

# Suffering (Time for Renewal Conference)

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the significance of suffering in the Christian life as a means to deepen faith and connect with others in their pain.*

**Duration:** 43:42

**Scripture:** Exodus 12:21, Acts 16:31

**Topics:** "Suffering"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal testimony about a moment of repentance and prayer for his children. He describes how he heard the voice of God speaking to him and revealing the future of his children and future generations. The speaker then references the story of Paul and Silas in prison, highlighting their suffering and rejection, but also their ability to reach others through their own suffering. He emphasizes the importance of not losing hope and encourages listeners to be a source of hope for others who may be in despair.

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## Transcript

Father, there are some places I can't go, but Holy Spirit, there is no barrier to you. You can go into every heart in this house tonight. You can go into every inner place, every depth, every bondage, every pain.

And mighty God, you are well able to touch and to heal and to restore. Holy Spirit, I ask you for an anointing tonight to heal those that are broken hearted. Only you can do it, oh God.

Lord, we can't drum it up, we can't work it up. There has to be a divine, it has to be sovereign. It has to be your hand reaching in.

My God, I yield to you. I ask you, Holy Spirit, to speak through me again tonight. I ask, oh God, that you would go forth with power and be glorified.

Jesus, be glorified in this house. God, be magnified. We thank you, Lord, that you're going to touch what we can't touch.

My God, you're going to release what we can't release. You're going to let your glory be known in the inner man. There is going to be a shout of glory.

My God, I thank you. I praise you from the depths of my heart. You've spoken to us about it all week, all day, oh God.

We've known that you're going to do something special in this house tonight, and we give you all the praise and all the glory in Jesus' mighty name. I'm going to talk tonight about being entrusted with the inner prison. I'm going to talk a bit about suffering.

I'm trusting in the Holy Spirit tonight completely because I have suffered, I suppose, a little bit through my life, but I've not suffered near as much as many who are here tonight. There are some people that are in this sanctuary. You've come here from all different parts of the world, and you have experienced pain that is almost unspeakable.

You have experienced the pain of loss, of things very close to your heart. You've experienced the pains of betrayal, physical sickness, all types of difficulties, sometimes just too numerous to mention. I believe tonight that this message is for you.

The very beginning of his ministry, entrusted with suffering. Now this is an important thing because many people don't understand that God will sometimes entrust a person with suffering. We can somehow get the message, so it can be an audibly given message, it can be a subliminal message, you can even get it in the church sometimes that suffering, people who suffer are somehow outside of the will of God.

Now that may fly well in the Western world, but unfortunately it doesn't work for Christians in China and Vietnam and different places throughout the world. In some cases they are suffering greatly for the gospel of Jesus Christ. The early church suffered.

Paul, in Acts chapter 9 verse 15, a man called Ananias was sent by Christ to the Apostle Paul, well Saul before he became the Apostle Paul, and Christ told Ananias, he said, go your way for he's a chosen vessel to me to bear my name before Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel, and I will show you, I will show him rather, the great things that he must suffer for my name's sake. And so suffering was part of the call on the life of Paul. I find it personally tragic today that there are places where they've actually taken the words of Paul, completely discounting his life and the things that he had to go through, and the fact that he ended up imprisoned and ultimately beheaded, and using the words of Paul to somehow tell people that there is no need anymore to suffer, and that suffering somehow is not part of the Christian experience.

Well folks, I beg to differ with that. If you live long enough, suffering's coming your way. I guarantee you that.

Everyone in this house, someday death's going to knock at your door if it hasn't already. If not to you personally, then to somebody close to you. Someday you're going to have to go through things.

There are going to be circumstances that come your way that are going to be difficult to understand. The devil, of course, is always there to try to tell you that you've somehow sinned, some hidden sin, or you're out of God's favor. And quite often, you and I may never come to the point of understanding God has given a trust into your head for a particular reason.

Paul was a very unique man. He was the only one that I find in the Bible that actually called suffering fellowship. Philippians chapter 3 verse 10, let me read it to you.

