

# Mr. Discouragement

02 - Nehemiah: A Time for Restoration  
Church on the Park | Sunday, 27 SEPT 2020

**Text:** “Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God.” (Isaiah 40:1)

נְחַמְנוּ נְחַמְנוּ עַמִּי יֵאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

**Theme:** This is a time when our God wants to comfort and restore us.

**Intro:** Today, I want to talk to you about how to overcome discouragement. How can you drive out discouragement and experience God’s comfort. We’ll look at three Biblical leaders—Nehemiah, Joshua & David—and how their examples show us the way. Last week, we began to open up Nehemiah and started to learn what a good leader is. Today, we will see that a good leader is a comforter, but God’s comfort is different than our kinds of comfort. Usually our sources of comfort cover up or mask the problem. God, on the other hand, gets to the root of the problem.

## 1) Don’t let Mr. Discouragement into the home of your life (Neh. 1:1-4).

- Mr. Discouragement comes **knocking** at our **eye** and **ear** gate, seeking to come in.
  - Let him in and he will **sap** your **strength** and **will to live**. Soon, you will start **opening your gates** to sin and death.
  - God warned **Joshua**, “Do not be **discouraged** or afraid” (Joshua 1:9).
  - In **new beginnings**, we need tremendous **courage** (*hazaq v’ematz* - חֲזַק וְאַמֵץ) because things are not as they are meant to be.
- **If** you have let him in, you are going to learn how to **kick him out**.
  - “Mr. Discouragement, you’ve been **squatting** here long enough. I’m going to show you the **door**—it’s time for you to **leave**.”
- Discouragement is **dangerous**, but it’s often far too familiar to us.
  - Once you **invite Mr. Discouragement** in, he invites **his friends** over to have a **party**—a **pity party**.
    - These **friends** will sap your strength and keep you from **fulfilling** God’s will for your life.
    - Mr. Discouragements **friends** are Mr. Despair, Mr. Disappointed, Mr. Despondent, Miss Discontent, Mr. Depression, Mrs. Doubt, Miss Distraught, Mr. Distraction, Miss Division and Mr. Disillusionment.
    - Yes, he has **lots of friends** :-).
- *Why is discouragement so dangerous?*
  - 1) Discouragement causes you to lose **inward strength**.
  - 2) Discouragement is **like broken down walls and gates**. It will let the **enemy in**.
  - 3) Discouragement will **cause disobedience**.
  - 4) Discouragement **gets your eyes off Jesus** and on to the problems.
  - 5) Discouragement is the **beginning** of entering into the **realm of the flesh**.
- **Nehemiah** could have let discouragement in.
  - The **situation** of the broken walls and gates of Jerusalem was **overwhelming**.
  - But instead of **covering up his pain**, he **poured** out his heart to the Lord.
    - He **prayed, fasted and wept**.
    - He **mourned**—he **felt God’s pain but also let God into his pain**—and consequently, God **comforted** him.
      - **Jesus** said, “Blessed are those who **mourn** for they shall be **comforted**” (Matthew 5:4).
        - It’s the **right kind of mourning** that is the **pathway to comfort**.

## 2) Yahweh God is our only source of true comfort and restoration.

- Whatever **source of comfort** you look to that is not God Himself will **disappoint** you.
- **Nehemiah’s name** means ‘**Yahweh Comforts**’.

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נְחִמָּה  
from, נֶחַם

- The essence of this Hebrew word according to **Gesenius** is “prop. **onomatopoeist. to draw the breath forcibly, to pant, to groan...**” In other words, it’s a **deep seated pain** and the Hebrew word **sounds like a person mourning and in pain.**
- And yet, amazingly **this same word for regret, pain, pity and mourning also means comfort.**
  - *How is this so?*
    - From God’s eyes, **true comfort happens** when he **shares** in our grief and pain.
    - He actually **takes it on himself.**
      - He puts his arms around us and **weeps with us.** But then, he doesn’t just leave us in our pain, but **carries it away.**
        - This is what Jesus did on the **cross.** He took every pain and sorrow on himself (**Isaiah 53:4-5**).
        - Paul said, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, **weep with those who weep**” (Romans 12:15).
          - And Paul’s thoughts all come from the Jewish idea of mourning and comfort—**two sides of the same coin.**
        - We see thought also in **2 Corinthians 1:3-7.**

