

require a larger bomb. Here, for example are some of the destructive characteristics of this new bomb. First, it contains 1,000 times the destructive power of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima, Japan in '45. Second, it contains more destructive power than a mountain of TNT 4 times the height of the empire state building. Third, it contains more destructive power than a caravan of 1 million trucks carrying 20,000 lbs of TNT. Next a 10 megaton H-bomb is 500 times more powerful than the Hiroshima A-bomb. If exploded 30 miles above New York, it would produce a fire storm which would take in an area from the tip of Brooklyn to Bridgeport Conn. A 20 megaton H-bomb if exploded in mid-air between Akron and Cleveland Ohio, would incinerate both cities.

Discouragement in one way or another, the sense of it comes to us all. It should not shock you to hear that it comes to me. Because we have no insulation against it, and the issues of life are deep, and they come with heartaches and with tears. And of course, the great question that we are concerned with this morning is, how are we going to deal with it, how are we going to face it? We can but admit on every hand that our world is a broken world. It's a world of discouragement...it's a world of despondency, it's a world of trouble.

Brown - 9:30 Am

WHAT TO DO WITH DISCOURAGEMENT I Kings 19:4

Intro: When we think of the (strain) of things in our time,--- two global wars, the cruelty, a mass bombing, the things our enemies did to us, and the many, many wars that are going on in the various parts of the world, we are prone to think about (Browning's couplet) "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world." But we see that there are people who have hardship. There are those who are blind to the machine age in which we live. And it seems that there are little wars that seem to be in progress all over this world. It is very much like the (French philosopher) Gabriel Marcel in one of his plays, he wrote, "Don't you feel sometimes that we are living in a broken world? Yes, broken like a broken watch, the mainspring has stopped working, just to look at it, nothing is changed, everything is in place, but put the watch to your ear and you don't hear any ticking. You know what I am talking about. What we call the world of human creatures, it seems to be it must have had a heart at one time, but today you would say that the heart has stopped beating." We know what he is talking about, this is a broken world, rough, tough, sin-scarred, and Jesus knew that this was a rough world, because when he came it was a decaying world. His mission was accomplished in the midst of a world of strife. And he said, "Be of good cheer, I have

overcome the world." He inspires and empowers his followers to do the same, not to conform to it, not to be frustrated by it, but to live in it and to purposely be the redemptive agents, knowing that it can be mastered and its hurts can be healed and its troubles borne and usefulness derived from it.

We are familiar, I am sure with the story of Elijah, which illustrates perfectly what we want to talk about. It deals with discouragement. We think of Elijah when we think of discouragement. We think of Balaam when we think of one who perverted his high talents of Naboth, but here is one who met discouragement, and who is among us in likeness, in type, even today. Is there

Is there one in our midst who has been exempt from the discouragements of life? Here is a man who is discouraged in his (business) finding it hard to keep up the pace. We see that he had chosen another trade, feeling that the verdicts had gone against him.

Here is another who is discouraged over (family) matters. Marriage isn't working out as they hoped and dreamed it would. The children cause concern and constant anxiety. There are loved ones who are ill and financially insecure. There are husbands who try to keep the lamp of faith burning

in spite of the unbelief of the wife who has no heart for the things of the spirit. Or, just the opposite,--the woman who tries to hold on to spiritual truth.

There are those who are discouraged over (spiritual) things. We seem to reach the place of stagnation. We seem to get nowhere with our prayers. And we have even lost interest in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are others who are discouraged over (moral failures) they have been caught in the battle between flesh and spirit. And the flesh has been winning. Or perhaps it is alcohol, or sex or honesty, or laziness. Some demon keeps winning the battle, and we lose heart and are discouraged.

There are others here today who are perhaps discouraged over the uncertainty of the future, which opens before us in today's world. We see the shadows of another world conflict, we see the imminent danger of war on every hand, and we feel so utterly helpless. We do take hope as men and increase our knowledge, for we know that faith the size of a (mustard seed) might mushroom into something glorious.