He said that I may know him, the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. Can you imagine passing by the Apostle Paul as he picks himself off the ground and brushes off the dust after he's been stoned after one of his servants? Saying, what are you doing, Paul? Well, I'm doing a fellowship. I'm having fellowship with the Lord.

Would you care to join me? An incredible man. You know, the Christian life, there are people who just simply breeze through. And if that's your experience, God bless you.

They seem to some degree to be untouched by many trials with some experience. And there's nothing wrong with that. Thanks be to God.

If you come to Christ and you know him as Lord and Savior and you're walking with him and you love him and you want to see people touched by the gospel and you are one of those that are privileged to go through life and it seems like you have no trials or very few, thank God for it. That's a wonderful thing. And I rejoice with you and I rejoice for you.

There are others who have to go through experiences. Many are heart-rending and they're common to society that's all around them. And then there's a third category of people who seem to go through suffering that is beyond human ability.

If without the infusion of Christ's life within, it's beyond what they could endure with their natural ability. That was the case of Paul. He said to the Corinthian Church in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 8, he said, I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of the trouble which came to us in Asia.

He said we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. Now Paul didn't try to hide his trials from the early church. He said, I don't want you ignorant of what came to us.

We had so much difficulty that it was beyond our strength to endure it and at some point we even despaired that our life was going to be taken from us. Now, first of all, I want to clear something up. Suffering doesn't make one man holier than another and nor does it grant him greater privilege in God's kingdom.

There's always a segment that walk around with a long face. They've suffered and they look at the rest of the church with a castigating glance. If you've not suffered, you don't know anything about God.

No, suffering doesn't make you holier and it doesn't grant you any special privilege. Jesus gave us a parable in Matthew 20 and it talked about a people who murmured against the good men of the house and they came to him at the last time and they said, these people have only wrought or worked but one hour and you've made them equal to us which have borne the heat and the burden of the day. Jesus said there was a people who gave a complaint and said, look, we had to go through the fire.

We had to walk through things that were hard and these people, in comparison to us, did almost nothing. And you're giving them the same thing that you're giving us. But he answered and said to them, friend, I don't do wrong to you.

You agreed with me for a penny or for a certain wage. Take what is yours and go your way and I will give to this last even as I have given unto you. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. So suffering doesn't make you holier than anybody else but it does, however, take you and I into something of Christ which can enable us to reach a people who otherwise may never note or understand the grace of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul and Silas were such.

They suffered. The Bible says when they had laid many stripes upon them or whip marks upon their back, they cast them into prison and charged the jailer to keep them safely. Well, having received such a charge, he thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks.

And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bands were loosed. Now here's an example of men, Paul and Silas, who've gone through some very difficult times.

They have, as it has been, rejected the gospel. Even though there was only good intent in their heart, they've been rejected by the people around them. They've been wounded.

They've been brought into a place that is extremely despairing and absolutely uncomfortable to be in. But here they are in the same place that many other people are. Folks, there are people like that all over society today.

There are people in such absolute despair. They are in such absolute oppression. They have known such absolute pain that sometimes the only way they can be reached is if God should entrust a similar suffering to some in the church of Jesus Christ.

That in our hearts we can understand where they live. We can understand what they're going through. And we can go to them and be where they are.

And even though it's a dark hour, it's a midnight hour and there's pain all around, we can begin to sing praises to God. And they begin to look and say, listen, they're in the same circumstance I'm in. They've gone through the same trials that I'm going through right now.

But they are praising God. They are glorifying God. They are singing songs of Zion.

And all of a sudden at midnight, the scripture says the whole foundation of the devil to swallow a society in its own pain was broken. And every prison door was open and everyone's bands were loosed. Oh, beloved, I believe that God will entrust suffering to some that we might know Him in such intimacy that in the midst of our darkest times, we can raise our hands and begin to praise God that people around us can be set free from the captivity of darkness.

Hallelujah. David, the king, when he wrote one of the Psalms in the Old Testament, Psalm 40, let me just read it to you. The first few verses.

