

# Purified Through Trials

by Angel Castillo

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*Angel Castillo's sermon discusses how trials serve as a means of spiritual purification and growth, urging believers to embrace difficulties as part of God's plan.*

**Duration:** 49:52

**Scripture:** Psalm 19:1, Psalm 119:103, Jeremiah 48:11

**Topics:** "Trials"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of living a holy life that pleases God. He warns against being influenced by the world and its desires, as it is contrary to God's will. The preacher uses the example of the nation of Moab, which is compared to wine that has not been passed from vessel to vessel, to illustrate the need for believers to be transformed and refined by God. He encourages listeners to embrace difficulties and afflictions as opportunities for growth and to rely on Jesus Christ to fill their souls. The sermon emphasizes the testing of one's faith in times of affliction and the importance of using one's religion in such times. The preacher concludes by highlighting the need for humility and self-reflection, especially when everything seems to be going well. The sermon references James 4:4 and John 2:15-17 to support the message.

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## Transcript

Just a moment ago, I phoned the church back in the Dominican Republic. We have our prayer meeting there at this time now. They're praying for us now, and they send you their greetings.

Our church started about 28 years ago. Since we had heard that the Word of Family was here in the church, we have been praying for you all. The pastors here at the church have asked me that I would bring something from the Word of God in addition to something of an explanation of the ministry in the Dominican Republic.

I thank you very much for this opportunity and privilege that you're giving to me. I think that preaching the Word of God, it requires a lot of fear and trembling because we are undeserving of those who would bring the Word of God. But even God uses frail vessels, and that's exactly what we are.

Any day that we would think differently of ourselves, God will take that privilege away from us. Please go to Jeremiah 48, please, again. Jeremiah 48, verses 11 and 12.

Jeremiah 48, 11 and 12. Moab has been at ease since his youth. He has also been undisturbed on his leaves.

Neither has he been emptied from vessel to vessel, nor has he gone into exile. Therefore, he retains his flavor, and his aroma has not changed. Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I shall send to him those who tip vessels, and they will tip him over, and they will empty his vessels and shatter his jars.

Let us pray. Lord God in the heavens, we know, Lord, that your Word is a dagger, a two-edged sword. That's why we ask you, Lord, that your Word would come to our hearts and take out that which is not of you.

Your servant here now that will bring your Word, give a portion of your Spirit. You know, Lord, what our needs are. Strengthen us in God.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Life is filled with difficulties and afflictions.

We can say with every ounce of happiness, we can even find even tons of problems and difficulties. Job expressed it in this way. As a spark flies upward, so man then is born unto affliction and adversity.

Even though we still see that men, even believers, a man involves himself to avoid difficulties. We look for the things that are the most easiest for us. A man would feel confused at times.

When the providence of God would stop him or confront him in the way. And when that happens, we are quick to become bitter, to complain, to question, and even to rebel against the will of God. Our minds can be filled with doubt concerning the love and goodness of God.

And we try to think in our minds of a life wishing it would be full or it would not have any difficulties. That's where the world would offer us things. That we might look unto it as very attractive and dangerous for us.

It's in that moment that a text like the one we just read in Jeremiah becomes a healthy antidote against reasoning. It becomes what? An antidote. An antidote? Yes, like a medicine.

And reasoning and the natural desires that there are going against what would be our ambitions and interests in simply having the easy life. Jeremiah gives us here a warning of this kind of thinking that what would come upon those that were seeking it. And if we were to examine this kind of warning so that we would fight against what would be our natural inclinations that would cause us to complain and to flee from difficulties that God would even bring and want for our own lives.

In the way that Jeremiah tells us and teaches us is through a very vivid and very real kind of illustration and very instructional. What we will do this evening is to first of all explain the illustration to take out the principle that is illustrated here and to then amplify the illustration. Let's look at the explained illustration.

The nation of Moab as a result of the incestuous relationship of Lot is compared to a wine that has been left behind that had not been passed from container or from vessel to vessel. Wine, as it is stated in verse 11 that has retained its original flavor and its smell had not changed. In order to understand the lesson, it's necessary that we know something of the making of wine.

I'm not a wine making expert but I know a little bit about wine. In order to understand the text here we need to understand something of the process. How is wine made? Normally it's taken, of course, simply from

the grape what is normally then heavy and it is impure.

It's placed into a very large container. Fermentation then begins and then those sediments rise to the top. In the process of fermentation the procedure is that the wine would then pass from vessel to vessel.