So far as we know the (largest bombs) now being stockpiled, are the (20 megaton variety) equivalent to 20 million tons of TNT. Perhaps one reason for stopping at 20 megatons is that it is difficult to think of a destructive task that would

get away from discouragement in themselves. They turn to liquor, they turn to lust, they turn to radio, they turn to television, they turn to sports, they turn to pleasure.

Society is not one polished horde formed of two mighty tribes, - the bores and bored.

Even though one might try to run away from his discouragement, it will be just a temporary thing. A preacher got on a train, and next to him flopped down a drunk woman. She squinted out of the corner of her eye at the preacher, who happened to be wearing a clerical collar,--a slipped halo, Dick Sheppard called it. She remarked, "Life is very mysterious, father." "Yes, he answered, and it is not made less mysterious by your condition." "No, you're right, father, perfectly right; life is mysterious whether you're drunk or sober, but when you're drunk you don't care."

When you're drunk you don't care, but there is the morning after,--the hangover, the old troublesome self, so mysterious--at odds with itself, good and bad, big and yet so little.

We see that there are people like this who try to get away from discouragement.

We know that Jesus gives himself to us so that we can live; on every page in the New Testament, he affirms this. Who on earth can set me free from my own sinful nature. I

I. How some face it

We know that there are some people who face the discouragement of society and other discouragements that come in various ways. For example there are those who try to run away from it.

This was what Elijah was doing. You find it hard to believe, but it is. After his great victory at Carmel, he was still so keyed up that he ran all the way from Carmel to Jezreel,--17 miles. The man who can do that doesn't seem a likely candidate for discouragement, but when he got to Jezreel, they told him of Jezebel's threat and all at once he was afraid, and he ran. Now that is hard for us to explain, it's hard for us to really analyze...what was turning over in the heart and mind of Elijah, this great prophet of God.

Perhaps some of (you know how he felt.) Have you ever laid your heart open in complete trust to somebody, only to be (betrayed?) Have you ever (laid out your best?) You put your best into it, only to be criticized and blamed for what you could not do.

Have you (tried again and again) to accomplish something you knew was right, only to fail and fail and fail, and to know there was nothing left but to try again.

Then perhaps you know how Elijah felt. He had won the victory, but the enemy was not conquered. We look over in Psalms 55:6-8. These are the words too of a discouraged man who had taken just about all that he could. In our modern phrase, he had had it. His reserves of courage and patience and optimism were gone. All he could think of was to quit and to run. He even said, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, from them would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off and remain in the wilderness...I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest." So this is perhaps something that Elijah felt in his own heart. It was something he would like to get away from.

(Did anybody here) ever feel like that? You'd like to get away from it all? From people who irritate us, who rub us the wrong way, who clash with personalities at home, at office at school, at work?

(From responsibility?) Are you tired of being looked on as an influence? Would you like just to be nobody for a while? Just to slink into the wings and get off stage, and let somebody else get in the limelight? As one person put it, "I'm so glad that I'm what I am, I'm away from all of that idea that I have to be something." Yes, we'd like to run away and some try to run away. That is the story of countless thousands of people today. Even in this city of ours, there

are those who think that (alcohol) is the quickest way to run away from discouragement. There are yet other people who think that (divorce) is the thing that will settle all their problems. People are unwilling to face themselves. They just want to run away from it and they feel that that's the only answer.

But you can't run away from yourself. Did you ever try to run away from your (shadow) out on a dusty road somewhere. You never could get away from it, no matter how fast you run or how great your problem is, it's still there when you stop running.

This is one of the great discouragements that people face today is trying to live with themselves when they think about their weariness and their deepest needs. (They are disgusted with themselves.) They have the best intentions but they become discouraged by repeated failures. A man said to his minister, "I try and try but there is something wayward in me. I leave the lines and seem powerless to get back to them." It sounds very much like the Roman emperor who wrote in his diary, "It is hardly possible to endure the pleasantness of those who live with you, to say nothing of a man's, being hardly able to endure himself." Now there are lots of people who spend their (money) and their time in an attempt to

3- Therefore when we understand faith, it does not promise necessarily that life is going to be easy for us. It promises only to make us strong. It opens our hearts to the redeemer who is able to do for us beyond our asking.

