



Overcoming Discouragement and Depression, a Strategy

Peter Scott . April 2018 . transcribed

Preamble . Joy and Courage

As I was waking up a week ago the Lord said to me, “Peter, what do you think I was thinking when I opened my eyes when I was under My grave clothes in the tomb?”

So I laid in my bed thinking, “Well it was probably a lot different than my waking up. You were probably thinking entirely different.” If you can remember He died on a Friday, so all day Saturday His body lay there in the tomb while He Himself went down to the gates of Hell to let the prisoners free. But His body was just lying there, dead. And then on Sunday morning when the sun was rising, He blinked His eyes open and for the first time in a few days, blood started pumping through His veins. His arms were definitely asleep and tingling; the blood starts coming through His body. His brain is responding. He blinks open His eyes.

Now before, at the cross and all previous, He was King of kings and Lord of lords but He was confined to a human body. He was not omni-present and not omni-powerful in the sense that He was at creation. However, after the cross and resurrection, He still had His mortal body. He said, “Don’t cling to Me. I need to go and get My glorified body.” Here He is in the tomb awakening in His natural body. He can still feel the blood flowing through His veins, He muscles warming up. He blinked His eyes open. I suspect the angels were standing there beside Him. I can see them fluttering their wings and saying, “Okay, He’s up!” Jesus opens His eyes and the first thing that came to my mind, He probably said this, because when creating the world He said, “This is good!” When He created man He said, “This is very good.” Now I suspect He said, **“This is going to be a very, very good day!”**

All conjecture, it may not even be true, but it was something the Lord was trying to teach me. The power of the resurrection is in how we look at each day and each morning. It isn’t some day we celebrate in March or April at Easter time. It is a day we celebrate because we live it every day, the strength and power of the resurrection. Therefore every morning when I blink my eyes open, I should say, “It is a very, very good day!” Whether I feel the flutter of angel wings or not I should still say that. Amen. This is the day the Lord has made, we will be glad and rejoice in it.

Introduction

I’d like to teach today on a strategy against depression and discouragement, a strategy to overcome that. It is one thing to say, “I’m just going to conquer depression. I’m just going to do it!” It is another thing to have a *strategy* on *how* to do it. And so, those who have a strategy tend to succeed and that we need the Holy Spirit. Jesus died upon the cross for our sins. He was risen from the dead for the very idea of having resurrected power, so that He could ascend to the right hand of the Father. He ascended to the right hand of the Father so that He could send us the Holy Spirit. I celebrate Pentecost more than anything else. I need the Holy Spirit in my life every day. *That is my main strategy.*

Do you remember who Joshua was? Joshua was Moses’ armor bearer. What kind of job is that?! Joshua was being mentored by Moses. He was watching Moses. He was seeing what was going on and, more importantly, the relationship between Moses and God and what that meant to his master. He took it all in. None of it was wasted on Joshua.

In the first chapter of Joshua it says, “You know what, you are going to go to the Promised Land where Moses couldn’t go.” So, Joshua was no longer just an armor bearer; he was now the leader. Over and over again in this first chapter the Lord says to Joshua, *“Be strong and courageous. Be very strong and courageous. Be strong and courageous. Be courageous, be strong. Be strong,”* over and over again. Why? Joshua knew how to carry the armor of Moses. I don’t know if I’ve ever read scripture where Moses actually put it on. . . So Joshua’s job had little meaning.

But while watching Moses and the relationship he had with God, you would think there wouldn't be a problem for Joshua to be strong and courageous. In all of the miracles that he had witnessed, Egypt being defeated, Israel being victorious over all things, the parting of the Red Sea. What would the Promised Land harbor that he would need to have even *more* strength and courage ??? Well, God said that to him because Joshua needed to be *reminded to be strong and courageous*; that was the strategy, God's strategy to **encourage**. It is also our strategy to do the same to one another, to encourage each other because we are weak in the flesh. We are weak in our natural being, however in the Spirit we are strong! We overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, that testimony of encouragement. Encouragement is a strategy, one that we should not forget. Encourage yourself! Everybody deserted David, his men walked away, saying, "What kind of king is this? We don't need this!" It says that David went down and encouraged himself in the Lord. Just so, we need to encourage ourselves and each other. If we are not doing that we are missing a *major strategy, that God has for us, His provision for us.*