In a very careful manner. So each time that it's passed from one vessel to another as much of the sediment would stay with the first and the ongoing vessels. That's the only way to have a clean and pure wine.

What happens if you keep the sediment in the wine? In that case, the wine would have a taste and a smell that would be very disagreeable. That would have the wine continue to ferment. The sediments actually, in the passing from one vessel to another is actually purifying the wine so that each time the smell and the taste is better and better.

When these attributes, the quality of the wine is developing that's when the emptying out from one vessel to another takes place. So the best of the wine is the last of the wine in the transmission from one vessel to another. So here Moab is like the wine that has been left with all the sediments that was not taken and transferred from one vessel to another to another.

That nation had been left in peace. It's to say that that nation had been left to live in relative peace and tranquility from the time that it was formed as a nation until the time of the Day of Jeremiah. If we examine the history of these people, we would know that even though it was in war and even though it had been governed by other nations it had never gone out to exile.

That's exactly what the text here tells us. It was never in captivity. It had never been taken out of its own land.

Its inhabitants had enjoyed long periods of time uninterrupted of prosperity and comfort and peace. Nothing could really happen that you might recognize or call it to be something that would be really grave or serious. It said this had been the case of Moab since his youth.

What happened to Israel is just the opposite. Israel had been oppressed since its youth, since Israel's youth. 129.

In Psalm 129 Psalm 129, 1 and 2 It reads, Many times they have persecuted me from my youth up. Let Israel now say, Many times they have persecuted me from my youth up, yet they have not prevailed against me. While Moab was left in its land, Israel knew the affliction and knew exile.

It was under the judgment of God against the heavy hand of God. God had emptied Israel many times and as a result of this process through the ages purified Israel at least until it grew to be a monotheistic nation. Part of the greatness that Israel and its kings knew and even its permanence as a nation compared to the relative obscurity of Moab it had been given to them, Israel God had given unto Israel that method of the purification process.

But Moab was left behind. In its security and peace and its result was disastrous. It did not know as a nation did not know the process of being transferred from vessel to vessel and it had converted or developed into an incredibly proud nation.

It says in verse 29 in Jeremiah 48 29 We have heard of the pride of Moab. He is very proud of his haughtiness, his pride, his arrogance and his self-exaltation. Moab did not know as a nation the repetitive process of having been emptied and it had filled them with pride.

That is the explanation here of the illustration. Let's look at the principle here that we can get from the text. What do we learn from this text? That to remain in peace and tranquility for a long period of time is very difficult for your spiritual progress.

What is true about the history and the events in the life of the nation of Moab and of the nation of Israel can also be said of us as individual people as well. If we are not stirred up and go through confictions and difficulties by the providence of God we can sit in a carnal peace and the end result would be that the sediment in our own lives would not be cleansed. Probably it is the same principle that the psalmist applies to the unbelievers in Psalm 55.19 Why is there no fear of God in their hearts? Because they do not want to change.

Because they are not disturbed by the fictive providence of God. Therefore they will never fear God. Life is easy without problems.

Easy life without problems. Without difficulties. If we were to be honest we would admit that really we as Christians even long for that kind of life.

Even that which destroyed Moab. And it would destroy anyone that would want that as an ambition as well. Solomon warns us that that the prosperity of the of the unbelievers will destroy us.

We ought to consider this and we ought to have this in our minds from time to time. To keep us from the desire of an easy life. Having seen here the illustration and the principle taken from it let's amplify here the instruction.

We are going to respond to the following question. What is it then to be emptied and to pass from one vessel to another to another by the providence of God? That would move us along to spiritual growth and development. The first reason is the difficulties would work good for us in our spiritual lives.

Because the hard providences of God they are used to show us who we really are. God brings certain difficulties so that we would know things in a much more intimate way. That we would have a much greater understanding of who we really are.

Many times we are simply ignorant of who we ourselves are. The plaque that there is even in our own hearts. In normal conditions.

It is much easier to seem like we are friendly generous affectionate holy patient spiritual filled with faith and filled with all kinds of good things. But when we are underneath the pressure of God moved from one vessel to another to another then we can really see what is really in our own hearts. That is when we can often times see what our real condition is.

Sin can show and reflect what is really in our hearts. Sin could be very strongly at work in our hearts but maybe we won't even see it ourselves until adversity comes along and raises it up. Ira.

For example, maybe the sin of anger that you may have thought was mortified in your heart may arise. It is there. It is in your heart.

