

Hindrances

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[0:00] Please be seated. Amen. Galatians 5, if you've got your Bibles. Galatians 5, from verse 7.

! I'm talking about hindrances here. Paul tells us some hindrances to the Galatians, someone troubling them. In the context, it tells us a little leaven, just a eensy-weensy little bit of leaven, affecting the whole lump, the whole lump of dough.

False teaching was making inroads there and causing harm to the church. People were being put back under the yoke, under the law, under bondage, and it was an attack against the people's freedom in Christ.

Galatians 5, verse 7. It reads, Paul writes, You did run well. Who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?

You did run well. Who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth? Now, I like to do illustrations from time to time.

[1:14] I was thinking, how could I illustrate this? And I thought, maybe I could pretend to be running and then Brother Peter might kind of rugby tackle me and drag me to the ground and stop me from running any further.

I thought, I could have asked him to do that, but I thought, maybe I shouldn't. That might be a little bit, taking a little bit too far. But that's the picture that came to my mind as I was running so well.

And then Brother Peter just tackles me and throws me to the ground in a headlock.

I can imagine he'd be good at that. You did run well. Who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth? Fact is, we can be running the Christian race and we hit a roadblock.

Bang. We can get slowed down and hindered. I'm talking about hindrances today. Barriers to blessings. Spurgeon commented on these verses and he said of hindrances, two things.

God have mercy on hinderers. We must rebuke them. God have mercy on the hindered. We would arouse them.

[2:19] Hindrances, they're an ongoing problem for every believer, every church. Are you hindered? It's a question. What's worse?

Are you a hinderer? A hindrance. It impedes. It obstructs. It's unproductive. It slows us down. It causes damage and hurt to a church and to people's spiritual growth and fruitfulness.

I remember as a lad, I used to go down to the local creek down by our house and I would head down to this local creek and I would like to play in the mud in the creek there.

Probably can't do it anymore these days. There's so much pollution. But I would go down to this local little creek and I would enjoy making little dams and just see the water back up.

A hindrance stops the flow. It stops the flow. And spiritually, we can be hindered. We can get stagnant. We can be having like, as it were, the spirit quenched or the Holy Spirit grieved.

[3:28] We can be retarded in our spiritual progress. And Paul says to the Galatians, you were making progress. You were going so well. You were running so well in your race.

You were serving the Lord. What's happened? What's happened to you? What's hindering you? What's stopping you?

Who hindered you? Who ultimately is the hinderer? Satan. Satan loves to hinder, doesn't he? As he did in 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 18.

Paul says, Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I, Paul, once and again. But Satan hindered us. Satan can hinder you.

Brother, sister, Satan can hinder you. Satan does not want you to receive the saving truth. He does not want you to be a growing, thriving, God-honouring Christian.

[4:27] The Galatians, they started out so terrifically, but now they faltered. You were running so well. What's happened? Let's look through

the word at some hindrances.

For the Galatians, it was false teachers, false teaching. And Peter wrote in his letter, of the second letter, of false teachers, that they can do much damage, a terrible damage.

2 Peter 1. Sorry, 2 Peter 2, verse 1. But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily, who privily, kind of sneakily, shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. Peter says, false teachers, they're going to come among you, they're going to bring damnable heresies.

Many shall follow their pernicious, their evil ways. And by reason of these false teachers, the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of.

[5:46] False teaching. It's a hindrance. Another gospel. And friends, I put to you today, there's many, many such false teachers active today.

I know I've said this before, they're probably amongst the top 10 down at Courant. You know, generally so. The false teachers have quite a hearing. They've got quite a following. And many are active today, promoting these weird and wacky teachings and unbiblical practices. False teachers abound.

And they can cause much damage. And such that the truth can be evil spoken of. That's terrible, isn't it? To think that the very truth of God's word, the very truth of God, the way of truth should be evil spoken of because of these false teachers.

such damage. Such that people don't know what's right or wrong anymore. What's scriptural. Now every church has its kind of pattern, its liturgy, its general proceedings.

[6:56] We like to have communion every week. Not every church does that. And that's a kind of up to each church of such matters. There's many practices you could say, well, that's not something you have to stick rigidly to or not.