4- The reality is that we need something deeper. Paul faced this manner of discouragement as did Jesus who said, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me." It could not be granted, we see. Paul faced it when he prayed about the thorn in the flesh. Three times he prayed, he said, he besought the Lord to remove it, but the Lord did not remove it. Where did Jesus turn when he knew there was no escape from the cross. Where did Paul turn when he knew he must bear the thorn. They turned back again to God who had said no. to them. And they found the courage, the strength, the capacity to hope in the face of denial.

But Paul in his discouragement found that the deeper things in life were needed, and even though Jesus had said no to his prayer, there was something in Paul, even though he seemed to go down to the depths of his spirit, that he could not turn lose of God. It enabled him to keep his feet on the ground and his head in the clouds. That is what Paul needed,--a profound experience of the tragedy that was in his life during those days of the Roman empire when times were

thank God there is a way out through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now thanks be to God who makes my life a constant pageant of triumph in Christ Jesus. The hymnbook that we use in our church is full of Christian biography and emphasizes overcoming discouragement. People like us have discovered that Christ did not come to earth simply to tell they what they ought to do. He came to do something for them. And they go to him for help, and Christ can do something for you.

There are so many ways in which people try to face discouragement. There are those who have lost their optimism so that they look at life with a hard and cold eye. There is no real justice in the world. It doesn't make sense to do the best and try to be decent. You believe in God, you go to church, and where does it get you...nowhere. That's the way some people sum up things.

Elijah must have felt something like that. He had been loyal through the years. He had been unpopular, he had lived a good life in obedience to God. He had been living in a hostile environment. Then the great moment, doing a great thing for God, winning a triumph for God's name, so he runs all the way to Jezreel to witness the effect of his victory, and what happened? Nothing. Nobody cares, nothing is changed

Jezebel is still the same old Jezebel, they're still worshiping idols in the palace.

We know that there are times in your life perhaps, and you blame the leanness of your soul on the wickedness of the world around about you. I could be a better Christian if I had half a chance, you say, but things are just backed against me. The most miserable people I know are those who are afraid to let themselves believe in the goodness of God.

II. Realities not ignored

I think when we come to look at the matter of discouragement here in Elijah, there are certain realities that we cannot ignore, there are certain facts that an individual (must face) and must take into consideration.

I would say first that being a Christian does not guarantee success in material wealth or popular favor. Maybe Elijah was somewhat frustrated that the people were not favorable toward him and his work that he had been carrying on. We're discouraged spiritually oftentimes because we do not understand this and we expect the wrong things to happen. So Judas was disappointed that Jesus was not the kind of king that he expected. The disciples on the Emmaus road walked in heaviness of heart because Jesus did not fulfill their pattern of

messiahship.

So with Elijah. And this is the meaning of the wind and the fire and the earthquake, and then the still small voice. Don't be deceived by the loud and monstrous events. God works in his own ways. We must keep on in obedience and leave the outcomes to God. For the truth is that we don't have to succeed. We do have to be faithful is the thing that counts.

Another fact and another reality that we must face is that deserting the Christian faith will not solve our problems either. Most preachers are familiar with the sermon by Dr. J. J. Gossip that after the sudden death of his wife, the members of his church wondered whether or not he would preach on the following Sunday, but preach he did, and the sermon has become a classic, the title was, "When Life Tumbles In". Here is the first part of his sermon: "I do not understand this life of ours, but still less can I understand how people in trouble and loss and bereavement can fling away deviously from the Christian faith. In God's name, fling away to what? Have we not lost enough without losing that too? You people in the sunshine may believe the faith, but we in the shadow must believe it. We have nothing else."

church shouts out nothing that is good withing behold a wider world and it seeks to be leavened redeeming power. But we must choose the world in which we live. How fortunate and how blessed we are that through the fellowship of his church, we can be informed and nourished and his courage can restore hope and keep it alive in our hearts when we are discouraged. So we see in the church that we can turn the tide of discouragement.