Incredible psalm. He said, I waited patiently for the Lord and He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of a horrible pit and out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings.

David said, God took me and in the midst of my adversity, He gave me the strength to endure. Some of the greatest saints of God that have ever lived have had to go through incredible adversity most of their lives. But out of that adversity was born a song.

Out of that adversity was born something that touched a generation. We are unwise as God's people if all we live is to escape difficulty. If the only gospel we pursue is to somehow make us comfortable, we're unwise for that will never touch our generation because people don't live there.

He said, he's put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God and many shall see it and shall fear and shall trust in the Lord. David didn't say many shall hear it. Many shall see it.

They shall see you and I walking into our place of business or our office or our community. They know we're going through adversity. They know we've been in a horrible pit, but we've not lost our confidence in God.

And we are walking with a sustaining strength that doesn't come from anything of our natural selves. Comes from something that only God Almighty Himself can do within us. And the scripture says many shall see it and shall fear and shall trust in the Lord.

There'll be an inner knowledge in those that are going through the same struggles that God Almighty is in this person. Only the hand of God could sustain him or only the hand of God could sustain her through the difficulty. I remember years ago we were pastoring in a small town and there was a lady whose husband, she had just had heartache after heartache.

Married four children to find out her husband is a homosexual. Her husband left her and she would come and visit us quite often. She had four children.

We kind of tried to help a little bit to take some of them under our wing. Had a beautiful little four-year-old girl. The sweetest little child that you ever laid eyes on.

And I remember one day the girl just started to not look very well and she took her to the doctor and the doctor said she's got leukemia. And the little girl, folks we did everything we knew to do. We fasted, we prayed, we believed, but she died.

And I remember the anguish. I remember I wasn't in the hospital the day she died, but I remember hearing of the wailing, the sorrow, the depth of sorrow that came into her heart. The questions.

Yes, legitimate questions that everybody asks in times of sorrow. Times of difficulty. God doesn't expect us to go through with a foolish smile on her face when difficulty comes our way.

He's not offended by our questions. I was asked to preach the funeral. It was such a hard time for me.

I had really believed also that God was going to touch her life and chose not to. I remember at this time I lived out in the country and I was walking through the field and I was saying, Jesus, what's going to come out of this? What could I possibly say at this funeral that's going to make any difference? How can anything positive come out of a situation like this? And I remember the Holy Spirit just so very tenderly said to me, Carter, just reach down. It was a time, it was springtime and it was a time when all of the buttercups come up in the field.

And he said, just reach down and pick a flower. And so I just obeyed the Lord and I reached down and I picked a flower out of the field. And then the Holy Spirit said to me, which flower did you pick? And I said, well, I picked a prettiest one I could see.

And Jesus said, yes, and so did I. I reached down and I picked a beautiful flower from my table and she's home with me. There's no sorrow here, there's no sorrow, there's no pain. And I sometimes make choices that people don't understand and I do things that can't be comprehended, but I give the power and the strength to go through it.

I remember just a little while later, it was only a few months later, there was a lady in our community that contacted cancer and she was dying. She was told she had only a few months to live and nobody could reach her. She wasn't a Christian and people were trying to go to her and she'd shut everybody out.

She wouldn't let anybody in the house. She was in total darkness and despair until this young mother went to her door and knocked on her door and she opened the door and she said, wait, before you close the door, let me tell you, I just lost my daughter to leukemia and I understand what you're going through. And she said, won't you come in? She went in the house, she led her to Jesus Christ, not only led her to Christ, but walked with her all the way through all the difficult days that were ahead of her until she went home to be with Jesus Christ in glory.

We have to ask ourselves, what is the value of a soul? What is the value of someone coming to Christ? And if that's what it took for that lady to come to Christ, we have to ask ourselves, is it worth it? What price would God pay for a soul? You know what price he paid. He became a man and gave his only begotten Son. There are things that come into our lives that are entrusting, that take us to the inner presence.