And you see in some quarters where there's certain proceedings that happen by way of course, where there's some altar call and people fall on the floor. And that's kind of the done thing. That's normal.

That's the tradition. That's the practice of that church. But friends today, it is unbiblical. Unbiblical. And when it's unbiblical, it shouldn't be happening.

We shouldn't be doing that. Many are put off churchianity and false Christianity. They're put off by that. Many are caused offence.

There's much damage. You see these as we've had past occasion to be involved in some of such things where churches condemn people.

[8:04] For example, there's an altar call and someone prays for their healing and they don't get healed and they're condemned. They heap condemnation on their man's head, the woman's head, who's not healed.

But it's not always God's will to heal. It's clear in the scriptures that that is such. And so many are put off by such things. They go home despairing, hurt, and say, I'm not going to church again. The truth, the way of the truth is evil spoken of. Many hurt people. I know there's many hurt Christians out there. I've seen many of them and they're wounded, they're bruised, they're hurting. And what a grievous thing it is, isn't it? Brother, sister, you know such too. I know you do. And the word tells us, Matthew 18, in the context, our Lord was welcoming little children to come unto him. And he says, who shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me? It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

[9:12] Now a millstone around your neck is not a pleasant item to wear. It's not like some little necklace or some charm. It's a heavy stone that was used to grind the wheat.

It was heavy. It was large. It was uncomfortable. And our Lord says, better to have the millstone hang around your neck and thrown into the depths of the sea than to offend one of these little ones that believe in me.

And so, you know, as teachers, as preachers, as fellow believers, as Christians, let's be very careful. Do not be a hinderer.

Do not be an offender. Many can cause terrible damage, terrible hurt and hindrance. Some people do more damage by being in the church than if they weren't there, sadly.

Some will show discord among the brethren. In other words, it's causing argument and disagreement and conflict, causing hurt and trouble. Some people's words eat like a cancer, like gangrene.

[10:26] Now, you hear of people that lose toes and feet and limbs. Gangrene. It eats away. Every day, it's just that little bit more that spreads.

And before long, it's too late. And the limb has to be amputated, removed. Gangrene.

Cancer. Some talk about white-hanting. And that happens in political parties where some group gets in and kind of eats away at what the group stands for.

That can happen in churches too. White-hanting. In some churches so-called, some churches so-called, we know that men have done evil things and caused many to stumble and disbelieve God because those hurt people associate these wicked men with men of God.

Just because they wear a dog collar and say their Hail Marys and blow their holy smoke over you and sprinkle their holy water over you doesn't mean that they're men of God.

[11:40] And we see such wickedness has caused such hurt. Hasn't it? You see some people, I know years ago we had a thriving children's program and it kind of dwindled for a while and you think, how could we have such a program again?

I think nowadays people would be, oh, we can't trust churches without children. That's what the world is like now, isn't it? Oh, I can't send my child to a Sunday school because I've heard stories about churches.

And the damage that has been done, the hurt, the unbelievable wickedness that some, and they are accommodated such that these people are not dealt with sternly and appropriately and biblically.

Woe to them, says our Lord, that cause offence. A false teacher can do such harm, it can be a real obstacle for such, for people to believe.

And friends, it applies to every believer. Every believer. Watch yourself such that you are not an obstacle, that you do not cause someone to stumble.

[12:59] Because Satan loves to hinder the work of God in the soul. Here's some other hindrances. Some other hindrances are opposition and tests. Satan loves to hinder.

And Satan will use people to hinder his work, God's work, in your soul, in the church, in the people of God. And he will use people to do his dastardly work.

We see 2 Timothy 3, Paul says, of Janus and Jambres. They withstood Moses. So these also resist the truth. These false teachers and such, men of corrupt minds, reprobate, concerning the faith. Moses was withstood withstood by two men, Janus and Jambres. And people understand these to be the traditional names of the Egyptian magicians.

When Moses came to Pharaoh in Exodus 7 and he cast his rod on the ground, or Aaron did, and it became a snake.

[14:04] And then the Egyptian sorcerers and magicians, they did in like manner with their enchantments. So these men were able to replicate, to duplicate some of the supernatural signs of God by their own craft and evil power.

