

Dealing with Dismay

Steve Berger January 14, 2018

Dismay — Fear's Evil Twin

Question — Have you ever been so confused by your circumstances that utter hopelessness has almost set in?

Answer — If you have — you've experienced what the Bible calls DISMAY — confused, broken, beat down, discouraged, disillusioned, reeling in your faith...

*Like fear, **dismay** is one of the Enemy's weapons against us — fear and dismay go hand in hand — seen together, the order is interchangeable!*

- **In my opinion** — *dismay is more dangerous than fear* —
 - someone who **fears** still recognizes it as fear, still hopes
 - someone in **dismay** is near hopelessness, lack of care, spiritual numbness
 - if dismay goes undiagnosed, it may be interpreted as the judgment of God

Dismay is so real — God continually warns about it

- Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel... God warns against it.
- **Biblical background on dismay, to help us recognize dismay and deal with it**
 - Israel has been freed from Egyptian slavery, starting a new life in Promised Land
 - amazing promises given, highly symbolic of our new life in Christ...
 - **Deuteronomy 31:1-8**

Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. And he said to them: "I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in. Also the LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross over this Jordan.' The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said. And the LORD will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them. The LORD will give them over to you, that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you. Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."

Application — LORD goes with them FIVE times, He'll destroy, He'll give, He won't leave or forsake

- **JOSHUA TAKES OVER after Moses dies**

- amazing promises reemphasized to Joshua by God...

- **Joshua 1:5-9**

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

- **Joshua 2:** spies encounter a terrified Jerico
- **Joshua 3:** Jordan river splits, walk through on dry ground
- **Joshua 4:** Joshus exalted among people, river returns to normal flow
- **Joshua 5:** Angelic Commander of Army of the LORD appears
- **Joshua 6:** Jericho miraculaously falls, all according to plan and promise

UH—OH...

- **Joshua 7:** little insignificant Ai defeats Israel, 36 men die, hearts melt, like water, clothes torn, fall on face, dust on heads...

- **Joshua 7:7-9**

And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?"

This is the sound of dismay! *"God why did you do this? Are you destroying me? I'd be better off in my old life! What am I supposed to do, I'm helpless here! The Enemy is going to totally destroy me! Then what will you do?"*

How does dismay happen? When can it set in?

Three suggestions

- **When circumstances don't seem to line up**
 - Joshua had amazing promises but temporarily bad circumstances- BEWARE!
 - *It isn't over til it's over — God has the final word — wait on the promise!*

- **Psalm 27:13-14**

I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!

- **wait** — your hopeful expectation of a glorious end!

FACT — David would have been dismayed, unless he BELIEVED he would see goodness — he knew he needed to WAIT on the LORD, and let the LORD strengthen his heart!

- **When sin and disobedience weaken us before the enemy**

- sin produced weakness, weakness produces defeat, defeat produces dismay!

- **Joshua 7:10-12** — Ai defeat

So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you.

Application — *Israel's sin produced weakness that prevented them from standing against enemy! That led to defeat, which led to dismay- that happens! Double-life leads to defeat and dismay! BEWARE!..... How does dismay happen?*

- **When we lose perspective of God's power over the Enemy's power**

- **1 Samuel 17:1-10**

- describes in detail how big and bad Goliath is...

- **1 Samuel 17:11**

When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

- **Young David shows up and brings a "perspective adjustment" to King Saul**

- **1 Samuel 17:36-37**

Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God. Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

- **1 Samuel 17:45-47** — more perspective

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands."

FACT —

- **When we have proper perspective**, when we're believing and waiting on the LORD, victory is near, at the very door...
- **When we lose proper perspective**, when we quit believing, are not waiting, complaining, and blaming God — dismay sets in.
- **YOUR CHOICE**

What do I do?

I'm dismayed right now

- **Check your heart**
 - have you quit waiting, believing, sin, wrong perspective
- **Make necessary adjustments**
 - believe, wait, repent, realign. IMPORTANT!
- **Rehearse the promise**
 - **Deuteronomy 31:8** — Encourage yourself in the Lord!
And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.
- **Obey the command**
 - **Joshua 1:9**
Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
- **Get up, go to war, see victory**
 - **Joshua 7:10, 8:1**
So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face?" "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land."

Discussion Questions

1. Had you ever heard *dismay* defined like it was today, or had you thought it was more benign?
2. Discuss *dismay* being *fear's evil twin*. What does that mean?
3. Have you personally experienced times when *circumstances* and *promises* didn't *seem to line up*? How did you react?
4. In life in America, how do we magnify the Enemy's power to be greater than God's power?
5. Does understanding *waiting* to be a "hopeful expectation of a glorious end," change your perspective of "waiting on the LORD"?
6. Read Joshua 1:9 aloud, in light of it being a COMMAND (not a request) to each of us.