No one else can go there sometimes, but somebody who understands and somebody who has experienced, but they've also been kept by the keeping power of God. Paul said in Philippians chapter 3, in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God that passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. Paul said bring it to God and God will give you peace and he will give you a peace of mind that is not anything of the natural.

No one around can understand it, but it's a peace that comes from God and from God alone. Again in Acts 16 27, it says the keeper of the prison waking out of his sleep. Now you remember Paul and Silas are praising.

The foundation is shaken, the doors all open, everyone's bands are loosed and the keeper of the prison awaked out of his sleep and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword and would have killed himself supposing that the prisoners have fled. Now the keeper of the prison is a type of a person who has lost control. Everything that he was charged with seems to have gotten away.

Now just like the man in the song of Solomon chapter 1 verse 6, he cries out they have made me keeper of the vineyards but my own vineyard have I not kept. He's a man who feels like his reason for living is over. And so the voice of a suffering man, Paul cries out and Paul says don't harm yourself for we are all here.

Don't harm yourself. Let me tell you a little bit of a personal testimony. I studied law in university and when I finished university I got into police work and and then not long after I was saved.

And so I approached the Bible from the legal perspective. I saw the law clearly because that's where my mind was, that's how I lived. I saw fully the law and I saw just a little piece of grace.

And I made Christianity a difficult thing in my own home. People who live under the law do that. Everything becomes rules.

I was an extremist. I found out that there was a homosexual teacher in the grade school where my children started to attend. I took my children out of the school and we bought a school.

Started a Christian school. And I guess like the keeper I thought maybe just somehow I can box my own children in and keep them under the law and cause them to live for God. You know how, you know parents have tried to do that? Well you know the trumpet could sound tonight and if you're found at a movie theater you never know you might not go.

You know it's funny nobody's laughing because some of you have done that and others have heard that. I tried to keep my children. I made it a difficult thing for them to lay hold of God.

In the later years when I finally through my own brokenness found an absolute revelation of grace. I found grace but I'd already done some damage in my own home. I know I'm speaking to a lot of men here tonight.

I'm keeping others vineyards but my own vineyard I've not kept. When I finally found out about the extent of grace, the beauty of grace, the wondrousness of grace, the keeping of grace, incredible covenant of God, the wonderful provision for all of our need, the fact that we don't work for anything. It's all given to us.

It's all imputed to us. The sorrow of my heart was that I had so misrepresented God in my own house and so made it difficult for my own children to lay hold of God. And so then I did as the keeper does.

I took a sword out and began to run myself through every day. Every day. Every day I'd walk upstairs and I'd go into my children's bedrooms and I'd cry over every pillow.

God forgive me for not representing you. Forgive me for portraying you as a hard man. Forgive me Lord for I did it in ignorance of God but so misrepresenting you in my own home, making it so difficult.

Christianity wasn't fun for my children. It wasn't a joyful thing. I remember one of my sons just turned 11 or 12 years old and it was just this little rinky-dink ride, not a carnival, but just like a place where rides came to town.

And one night our family was going to go there and he said to me, Dad, would you please not come? He said because we just get there and you get this burden for the lost and you make it such a miserable time for everybody. I remember crying over my children's pillows every day. I made it a daily ritual to beat myself up.

It was about, I guess, six years ago or so that I was one day in my, headed up to my office to do my thing, to cry. And I went up and I got on my knees and I, you know, I guess the more you stab yourself the better. And I started weeping.

I started praying for my children. I said God forgive me for what I did. And I remember, I didn't expect this to happen, but the Lord said, Carter, stop crying.

And he said, I'm going to speak to you and I'm going to tell you the future of your children. Of course, I'm a Bible believer, so I questioned the voice. You know, is this you? Is this really you, Lord, that's about to do this? And where's the scriptural precedent for this? I went in the Bible.

He showed me some things in the Old Testament. I said, okay, that's good enough. And he said, I'm going to tell you the future of your children now.

And each of my children, he showed me the future. He showed me where they were going to go and what kind of people they were going to become. He showed me my future generations, not just my children, but my grandchildren.