They hindered Moses. Janus and Jambres, they withstood Moses, they hindered him. They were against him and against God, as was Pharaoh with his hardened heart, a hindrance.

And it's still the same today. Brothers, sisters, it's still the same today. Men oppose God. The Lord himself was dogged by opposition. We see the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the Herodians, they all made an effort to discredit, to hinder, to oppose our Lord.

Yet he would not be deterred. Even Peter, his beloved Peter, was trying to talk him into some other way, some other way. than the cross.

Some other way, not the cross. And our Lord said, get thee behind me, Satan. The Lord's response to hindrances was that he was steadfast.

[15:20] He had to go to the cross. He had to go to the cross for you, for me, to shed his blood, to save our soul. He set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem.

He set his face steadfastly there. He would not be moved. He would not be deterred by opposition. He would not be stopped by hindrances. And so should we, when hindrances come across our path.

Set your face to the cross. Set your face. Take up your cross. Follow me, he says. Nehemiah had his hindrance too. In his day, Sanballat and Tobiah, they tried to discourage him from his God-given mission of building the wall of the city of Jerusalem.

Sanballat and Tobiah, many times they opposed the work of God. You read through the book of Nehemiah. For example, Nehemiah 2 verse 10. Sanballat and Tobiah, they heard of it.

They heard that Nehemiah was coming and it says they grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. They were anti-God's people and it grieved them when they heard Nehemiah's coming to rebuild, to restore, to refresh the worship of God, to make the people of God safe in their city.

[16:44] And they mocked and complained and they attacked him. They were always on the attack. How about you? Have you had such direct opposition? Direct opposition.

It can slow you down. It can hurt. It can hound you. It can deter you if you will succumb to that pressure. It can slow you down.

Nehemiah, what did he do? They even invited Nehemiah to have a nice little meeting. Maybe they'd bring some jam and scones and a cup of tea and coffee and have a nice little sit under the palm trees and have a nitter-natter about what the project was to try to discourage him.

They invited Nehemiah to a little meeting in the plain of Ono. Sanbalat and Geshem said unto me, come, let us meet together. Let us meet together.

Together. Ecumenical. Everybody together. We want big happy family. Come on, let's get together. We don't have to disagree. Let's get together.

[17:52] Let's come together. Meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. What did Nehemiah do when they said, come and let us meet together in the plain of Ono?

He said, oh no. No, sir, he said. Verse 3, and I sent messages unto them and I said, I'm doing a great work so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and come down to you?

Why should the work cease? I'm doing something great here. I'm doing something for God here. I'm doing something for the Lord and his glory here. I don't have time to come down and have a nice little meeting with you.

Why should the work cease while I leave it and come down to you? They thought to do mischief.

Sometimes we've just got to be plainly saying, oh no, no. Sometimes the hindrances can come from very close to home.

Just the time Job needed a help meet and a word of encouragement, he'd about lost everything that he had. He was now covered in boils from head to foot. Job 2, verse 9, then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity?

[19:01] Curse God and die. Why do you hold fast your integrity? Job, look at you. You're covered in boils from head to foot. You've lost everything. Pack it in. Curse God and die.

What a blessing. No sir, it was a curse from his wife. What an offence.

That hindrance can come from very close to home. I know John Wesley had a wife who was one of the chief hecklers in his meetings. She was a vocal critic and she would stir up trouble and strife in the meetings as he was preaching.

His wife. Joshua 7, we read how Achan disobeyed God. Achan disobeyed God. God had specifically told him.

Sorry, I don't have that one there. God had specifically commanded that all the spoil of Jericho should be destroyed. It made me think. It's a bit like sometimes when it's hard waste.

[20:14] Julie says, just throw that out. It's rubbish. He built up this big pile of hard waste and I just sneak out there. There's just some

cherished item in that hard waste pile.

I just can't bear to go without it. I just sneak out there. I just sneak it under my coat. and hide it in the shed. Put it back in the tool shed.

It might come in handy one day. That's a bit like Achan. He said, oh, I like those things there from Jericho.

