

Bridgeway Community Church  
Series: Be Encouraged  
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## How to Fight Against Discouragement

“Beyond encouraging yourself, there are times when you are so overwhelmed by multiple things happening all at the same time that you feel like you need **some extra firepower**. Even though the enemy is an expert at dishing out discouragement, I believe that God’s message for you today will give you the tools and the weapons of hope necessary to fight against discouragement.”

GRAVITY has a way of pulling us down.

- The Gravity of Life.
- The Gravity of Relationships.
- The Gravity of Finances
- And definitely, the Gravity of the last two years of the CoronaVirus Pandemic.
- And right now in Ukraine and in Europe, we have the unbelievable & chilling Gravity of War!

My goal in today’s sermon is to pull you back up.

You see, Gravity may be a strong force that pulls down, but scientifically there are other forces in the universe that are stronger than Gravity. Scientifically speaking, out of the Four HyperPhysical Forces that are in the universe, there are 3 that are greater than the 4th one which is Gravity.

- (1) **Strong Nuclear Force**
- (2) **The Magnetic Force**
- (3) **Weak Nuclear Force**

All three are greater than gravity!

While all of that is true scientifically in the realm of HyperPhysics (strong nuclear, magnetic, and gravitational forces exist in the natural universe), there are also spiritual forces in the universe of our lives that seek to pull us down.

“I wanna talk about the Gravitational Force that Pulls on you within the “Dark Matters” of your soul.”

Psalm 143:1-3 NIV84

Oh Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief. <sup>2</sup>Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you. <sup>3</sup>The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in darkness like those long dead.

Notice the 3 gravitational forces the enemy uses to pull David down.

### **1. He PURSUES Me - The CHASE!**

David is worn out by continually being on the run. He's worn out by being pursued over and over again. Some of you might feel that way. You're just tired of the fight. You're tired of the chase!

My word to you on this day is - STOP RUNNING!

James 4:7-8 NIV84

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.

Stand your ground!

Ephesians 6:13 NIV84

When you have done everything to stand, stand. Put on the whole armor of God.

### **2. He CRUSHES Me - The CRUSH!**

"David feels grinded down and defeated. He feels like a loser. He feels crushed by the enemy.

Question: Do you ever feel crushed, defeated? Do you ever feel like a loser?

You want to lose 5 or 10 lbs, only to catch yourself eating ice cream at night. You then stand on the scale in the morning and hope that the ice cream didn't have an effect. But it did. You feel defeated. Crushed again!

### 3. He DARKENS Me - The CLOSET!

“The dark place of shame and guilt that keeps you in the shadows of secrecy.”

Psalm 143:3 NIV84

The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in darkness like those long dead.

“This is so opposite of what David said in Psalm 23:”

Psalm 23:2-3 NIV84

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, <sup>3</sup>he restores my soul.

There is nothing lonelier than being in the dark closet of shame. The enemy tempts you, you fall, and then he taunts you. While you are crushed by your failure, you are feeling the deep regrets of your choices as you judge yourself harder than anyone else ever could.

No wonder, John Mayer in his song GRAVITY ends it by saying “Keep me where the light is.” Where there is light, there is healing! What God reveals, God heals. What man conceals, eventually kills. Deal with your closet issues carefully, but do deal with them. First, deal with your issues with God! He is merciful and patient, kind and gracious... even when people may not be.

Author & counselor, Dr. Tim Clinton said: “It’s not that kids are afraid of being in the dark. Kids aren’t afraid of being in the dark. Kids are afraid of being in the dark ALONE!”

Psalm 133:7-10 NIV84

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup>If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. <sup>9</sup>If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, <sup>10</sup>even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

Psalm 139:11-12 NIV84

If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me, <sup>12</sup>even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Psalm 143:4-7 NIV84

So my spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed. <sup>5</sup>I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done. <sup>6</sup>I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. <sup>7</sup>Answer me quickly, O Lord; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit.

Notice the Words:

My spirit grows **FAINT**  
 My heart is **DISMAYED**  
 My spirit **FAILS**

“It doesn’t get much worse than that!”

“If this isn’t spiritual depression, I don’t know what is! Whether it’s clinical depression or not, I cannot tell you that because I am not a physician, psychologist, or psychiatrist; but as a pastor and bible teacher, I can definitely tell you that there is spiritual depression here if not spiritual oppression!”

David makes a pivot in verse 8. This is where we must also pivot in the midst of our pain. David’s pivot in the midst of his pain may help us see how we can pivot in the midst of our pain. Notice that David turns to what He knows about the Character of God

### The 3 Attributes of God’s Character that David Hold On To:

#### 1. God’s Faithfulness

Psalm 143:1 NIV84

Oh Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your **faithfulness** and righteousness come to my relief.

#### 2. God’s Righteousness

Psalm 143:1, 11 NIV84

Oh Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and **righteousness** come to my relief...For your name’s sake, O Lord, preserve my life; in your **righteousness**, bring me out of trouble.”

### 3. God's Love

Psalm 143:8, 12 NIV84

Let the morning bring me word of **your unfailing love**, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift my soul...In **your unfailing love**, silence my enemies; destroy all my foes, for I am your servant.

“David has to hold onto something in the midst of the pit that he’s in.”

Just like in the physical universe there are 4 forces; 3 of which are stronger than Gravity, In the spiritual realm there are 3 forces stronger than the enemy trying to pull you down.