He showed me there was going to be a blessing of God on my house to the fourth generation. And then he said, don't ever accuse me of being unfaithful to you again. He said, when you come into my presence with all of your tears and draw out your sword and run it through your heart day after day, he said, you are accusing me of being unfaithful to you.

Paul said, don't do it. He cried with a loud voice. He said, do thyself no harm, for we are all here.

Paul said, I know whom I have believed and I'm persuaded that he's able to keep that which I've committed to him against that day. Then the keeper ran in and he said, in verse 29, it says he called for a light and sprang in and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas. I believe that some are doing that tonight already to say, pastor, I so want to believe you, but help me to see it.

As far as I'm concerned, I've lost everything. I've lost my ministry. I've lost my home.

I've lost my children. I've lost my credibility. I've lost my integrity.

Help me to see it. Help me to understand it. What is the principle that I can base my faith on? Show me why you can say to me that nothing is lost.

Then Paul came to him and said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved in thy house. I don't personally believe this was a word of knowledge just for this jailer. You see, those who have suffered share an intimate knowledge of the keeping and sustaining power of God, which is often hardly understood by just a casual observer.

Those that suffer, God entrusts to their ministry, entrusts to them a ministry which can touch the deepest inner prisons of their generation. Those who have suffered have an unconquerable faith that arises in the heart, which understands the pattern that is set by God. When God delivered all of his children out of the bondage that they were being held in through Moses, Moses stood before Pharaoh.

That is a type of Christ, I know that, but it's also a type of the believer. He stood before Pharaoh, the most powerful despot of that generation that had all of the children of Israel in bondage. And God gave him a word and he stood before Pharaoh.

And I'm giving you a word tonight, I believe it's coming from the heart of God, that you can rise up and stand before the devil yourself for your family. You can stand for your children. You can stand for your grandchildren and say, let them go.

Then Pharaoh tries to work a deal just like the devil will. All right, I'll forgive you. You go, you worship God.

But Moses stood as every believer in this house should stand tonight and say, no deal. We all go, we go, our wives go, our children go, our grandchildren go, we all go. Hallelujah.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved in thy house. Paul knew the faithfulness of God. He knew the delivering power of God.

He knew the keeping power of God. He was saying to him, mister, I know what you've done. I know how hard you've been.

But if you trust in God, God will not fail you. God will touch your house. God will touch your children.

And folks, I have to tell you tonight, it is happening in my children's lives exactly the way the Holy Spirit told me it was going to happen. Exactly. Every once in a while, the Holy Spirit gives me a word of knowledge.

Not very often, but it's been tested over the years. And those on this platform know it to be a genuine gift of God. One time, for example, a man who thought he had lost his ministry, an evangelist of some report, snuck into Times Square Church saying, God, if I don't hear from you, my ministry is over.

It's finished. I'm done. I stood to preach that night.

The Holy Spirit, before I could preach, I could not shake what the Holy Spirit was speaking to my heart. And I said, there's a visiting minister here tonight. You're caught in immorality.

And if you will lay it down, not only will God restore your ministry, but grant you a larger ministry than you had before. He'll give you more authority. Before the night was out, that man was in tears.

The Holy Spirit had touched him. There have been instances like that over the years. And I'm not trying to qualify a gift, but I can't shake this.

I can't shake it tonight. I've got to speak this word to somebody. There's a couple here tonight.

You lost a child, a teenage child, under very difficult circumstances. And you've been wounded, so wounded, so hurt. You've run yourself through about it every day, especially you, sir, whoever you are.

You've run yourself through every day. You've hated yourself. You've even thought about suicide.

But I feel like I have a word from heaven. Do yourself no harm. We're all here.

I tell you, I've labored with this thing all day. I said, God, do I dare say it? But every time I tried to put it away, a weeping came upon it. Your child has made it home.