The Usual Traps

How many of you are not doing this? Instead of being encouraged you say, "This isn't going to work." How many times do I wake up with a bad dream and say, "No, no and definitely no." That's not a very encouraging word but instead I'm confronting the enemy. Better, I need to wake up from such dreams and say to myself, "The Lord is strong and mighty and His Spirit runs through my heart and I will not give up! I will be strong in the Lord. I will be courageous in the Lord, not in my own strength, not in my own courage but in the One that has given me in that circumstance."

Someone once said, "We are always limiting God's power." How are we doing that? By not having a strategy. We are going through our life saying, "Well, I don't know what circumstances I'll find but I hope I get through it, by the grace of God and I'll hang on by the 'skin of my teeth.' I'll just 'white-knuckle' through this things." Are we guilty of this? The limitations we put on God's power are because we put our faith and our trust in *ourselves* even though we know better.

I know that the Holy Spirit gives us the power to unleash the power of the Lord to break down these limitations by knowing the will, the purposes and the intent of God's heart. The only way that we can know the will, the intent and purposes of God's heart is by the *Holy Spirit*, the written Word of God, revealed in circumstance, revealed in the mouth of your brother and sister. In James chapter 1, it says that we should consider it all joy when we go through various trials. Why? Because we know that the end result of that is proven character, the character of Christ formed in us. How wonderful it is afterwards but when you are going through it, there is not that much encouragement, so we just "persevere" through them. However, it is also for the JOY set before us! Don't forget that; the Joy of the Lord is our strength. What exactly is the Joy of the Lord? Sometimes it is going to be the word of the testimony of your brother or sister.

Yesterday, I had a 24 hour bug and I couldn't eat, could barely drink any water, fever was up. I got out of bed a couple of times but couldn't do anything I tried. My grandchildren, Lilian and Luke were there and Gram was babysitting (not fair for her) and I could do almost nothing to help. By the end of the day their parents came to pick up the kids and while they were already out by the car and on their way out, Luke comes running back and says, "I just want you to know, Granddad, I'm praying for you." I could 'white-knuckle' all I could want but when you get that kind of encouragement, I don't have to! You see, the Joy is set before me in this little boy's heart. The next day I woke up and blinked my eyes open and said, "This is going to be a very, very good day." The fever was gone and the bug was gone. I wish all of our trials were only 24 hours long, or three days and three nights.

Joshua had to face much more than this. He had a whole army to put together that didn't really know how to fight that well. They had to face giants that were in the land which he knew about because he and Caleb had previously spied it out. But the Joy that was set before him was the land flowing with milk and honey, with provision beyond his expectation. So you see, we are not just to "white-knuckle" and to hang on and to persevere for the sake of persevering. A lot of religions offer that, but we have a JOY that is inexpressible. When Jesus was resurrected from the dead, the Power of the grave was overcome, the power of Death in all of our circumstances was overcome! It was broken! You can have that Joy now. Even in persecution, you can have that Joy, even when people come against you, you can have that Joy.

This is not something you should take lightly. Depression is a very serious malady. It can lead to a spiraling downward depression; it can lead to suicidal ideas and thoughts. One in ten people you know, as psychiatrists say over and over again, are considered suicidal in their life at one time or another. Considering suicide is not just thinking about it, but having a way and a plan to commit it . . . one in ten, even in this room. I asked my primary care physician, “Did you ever ask your patients if they had problems with depression?” She said, “No, I’m a primary care physician.” But, primary care should include mental health. Our mental health depends on the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit has given us a strategy to read the Word of God, to be in fellowship with Him, the King of kings and Lord of lords, to worship Him. Our strategy of worship is not just for Sunday; it is for every day of our life. To hear the word of encouragement from our brothers and sisters, that is our strategy. It is no wonder the mental health physicians, psychiatrists often will set up self-help groups. They know that encouragement is an important part of the whole process.