God the FATHER,  
God the SON,  
God the HOLY SPIRIT!

#### HOLD ON TO HIS CHARACTER

His is FAITHFUL  
He is RIGHTEOUS  
He is LOVING

“But the stronger force that David held onto could pull him up out of the quicksand of his depression when he was holding on tightly to the very character of God in the midst of his pain.”

“In the midst of it all, while discouragement is knocking on your door, sometimes you can’t go with what you see, you’ve gotta go with what you know about God. You know that God is faithful. You know that God is righteous and you know that God is love.

“**Somebody needs to hear today that God is faithful.** He will never leave you nor forsake you. He came through in the eleventh hour before, and he can do it again. He was there for you in the past and he won’t fail you now. Even when we are faithless, God is faithful!”

2 Timothy 2:13 NIV84

if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

### **Great is Thy Faithfulness<sup>1</sup>**

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
 There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
 Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;  
 As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Chorus:

Great is Thy faithfulness!  
 Great is Thy faithfulness!  
 Morning by morning new mercies I see:  
 All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—  
 Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

**Somebody needs to hear today that God is righteous.** God will always do what is right. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.

Romans 12:19 KJV

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

God will make right all that is wrong. God will set right all that is off, unjust, and unfair.

Genesis 18:25 NIV84

[Abraham speaking to God] Will not the judge of all the earth do right?

We serve a righteous God. We serve a just God. You can trust him to make crooked paths straight in due time!

“God is saying to someone...’Let it go! I got this! Let her go, I got this. Let him go, I got this. Let them go, I got this!’ You’re holding on to stuff that God is saying, ‘I’ll take care of it. I’m the righteous one, you’re not. No one is righteous, but I am, so trust in me.’ Don’t take matters into your own hands. Let God be God!”

**Somebody needs to hear today that God is loving!** More specifically, God loves you. Yeah, you’re gay, he loves you....you’re transgender, he loves you. You’re black, you’re white, you’re Asian, you’re Hispanic, you’re Russian, he love you. You’re Ukrainian, he loves you.”

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<sup>1</sup> Traditional church hymn written by Thomas Chisholm, 1923.

“It doesn’t matter what adjective you put before people, God. Loves. People! Whatever adjective you put in front of it, whether you agree with it or not, whether you stand behind it or not, whether you like it or not. Any adjective you put before people doesn’t matter, God loves people. Period. Done.”

“May the church never tell people that they’re hated because of their behavior, because of their orientation, because of their color, class, culture, sin. God. Loves. People.

John 3:16 NIV84

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

“Do not believe those from religion that tell you God doesn’t love you, it’s a lie! there is nothing in the book that says God hates people.”

## **CONCLUSION**

### **DAVID ASKS GOD TO DO 9 THINGS:**

1. *Bring me the word* (v.8)
2. *Show me the way* (v.8)
3. *Rescue me* (v.9)
4. *Teach me* (v.10)
5. *Lead me* (v.10)
6. *Preserve my life* (v.11)
7. *Bring me out* (of trouble - v.11)
8. *Silence my enemies* (v.12)
9. *Destroy all my foes* (v.12)

Out of these 9 things, tell me which ones fall into the category of DELIVERANCE or and which ones fall into the category of DIRECTION.

1. *Bring the word* (v.8) DELIVERANCE or DIRECTION?
2. *Show me the way* (v.8) DELIVERANCE or DIRECTION?
3. *Rescue me* (v.9) DELIVERANCE or DIRECTION?
4. *Teach me* (v.10) DELIVERANCE or DIRECTION?
5. *Lead me* (v.10) DELIVERANCE or DIRECTION?

6. *Preserve my life* (v.11) DELIVERANCE or DIRECTION?
7. *Bring me out* (of trouble - v.11) DELIVERANCE or DIRECTION?
8. *Silence my enemies* (v.12) DELIVERANCE or DIRECTION?
9. *Destroy all my foes* (v.12) DELIVERANCE or DIRECTION?

When you find yourself down, in despair, or discouraged, one of the important things to do is ask yourself and God is this:

Question: God, do I need DIRECTION or do I need DELIVERANCE?

In David's case he needed both Deliverance and Direction. In Psalm 143 David asks 4 for Direction and 5 for Deliverance.

Oftentimes, we cry out to God for Deliverance but we are not seeking His direction. We want to get out of our situation but then we still want to go our own way.

But David was connected to God enough to know that God is teaching him something in this. 'God, what do you want me to learn? Show me, Teach me, Bring me your word, Lead me...O Lord.'

Question: What are YOU learning about God during this trial?

Question: What are you learning about yourself during this difficult season?

On the other hand, some of us are seeking direction from God, when He is trying to deliver us! He wants to deliver us from evil!

Matthew 6:13 KJV

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

For someone, God is not trying to get you through, He is trying to get you out! You're trying to stay longer than you should. God is saying, 'no, you need to get out of it' but you're staying.

David requested both Deliverance and Direction!



Question: Why could David ask all of these things of God?

Answer: because "**I AM YOUR SERVANT**"! (Psalm 143:12)

Psalm 143:12 NIV84

In your unfailing love, silence my enemies; destroy all my foes, **for I am your servant.**

Beloved, because you are God's servants, in fact, His sons & daughters, I say to you today:

Hebrews 4:16 NIV84

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Romans 8:38-39 NIV84

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.