

## Crossroads Community Church

Sunshine reminds us of God's faithfulness and mercy as he causes the sun to rise and set upon us all. Our hearts were elated during worship as we exalted the Lord, Bob read Psalm 25 and Lamentations 3:22-24. Pastor Don brought the announcements and prayed; ?God help us remember to draw close to you when we are discouraged or tired, we trust in your faithfulness, be our strength in Jesus name Amen.? He delivered an invigorating message of hope.

?Have you ever felt like throwing in the towel?? When facing difficulties with finances, relationships or health we can easily be tempted to give up the good fight. Fortunately God shows us a way out when we seek Him, ?No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it,? 1 Corinthians 10:13. There is an epidemic raging against all of us; no it is not the Asian flu or Cancer; it is something that is universal and none of us are immune to it, it keeps coming and it can spread, that is ?discouragement?.

So what are its causes? They can come from external problems such as finances or insurmountable work, it can come from our physical problems like health or loss of a loved one, and it comes from internal problems like emotional and relational problems, all these come to oppose our plans and can tempt us to give up on what God has planned for us. In the Bible we find an example in Nehemiah 4:1-3.

Here we can see that the Hebrews were hard at work to rebuild the wall of Israel, it was God's plan, but many came to try and discourage them with ridicule and insults. I am sure we can all agree that overtime when we are constantly badgered while trying to accomplish something for God it is discouraging, it can wear us down. Many times if we are of positive nature we may be able carry on due to the excitement of doing God's will and can achieve quite a lot just as Nehemiah and his men did,(Nehemiah 4:6). When we stop to ponder about the days we first came to God, we can remember that reading the Bible and praying was new and exciting, it was easy to find time, after a while, when life started to challenge our faith, we tend to find it more difficult to make the time, then comes the enemy discouraging us with guilt, thinking that our faith mustn't be strong enough or genuine. The devil is glad to ridicule us, he is the accuser and it cuts deeply tempting us to give up all together just as in the case of Jesus when he was arrested awaiting His crucifixion, the devil taunted ,(Luke 22:63-65). The enemy kept coming after Nehemiah and Israel any way they could to discourage them, to wear them down,( Nehemiah 4:7,8,10,11).

When we feel the enemy pressing against us from every side and criticizes all that we try to do for God and our families and the church because on our own fatigue, frustration and failure, we are not as ready to face the devil's attacks but here is Good News! We can push forward and call out in faith for God's help to counter act as Nehemiah did,(Nehemiah 4:13). This is the only way to conquer the enemy, through God's strength and resting in Him as Jesus did regularly,(Romans 8:37, Mark 6:31). Once we find rest in God we are revitalized and we can now reorganize by adjusting how we were living, serving instead of striving, ? (Nehemiah 4:13). We can also regain strength and strategy by meeting together for support, our church family is a source of spiritual and moral support ,? not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another?and all the more as you see the Day approaching,? Hebrews 10:25.

Beloved life is difficult and our Father in heaven knows it, He never promised that it would be easy , but let us remember what He did promise if we stay strong and don't give in to fear and discouragement, He says He will be with us wherever we go. When we remain in God by praying, reading our Bibles and keep meeting together it will take our eyes off our problems and refocus on God. He is our safety net able to catch us when we fall. We need not fear for we can live for Him when we rely on Him and find rest in Him. If we can kneel before God, we will stand before anyone! Have a restful week in Christ, Asherey Shalom!

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