

# How God Transforms Your Life

by Danny Bond

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in Jesus Christ, effective fervent prayer, and meditation in the process of transformation and change in one's life.*

**Duration:** 46:14

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 13:23, Jeremiah 17:9, Jeremiah 33:3, John 3:4, Acts 9:11-17

**Topics:** "Transformation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the transformation of Saul into Paul and how God can transform anyone's life. The process of transformation begins with faith in Jesus Christ, followed by the sending of faithful disciples to help and guide the individual. Fervent prayer is emphasized as a crucial component in this transformation. The speaker also highlights the importance of God's plan for each person's life and how He will bring faithful disciples to assist in their growth. The sermon emphasizes the power of forgiveness and the confirmation of God's work in one's life through the testimony of others.

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## Transcript

The title of this message is How God Transforms Your Life. To me it is a very, very encouraging message. So many today are looking for a transformed life in the world in which we live.

They go about this in a plethora of ways. Psychology in the last several decades has been thrust forth as an answer to change your life. The whole idea of psychology, the whole field of psychiatry has its benefits, but in the end there is one problem, and that is someone can analyze you, but they cannot change you.

Only Jesus Christ can change a life. And there is, of course, a lot of change that happens with AA. Alcoholics find change in AA, but in the end when it's all said and done, and it's a good thing to get an alcoholic off of alcohol, but in the end when it's all said and done, what you have is a sober sinner.

They still need to know the changing power of Jesus Christ in the depths of their life. In the last several decades the whole idea of the entire prison institution has gone toward the philosophy that what prisoners need is to be educated. And so now you have people in prison that educate themselves until they find loopholes in the law to educate themselves right out of prison.

And now we have these people that were in prison because they were dangerous on the street. They're back out on the street and they're far more dangerous than they ever were because they're far more

educated. So they're smarter at being criminals.

And that doesn't work, obviously. Then there is the whole idea of positive thinking. It comes in many packages.

It's called by many names, but positive thinking. In Jeremiah 13, 23, God said, Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to doing evil. It is also in Jeremiah that God says the heart of man is deceitful and wicked above all things.

Who can know it? The answer is not you, but God. In John 3, 4, Nicodemus came to Jesus Christ, the teacher in Israel. The Bible says one translation says the teacher in Israel, perhaps the finest.

He came to Jesus Christ by night, wanting the answers to life. And Jesus said to him, he went straight to his need and he said, You must be born again. And that is the answer.

You must be born again. That is where the transformation begins to take place, because it's the change on the inside, not on the outside. So we have that great transformation here in the life of Saul of Tarsus, one of the most unlikely individuals to ever undergo such a change.

And it happened because Jesus Christ loved him, came to him and changed his life. Let's read in Acts chapter nine, verse 10. Pick up where we left off last time.

Saul was converted and then led by the hand, blinded by the light of Jesus. He was led by the hand into Damascus, dropped off at a house where he sat there for three days, didn't eat and drink. Now, verse 10, chapter nine.

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias and to him, the Lord said in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Here am I, Lord. So the Lord said to him, Arise and go.

Just like he said to Paul, Saul on the road to Damascus, he said, Arise and go. Here he says, Arise and go. God says that a lot.

Arise and go, he says to the street called straight and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying and in a vision. This is amazing. Ananias is having his own vision.

He says now Saul of Tarsus is praying and he's having a vision and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him so that he might receive his sight. Then in verse 13, Ananias answered. He said, Lord, I have heard from many about this man.

How much harming is done to your saints in Jerusalem? It's late. Lord, do you know it's that whole attitude we sometimes bring to the Lord? Well, do you know? Have you heard about this man, Lord? How much harm he's done to your saints in Jerusalem? And do you know that he has authority from the chief priest to come here and bind all who call on your name? But the Lord said to him, Go. I'm sure there was a pause for he has a chosen vessel of mine to bear my name before the Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel, for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake.

Verse 17 and Ananias went his way and entered the house, laying his hands on him. He said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. What a marvelous passage.

Basically, four things I want to draw out from here, and they all have to do with how God transforms a life. It begins with faith in Jesus Christ. Then you will find that God will always send those faithful disciples to you to help you.

You will find fervent prayer always involved, faith in Christ, fervent prayer, faithful disciple. And then ultimately you will discover God has a fantastic plan for your life. These are the components of a transformed life.

Let's take them one at a time. It all begins as it began with Saul here with faith in Christ. God met him.

Jesus Christ met him on the Damascus Road, and it was Christ who converted him. Do you realize that Saul was converted by the glorified Christ himself? Do you know that he was traveling with an entourage of Christian persecutors? There wasn't anybody with him that loved the Lord. They were all the way down the road.

Damascus was saying, Do you know that the Lord loves you and he wants to convert? You know, he was traveling to arrest and imprison and kill Christians. Jesus Christ appeared to him in his glory, risen from the dead, and he converted Saul to Christianity into a relationship with him. That is so encouraging to me.

You know why? Because no believer was there to pray with him. It was Christ alone. What an encouraging thought, because the risen Christ, this is what it tells me.

The risen Christ can save an individual directly himself anywhere on Earth. That is so encouraging to me because you wonder so much relationally about what about this loved one in my life that no one's ever had the opportunity to share Christ with. What's going to happen? Is it fair? What about those people out there? I have relatives on the other side of the world.

Jesus Christ can come to a person and save them personally without anybody else's help. Isn't that great? It's right there in the passage. It's always been there in the passage.