I've got a bit of a liking for this and that and I'll just sneak it here and hide it in my tent. Nobody's going to know. Achan. He snook some things and he hid them in his tent and his disobedience became a hindrance to the whole nation.

In Joshua 7 11, the Lord said, Israel hath sinned. One man's disobedience caused a hindrance to many. Friends, if you hinder, if you disobey God, there's a ripple effect.

[21:22] Isn't there? You're not just getting away with it as you think, as you try to hide sin or hide your disobedience to God. Others will notice and there will be a ripple effect.

And you're influencing others. You're hindering others as Achan hindered the whole nation by his disobedience. A little leaven, just an eensy weensy, a little leaven, leavens the whole lump of dough.

Think of the 12 spies. 10 of the 12, 10 were hinderers. The majority, 10 of the 12 spies, they feared. Two believed God, Joshua and Caleb. These two said, let us go, let us go and possess the land. Let's take the land at God's command.

In Numbers 13, and Caleb stilled the people before Moses and said, let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. But the men, the 10, the men that went up with him said, we be not able to go up against the people for they are stronger than we.

[22:37] And they brought up an evil report of the land which they searched unto the children of Israel, saying, the land through which we have gone to search it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof.

And all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants. And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers. And so were we in their sight.

We be not able. Hinder us. Hinder us will tell you you're not able. You're not able to serve God. You're not able to trust God. You're not able to walk by faith.

You're not able to know his saving grace in your heart and life. Hinder us will deter you from following. Be like Joshua and Caleb.

Joshua and Caleb. Caleb. Joshua and Caleb. Let us go up at once and possess it.

[23:38] Let's trust God. Let's go with God. Let's run and keep on running. We are well able. God is with us. That's what matters. Think of the hinderers, the ten.

They did so much mischief. Hinderers can cause much hurt. We must act in faith and trust the Lord. We can look at others and see they are hinderers.

But what about us? Let a man examine himself. Sometimes hindrances can be within us. Our biggest enemy can be ourselves, our flesh.

The flesh could be some easily besetting sin. As the writer of the Hebrews says in the same running analogy, he says, wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

What is it that hinders? the writer of the Hebrews talks about a weight, a sin that does so easily beset.

[24:53] What is it that weighs us down? Some weight, some burden? Could it be some injury? Some wound?

Some past offence? Some hurt, some failure? What's stopping you? Perhaps unfaithfulness, neglect, being a spasmodic, lukewarm Christian.

It's a weight, it's heavy, it's overpowering, it weighs us down. You hear stories of such things. not of anyone here present, but of situations of people I know, some hurt, something happened, they've almost forgotten what it was, and they haven't been in church since.

How sad, how very sad. we know Christians, professing Christians, that have been out of fellowship many, many years.

[26:17] Something happened, and they're not with us today. They're not anywhere. nowhere. I like to follow people up and know that they're going somewhere.

Thank God for that. Somewhere. But they're going nowhere. Nowhere. It's a weight. Lay it aside. That which weighs us down, cast your care on Jesus today, could be unconfessed sin. That is the hindrance for us. That big barrier, that blocker of blessings for us. May our prayer, our hearts cry, be as our Lord prayed. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. May this be our hearts cry, that will ask God, help me, with this sin problem. We confess our sins unto him, he's faithful, he's just, to forgive us all of our sins, to cleanse us from all of it. The evident source of sin is self, isn't it? The ego, as I say, it's the person I have the most trouble with, the ego, isn't it?

[27:28] And many will not recognise that they themselves may be their own worst enemy. And what is the answer? Grace, more grace, he giveth more grace.

Wherefore, he saith, God resisteth the proud, and gives grace to the humble. May this be our prayer, more grace, Lord, more grace, Lord, be gracious unto me, be merciful unto me. A big hindrance can be self-righteousness, can't it? We think, oh, pointing the fingers at everybody else but me. And with pride comes being unteachable too. Someone has said an unteachable mind is an untaught mind. When we become unteachable, we cannot be taught. May we humble ourselves and seek after God. Another hindrance is neglect of the Bible, the source of truth. The Proverbs 23 says, buy the truth and sell it not.

