

# Don't Lose Heart in Your Time of Testing

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon encourages believers to remain steadfast during trials, illustrating God's refining process through the story of Joseph.*

**Duration:** 1:00:29

**Scripture:** Psalm 22:2-105, Romans 8:28, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 Peter 3:8, 1 Peter 4:4

**Topics:** "Time Of Testing"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the theme of despair and how it can push at the door of one's heart. He uses the story of Joseph from the Bible to illustrate this point. Joseph, despite being chosen by God and having a promising future, found himself in a dungeon filled with overwhelming despair. The speaker encourages the audience to learn from Joseph's example and respond to evil speech with good speech, emphasizing the power of Christ in returning good for evil. The sermon concludes with an invitation for those who feel touched by God's presence to come forward and accept Jesus as their savior.

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## Transcript

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None of these messages are copyrighted, and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. ...giving us an opportunity to partake of that heart. Now, Lord, I ask that as the word is open today, Father, that you grant an anointing to me to be able to speak this word in the manner that you have, you've already determined that it should be spoken to every heart that is gathered in this house.

Lord, I don't have any wisdom. I don't have any strength. All that I have, you have given to me.

And Lord, I ask that you be magnified today and that I may have the privilege of disappearing, that you may be seen, that you may be heard in this house. Jesus, we need to hear from you. Holy Spirit, we need your voice, not the voice of man.

God, we thank you, Lord, that you'll give us the ears to hear now what you're going to speak. We ask, Lord, that you would destroy the weapons of darkness, anything the enemy has formed against any child of God gathered in this house or in the education annex. We ask, Lord, that by your word, that you would

open prison doors, that you would heal those who are bruised in heart, Lord, those who may even misunderstand the intent and purpose of your dealings, your allowable dealings that have come into their lives.

Lord, help us to understand your kingdom today and to be able to rejoice in your unfailing faithfulness and your goodness towards us. We thank you for this in Jesus name. Amen.

Psalm 105, please, in the Old Testament, if you'll turn there. Don't lose heart in your time of testing. Don't lose heart in your time of testing.

This is a word that I know of a certainty that Lord spoke to my heart. I was in the midst of preparing to speak on something else, and my spirit was troubled. I had no rest at all, and I got up and began to pray, and the Lord began to speak to me clearly about people that will be here this morning, and some are, if not many, are, you're beginning to lose heart in a time of testing because you really have a little understanding at this point of how God prepares the people when he desires to use them for his honor and for his glory.

Now, Psalm 105 is speaking about a young man in the Old Testament whose name is Joseph. Beginning at verse 16, and I'm only going to read through to verse 19. Moreover, he that being God called for a famine upon the land, he break the whole staff of bread.

He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant, whose feet they hurt with fetters. He was laid in iron. Until the time that his word came, that's the word of God, the promise of God, the word of the Lord tried him.

Now, the beginning of this particular psalm, when we get to verse 16, it talks about God creating a situation of hunger. God in his mercy will do that. He will do it in Kosovo, as we've seen this morning.

He will do it in Albania. He will do it throughout the world. He will do it in New York City.

He will create the hunger because it is in his heart that none should perish, but that all should come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. But it's, it's not sufficient just to create a hunger without having an answer. And God will always prepare an answer.

God will always, his answer has always been the same. Obviously it's salvation and provision and strength through the shed blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But God has messengers.

God has men, God has women that he raises up in the body of Jesus Christ and he raises them up so that they might be the ones who stand and have the authority, the spiritual authority, the wisdom and the heart that represents him to the generation within which he has created the hunger. I guess the easiest way that I can explain this is that my oldest son, when he became a Marine shortly after he went through boot camp, I went down to North Carolina and was given a tour by him of some of the things that he had gone through. And of course, during the course of his boot camp, I had gotten some of his letters and they were pretty desperate letters.

I remember when the first week he was gone, I remember getting a letter and he, he reached out to the heavyweights and he said, dad, please get pastor David to pray for me. Get, get elder so-and-so, get pastor so-and-so. And he listed these people, get them to pray for me.

He said, I need the strength of God in this place. And you know, folks, that's really what a lot of our prayers are like. When we come into God's boot camp, you know, when, when, when, when a, when a country takes a group of young men or young women and, and has a procedure whereby they are going to make them into soldiers, they are sent through a series of, it seems like testings and trials that are almost, and I say almost beyond the human ability to endure difficult things that maybe when I was 21 years old, I would have liked to give it a try, but certainly not now at 45.

I remember looking at some of these trials they had to go through. And I said, if, if I ever made it through even a third of these things, it would be absolutely an entirely the grace of God. Some of them seem to be so severe that it would be almost a relief to just lie down and die and get it all over with.

