

Don't Give Up

☒ Early one Saturday morning, I was sitting on the deck watching a female robin build a nest (or rather try to build a nest). She had chosen a location on the downspout that comes off the gutter. The spout was heavily sloped and made of shiny white aluminum. The surface was obviously very slick. I watched for about an hour.

She had made amazing progress. Then suddenly, as she landed on the nest it started to shift. She actually spread out her wings to use them like feathered arms trying desperately to hold the nearly completed nest in place, but to no avail. The nest slid off and fell two stories to the ground below.

My heart sank. She had worked so very hard, and now her efforts lay in a pile in the grass below. Well, I thought, at least she now knows that the downspout is not a good place to build a nest. She can go find a spot more suitable. As I sat drinking my coffee and reading, I heard a noise. I looked over and there was Mrs. Robin again...*starting over*.

For the next 10 days she built nest after nest. Nest after nest that, when almost completed, slid off onto the ever-growing pile of "nests" below. My wife would call me at work horribly distraught. "What can we do?" she asked. (She was mostly upset because the *male robin* had been sitting on a power line simply watching for the 10 days-something she thought was terribly unfair.) But day after day, nest after nest, there was nothing we could do.

And then something incredible happened that changed everything. It rained. Early one morning *it rained* one of those great soaking rains. And that evening as I was out on the deck, sure enough, there was mama robin (yes with daddy robin still looking on), starting another nest. But this time she was using wet, muddy grass. Not the dry parched grass that

had been too dry to stick, but wet, sticky grass. It was nest-building material that stuck to the downspout. Within a couple hours the nest was finished.

Think about this. Paul, the apostle, who wrote a vast portion of the New Testament, obviously knew what it felt like to wonder, *Is it all worth it?* He had certainly experienced the temptation to just give up and go on to something new. But in this little verse, Galatians 6:9, Paul shares a valuable principle: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (NIV).

Here is the greatest part of his admonition. This verse contains a *promise*. We will reap. Not maybe. Not we hope so. There's no room for doubt. We will reap. Mama Robin did not know when the rain would come. She didn't sit around waiting. She did not lose heart. She did not grow weary. Not even for a day. And the rain eventually came.

This journey we call "Christianity" is not always easy. Even when we are doing "good" things, we can get weary. The "cares of the world" weaken us and choke out our spiritual lives. And our weariness causes us to question: Does it all really matter? Who really cares? What difference does my little corner of the world make? If we are not careful we can lose heart.

We must do as the Bible says, "Contend for the faith." Fight. Hang on. Dig your heels in. Do not lose heart, because you do matter. Your persistency can and will make a difference. Sure, some of your "nests" may fall to the ground. Take some time, get alone and ask your Father for strength and grace, and then get up and start again. Contend. Overcome. *Do not lose heart*. For in due season, when the time is right, you will reap. And the reward will be so very worth it.