[28:33] Also wisdom and instruction and understanding. Neglect, neglect of the Bible, neglect of prayer, prayerlessness, busyness.

That can be a hindrance. Think of Martha and Mary. Martha was hindered. Martha, Martha. She was busy, yes. She was busy, yes. She was busy doing something good, yes. But Mary has chosen that good part. Mary's chosen that which is better, communion with her Lord. Martha received the Lord Jesus into her home. She had a sister Mary that sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. But Martha was coming about. With much serving, she couldn't sit still. She couldn't stop working and doing and doing and trying and rushing here and there, getting everything done, get everything just right. Cumbered about with much serving and she came to him and said, Lord, does they not care that my sister have left me to serve alone?

[29:36] Look at her. Bid her to come, bid her to come and help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful, you're full of care, you're full of anxiety, you're full of worry and fretting, thou art careful, full of care and troubled about many things, but one, one, one thing, one thing is needful.

And Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. Busyness can be a hindrance such that we get so busy that we miss God's best.

Perhaps this personal hindrance can be laziness, slothfulness. Luke 9, 32, it was the time of the Lord's transfiguration and it says Peter, and those that were with him were heavy with sleep. They missed out on something, they finally did wake up and they saw his glory, but they missed something of the glory because they were asleep. We can miss something of God's glory because we're asleep, spiritually asleep.

It could be slothfulness. The slothful prefer to be entertained They're not serious about discipleship, the hindrances that we face.

[31:00] Slothfulness. The Bible talks about the sun that's sleeping in time of harvest. Don't miss that. We can miss that, can't we?

Fact is, we can face many hindrances. Lot's wife was hindered. As Sodom had God's wrath poured out upon it, something about Sodom drew her back, drew her attention back. Backwards, she went backwards, she looked back. Something about that city that she'd left behind. Maybe it was the knitting club or the, who knows what it was, something that had a hold on her from Sodom.

That evil city, it still had a pull on her, there was still some attachment, but his wife, Lot's wife, looked back from behind him and she became a pillar of salt. Hindrances. The Lord was with some people making claims of following him, yet with other things to do.

[32:11] And he says to them straight up, no man having put his hands to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God. Now put your hands to the plough and go forward.

Don't look back. It's easy to look back, talking about memories, there's some things it's good to forget, isn't it? Sometimes it's good to forget.

The past hurts. All the attractions, the things you used to love when you were lost. Maybe those cherished wounds and war stories, the battle scars, the memories can be a hindrance. such that we fail to move forward. Paul says, brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, I press, I'm reaching forth unto those things that are before.

He says, I press toward the mark. Forgetting those things that are behind me, don't get slowed down, don't get hindered by some past incident, some offence, such that your whole spiritual usefulness is damaged.

[33:41] What a hindrance. It can happen to all of us. It can happen to me. Things that have hurt me, people that have hurt me, it still weighs you down, doesn't it?

People that are attacking me, and attacks are constant. I was attacked Friday, I think it was. It's happening, we're under attack.

You are under attack, constantly. I put to you there's certain blessings in forgetfulness, to forget those things which are behind.

Let it be. Let it go. I like to say, don't have that little chip on your shoulder that you keep cherishing. Brush it off. Get rid of it.

Amen. Life's too short, isn't it? Dory's in the grave. He's gone. How long have we gone?

[34:46] Luke 9. 32, but Peter, sorry, getting mixed up here. We'll go back. Forgetting those things. So Paul told the Colatians, you're running so well.

He says, you're running this race. You're doing so well. Paul says, I'm going to press on. I'm going to press forward. Press toward the mark. Nothing's going to break my stride.

Nothing's going to slow me down. What is the baggage that you're carrying today that's slowing you down? Lay it aside. The weight, the sin that doesn't easily be set. Hurts, unforgiveness, deal with it, dump it, and don't go back to that pile.

Let it go. Paul pressed towards the mark. He would not let hindrances deter him. Another hindrance we all face is worldliness. The works of the flesh in Galatians we see them listed there.

Galatians 5, the works of the flesh. They're many. John says, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

[35:59] Being earthly minded is a hindrance such that we get too locked into the thinking of this planet and worldly care and worldly friends and companions.