And in the midst of that come these letters and these letters, I guess they go home. All of these kids go down there and they think they've got the literally the world by the tail. And they get down there and find out all of a sudden they haven't got the world by the tail at all.

And all of a sudden, these letters start going home. Some of deep, deep regret because they don't understand the procedure that is happening in their lives. You see, they are being prepared to be soldiers.

They're being prepared to be obedient. They're being prepared to take orders. Fear is being driven out of their hearts.

They're being prepared to stand in the midst of even sometimes insurmountable odds. They're, they're being taught about unity. They're being taught many things that we would be very, very beneficial in the church to get a reeducation or re-understanding of when it's all done.

I got the letters. And when, when I went down for graduation and you look at these fine young men and women that, that I've been raised up as an army, something in your heart says, I am proud in a sense that these young men are representing this country that I'm part of. I'm proud that if they go overseas, that they're going to stand.

And many of them are going to be powerful, wonderful representatives. And you see, this is what God desires of us as his people, as his church. Many of our prayers are like my son's letters.

We come into the kingdom of God and we would like to just come into the kingdom of God, get saved, hear from God, then move forward unhindered, wielding the sword of the spirit and representing Christ unopposed in all things. Be nice if it was that, if that was the way it works, but you know it this morning and I know it. If you've been around any amount of time, if you're new to the Lord, just hang on.

You'll find out that is not the way it works. God has a work that he first needs to do in us in order that we may truly represent him. A work that he does.

There is a spiritual bootcamp folks. And if you don't know it yet, you're going to know it very, very shortly. God will take us through times of testing and trial.

Now, Joseph, this young man, God had determined through him to bring about a mighty deliverance to many people, even including members of his own family. You know the story. God was going to take him, send him down into Egypt and prepare a way after much, trial, many difficulties.

He was going to be the man literally who had the keys to the storehouse of God's supply that would keep many, many people alive, including the members of his own household. In Genesis chapter 37, please don't turn there. I'll just recount it to you.

God began to speak to Joseph in a very special way about a coming time when leadership and authority would be given to him. God had a special task for him, a place that was unique to him, assigned by God, which only he could fill. And folks, it's no different for you and I, when you came to Jesus Christ, I am absolutely sure the moment you were born again by the spirit of God, God began to speak to your heart.

He began to give you precious promises. The scripture says that by these, you might first of all, become a partaker of the divine nature. He began to speak to you about things that he wanted to do through your life.

A new desire came into your heart. I'm sure if you know, Christ is your savior, that there's a desire in you to have some kind of a spiritual influence in your family, especially if your family members are unsaved. There's a desire in your heart.

The more you walk with God to have an influence in your community, among your working peers, for example, in the workplace too, as well. And others, others are crying out saying, God, I hear about Macedonia. I hear about these other places.

Really in effect, this is a Macedonian call, just like in the day of Paul. And there are others who are seeing themselves in the light of, in the light of God's call. And they're saying, Lord, if you want to use my life, I don't have much to give you, but what I do have, I give you God, take my life and use me for your glory.

And when that cry begins to come from our hearts, then God begins to plant very special promises in our hearts. Many of us here today, you know that God has been speaking to you about something. You know also that it requires a letting go of what is old to be able to lay hold of what is new.

Many, many people in the body of Christ never encounter the fullness of God, of what God wants for their life, because they're unwilling to let go of the old. They're unwilling to let go of the old trusts and the old pursuits, the old aims and objectives. And subsequently they, they reach out.

But the things that God has planned for their life seem to be always outside of their grasp. But in spite of those, there are others who say, Lord, I am willing to let go. Show me the pearl of great price.

Show me what it is that you want from my life. And by faith, I'll make the step. And I trust, oh God, that when I make that step, that you will not let me drown.

You'll not let me perish. If it is you, Peter said, bid me come. And God, when he speaks promises to our heart, will always say, come, come and inherit the things that I've prepared for you.

We know the end of the story from the beginning. We are aware that God was raising him to be a key holder of a store of supply that would nourish and sustain many lines, just like he's doing in you and I. Paul says in second Corinthians chapter five, verses 19 and 20, God was in Christ, reconciling himself to the world or rather the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then we are ambassadors for Christ.

What an incredible thing God has made us ambassadors of him. Now we would really like it to be easy. We'd like to get saved.

We'd like to get filled with the Holy Ghost and just head out and see every power of darkness part in front of us to see souls absolutely saved and transformed. We would like all of us to get out of God's boot camp and to get into the war and to have everything just go smoothly. But you know, God can't send us into this battle.

He can't use us as those that represent his kingdom until first his character and his nature have become formed in us. When we stand, remember that we represent him. You remember the tragic mistake that Moses made? Moses was leading these people that were continuously rebelling against God.