In closing, as I think of what to do with discouragement I think that there must be a personal experience. We could discuss Elijah's experience but let me see if I cannot illustrate for you this great experience of a young man whom Dr. John Hutton had never met, called at his hotel in New York, and asked for an interview, and he told him his story. He had come from the middle west to be married, with his young bride to be, they were walking along 5th Avenue. The sidewalk was crowded and she stepped off to the side and was knocked down by a car and was killed on the spot. This happened on a Wednesday, they were to be married on Friday. On the Friday, she was buried. For two days the man was past feeling. At her grave he made a vow that he would join her almost immediately, in whatever world awaits such broken hearts. And something restrained him from hour to

difficult.

We wonder how he could sit where these men sat, except we understand him and the love and the power that God gave him, to bear that thorn in the flesh, that he may learn the experience of fuller grace and richer grace. And God replied to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in your weakness." God would be the first to recognize the dangers that would confront Paul the convert, and in this way he would lose sight of God just as he had lost sight of him when he was a slave to the law. And men would not be able to see the Lord of grace and power in their proud and ineffectual and foolish way of majoring on their discouragements.

Paul used this as an instrument of power to learn his weakness.

And when the props are removed, I wonder how you react. So many people are restless and at odds with themselves and circumstances seem to be against them, they're drifting rather than driving...they've never hitched their wagon to a star...they've never organized themselves around great conviction, and they've never made a great commitment unto God. They've never tackled something bigger and better out there that would challenge them.

They've been thinking only of private profit and personal

gain.

I have read somewhere that across the desk of a leading Communist in New York is stretched in large letters the inscription, "A world to win." Communists have borrowed that watchword, --Christ was the author and the originator of it. He gives us a cause we can live for. He came into this world and he dispelled discouragement.

He comes to us as Albert Schweitzer said, "As of old by the lakeside, he came to those who knew him not, he speaks to us the same words, follow me, and sets us to the task which he has to fulfill for our time." He commands and to those who will obey him he will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the discouragements, the sufferings which they shall pass through in his fellowship, and as any mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who Christ is."

III. Turning the tide

We think of discouragement and how to meet it. We can first of all summarize what God accomplished for Elijah here through the whirlwind the fire and the still small voice speaking to him. Meditate upon what happened there and how Elijah was given encouragement.

Second, if we would turn the tide of discouragement, we will think more about the church. I think here in the face of discouragement, that we can find great strength in the Christian church. We have the promise of fellowship of Christian friends, a wider family of men and women, brothers and sisters in a common cause in Jesus Christ. This is what Paul meant in his letters to philippians, a saint in Caesar's household. What an unlikely place for saints. How easy it must have been for them to be discouraged, indeed, how forgiveable if they were. In such a place, many of us would have shrugged our shoulders and we would have gone on and said, "What's the use?"

But these saints were different. They had a church, they had a fellowship and they stood. So the church surrounds us with encouragement. And the dear strains of "Blest be the Tie" keeps ringing in our hearts on the dark days when it seems that the heavens are darkened and we cannot find our way.

We ought to thank God for the church, for this is a broken world and no one of us lives in it all alone. We may choose our own little world, but we know that we're dependent upon others.

For the Christian believer, Christianity means life within the church...a world within a world...but the Christian



hour. He was sure that it was not cowardice. He was sure that he was merely postponing the deliberate act. He had even booked the room on the top floor of the hotel from which to dash himself. Sitting in that room on a Saturday night, he read the newspaper,--the New York Times, where Hutton was to preach, the next morning on the subject, "The Breaking Point,--what next?" Unknown to the preacher, he was in the congregation, Fifth Ave. Presbyterian Church, and heard Hutton say, "My dear sir, preaching in my view is saying things which those who hear me cannot deny. Two or those incontroversial facts I now say to you. First it is always possible to hold on a little longer. Second, you never know what God has waiting for you around the corner." At those words, the young man told Hutton, the grim purpose was torn from his heart. He left the church determined to begin again, and to put his hand by faith into the hand by faith into the hand of Jesus Christ.

Unless people today come to this truth of personal experience as to what Christ Jesus has been doing for 1900 years. He gives men and women a world they can live in. He inspires them to stand up to tragedy. He delivers them from the disastrous feelings of futility. He rekindles the faith in God and shows them how sorrow and suffering can be transmitted from loss into gain. They can say with Paul

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