And when the adversity and difficulty comes what do we do? We explode. So the affliction comes and then our true hearts and our true condition is revealed. And we become surprised.

That was really in my heart? I used to sing in the church. I used to pray. It used to go very well for me in my business endeavors.

But then comes a problem and then comes out what is actually in our hearts. Brethren, who has not experienced this in their lives? There may be a moment when everything seems to be such at peace and calm but then all of a sudden something difficult comes along. And God seems to be frustrating all of our plans with movimientos.

All of the directions that we are going in. And even when it may seem that we are working with pure and right motives it may seem we may ask God does not want me to prosper or to do well. Wherever we may seem to go it may seem that we have problems.

And when we end one situation and go to another there comes another that may even be more difficult. We must remember that God is emptying us from one vessel to another to be better to be emptied from one vessel to another to another to make us better and better wine. That Christ will be formed in us.

It is in times like that that we often grow to know ourselves better. Where our own sin and where we are in the faith Andrew Fuller expressed it this way The religion of a man is tested by the use that he has of it in the days of affliction. And this understanding, this principle is humbling certainly for me.

When everything seems to be going well we seem to be so happy and so content. When work is going well we seem to be so happy and content. But then when adversity comes how do we respond? Brethren A boat, a ship cannot be tested in calm waters.

It's the storm that will actually bring the true test of that ship. That's what it is with afflictions for us as well. Even sins in our own heart that we think that those sins are mortified we're done with them.

The weakness of our own faith because we thought in and of ourselves we were so spiritually strong. The sinful habits that we thought had been completely broken still are there. Solo así sabremos nuestra verdadera condición.

Y lo que tenemos que hacer para mejorarla es dejarnos guiar por Dios. Solo así avanzaremos en nuestras vidas espirituales. Las providencias asistivas promueven nuestro bien.

No solo en que nos muestra quienes somos sino que en segundo lugar nos enseña a confiar mucho menos en nosotros mismos. Muchas veces nosotros planificamos en Dios. Nos apartamos en nuestros planes de la gracia de Dios.

Y que estamos promoviendo en ese rumbo. We're moving in the direction we think of the things of God. Y a veces tenemos éxito en lo que hacemos.

Logramos cierto éxito en lo que hacemos. And at times we can accomplish things for God. Y nos felicitamos nosotros mismos.

And we can rejoice in what takes place. And at times we can think ourselves to be wise. And even at times when we may think that what we have gained has been by the help of the Lord.

In the most intimate recesses of our hearts we're actually proud that the triumph of our own lives we just deserve it. But when God's providence comes along and He switches all the plans, even when we have been diligent in the things of the Lord, and we have prayed, and we think that maybe all is fine and well, and it comes along a minute when all of a sudden our seeming plans are up in smoke, what happens? If we respond properly at those times that we think that we are the triumphators, is that a right word? We realize that really it wasn't us, it was God. Let's not build anything without the Lord.

At all moments we must run into the presence of the Lord and ask for His help. It's through the difficulties and afflictions that we learn to rest in Him and to have less and less confidence in ourselves. Only then when we remember what Solomon had stated, trust in the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.

God, by His mercy, has He confronted you with adversity, affliction and difficulties? Has He put you in a place where you realize that you in and of yourself have begun to recognize Him in the midst of your difficulties and problems you realize that you must look to Him and trust in Him at all times? Proverbs 3, 5 and 6 Do not lean on your own understanding and in all your ways acknowledge Him. You learn to acknowledge Him in all your ways through the difficulties of adversity. It is He and only He that is going to make our way straight.

Why was this necessary? That you would be taken from one vessel to another. This teaches us not to grab the world. How is it that the afflictive providences help us to not grab onto the world? Everyone is designed to teach us that our rest is not here and now, but that our time here now is fleeting, passing.

The world wants to convince us of an easy life. To simply look for prosperity and abundance. And the world wants us to live in it as though it were our ultimate goal and aim.

What does God say in James 4, 4? It warns us that friendship with the world is enmity towards God. And in many other texts, 1 John 2, 15-17, Brethren, when friends fail us, when our labors fail us, and even our dear ones are taken from our side, even when the family is affected with affliction and sickness, or any other sort of difficulty that we can feel, then with everything that there is in this world that it has to offer, we cannot have the capacity of filling our souls. That only the Lord Jesus Christ can fill our souls.

No one else and nothing else can fill it like he can. I'm not saying that there's nothing good in this world and life. The psalmist said that the heavens declare the glory of God and the earth is also and earth is also glorious.