I’ve told this story before, I was put in charge of putting together a committee of psychiatrists, sixty-five of them, in New York City to revamp the entire program the VA had for homeless veterans on the street of New York. Before that program was put into effect, you would find them, put them into a van and take them up to Middletown, putting them into a big facility to do “time-out.” That was the previous strategy! And so, the psychiatrists got together and said, “You know what we are doing wrong, we are categorizing everybody. We are putting them all into pigeon-holes. But everybody is different. They need encouragement to the individual person that they are, who God meant them to be.”

After it was all over, the leading psychiatrist and I were working closely together. (God only knows why I was doing this because all I had was psychology 101 and by the way I found it boring.) He and I were working hand in hand with this whole program and I began to see that something within his spirit was different. He had a closing remark, “You know *statistics say* that no matter what we do as psychiatrists and psychologists (a lot in that room in Manhattan), we know that no matter whether we give them medication or therapy, as many as get better or get worse, it will make no difference whether we treat them or not.” How would you like that job? No matter what you do will not make a difference! I thought how could he say such things? Then he turned and looked right at me and said, “But we know that there is one thing we can give everyone and that is *Hope*.”

I know; I talked to him about that Hope. I know that he had talked to many of his colleagues about that Hope. He was a Christian. Isn’t that good?! We have our Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. It isn’t some intangible Hope that we have somewhere down the road; it is Hope that we have now in the circumstances, the ones we have now. For some reason we don’t like to talk about depression. We don’t like to talk about suicide in our society. But let me tell you , we may never have the opportunity here on Sunday to talk about this, but in a home group where you can link your life together with other people, one-on-one, you can. You can open up your heart and say, “You know, I’m having a serious problem. When I hear the Word of God on Sunday I find it so encouraging, but come Monday morning, I could care less . . . The circumstance I find myself in is not like anything I have ever seen anybody else go through and I don’t know how to deal with it. You don’t know the diagnosis that I might have had. I don’t know how to get through this problem.” Now your brothers and sisters can come along, put their arm around you and say, “No, no. I have actually been there. See I was diagnosed with cancer. I know my family went through a divorce. I know . . . what it is like to be deserted.”

Jesus did too! He looked down upon His disciples from the cross. What was going on in the natural? He wasn’t just in the Spirit. His natural mind was working too! He said to John, “Listen, take care of my Mom. My God, My God why have You forsaken Me?!” In the Garden of Gethsemane, the disciples couldn’t even stay awake for a little while. There will be times even in a home group when you think your friends have deserted you. Let me tell you they haven’t because the Holy Spirit is within them.

Getting Ready for Circumstances

Let’s turn to Luke 22:39-46. Jesus had a right to be depressed *in the natural*. He knew what was lying before Him and He didn’t want to go through it. He knew His disciples would be letting Him down, even Peter. He knew that somehow they didn’t get it that He was going to be raised from the dead. Somehow they didn’t get the

whole picture. “How do You know all these things, Lord?” They weren’t yet baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. They had a measure but Jesus had not as yet ascended to the Father.

³⁹ And He came out, and went, as His custom was, unto the mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him.

So there they were. Here’s our group. What powerful men they were and would soon be and when they arrived at the place He said,

⁴⁰ And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

Pray that they would not enter into temptation. What does that mean? When you pray, do you pray that you won’t enter temptation? What temptation? “Lord, I pray that I won’t sin tomorrow. I pray won’t have lust in my heart. Lord, I pray that I won’t steal, I won’t covet, I won’t . . .” No, that’s not what it is about. The temptation they were facing that He was referring to in this passage, was the *temptation of discouragement, of depression, the circumstances taking over their life, their spirit*. He said that they should pray that they wouldn’t fall into that temptation. What do people do when they are very depressed? They not only think and consider suicide but they say, “That’s it. I’m out of here.” And they fall asleep. They don’t know what else to do, hoping that somehow sleep will give them strength.