And finally, in the midst of all that was going on around about him, Moses cried out and he said, Lord, I want to know you show me your glory, not just enough to know you in a legal relationship. I want to know who you are. And God, in his mercy, took him to a mountain and covered him with his hand and passed by.

And as he passed by, he gave him an incredible revelation. The Lord merciful, the Lord gracious, the Lord long suffering, the Lord kind, compassionate to many generations. God began to reveal something about himself to this man, Moses.

Moses came down from the mountain and the revelation, however, that was given to him was not yet fully formed in him. And there's a danger. There's a danger sitting in a place where we are given revelation of Jesus Christ, given truth about him.

But yet the truth we're given has not yet fully been formed in us. And so from that that place of understanding the glory of God, Moses came down from the mountain. The people were murmuring and complaining as they had usually been.

And Moses took the rod and struck the rock and called them rebels in the sight of God. And in doing that, he dishonored God. He misrepresented God and many, many people who rise up to positions of prominence who've never been through God's time of training and testing.

They stand, but they misrepresent God because the human spirit is still very much in control of them. They present God as angry. They present God as fault finding.

They present him as intolerant with the people. Many, many other aspects that really are only coming from the human heart and have nothing at all to do with God. But the man or woman that is going to represent God.

Remember, Moses missed out on the promised land because of this. He never entered into the fullness because the fullness was not entered into him. And many, many people today stand and they're not complete in their understanding of Christ because they have done everything in their power to duck out of the dealings of God, to escape, to circumvent the times that God would bring them through and bring them in effect sometimes even to the end of their own strength that they may have to turn to him and trust in his strength.

Psalm 105 19 talking about Joseph tells us until the time of his word came, the word of the Lord tried him. In other words, God gave this young man a promise. God told him some very, very powerful things that he

was going to raise him up.

He was going to be a leader. He was going to have influence, but until the word of the Lord came, the word of the Lord tried him. Now the word tried in the original Texas say wrath.

And here's what it means to melt metal, to refine, to purge gold or silver by fire in order to separate it from the impurities in it. This is what the scripture saying. God gave Joseph a promise that until that promise became a reality, the word of God led him to a place where he was purged of all that was in him.

That was unlike the heart of God. Incredible. When we think of this, he was about to undergo the trial of his life and all these trials that he was about to undergo had been preordained by God for his life, for a purpose.

Folks, it's an erroneous theology that says to you or says to me that we are saved. And the purpose of our salvation is to escape trial. That is not the purpose of our salvation.

The purpose of our salvation, well, obviously it's so that we go to heaven when this is all over. But the purpose of our salvation is that in trial, in fire, in misunderstanding, whatever we have to go through, we are a people who learn to trust him. We learned that everything that comes our way has been allowed and even preordained of God for a purpose that we may or may not understand.

But we do know that all things work together for good because we love God and are called according to his purpose. Now go with me to first Peter, please. In the New Testament, first Peter chapter one, and then keep a marker there because we're going to come back to that a couple of times.

If I had a marker, I'd put it over here. I do. Okay.

First Peter chapter one, Peter starts out very optimistic, very excited. In verse three, he says, blessed be God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled. And it fades not away reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith under salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Now this is very, very positive. All of this. I mean, we could, we could shout and just have an altar call and see the glory of God break out right now.

But there's another step here that Peter goes on to. He says, wherein you greatly rejoice though. Now for a season, if need be, you notice those three little words that get stuck in there sometimes in the passage of scripture.

Well, who determines if need be, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations. So that means trials of testings that the trial of your faith being more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. If need be, I'm absolutely convinced today that there is a need in all of our lives for God to take us through times of refining and testing.

If we are truly going to be his representatives to our generation, if truly he can entrust to us the keys of his inexhaustible storehouse of supply, if truly we're going to be raised up to speak for him, there have got to be times of testing come into our lives. Now, firstly, when we think about this young man, Joseph, it

seemed that the more favored he became in the sight of his father, the more rudely those around him began to speak to him. In Genesis chapter 37 and verse four, scripture says that when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

How's that incredible? Some of you, you remember when you first got saved and when when you lived like the devil, literally, and you walk into work and some of you even in your own home, you went home and everything was fine. Everybody spoke well of you. Oh, Charlie, such a nice guy.

Or Alice, she's such a nice girl. So dependable, so lovely, et cetera, et cetera. And then all of a sudden, one day you walked in and said, guess what? God loves me.

God loves me. I found out that he loves me. And all of a sudden, you thought in your naivety, at that time that everyone around was going to agree with you.

I thought that when I first got saved, this is the best news that I've ever heard in my entire life. People are going to be so excited to find this out. This is what people have been looking for.

So you walk in and tell God loves me. God loves you. Then all of a sudden you find out the more you become aware of this love of your father, the more people around you begin to speak evil of you.