Your child made it home. Now, can you imagine the jailer coming home with Paul and Silas? This rough-top, inner-prison man, probably cracked a whip in his own house as much as he did in the jail. Can you imagine him coming home, and you can see his children all cowering in the corner, whatever it is that they normally did when he came home? And he walks in with these two men, and there just seems to be such a change has come over him.

And he takes out a cloth, perhaps, and some water, some warm water, and the Bible says he washed their stripes. Can you imagine his children, so amazed, seeing their harsh, controlling father so changed? Hallelujah. You're having a shock.

This man comes in, and he's part of a system that wounds people. And all of a sudden, he's bathing the wounds, and he's being so tender. There are some men here tonight.

You're going to go home, and the Holy Spirit's going to show you how to be tender, going to show you how to bathe the wounds that perhaps you've created, going to show you the touch of God, going to release you into the love of God, and give you the power to be another man, take you out from condemnation, release from you the feeling that you have somehow to, you've got to ramrod your whole family into heaven. No, you don't ramrod them, you leave them. They'll follow you, trust me, they'll follow you.

And the Scripture says he washed their stripes first, and then he was baptized, he and all his. And when he had brought them into his house, he said, meet before them and rejoice, believing in God with all his house. Hallelujah.

Can you see it now? Setting meat down on the family table, opening this book and saying, my sons, my daughters, rejoice. Let me tell you about the goodness of God. Let me tell you about the faithfulness of God.

Setting meat on the table. Not having to prove anything to anybody. But all your righteousness now is in Jesus Christ.

Your whole reputation is all about Jesus, it's not about what you've done or what you've been. All the pride has washed away. All the sense of having to hold on to something is gone.

All the damnable ministerial pride has died. And you've come through the door and you're a real Christian. Imagine how your children feel when they see you going to your wife, where the two of you have played church, and they see you going to your wife with tears and say, honey, forgive me.

I've sinned against you and I've sinned against God. You see it as fathers go to their children and say, son, even some sons that maybe are grown and some are gone now from your house, you go to them and say, forgive me. Forgive me how I lived before you, what I did, how I represented God or didn't represent God, forgive me.

Can you see it? Somehow I've seen it in my spirit today. I've seen it this week as the Holy Ghost just blew everything I was going to preach out the window and just began to speak to my heart about you. About how much he loved you, about how tender he's willing to be with you, about his desire to restore, heal, send out a people who have not just been at a convention in New York, but have been changed by the power of God.

I've suffered. You better believe it. Is it worth it? Just ask Jesus, I guess.

Is it worth it? Whatever God entrusts to me to endure, I've learned to thank him now for the hard times, not just the good times. The hard times produce something in me that the good times don't. The hard times take me somewhere that the good times could never take me.

The hard times make me something that the good times will never make me. The hard times mold something into me that the good times will never put into my heart. The hard times show me my need of God.

They show me my own inability, but they show me the grace and the goodness and the power and the love and the mercy of my Savior. The hard times enable me to go. I had an opportunity not, well, it was a while back, but I had an opportunity to go into prisons, different places.

Remember one time I spoke to a prison of 700 sex offenders, some of the worst sex offenders in that particular country, and to be able to tell them the only thing that separates you and I is the blood of Jesus Christ. How wonderful. The hard times give me faith.

I thank him for entrusting me with some suffering. Don't misunderstand me, I'm not on some kind of a suffering kicker, but I do thank him for entrusting me with the things that he has entrusted to me. I thank him for using me for his glory, and I think you should do that too tonight.

And I believe that you should stand with me tonight and say, Lord Jesus, I believe for my house, for my trial. I believe for the power to be changed into a man or woman who can be changed, and a man or woman who can be entrusted to reach the inner prisons of my generation. There needs to be integrity and humility in ministry again.

America and Canada and countries throughout the world need honest men and women of God in the pulpit again. If that's what you would like to be, I'm going to ask you to stand. You don't have to unless the Holy Spirit is speaking to you.

I'd like you to stand. I'm going to ask Pastor Neil to come and lead us in prayer. Hallelujah.

