

One Thing the Enemy Hates You to Do

Recently, I was struck by the simple truth in Jeremiah 1:9-10 (MEV):

“Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, ‘Now, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.’”

Notice the dual task in our appointment as Christians. On one side, we are to be tearing down and destroying the things that set themselves against God’s Kingdom. But on the other side, we are to be building up and planting.

And notice how we are to be doing this tearing down and building up. “Now I have put My words in your mouth,” God says. His word is sharper than a double-edged sword, capable of defeating every foe. His Word created heaven and earth with just a syllable, and is capable of creating exactly what you need in your life.

I tend to think building up is the most difficult of the two tasks. Planting requires keeping a vision of what could be. It requires digging into dirt on a flat landscape, knowing that one day a garden will thrive there. But then there are the days between the seed and the flower, when the landscape is still flat and the work to be done is the waiting. It seems like nothing is happening. It takes all we have to believe that there is growth underground, something we can’t see.

There are some dreams and goals I have always felt God wanted me to build, but I was afraid to say those things out loud in prayer to God. Have you felt that way? Why would it ever be a risk to say something out loud to God, with nobody else

listening? I am convinced that the enemy knows something about speaking out loud. We are made in the image of the Creator. The Creator didn't *think* the world into being, He *spoke* it into being. He has given us the breath-taking opportunity to co-create with Him here on the earth. The way we do that is by speaking out loud the things that He put on our hearts. His strategy is to keep you from speaking out loud, so he disguises that assignment with fear and kingdom things go uncreated.

I knew I had to speak those daring prayers out loud. I was so scared that I had to do it outside, where no one could hear. I was willing to speak those prayers, but I needed them to be sucked up and away, as if they were in a tube at a bank drive thru. They could get whisked up and away to God outside, and I felt a little better!

And for some reason, the first time I prayed, the urge in my heart was to come to the church building where I had attended for most of my youth. I think I felt safe walking there instead of in a park by myself. There were enough people around, I knew someone could help me up if I fell. But the next day I came back and walked around the church building again. I kept coming back for weeks, walking around and around. I had the sense that I was building something with the words that were leaving my mouth, out loud. I developed a playlist on my phone. One song represented one scary prayer, the next song represented the next scary prayer, and on and on.

For months, I went back to the church building to pray. Around and around I walked, sometimes twice in one day.

At a couple of points, I wanted to try walking somewhere else, but I couldn't. I was drawn back to the same place *every time*. Finally, I decided to ask the Lord about it.

"Why am I drawn here to pray around this building, Lord?"

He said, "I am taking you back to where the seeds were planted."

And as He said it, I saw, vividly in my mind, a memory from my youth. So many of the visions I receive are memories that the Lord explains or connects for me. I saw an army of men and women in church clothes with shovels in their hands.

On that Sunday in the late '80s, most of the members of my church walked from the old church building to a new property about half a mile away. We carried our shovels to the place we were going to build, a place where there was nothing but dust. We walked, prayed and called down God's blessing in joy and hope. We had a vision for a mighty structure that would stand there, and we dedicated its use and ourselves to God all over again. Then we positioned the blades of our shovels. We started to dig.

There I was in the middle of the crowd, a twelve-year-old girl who already knew she wanted to be a writer. I stood there watching my parents break the ground. And into the opening we dug, I dropped one tiny seed. "If You can, use me, too."

My first book would not be published until thirty years later.

The wait has been long. God's timing is perfect. These two realities can coexist.

Please know that the prayers you pray *out loud* today are creating something that wasn't there before. It is perfectly all right to put all your eggs in one basket when God is holding the basket. It is not only all right, it is the only way.

This is how you hunt for hope:

Listen to His word to you. Repeat it out loud. Obey it.

Wait for it to bloom.

Nika Maples is the author of *Hunting Hope* and *Twelve Clean Pages*, the memoir of her survival of lupus and a massive brainstem stroke that left her quadriplegic at age 20. She could not speak, swallow or blink, but her faith sustained her and a year later she walked back onto her college campus on her own two feet. She writes and speaks full time, sharing messages of hope and endurance with education, business and church groups across the country. When not traveling, she lives, writes and laughs as much as possible in Fort Worth, Texas.

Keep up with Nika Maples and *Hunting Hope* by visiting or following her on Facebook (nikamaples) or Twitter (@nikamaples).