I know. I’ve been there. One of the early times when I was discouraged as a young boy, I was delivering papers every week and I had a large paper route, 150 customers. They weren’t all nice customers. They didn’t always have their 45 cents a week ready for me when I came to collect. I knew that every Friday I had to meet this guy in a car down by the train station who would collect money from me from my customers. I had to keep records which of them paid and which didn’t. Some were liars. They might say, “We already paid you last week!” No they didn’t. I have a guy waiting for me at the train station and he’s going to want some of that money! Then the worst thing happened; the guy at the train station had an alcoholic problem. He said one time that I hadn’t given him any money! My dad came to me and said that he was told I hadn’t given the paper their money. “Dad, how can you think that I would just do such a thing! Why would I do it? How do you think I could get away with that?” I thought later that I should really pray for this man. What he had done was terrible, not just to steal but to steal from a kid like that just because you have an alcohol problem. Yet his choices were probably few. I went into a depression. I thought, “What hope is there?” Then I fell asleep.

Jesus says, “Pray that you would not enter into that kind of temptation.” David didn’t fall asleep. Joshua didn’t fall asleep. They both had a strategy. They had already been there in that depression; they already knew how to overcome. Scripture says:

⁴⁰ And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. ⁴¹ And He was parted from them about a stone’s cast; and He kneeled down and prayed, ⁴² saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done.

What a wonderful prayer. You know the text of Calvary was already written right here. The victory had already been won.

⁴³ [\[a\]](#) And there appeared unto Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him.

The circumstances you are going through, the depression you are going through isn’t just a natural depression, it isn’t just natural circumstances for you. **Everything that you go through has a spiritual context!** What Jesus was going through caused the angels to come to encourage Him. It wasn’t just natural, it wasn’t just the fact the Jews were upset with Him, it wasn’t just the fact that He was going to be crucified upon the cross, rather there was a *spiritual* context to this. In your life it is the same! Don’t think that you are just a natural man or

a natural woman. You are a Spiritual man; you are a Spiritual woman. **The Lord is calling you to be in His army!** An army of overcomers, an army that's not going to fall asleep. He doesn't need sleepers. He doesn't need an army that is going to look down when trouble comes in the door; He wants to have an army that looks up straight into the enemy's eyes and say, "What are you doing here?! Get out."

⁴⁴ And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.

Well, He knew He had to not just shed blood but He had to die for us.

*⁴⁵ And when He rose up from his prayer, He came unto the disciples, and found them **sleeping for sorrow**, ⁴⁶ and said unto them, *Why sleep ye? rise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.**

You may not be physically sleeping here this morning, but are you spiritually sleeping, trying to avoid the circumstance because you don't have any Hope? The Hope you have is in your brother and sister and their testimony. The Hope you have is the relationships you form in home groups in your Christian community. The Hope you have is in the resurrection power of Christ Jesus Himself. He broke the power of the grave, not just death as death but death in everything! **Not just death as death but death in everything!** There is a spirit of Death in this world like we don't even know nor understand.

The reason people love their animals and pets so much is so that the enemy can distract them from the fact that young people should have children! Instead they have "Fur Babies." Now, I love pets as much as the next guy, but not to replace children. They don't! The first covenant that God made with man was, "Be fruitful and multiply." Yet realize, there is a spirit of Death in this world. It comes in many forms, workaholics, "I don't have time for a family." Materialism, "Well, I don't have enough things. I'm not ready to have a family. I need to have enough money for a college education first." We can keep going. The spirit of Death takes some very sinister forms.

Jesus knew the spirit of Death well. He took upon Himself all of that death, the iniquity of us all was laid upon Him. And He didn't just take it upon Himself figuratively. There was a weight of oppression! But, He did not succumb to it because His strategy was nevertheless, **"Not My will, but Thine be done."** The relationship with the Father, the relationship, not just a covenant- *theoretical* relationship but an *actual* relationship with the Father, which is why Jesus died for you, which is why the Shepherd's angels were singing the night He was born. You can now talk to the Father yourself. You.

Why does the Lord ask such crazy questions as, "Why are you sleeping?" He is encouraging them, don't do this! Don't do it; don't walk away from the problem. "Rise and pray that you may not enter into that kind of temptation.

And So What Is Our Strategy?

1) Prayer: relationship with the Lord.

2) Submitting to the will and purposes and intent of our Father. How can you know that? Through the Holy Spirit.