First Peter four, four, he says, where they think it's strange that you run not with them to the same excessive riot, speaking evil of you. This is the first lesson, the first classroom. I think that we have to get through testing is learning in the power of Christ to return good speech for evil, learning not to respond in like kind.

I go back to first Peter chapter three again with me. First Peter chapter three, Peter says, finally, verse eight, be all of one mind, having compassion. One of another love is brethren.

Be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrary wise blessing. Know that you are there. Aren't you called that you should inherit a blessing for he that will love life and see good days.

Let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that the lips that they speak no guile, let him issue evil and do good. Let him seek peace and ensue it for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers. But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

And who is he that will harm you? If you be followers of that, which is good, but an, if you suffer for righteousness sake, happy, are you the not afraid of their terror and neither be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, having a good conscience that whereas they may, they speak evil of you as of evil doers, that they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ for it is better if the will of God be so that you suffer for well-doing than for evil doing. Lesson number one, learning in the power of Christ to return good speech for evil. And sometimes the tongue can be a deadly poison, just like the scripture says it is.

Sometimes I remember the first time that you become really aware that people are saying unkind things about you. I remember the tendency of my flesh was to rise up because before I got saved, I'm telling you, if you said something about me and I found out about it, you had better run. I mean that there was

something in me.

I'd walk into the midst of the lunch room and I'm telling you, we either resolved it or we resolved it one way or the other. This thing was done. And all of a sudden now you're a Christian.

And I don't know how they unsaved Noah, but these little, these little people that wouldn't say boo to you at any other time, all of a sudden you are saved. And it's like, they rise up with this bravado thinking they can speak anything about you that they want. Formerly, they would have been in the history books if they had ever tried something like that.

But now you're a Christian and this war starts to rage inside. Everything inside of you wants to lash out. See, this is God's boot camp.

God, why do I have to put up with this? Why do I have to sit here? I'm preaching for you. I'm living for you. And these, these slanderers, these sneaky slanderers are running around saying all kinds of lies about me.

Well, I remember getting in my car one time. I've shared it with you before, getting in my car and I'm preaching my heart out. I'm trying to live for God.

And this man who professed to be a Christian is spreading this horrid lie about me all through the community. And I determined in my heart, I said, I am going to his house. I'm going to knock on his door and I'm just going to plant him right where he stands.

I said, that's going to be, that's going to be a testimony to him, to his family and to every other liar in this community. And the Lord spoke to me in my house and said, Carter, vengeance is mine, said the Lord. Vengeance is mine.

Don't take these things into your own hands. I remember getting in my car and what a fight, what a struggle. And I remember saying, Lord, just this once I'll repent today.

I'll repent tonight. You're a forgiving God. You're a merciful God.

But just this one time, how dare this man say this type of thing about me? I remember driving to his house. I was fuming. I drove into the driveway.

He's sitting on the front lawn with another friend. I got out of my car when he saw my countenance. He thought he'd better change his tune and become very, very spiritual in a moment.

I walked up to him and I said, I, and the whole time the Holy Spirit is saying, don't do anything. Don't take things into your own hands. I walked up to him sitting in the chair and I said, I hear that you've had some things around the community to speak to about me.

I said, I'd like you to tell me right now what it is that you've been saying. He started to speak. He says, oh brother, you are a wonderful man of God.

He said, I have nothing but admiration for you. And as he was speaking, a huge bird flew overhead and dropped right smack in the middle of his forehead. You heard it hit him like that thing.

And the Lord, he had to get up out of his chair and run into the house to get the stuff off his face. And the Lord said, vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. Secondly, in Psalm 105, 17, it says he sent a man, that's God before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant.

Now God knows that pride comes before destruction and a haughty spirit comes before a fall. And so the Lord led him to a place where he would have to learn to be content to be a servant. Joseph had this vision of God and he was running around and unwisely sharing it with everyone around him, telling his brothers, I'm going to rule over you.

You know, telling his father and mother, you're all going to bow down to me. Did you know that? And pride was getting into his heart and oftentimes we don't realize the depth and strength of pride that is in every one of us. God begins to speak to our hearts.

And if he doesn't take us through this bootcamp of learning to be a servant first, then we can never truly represent him as a leader. You remember the disciples came to Christ and they said, who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom of God? And then he told them clearly, whoever will be the cheapest among you is going to learn to be your servant in Christ himself in Hebrews five, eight says, though he were a son yet learned the obedience through the things which he suffered. And so all of a sudden he is sold up.

He's delivered up of his brethren and he's stuck in this foreign land in a man called Potiphar's house, where nobody is interested in his dreams. You're many of you here today can, can attest to that. You had this vision of what God is going to do in your life.