You know, I really don't know where to go from here, but the Holy Spirit does. One thing we never do at Times Square Church, we don't manipulate people. I thank God for it.

It's so freeing. You are now free to let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart. You want to cry, you can cry.

You want to shout, you can shout. You want to raise your hands, you can. You want to leave them by your side, just go ahead.

But the issue is agree with the Word of God, and whatever the Holy Spirit has spoken to your heart, let him now begin to do it in your life. But I would ask you to do one thing. Would you thank him for everywhere that you are suffering right now? Would you thank him for the trials that have come into your life? Would you thank him for being faithful to you? Would you thank him for entrusting you to something and places where no one else can go but you? Mighty God, I praise you.

I bless you, God. I bless you for everything that you've done in every life in this house tonight. I bless you, Jesus, for all the struggles that are represented here and all the trials and all the difficulties.

Because in the midst of it, you have shown yourself to be faithful. Mighty God, the fact that we're here tonight shows that you are faithful to us, O God. You are faithful, God, in the midst of our struggles, our trials, our difficulties, beginning with our own children.

God, beginning in your house and everywhere you send us to, we thank you for the trials. Thank you for the hard times. Thank you for the difficult times.

We thank you for the impossible times. Because in the midst of those, you show that you are God to us. You are faithful to us, O God.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Thank God for that message tonight.

I don't want to draw unnecessary attention, but Sister Gwen, would you please just remain standing? Just please stand for one second. Sister Gwen Wilkerson. I want to just take just an opportunity.

Here is a woman that after a message like this is standing with her hands outreached, worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ, and she's looking absolutely gorgeous. But I wanted to say something to you all today. Here is a woman who's gone through 25 operations in her body.

Five of those have been for cancer. Here is a woman who has gone through extreme suffering, and at the end of a message like this, she's standing and she's saying, I love you and I thank you, Jesus. I thank you, Jesus.

Beloved, the devil might have thrust us into situations that have hurt us. Circumstances might have thrust us into situations. There might have even been times that you have wounded yourself.

That you've done things that have caused the pain to come upon your family. But I tell you one thing. All things work together for good to them that love God and know the will according to his purposes.

Now, beloved, whatever you're going through, the devil is a liar and God is true, and we are going to thank him tonight. Let's lift the roof off tonight with thanksgiving in the name of Jesus. Thank him, beloved, unashamedly now tonight.

Thank him. Thank him. Thank him for that small church.

Thank him for that hardship. Thank him for the sufferings. Thank him for the difficulties that he's taken you through.

Thank him. Don't stop thanking him now. Just thank him, beloved.

Praise and thanksgiving will overcome every defeat of the devil in the midst of his suffering. Paul and Silas began to worship the Lord and thank him. Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Give him thanks, beloved.

Give him thanks. Don't just stop. Just give him thanks now.

Thank him. Thank him. Thank him from your heart.

Thank him from your heart. Thank God tonight. Thank God for a message.

Thank God for a pastor who will stand up and deliver a message when the whole world is trying to seek its own blessing and its own particular comfort. God is saying that there's a people who will rise up and thank him in the midst of adversity who will thank him. Hallelujah.

Give him thanks one more time, beloved. Just thank Jesus. Thank him.

Hallelujah. Worship the Lord with all of your heart. The blood of Jesus has washed you.

You're clean tonight. The blood of Jesus has washed you. You're clean.

You're clean. Now stand before him and thank God. Hallelujah.

Glory to Jesus. Father, tonight my prayer is one of thanksgiving. Lord, for those pastors in small churches struggling, battling, condemned, God, I pray tonight that they're going to stand on a new foundation and begin thanking God.

Hallelujah. Thank God that you've placed them in that position. Lord, I thank you tonight that you're going to touch every person and there's going to be such a shout through New York City as men and women go back to their hotels.

There's going to be a thanksgiving, a joy, a shout in their heart. Men and women are going to see the song that you put within them and we give you thanks in Jesus' name. Hallelujah.

Glory to God. Glory to God. Hallelujah.

This is the conclusion of the message.

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