### 3) Good leaders know how to encourage themselves in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:6).

- **David** learned to **encourage himself** in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:6)

וַיִּתְחַזַּק דָּוִד בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהָיו׃

- Because of Ziklag’s destruction and their families being stolen, David’s mighty men wanted to **stone** him.
  - In the midst of this **grief**, the Scriptures say, “But David **strengthened** (*hazaq*) himself in Yahweh his God” (1 Sam. 30:6c).
- We need to be the **pioneers** who **find strength in God** and give it to others.
- **This season is a new beginning for the world.** We have just been through a great time of darkness that has affected every nation under the sun.
  - *What happens during the dawn period?*
    - The **birds** begin to **sing.**
    - **David** himself was known for his **singing, praise and worship.** (Awaken the dawn!)
      - This is one of the ways we find strength in our God.
    - The **birds prophetically announce** to us a **new day** is beginning.
    - And we as **God’s people** are called to be **like birds.**
      - We are to **sing and praise God, even though it’s still dark in this world**—even though the sun has not fully risen yet.
  - **Birds** are **free** and they **sing.** Birds **fly.**
    - And **we announce the new day** through the spiritual songs of worship and praise.

### 4) Here are the practical things you can do to find comfort and strength in God.

- **C - Commune** with your **Comforter**, **Call** on the Lord, **Confess** your sins and **Contemplate** the Cross. (Nehemiah 1)
- **O - Open** your eyes to God’s greatness and **Open** yourself to his love. (Nehemiah 1)
- **M - Mourn with God’s Spirit, Meditate** on the Word day and night and **Make** fellowship with genuine believers a priority. (Nehemiah 1, Joshua 1, Hebrews 3)
- **F - Fast**, seek **Forgiveness** and **Fervently** pray. (Nehemiah 1).
- **O - Observe** God’s Word in order to **Obey** it, not just hear it.
- **R - Remember** God’s promises, **Repent** and **Receive** his **Restoration.**
- **T - Taste** and see the Lord is good, **Trust** his way and timing and pray in **Tongues.**

**5) Personally praying in tongues is one of the great gifts that will strengthen, encourage and comfort you in the Lord (1 Cor. 14:4, 18).**

- I want to focus on the last thing: tongues. And I want to **demystify tongues**.
- **Everyone** can have this gift. It's just the **Holy Spirit praying** through you in a heavenly language.
- Look at how **Paul** describes tongues: (1 Cor. 14:4, 18).
- **Don't** make tongues **complicated** and **over think it**.
- The Holy Spirit wants to **pray through you**, but you must let him.
  - He will not **force** you to speak in tongues.
  - It's like **preaching**. You have to speak out in faith; the Holy Spirit is not going to **hijack** your tongue.
- It's a **free gift**. **Ask the Holy Spirit** to **fill** you and **flow** through you.
  - It's part of your **inheritance** in Christ.
- The general rule is that praying in **tongues** is done in **private** and **prophesying** is done in **public**.
  - Why? Because when we publicly gather, it's not meant to be confusing for those who don't understand tongues.
- This week **practice praying in tongues**.

**Conclusion:** God wants to come into your pain and brokenness and heal you. But you need to let him in and kick out Mr. Discouragement. Restoration takes time, so don't be impatient with God's work. It happens one stone upon another. Each day let God add another stone of restoration to your life.

## END NOTES

**1344** נָחַם (*nāḥam*) **be sorry, repent, regret, be comforted, comfort.** Not used in the Qal, *nāḥam* occurs chiefly in the Niphal and Piel.

### Derivatives

**1344a** נֹחַם (*nōḥam*) **sorrow, repentance** (Hos 13:14, only).

**1344b** נִחַם (*niḥûm*) **comfort** (Isa 57:18), **compassion** (Hos 11:8).

**1344c** נִחַמָּה (*nehāmâ*) **comfort** (Ps 119:50; Job 6:10).

**1344d** נִחַמָּה (*tanḥûm*) **consolation** (e.g. Jer 16:7; Isa 66:11).

**The origin of the root seems to reflect the idea of “breathing deeply,” hence the physical display of one’s feelings, usually sorrow, compassion, or comfort.** The root occurs in Ugaritic (see “to console” in UT 19: no. 1230) and is found in ot proper names such as Nehemiah, Nahum, and Menehem. The LXX renders *nḥm* by both *metanoēō* and *metamelomai*.