And all people want to do is stick a broom in your face. Every time you talk about God's call that is on your life, you know what I'm talking about? You come in, you talk about the things, the marvelous things that God has spoken to you. And it can be frustrating because you go from place to place.

And then all of a sudden the pastor, the leader, whoever you're speaking to, just looks up from his Bible, looks up from his desk and says, we have a need for a cleaner on Wednesday night. Are you available? And you've been talking about massive evangelism and crusades and what you're going to do through your life. And he says, uh, we need a cleaner Wednesday night.

Are you interested? Uh, are you available? It seems in this place, nobody's interested in all of your dreams. All they're interested in is your obedience, your obedience. If we don't learn to obey, if we don't learn to joyfully begin to do the little things, we will never be able to represent God in the capacity he wants us to represent him.

There's no doubt that the enemy began to assail him here with doubts about what God had spoken to him since the first day, what had happened to him? God had all of a sudden he's, he's given this, this marvelous revelation of his future. And from the day he was given it is evil spoken about he's betrayed and cast out. He's made into a servant.

God says, you're going to reign in effect. And now he's finds himself pushing a broom in part of his house. And then another battle comes like none he's ever experienced in his life before in this place, he's being enticed to sin as he has never been enticed in his entire life.

He's a young man and part of his wife takes a liking to him. And every day he comes into the house. She is, she is attempting to seduce him.

And you know that the situation that he's in, he's actually being prepared by God, but he's not aware of it. And sometimes in the midst of the, the, the struggle and the trial, something happens in the heart of a Christian and say, I just got to get out of this for a while. I just, I've just got to have just, I just got to get out and get a break from all of the struggle, all of the servitude, all of this betrayal, all these people speaking evil about me.

And instead of turning to God with all of their heart, they turn to the satisfying of the desires of their own flesh. He's enticed to sin like never before. But Joseph stood firm in that place of enticement.

He said, would be, I cannot sin against God. He said, by doing this thing, nor against his master at that time, the physical one who was Potter far. And so he resisted and you would think, well, in this place of resisting sin, surely now God's blessing is going to come.

And so you resist this day by day temptation that is coming his way only to be triumphed over seemingly by a lie. He wouldn't give into the sin. And so now the enemy through Potter for his wife comes and accuses him falsely.

The people around begin to believe the false accusation. The next thing, you know, he's cast into a prison. Psalm 105 verse 18 says whose feet they hurt with fetters.

And he was laid in iron, not only now just lied about, not only betrayed, not only made a servant, not only falsely accused, but now he's being physically afflicted. His feet are in fetters and he's laid in iron. He's in an extremely uncomfortable place, imprisoned once again, seemingly betrayed by those that he was reaching, trying to be a blessing too.

This is the end of side one. You may now turn the tape over to side two. That's the despair that was pushing at the door of his heart.

There was all these things, brethren, you have to understand something. All these things were coming from the hand of God. God had sent him to prepare a way for many, many people that were going to come into famine.

These were classrooms. This was God's bootcamp. But we see him now in this dungeon with despair, pushing at the door of his heart, an overwhelming despair.

There are some who are in this house today. That's exactly where you are. You said, God, you called me, God, you spoke to me about something you wanted to do in my life.

You talked to me about giving me my family as an inheritance. You talked to me about opening my mouth and filling it with good things. You talked to me about a storehouse of supply that was going to begin to literally emanate from my life as you begin to use me.

And now I'm in this place where I'm seemingly overwhelmed by all of my enemies. People I reached out to and tried to be good to betrayed me. People have lied about me.

They've slandered me. And a despair now is wanting to just overwhelm him. But right on the coattails of that despair is another enemy, even more dangerous than despair.

And it's an enemy called bitterness, a feeling of being wronged, a feeling of being betrayed, a feeling of being abandoned even by God himself. And many, many believers that God, all God has been doing is

he's been answering your prayer and he's been leading you and he's been guiding you. And you get to the place where all this trial and all this trouble is coming your way.

And it's for a point. It's for a purpose. But many, many people say, God, I trusted you.

I thought this was going to be an abundant life. I thought this was going to be a wonderful walk with you. I thought it was there.

You had promised me that the power of God was going to emanate through my life. And now I feel despair and I feel betrayed. I feel abandoned by all around me.

God, I'm not even sure that your hand is still in my life anymore. This is what the enemy wants. Go to Psalm 22 with me now.

We're going to close with this. Psalm 22. This is exactly what the enemy wants to get you despairing.

And on the coattails of that despair to sow a root of bitterness in your life. Looking diligently, the scripture says, lest a root of bitterness, lest any fail of the grace of God, lest a root of bitterness be found in you. And many are defiled by that root of bitterness.

Many, not just a few, but many. It has been God. It's not been your enemies.