3) Spiritual context: Remember that you are not natural people. You are spiritual and *everything* that happens to you has a spiritual context. "Really? I don't think so." Yes, everything. He upholds *all* things by the Word of His Power. What do you think is not covered by that statement? Sex? Everything. Considering this heterosexual world that we live in, not too long ago in the fifty's when one said somebody was heterosexual that actually meant they were oversexed (in a psychiatric examination). The term does not have that meaning now. What do you think happened? Now we have heterosexual, homosexual, bi-sexual, transsexual, etc. Whoa. And so, when I look out at my class, twelve students to whom I am currently teaching hematology, it is amazing how transparent they can be. The Lord said to me, "You know you are living in a heterosexual world." I know that; I'm getting to know them very well. Even in their blood chemistry the differences are there, even diseases and disorders and sexual processes. So,

the Lord said, "Peter, why are you walking away from this? Why are you ignoring the fact their sex is out there?" I try to treat them all the same. The Lord said, "Don't do that. That one is a brother. That one is a woman. There are humans different from you as a man. You live in a heterosexual world, right, Peter?" "Yes, Lord, I do." What is wrong with us? The spiritual context is that we need to *accept the sexuality of our female partner*. We need to accept and embrace the idea that a woman is a woman and a man is a man, and the wonderfulness of that difference! The wonderful spiritualness of that difference. . . So when a man and a woman come together in marriage, it has a spiritual context. It certainly does. It is a type of Christ and the church. Then we begin to understand a little bit more about the problems we are going through. Your boss, school, parents, the circumstances we find ourselves in. Taxes, it doesn't matter whether they are less or more.

Let me add this also for you *to look around for the angelic presence*. It wasn't just meant for Jesus alone to have angels around Him. We do too. In my own experience angels don't usually identify themselves, "Hello, I am an angel." Did happen but most of the time angels shy away from identifying themselves by name. I'm sure they all have names; the Word says that the creator named every star in heaven. God likes names! So if angels have names, why aren't they telling me? One time I asked my angel, "What's your name?" He said, "I'm not telling you. That's all you need, Peter, to know my name." Why? Because it would be a strong tendency to say, "That was Gabriel or that was 'so-and-so,' or it was an archangel." That is not what angels are about. They are about doing and encouraging you through the Spirit in what you are going through. They can breathe into you Life because they are messengers from the Lord. You have something that the angels wish they could have; you have the Spirit of God dwelling within you. All they have to do is fan the flames around you, "Come on you can do this!" I am then able to respond, "Yes. I know I can. This is pretty tough, Lord. I don't know anybody who can do this, but You can."

I'm going to get a little graphic here. I did between 75-100 autopsies a year for twenty years. They are not really pleasant experiences to go through. One time this guy who I'd been trying to help survive for many weeks, about 580 pounds, was full of so much fluids/water and then he died. They took him off the anti-biotics before he passed, so I knew he was going to smell. So, now he's leaking everywhere. I had to put him on the table and cut him up, etc. It smelled. In those days we didn't have the purified charcoal filters that they have now. But, as I smelled this I said to the Lord, "Do I have to do this? This is terrible, ugly. Horrible!" The Lord said, "You know, I was leaking from every place too, but somebody took care of Me, My body. It mentions that in Scripture. It is not something to be afraid of. It is something you do for them." Hey, this guy was a veteran Marine! Okay, I'm doing it! "Angels this way."

Spiritual context, filled with power of the Holy Ghost, not in my own strength. 580 pounds? Even with body mechanics, this is going to be hard to do. But God did it. I got through it. And, I was *glad* I did. I was glad. I was glad someone else didn't have to.

4) Strategy/Encouraging one another: If you think that can only happen here on Sunday, you are wrong. Sundays are a great encouragement, but we *need* one-on-one. I need two-o- one, three-on-one, I need a home group. I need a family that cares for me! When I'm wrong I need someone who cares for me say, "You know, Peter, you are wrong." "Peter, you're right," when I'm right. We need a family that is concerned about "me" and my spiritual welfare. We *need* each other. Many that are not here today are not getting that kind of encouragement. You are not going to get it on Facebook, not that way. Though there is some encouragement; I have a lot of Christian friends. But, not one-on-one kind of stuff that I need. There is something about touch, your breath and your testimony that's important to me. Right! When you come up for prayer, it isn't just prayer but usually we lay hands on the people we are praying for because a human touch is indispensable in our strategy to know one another. In a heterosexual world? Can we mention it? Yes! Yes, you can.