The KJV translates the Niphal of *nḥm* “repent” thirty-eight times. The majority of these instances refer to God’s repentance, not man’s. The word most frequently employed to indicate man’s repentance is *šûb* (q.v.), meaning “to turn” (from sin to God). Unlike man, who under the conviction of sin feels genuine remorse and sorrow, God is free from sin. Yet the Scriptures inform us that God repents (Gen 6:6–7; Ex 32:14; Jud 2:18; I Sam 15:11 et al.), i.e. he relents or changes his dealings with men according to his sovereign purposes. On the surface, such language seems inconsistent, if not contradictory, with certain passages which affirm God’s immutability: “God is not a man ... that he should repent” (I Sam 15:29 contra v. 11); “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind” (Ps 110:4). When *nāḥam* is used of God, however, the expression is anthropopathic and there is not ultimate tension. From man’s limited, earthly, finite perspective it only appears that God’s purposes have changed. Thus the ot states that God “repented” of the judgments or “evil” which he had planned to carry out (I Chr 21:15; Jer 18:8; 26:3, 19; Amos 7:3, 6; Jon 3:10). Certainly Jer 18:7–10 is a striking reminder that from God’s perspective, most prophecy (excluding messianic predictions) is conditional upon the response of men. In this regard, A. J. Heschel (*The Prophets*, p. 194) has said, “No word is God’s final word. Judgment, far from being absolute, is conditional. A change in man’s conduct brings about a change in God’s judgment.”

The second primary meaning of *nāḥam* is “to comfort” (Piel) or “to be comforted” (Niphal, Pual, and Hithpael). This Hebrew word was well known to every pious Jew living in exile as he recalled the opening words of Isaiah’s “Book of Consolation,” *naḥāmû naḥāmû ‘ammî* “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people” (Isa 40:1). The same word occurs in Ps 23:4, where David says of his heavenly Shepherd, “Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” Many passages, however, deal with being comforted for the dead (II Sam 10:2; I Chr 19:2; Isa 61:2; Jer 16:7; 31:15). People were consoled for a death of an infant child (II Sam 12:24), teenage son (Gen 37:35), mother (Gen 24:67), wife (Gen 38:12) et al. A mother might comfort her child (Isa 66:13) but it is God who comforts his people (Ps 71:21; 86:17; 119:82; Isa 12:1; 49:13; 52:9). God’s “compassion (*niḥûm*, a derivative of *nḥm*) grows warm and tender” for Israel (Hos 11:8).

**Bibliography:** Girdlestone, Robert B., *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, Eerdmans, 1956, pp. 87–92. Richardson, Alan. “Repent,” in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. Alan Richardson, London: SCM, 1957, pp. 191–192. Turner, G. A., “Repentance,” in ZPEB, V, pp. 62–64. Richardson, TWB, p. 191. THAT, II, pp. 59–65.

M.R.W.

Wilson, M. R. (1999). [1344 נחם](#). R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., pp. 570–571). Chicago: Moody Press.

נחם unused in Kal, **prop. onomatopoeit. to draw the breath forcibly, to pant, to groan;** like the Arab. **خَجِمَ**; cogn. roots נחם (comp. נחם and נחם), and נחם, which see.

Niphal (1)—נחם *to lament, to grieve* (as to the use of passive and middle forms in verbs of emotion, compare נאנן, ὀδύρομαι, *contristari*, etc.)—(a) because of the misery of others; whence, *to pity*. Constr. absol. Jer. 15:6, נלאיתי הנחם “I am weary of pitying;” followed by על Psal. 90:13; אל Jud. 21:6; ל verse 15; מן Jud. 2:18.—(b) because of one’s own actions; whence, *to repent* (compare Germ. *reuen*, which formerly and still in Switzerland is *to grieve*, Engl. *to rue*), Exod. 13:17; Gen. 6:6, 7; const. followed by על Ex. 32:12, 14; Jer. 8:6; 18:8, 10; 2 אל Sa. 24:16; Jer. 26:3.