Not saying we shouldn't have worldly friends. But it's who's got the pull on who? Who's drawing who? Who's following who?

The company of the ungodly can be a hindrance. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Rather reprove them, oppose them, rebuke them.

Sometimes the hindrances we face can be subtle. We don't even realise it. As I say, even in churches it's like people are in church in the fellowship as it were.

But some people are more like barnacles slowing the church down. Worldliness, we've got to shed it, we've got to get rid of it, we've got to release it and surrender to God.

[37:05] There was a sailor telling of how he was sailing on some journey from Cuba and he said he thought that he was gaining 60 miles a day, 60 miles in one day because he looked at the wind and he put his sail up and he thought we're going to make 60 miles today.

But at the next observation he found he'd lost more than 30 because of the undercurrent. The undercurrent. The wind was blowing the right direction but the undercurrent was taking the ship backwards.

The ship had been going forward by the wind but going back by the current, the undercurrent. And that can happen spiritually. We think we're going forward, we think we're advancing and growing as a Christian yet really we're losing ground.

How are you running today? How are you running? How well are you running? How are you going? running your Christian walk? Your faith? Is there that undercurrent?

That undercurrent dragging you back? Back where you came from? Back to the world? The wrong way? Sometimes it's a lack of separation that can hinder us.

[38:20] Worldly ways, worldly thinking. Look, we're living in the world. We know that. We know that the world has an influence on us, it's impacting us, sometimes without us even realising it.

We have to cut the ties that entangle us. 2 Corinthians 6, be ye not unequally yoked together, like banding together, joining up together in some close affinity, some close partnership with unbelievers.

For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, what communion hath light with darkness? They're chalk and cheese, it's oil and water, they don't join, they shouldn't join, yet sometimes we mix, mix it up.

And the world has a pull. Mark 4, 19 talks about the cares of this world, that worldly allurements that draws us. Perhaps we are walking with the Lord, yet there is this slow and steady hindrance, this undercurrent.

I suppose you could, in a way, call it leakage. Spiritual leakage is a problem. We need his feelings. Now, I had occasion to go down to the soil and metals place to get a load of sand.

[39:42] sand. I had to get some sand for my brother here doing the paving. And I pulled up and the machine, what's it called, the bobcat, it loaded up the ute with this sand and I drove off and went to pay and as I walked around the back of the ute, one of the tyres was pretty flat.

Right after I'd loaded up that ute with a big pile of sand and I thought, what am I going to do now? Because it would be hard to change the tyre. But thankfully they had a compressor and could refill the tyre.

It was a leakage problem. It could be happening right now to your car outside. Check those tyres before you drive off. People have gone, leakage.

What about spiritual leakage? Spiritual leakage. Leakage is something that can happen without us even realising it. Can't it? Someone does a backslide just overnight so much as it's a gradual leakage, gradual lukewarmness, that spreading, apathy, complacency.

Sometimes we can just plain be careless like I was with my car. I didn't realise the problem. The problem. And our spiritual life too.

[41:12] What of that today? Is our spiritual life at a low ebb? Is there a leakage problem? Let's seek after God's spirit.

Seek after God to energise, to fill, to refill, to empower, to energise, to equip us. We can suffer hindrances.

What about a lack of faith? Galatians 6 verse 9, let us not be weary in well-doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

Spiritual fatigue. Spiritual fatigue can be a hindrance. Sometimes we just got to come apart and rest a while. Seek after God. Rest in him.

Neglect. Not forsaking the assembling. Neglect. It's a real hindrance isn't it?

[42:05] Of course we're not just talking Sunday morning. There's other meetings. We used to just be a Sunday morning Christian for a time, Julian and me. And we were missing something.

And something happened that was good. don't forsake the assembling. How much time have we got? We should be so much the more as you see the day approaching.

And I don't want to get my dad started on the prayer meeting. But spiritual growth is not accidental. And the opposite of leakage and neglect. Spiritual growth is not accidental.