Summation

1) Prayer, 2) submitting to the Father's will, purposes and intent, spiritual context, 3) inviting the angels into your life, and 4) encouraging each other are the four principles for strategy to overcome. I know that in Phillipians it says we are supposed to just put on the idea of thinking of good things. That is true. The fruit of the Spirit, why God fills us with His Spirit, is Love, Peace and Joy, and **Long Suffering**. Love, Joy and Peace and not neglecting Perseverance, Long Suffering. How do you do that? You do it by two things. First knowing Scripture, knowing the Word of God, not just knowing it by reading and memorizing it, but by knowing it here in your *heart*. Writing the Word of God on our hearts means we don't just understand intellectually but we understand and embrace it with our heart. We can only do that by going through the testing and the trials that we have. That's why we "consider it all joy." Applying the Word of God by a word of knowledge and the gift of wisdom. How can we do that? The word of knowledge is a gift of the Spirit, along with the gift of wisdom, gifts. It is wonderful that we have the Spirit of God!

Psalm 28 says, "the joy of the Lord is my strength and my shield." "Well, Peter, I'm glad that you are out in the forefront. I'm glad you are the first guy in line. I'll stand back here." I don't mind that because we need shields before and behind us also. Not everyone in Gideon's army were there at the beginning. Gideon picked up 300 men out of all the multitudes. But after they started winning, what happened? *They invited them all in, "Come on let's get them!"* It was an unbelievable victory in that day.

Let me tell you something. When Jesus was thinking about what was set before Him in the garden of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, and He turned and said to the Father, "Not My will but Thine be done," scripture says He endured the cross with the joy that was set before Him. He was thinking of you today not just those disciples that were alive and breathing on that day! He was thinking of you and your children. Today as I was watching our children worshiping the Lord, we need to see the *spiritual context* of what God is doing in our midst!

Let me digress for a moment. When the Lord sends Wayne and Paul down to Mexico, it isn't just the fact that they are going and doing a good work. There is a spiritual context that's going on down there; the enemy is being defeated at his very door where the drugs come from into our country. The Lord is establishing His threshold that the enemy will not be able to cross. The enemy will not be able to enter this country. There are times when we worship here and when we worship at home and when we share communion, the enemy dares not enter. You can feel a spiritual context of what God is doing in our midst. Is not just natural. It is a spiritual thing.

Let me encourage you today. Don't just go through this life one circumstance after another, one hardship after another. Do you have one now? No, well another one is coming. . . But they won't be hardships for you because you will have strategy, you will have an idea of the will, intent and the purposes of the Father. You will have an idea of the Word of God. It won't just be something that we read and that preachers preach. You will know it because you will share your life with your brothers and sisters. It is something absolutely embraceable and wonderful. Amen.

Call to Arms!

Okay, all you soldiers. Stand up. We are going to stand together against the schemes of the enemy, against the flaming arrows, the missiles that he sends at us that are targeted at certain parts of our lives. He knows our weaknesses, for sure. However, the Lord knows them better. In our weakness, He is strong! We have a strategy this morning that we are standing together as a church. We are not isolated people. We are not isolated home groups, but we are standing together. We are not an isolated ministry. We are standing together against the schemes of the enemy, against all of the stuff that's going on in our country, in our world and all this junk that's all around us! Lord, we embrace Your will, Your intent, Your purposes in our lives individually, in our lives in our home group, in our lives in this church and those that we touch. Our friends, we claim them for You! Those that have fallen away, we ask You to bring them back! Those who are walking away purposefully and rejected You totally in their spirit, Lord, we ask You to apprehend them. Bring them to their knees that the scales on their eyes would fall off! They would see, without a doubt, Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Lord, give us the strength to fight, not just with the shield but with the Word of God being placed in our hearts. Fill us with the Holy Spirit beyond our expectations, with no limitations of our own weakness, but of Your strength, that resurrection power to overcome Death wherever we find it. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.