And this is why the heavens declare and the earth are also glorious. We need to say 119, 113. Yes, exactly.

This is not the text, right? No, it doesn't seem to be the text. But the text I'm quoting is that the earth is full of its glory, and the earth is full of its benefits. That's Psalm 19, right? 19, but not 113.

19. Did you say 19? 119. No, that's not the text.

Psalm 19. I have the wrong text. But what we want to say with this is more or less.

Let me tell you the truth about this text. Yes, 19. Tell him, yes.

Sadly, we receive all the benefits of God's hand. And the more we are full of them, we forget God. We forget God himself.

The giver of all things. We forget the giver. We begin to make here earth as if it were heaven.

We change. We make the change from he, the giver, to the things given. We start to love so much the good life, it makes it difficult for us to live the spiritual life.

Spirit-filled life. We cease to pray for God's kingdom to come, for the presence of Christ in our lives, and for the cultivation of Christian graces. The world just swirls around in our minds, and it's then, at that time, then for our good, God begins to empty us in order to take us away from the things of the world to take us closer to him.

Brethren, instead of rebelling against God, and complain when God sends difficult providences that do not make for peace in your life, give thanks to God. He is taking care of you. He is taking care of your soul, your heart.

We need to take care of our hearts to not love the world. He is uprooting us to be more planted there. He is trying to make of us a much better wine, the wine that is pleasing to God, the holy life that glorifies the name of Jesus.

This world is not going to help us to love the things of God and Christ. That's why in many cases God doesn't allow us to enter into some of the things of the world. Those applications could be numerous.

But I'd like to give some concluding words. When affliction knocks at the door of your life, in the future, how will you react? Do you still want a life without any difficulties? That it's the principle that we have examined today may keep you and help you in the difficult day. That upon ending the difficulties and the problems, that God has actually provided for you a new vessel to be emptied into.

That part of those sediments have been left behind. And then someone may say, well, pastor, but I have so much sediment in my life that nothing is going to be able to clean it all out. The blood of Christ can cleanse us from all sin.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It's the blood of Emmanuel. It continues to flow in order to cleanse us from all of our sins.

When we go unto Christ, humbly before him, as a result of the difficulties, give him thanks. Ask him to forgive you. Then there would be another new song in your heart.

There is a flow. Another precious flow of the blood of Christ that purifies everyone who draws near to him. And the desire, the will of God is that when we go from vessel to vessel is to purify us.

May God apply that unto our hearts. So we would know that when the afflictions come, God is with us. Because he whom he loves he disciplines and works with in order to get out the better wine for him, for his glory.

And then through us to be able to demonstrate the kingdom of God unto others. May God bless his word. Let's pray together.

We can identify, Lord, with this message. In our own lives we have experienced the vessels. And when we have seen them coming, we have seen in our own hearts the tendency to rebel, complain, murmur.

We know by our own experience, Lord, that you send dark providences. Yet, Lord, we know that you have such a good purpose. You have such a way to purify and cleanse your own.

We would realize, Lord, that we all have still too much of that old sediment that needs to be purified and cleansed. We need, Lord, to be passed from vessel to vessel in order for us to be useful to all. We know, Lord, that there is one of old who has said, he whom God will use greatly, he will wound severely.

And, Lord, we would see that in the life of the Apostle Paul, the means you used to keep him humble before you. And we would see, Lord, that the fighting of our own soul against you in these vessels would reveal who we still are. We pray, Lord, you would teach us to respond better and even well to those vessels.

That we, Lord, might even learn to welcome them, to realize your good purposes behind them. That, Lord, there might be much more of a fragrance of Christ unto God and unto men. That, Lord, there might be the ability for some to say, Christ is in that person.

Lord, may that be our experience. May, Lord, you use afflictive providences to mold us and shape us into the image of Christ. Help us, Lord, to realize it's out of your abundant goodness that you would make that and shape us and mold us into his image.

Lord, we do not want to remain in and of ourselves. We want to be molded into the image of Christ. That's the best thing for us, Lord.

Help us, Lord, not to flee or run from that. We ask, Lord, for those who may be going through some dark providences that are experiencing the outpouring of one vessel to another that you may give special grace and help. That, Lord, you may sustain them.

Give a great felt sense of your presence. Lay upon their hearts promises from your word. Encourage their hearts.

And, Lord, when you take them through, may it be that they will be able to thank you for it. This would give great glory to you. May it be so we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

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