It takes application and diligence. And friends, you have an enemy, he just wants to hinder you, doesn't he? Satan hindered us, Paul said. You have an enemy, the world, the flesh and the devil. You're under attack constantly. And Satan will hinder your witness such that he'll stop you having communion with God. He'll make you so busy, maybe doing good stuff.

[43:18] And our Lord says to you, Martha, Martha, don't neglect your communion with God. And recognise and realise the hindrance of the sin barrier.

Our Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is he heavy that it cannot hear, but your sins have separated between you and your God. Hindrances is sin.

Let's recognise the hindrances in our lives. Let's recognise, Lord, am I a hindrance to someone else? And may the Lord draw you to him and know that victory for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.

And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith, to believe on Jesus as the Son of God. Friends, just to close, hindrances.

Now, you might hear all of this and say, oh, he's talking about somebody else today, or I'm not ready to make any change. Unwillingness is a hindrance, isn't it?

[44:31] Unwillingness. Our Lord says, they would not. He told them and they would not. Many will sit and stagnate, stuck, the answer is the cross.

Take up your cross daily. Believe God, trust in him, trust and obey, search out your heart. You might say, preacher, look, you don't understand what I'm going through.

You don't understand my situation. I've got so many hindrances and it's not of my own doing. But, we must refresh our resolve.

You were running so well. You did run so well. What has hindered you? As Spurgeon put it, go on, hindrance or no hindrance, in the path of duty, as God the Holy Ghost enables you.

Go on, hindrance or no hindrance. Don't let it stop you. Jesus set his face as a flint. He set his face to Jerusalem. Paul says, I press toward the mark.

[45:49] Press on, dear Christian, dear Christian brother, sister, press on. The more opposition, the more honour. Be zealous of good works.

Be zealous to do God's will. Let's not get stagnant such that we like, as I was splashing around in the creek and building that little dam out of clay, let's break that down and let it flow.

Let's be a flowing, growing Christian, overcoming obstacles by God's strength and power, demolishing those strongholds in our minds that we build up, that are holding us back.

The obstacle is not bigger than God. God can move the mountain. Just again, you did run well.

Who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth? How do we beat these hindrances? Seek after God. Believe him, take him at his word, obey the truth and make practical application so that stop and think and maybe do a bit of a stop take.

[46:58] Are there some hindrances in my life, in my walk with God, in my personal situation, in people, in my circle of influence, in people in my life?

Am I being a hindrance to other people? Don't be a stumbling block, especially to younger ones or younger in the faith.

Don't be a stumbling block. Ask God to help you overcome the obstacles that are slowing you down and rest your heart on the promises of God.

God, I urge you today, it's good to consider we're running a race, a Christian race, we're running well. Something can slow you down and recognise that.

Of course, you need to be on the race track and really, I urge you today, I'm not taking it for granted that everybody is running this race of the Christian life. Now, the starter's gun hasn't gone off for you yet.

[48:04] You're saying, I'm not a Christian, I don't know Jesus. Put your trust in him. He died on the cross for your sin, he rose again victorious.

His death on the cross paid your sin, your guilt, the death penalty, he paid it for you and rose and ever lives as your ever living saviour, if you will but trust him and yield your life to him.

Seek his saving grace, trust him and his saving power. Call on the name of the Lord and you shall be saved. And that's when, bang, the starter's gun goes off.

And you're running the race. And run the race with patience, with steadfastness, with perseverance. Run the race, hindrance or no hindrance. Run on, run well, run more.

Run until you break the finishing tape and you see your saviour face to face and receive his embrace, his grace, his ever changing love, everlasting love, never changing love for you.

[49:24] Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for every soul here gathered. Lord, if there's any yet to trust you, that even now, in simple trust, they will say, Jesus, Lord, I believe.

I call on you. I receive your pardon, your gift in saving my soul from my sin by what you did in dying on the cross for me and rising for my sanctification.

Lord, for my further growth, that I can be running well. We pray if there's any here present, Lord, that we've been guilty of hindering, maybe causing a stumbling block, Lord, forgive us.

Help us to seek that we right that. And Lord, help us to get on the track. And Lord, to also be mindful if there's anything that's slowing us down.

Help us, Lord, pinpoint it. Help us to discard it, to bury it under your forgiveness, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.