It has not been man that stood against you. It has been God. You've been in his boot camp.

He has allowed those voices to be raised with against you. He could have just as easily slapped his hand over their mouths and stop them from speaking. But he chose not to.

Because in all of this, in everything that God allows us to bring us to the place where one day we're going to stand and nothing but Jesus Christ is our strength. Nothing but his will is our will. Nothing but his desire is our desire.

Nothing but his voice is our voice. Nothing of ourselves in all of him. The whole purpose of God allowing us to be tested is to bring us to an absolute, complete reliance on him, that finally he can put the keys into our hand of the storehouse of the knowledge of almighty God.

Hallelujah. Psalm 22, a psalm written by David, but quoted by Christ on the cross on Calvary. Verse one, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring? This has been the cry of many, many of the saints of God over the years throughout the ages, even some that are in this house today.

You come in this house and your heart is failing you in the time of testing. You don't see the hand of God anymore. You have a disciple's vision of what the kingdom of God is supposed to be.

And so little understanding of the procedure, the way that God leads a man or woman that he's going to use, the way that he leads us is to another cross, a place where we die to all of our own desires and our wills and our ways and all of these things. And we come back to life again, but through Christ and through Christ alone. Verse 14, I'm poured out like water.

All my bones are out of joints. My heart is like wax. I started in so strong and now I've become so weak.

I had such powerful intentions because of the promises that you gave me. And now it seems that my heart is melted right in the midst of me. It is melted in the midst of my bowels.

I have no more courage. I have no more strength. My strength is dried up.

Verse 15, like a potsherd. My tongue cleaves to my jaws. No more promises.

There's nothing I can say to you. And that has brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me.

The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones.

They look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture. Be not thou far from me, O Lord.

Oh, my strength hasty to help me. Deliver me, my soul from the sword, my darling, from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth, for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

Verse 22. Now here's the key. He says, I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the congregation.

Will I praise thee? Ye that fear the Lord, praise him. All ye that seek of Jacob, glorify him and fear him. All ye that seek of Israel, for he has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and neither has he hid his face from him.

But when he cried unto him, he heard. Here's the end result of all that God was doing in Christ and all that God is doing in us. Thank God that we have the privilege of walking in the footsteps of the master.

If you are being tried, if you are being brought into places of fire where everything unlike Christ is being purged from your life, then begin to rejoice even in the midst of that trial. For God is working out his purposes in your life and fitting you to raise you up from the dead that you may live in him and represent him before men. I will declare thy name, he says in verse 22 unto my brethren.

And what he's saying is this. I will represent you before my brethren for you to not hide your face from those who cry to you, even to those who have caused you unspeakable pain. Think about Joseph now for a moment.

He had been caused unspeakable pain by his brothers who had betrayed him into all of this harm and all this captivity and everything that had come his way. But now, after God's dealings are done in his life, there's a something came into his heart and he had made a choice that God, when you send the famine and cause those even that have harmed me to come before me, when you raise me to a position of authority, I will not manifest the anger of my human nature. I trust that it's put to death.

I will represent you and you alone before them. Hallelujah. I will be a servant to them.

Even if you place me in a position of authority, only your goodness will be manifested through my life to them. Only your goodness. I tell you, brethren, when God is able to get a man or woman to that place, here's what happens.

Psalm 105. Go back there, please, with me very quickly. Psalm 105.

Hallelujah. Here's what happens when we get to that place of saying, Lord, Lord God, when you raise me again, it will be you and you alone. It'll be your voice and not mine.

Be your heart. It'll be you. I don't want anything of myself involved.

God, even those that have hurt me, even those that have wronged me, if they come to you, I will open my arms as you would and welcome them and receive them and feed them. Hallelujah. Verse 20 says the king sent Psalm 105, verse 20, the king sent and loosed him.

This is Joseph now, even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house and ruler of all his substance to bind his princes at his pleasure and to teach his senators wisdom. God brought this man through trial.

He allowed him to be tested even to the point of where he was not able to physically endure. But remember, the scripture says that God will not allow us to be tested above that we are able, but with that temptation will make a way to escape that we may be able to bear it. He released him and let him go free and made him lord of his house and ruler of his substance.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

My heart's cry for years now has been, God, give me a grasp of your word. Give me a grasp of who you are that I may present you to the people that they may lay hold of you, that sinners may be converted unto you, that the weak may be strengthened in order for God to do that. He's got to take you and I to the very limits at times of what we are able to endure so that we will cast off all confidence in the flesh and turn to him and him alone, who's able to raise us from the dead and give us life.