(2) reflex. of Piel *to comfort oneself, [to be comforted]*, Gen. 38:12; followed by על on account of any thing, 2 Sa. 13:39; and ירי אחריו i.e. for any one’s loss, Gen. 24:67. From the idea of being consoled it becomes—

(3) *to be revenged, to take vengeance*, as, to use the words of Aristotle (Rhet. ii. 2), τῆ ὀργῆ ἔπεται ἡδονή τις ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ τιμωρήσασθαι. Followed by מן Isa. 1:24 (compare Eze. 5:13; 31:16; 32:31); see Hithpael, No. 3.

Piel נחם *to comfort* (prop. to signify, to declare grief or pity), followed by an acc. of pers., Genesis 50:21; Job 2:11; also מן of the thing on account of which one is comforted, Gen. 5:29; and על Isaiah 22:4; 1 Ch. 19:2. It sometimes includes the notion of help put forth, especially when used of God, Isa. 12:1; 49:13; 51:3, 12; 52:9; Ps. 23:4; 71:21; 86:17.

Pual נחם *to be comforted*, Isa. 54:11. Part. נחם for מנחם Isa. 54:11.

Hithpael נחם, once נחם Eze. 5:13; i.q. Niph. but less frequently used.

(1) *to grieve*—(a) on account of any one, *to pity*, followed by על Deut. 32:36; Psalm 135:14.—(b) *to repent*, Nu. 23:19.

(2) *to comfort oneself, to be comforted*, Genesis 37:35; Ps. 119:52.

(3) *to take vengeance*, Gen. 27:42, הנה עשו אחיך מתנחם לך להרגך “behold Esau thy brother will take vengeance by killing thee.”

Derivative nouns, נחום, נחום, נחום, pr.n. תנחמת, מנחם, נחום, and those which follow.

נחם (“consolation”), [*Naham*], pr.n. m. 1 Ch. 4:19.

נחם m. *repentance*, Hos. 13:14.

נחם f. (with Kametz impure), *consolation*, Job 6:10; Ps. 119:50.

נְחֵמְיָהּ (“whom Jehovah comforts,” i.e. whom he aids), *Nehemiah*, pr.n.—(1) the son of Hachaliah, the governor of Judea, in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, Neh. 1:1; 8:9; 10:2; compare אֲשֶׁר־נִחַם. Others are—(2) Neh. 3:16.—(3) Ezra 2:2; Neh. 7:7.

Gesenius, W., & Tregelles, S. P. (2003). [\*Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures\*](#) (p. 544). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

### **Misc Personal Notes**

Don't look to the wrong places for comfort.

When you look to one another for comfort, rather than from the Lord, you will be disappointed. Yes, we are called to encourage one another, but we cannot demand encouragement. We cannot expect comfort from others.

If we are going to be servants, we must find our source in God—we must find our comfort in God.

Our inner person has to be stronger than the pressure without.

We cannot see ourselves as victims—slaves being pushed around and punished by God.

Pioneering can be discouraging because its lonely work. We are the few that are breaking barriers for many.

Isaiah 40 is about comfort and pioneers.

When we look around at the church in Australia, it's easy for us to fall into discouragement.

Joshua - “Be strong and courageous” (Neh. 3 and the use of hazaq)

A good leader is a person of prayer. They are not afraid to enter into God's grief and pain. They see and feel the real problem—people's sin and rejection of God. Then and only then, can they comfort and restore.

The greatest source of comfort is the cross—but only for those who have eyes to see.

Right now, God is calling intercessors to arise.

“Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.”

2 Corinthians 1

### **What Rebuilt Walls Look Like**

- 1) God's people resist temptation—they have a strong defence.
- 2) God's people are filled with hope, confidence and joy.
- 3) We prevail against the gates of hell.
- 4) The people of God are filled with passion and fire for God's glory.
- 5) Corporate prayer is strong.
- 6) Church gatherings are valued and God's people are committed.
- 7) We look to God's Word rather than the world for help.
- 8) We invade the world with light.
- 9) Brothers and sisters stick together—they are loyal to one another.
- 10) Our witness to the world is strong, even to the death.

- You are called to be the leaders and pioneers.

- What is a a good leader? They are a pioneer—one who blazes a path for others to use in the future.