How could Joseph have known the impact of his faithfulness towards his God? How could he have known that God, through him, was going to bring his whole family down into Egypt? That God, through him, was going to give him wisdom to amass a huge storehouse of supply to feed not only his own family and keep them alive, but many, many others of many other nations. How could he know what God was going to do? How could he have known that God was going to bring his people into Egypt? They would sojourn there for 400 years. Then, at the end of 400 years, that God would bring them out through a man called Moses with a mighty hand.

Hallelujah. How could he have known that God was going to lead them through the wilderness, through the Red Sea, into a place of promise, that there was going to be a lineage established through whom would come a Messiah? How could he have known that God was going to raise up another people, that through whom he was going to bless all the families of the earth, a people called his church? How could he have known? How could he have understood that one day Christ was going to come and die and raised again from the dead by the power of the Holy Ghost and go to heaven to prepare a place where thousands upon thousands and multiplied millions would dwell and rule and reign with Christ for all of eternity? How could he have known that one day the sky was going to split and Christ was going to come back with thousands upon thousands of saints of Almighty God as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to create a new heaven and a new earth? How could he have known? How could he have seen? Folks, there are times when the plan of God clearly does not always involve our understanding of every place and every detail. We don't even know what it is that God is going to do sometimes through our lives or through

our own faithfulness to him in the future.

God's work in us is to be brought to a completion. It does, however, require faith and trust in every place that he leads us. In every place.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Faithfulness to God.

Saying, Lord, no matter where you lead. There were songs they used to sing in times of old hymns in the church, where he leads me, I will follow. I will follow for God.

I do know that you have planted something in my heart and I do know that you are leading me to a place where what you have spoken to me is going to become a reality. Not just for me, but for my family and for my children and for my grandchildren and for their children after them. You never know, you don't have an understanding of what God will do through the lives of those who make a choice to be faithful to him.

I have a question to ask you this morning. Are you losing heart? Are you finding that bitter and vengeful and hurtful words are not coming more frequently from your lips? Instead of trusting him and understanding that he brought you into this place for a reason. Now, out of that fountain is starting to come sweet water and bitter at the same time.

You're beginning to lash out against those that have said things to you that they shouldn't say. Instead of taking it in the spirit of Christ, you're beginning to speak words, bitter words. Even sometimes in your own prayer closet, there's a bitterness that's coming out of your spirit towards them.

A desire for vengeance that belongs only to God. Have you understood that the goodness of God is leading you to a greater and deeper dependence on his strength? You've cried out to the Lord and he brought you into a testing ground to purge from you everything that is unlike him. For one reason, to give you the keys of a storehouse of incredible supply.

To meet every need of every person that will ever come your way. Are there people this morning that you need to forgive? People have wronged you. You've taken it personally and not understood that God allowed this.

Brethren, let's get it clear inside. God allowed it. He could have stopped it, but he allowed it.

Are there people that you need to forgive? A test of that, I suppose, would be if you were put in a place of the preacher and you preached a sermon and this person that now the Holy Spirit is bringing to your mind or this group of people came forward like Joseph's brethren did one day. Would you be willing to embrace them as he did and weep with them and love them and tell them not to be afraid? Tell them that God used them to send you to the place where you are now, that their lives may be spared. Are you at the place where you've yet seen that they have been used in the purposes of God, even though their tongues were not used for righteousness? And remember this, in so much that people have been used that way for you, be assured you have been used that way for other people, too, as well, that have gone before you.

Be assured that your tongue has spoken some hard things from time to time and has wounded others. Have you yet learned to be content to be a servant? Forget mass evangelism until you've had a mass broom in your hands for a little while. Forget about greatness until you've learned to be obedient to God.

Forget about high praises and conferences on worship until you've learned to thank Him in the midst of the fire, in the midst of the trial. My prayer is just simply this, Lord, keep me faithful. Thank you for every trial that you send into my life.

Let your life shine through me and your life alone. That is my prayer. Now, Father, God in heaven, thank you that you are speaking clearly to many who are here today.

Lord, I would ask in Christ's name that you would grant a great grace to be able to respond with a thankful heart for times of testing, with a thankful heart for difficulties, circumstances that you have allowed because of purposes that we don't yet understand. But we do know that all things work together for good. Lord, we would ask today, I ask, Father, that for those that are losing heart and in danger of becoming bitter, that you would turn it all around this day.

There would be thankful hearts and joyful hearts knowing that you are leading to a place where you're going to unlock every promise that you've ever made to their hearts. And, Father, I thank you for this in Jesus' name. We're going to worship for a moment.

Choir's going to come and lead us in a song. And as we do in the main sanctuary, the education annex downstairs, if the Holy Spirit has spoken to you, if you are that person, if God's Spirit has been speaking to you, say, Pastor, I need to ask God forgiveness today that I have not understood his dealings in my life. But today I want to come to this altar just to declare him faithful.

He is a faithful God. He is leading me. He has never forsaken me.

If that's your declaration today, if you need to forgive some who have wronged you, learn to be content to be a servant. If your lips have been used for unrighteous purposes, I'm going to ask you to come and repent of that today. And let's just get it right before God as we all stand together and begin to sing.

Slip out wherever you are. In the balcony, you can go down to any of the exits and come to this altar in the main sanctuary. Slip out of where you are.

Make your way down here. We're going to pray together and believe God. If you thank so God.

Lord, you are faithful to us. You are faithful to us as your people. You've never failed us.

You've never forsaken us. Maybe there are some here this morning. They could say, Pastor Carter, I'm a sinner.

I've been touched, I've been moved upon in the service today. And something in my heart is telling me that God is a reality. That Jesus Christ really is the Son of God.

He really did come and gave his life for my sins. That I might have a new life. I've controlled my own life for a long, long time.

And I'm tired of it. I'm tired of the sin. I'm tired of all of the turmoil.

And today I want to release my life to the mercy of God. And to understand that I'm a sinner. But Christ came to die for me.

That I might know eternal life. And have my sins forgiven. And not even that, even more.

That God may reveal his purposes to me and through me. And give me the life that he has destined me to live. From before the day I was even born.

If that's you today, it might take a little bit of courage. But I'm going to ask you, wherever you are. You can be up in the balcony, the annex.

You can be in the main sanctuary. You can be at this altar. But I'm going to ask you to join with me and just raise up your hand if that's you today.

And leave it up. All over the sanctuary. In the front, up in the back.

Please don't be ashamed of Christ. He's not ashamed of you today. Raise up your hand and raise it high if you want to receive him as your Savior.

He sees that hand. He sees that heart. He sees the ones that are coming to him today.

There are people way up in the back. All over. I thank God for you.

We may not notice you. But I'm sure there's one in heaven that's noticing you right now. And responding with great joy.

I want us to pray together. Just a simple prayer. And then after we pray, please do what you can.

Do your utmost to make it to room 206. Over in the education annex. There will be people in the back that will tell you how to get there.

So that somebody can pray with you. And give you some literature. Just helping you to understand what it means to be a Christian.

You're not asked to join anything or be part of anything. Let's all pray together for those that are coming through to Christ this morning. Lord Jesus.

I am a sinner. Thank you, Jesus. That you loved me so much.

That you came to this earth. God became a man. And you paid the price.

For all the wrong things that I have done. I'm tired of controlling my own life. I'm tired of sinning against God.

Today I yield my life to you. I acknowledge that I am a sinner. But that you are my Savior.

I open my heart to you. And I invite you to come in. To be my Lord.

And my Savior. This day. I believe.

That Jesus, you died for me. I believe. That because I've opened my heart to you.

I've accepted your offer. Of forgiveness. And eternal life.

I believe. That my sins. Are right now.

Being washed away. I thank you today. For saving me.

And giving me a brand new life. In Jesus name. Amen.

Hallelujah. I want to pray in just a moment for those that came to this altar call. And for those that are in this sanctuary.

But if you prayed that. Right now. And you desired Christ as your Savior.

I'm going to ask you to beat the crowd if you can. And even if you're at the altar. Turn around and make your way down to exit one.

In the back. In the balcony. Make your way to the mezzanine.

In the education annex. Make your way over to room 206. Counselors are waiting there for you.

To pray with you. To give you a free gospel of John. And to help you get started in your walk with God.

If you could do that now. While the rest of us are praying. We really appreciate it.

God bless you. God bless you. Now have you understood this morning.

For the rest that are at this altar. That you have just misunderstood God. He's brought you to a place of despair.

Not so that you fail. So that you just turn to Him. And begin to recognize that He is your all in all.

And when you begin to sing that now. It will take on a brand new meaning. Pray with me.

Lord Jesus. Thank you. For taking away from me.

The desire for vengeance. Thank you Lord. For giving me the ability.

To forgive those. That have been allowed. To bruise my life.

Help me now. To be content. To follow you.

As a servant. And to trust you. In every place.

That you will lead me. Jesus. You are faithful to me.

You haven't failed me. You do love me. You have kept me.

Right in the palm of your father's hand. And every promise. That you've made to me.

You are keeping. That is why. I'm going through.

The things that I'm going through. I come to this altar today. To say Lord thank you.

You are a faithful God. You are faithful to me. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Remember our service today at 3 o'clock. And again this evening.

It's going to be a wonderful time this evening as well. At 6 o'clock. What more could he do? Can we sing that? What more could he do? God bless you.

Turn and shake somebody's hand. Encourage one another in the Lord. Remember the missions table.

If you want information on Kosovo. It's in the back. God bless you.

See you at 3 o'clock. This is the conclusion of the tape.

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