And I'll tell you the truth, it didn't really come to me that clear until last time when we were studying it. And theologically, it's comforting to me because, you know, in the world, China, the Philippines, Japan, etc., Japan is less than one percent born again Christian, less than one percent. You look at statistics like that, and as you begin to think about it, it troubles your soul.

And then you begin to think about how many missionaries are there and how many people are in the churches there and how many missionaries are going out from America. And then you start to think about the state of the church in America. What kind of preaching comes from the pulpits in America? What kind of a gospel is given even when the gospel is given? And it becomes very encouraging to me theologically that Jesus Christ is, in the end, the one who saves souls.

You realize you are given the gospel, but the gospel doesn't save you. In the end, it's Christ himself who saves you. He saves you.

He rescues you. So theologically, as I as I survey the world, as I look at world history and I think, Lord, what about the poor people out there that never heard about you? And what about the children who died in the third world countries? Jesus Christ has it all covered. Isn't that comforting to your soul? Our God is a rescuing God and he's well able to do it.

Saul was converted, converted by the glorified Christ himself. And then Saul came to believe. This is fascinating.

Saul came to believe on the human Jesus, on the human Jesus, by first seeing the God Jesus. First, he saw the risen, glorified Christ. Then he came to believe that the human Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

Isn't that fascinating? The disciples, the apostles, they spent three years with the human Jesus Christ. And during that time, they went through a whole process of change in their thinking to come to the point where finally Peter makes his declaration at Caesarea Philippi. He says, Jesus says, who do men say that I am? Peter said, they give him, you know, the disciples are spouting off some say, some say, some say.

Peter says, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus says, the father has revealed that to you. But it took them this whole period of time to believe that the human Jesus was in fact, God with Saul of Tarsus.

It was exactly the opposite. The first encounter he had with Jesus Christ was face to face as God. Isn't that amazing? And then he came to believe that the human being, Jesus of Nazareth, was the Christ, the Messiah, the king of the Jews.

All of that is to say this, make it your business from this day forth to never put God in a box again, never put God in a box again. And so the faith in Christ is where it all begins with the conversion experience, with Christ saving you himself. And then he begins to work in your life.

It begins with faith. Now, anytime you mention faith and camp on it for a little bit, somebody begins to think, and it may be you, but you know, you're talking about transformation and change. I have faith, but my faith is so weak.

I wonder if God will honor my faith because it's so weak. Then you need to hear these words from John Rogers. Weak faith is true faith as precious, though not so great as strong faith, but as precious for the same Holy Spirit, the author of the same gospel, the same instrument is the one who brings it about for it is not the strength of our faith that saves, but true faith.

Isn't that great? So your faith may be little, but if it's true, it's precious. And that's what God looks at. You know what mustard seed faith is? Yes, mustard seed faith is this little tiny faith that moves mountains.

When was the last time you moved one? Oh, man, don't condemn me, brother. I have never moved a mountain. Does that mean I don't even have faith the size of a mustard seed? It means you've never moved a mountain.

What is mustard seed faith? Jesus came down from a mountain, the Mount of Transfiguration, he found the disciples, they could not cast out this demon that was throwing this boy into the fire and trying to drown him all the time. And so the father says to Jesus, help me. Your disciples can't cast this demon out.

And Jesus says, if you had faith as a grain of mustard seed and so on, you'd say to this mountain and it's like everybody reads that we all go that I'm disqualified because I haven't moved any mountains lately. Lord, someday can I have mustard seed faith? I remember being a young Christian and practicing on moving mountains. I was commanding them to move and none of them moved.

I was so condemned when I was all done. Then move. Then I tried a dirt clog, you know, because I didn't have any success with a big mountain.

Jesus cast out the demon and then he went on to say this kind does not come out, but by prayer. Another translation says and fasting. You know what he was saying? He was saying this to them.

You gave up too soon. Mustard seed faith, to put it simply and quickly, is faith that starts small and grows bigger and stronger in the face of opposition. That is mustard seed faith.

Starts small and grows bigger and greater in the face of opposition and it grows stronger by the power of the Holy Spirit within you. Faith in Christ is where the transformed life begins. The next thing is fervent prayer.

Fervent prayer. Acts 9 11. So the Lord said to him, arise and go to the street called straight.

Inquire at the house of Judas or one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. Behold, he is praying. I know the street he's on, the house he's in, and I know that he's praying.

Fervent prayer is such a big part of a transformed life. It really is. And I think that the foundational aspect of fervent prayer to keep it, to give it birth in the beginning and keep it going.

Frankly, I think it's the blood of Jesus. I'll tell you why. Hold your place here and turn to James chapter 5 verse 16.

James chapter 5 verse 16. James 5 16 says, confess your sins or trespasses to one another, pray for one another that you may be healed. Then this the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Now we know that verse, right? We quote that verse, right? But how many of us really believe that it's for us? If the truth were known, I want you to say that many of you believe that it's true for righteous individuals and thus you just you just disqualify yourself. Well, we all know that the effect of fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. You know, prayer is so powerful.

But in your heart, you're saying, oh, would to God that I was righteous so that I could have effective prayer, too. But until I am, I'm out. So I got to find some people like that to do some praying for me.

Are you like that? You see, because the effect of fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Yes, that's true. It has to be true.

It's in the Bible. Want to know the truth? How does God regard even your finest seasons of righteousness? Just as it stands alone with you as a human being. Yes.

You know, what is it? Filthy rags. OK, so. What kind of righteousness is this? It has to be the righteousness based on the blood of Jesus Christ.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says that we are given as a free gift in salvation by God in exchange for our sin. The righteousness of God in Jesus Christ, what kind of righteousness are you imputed in salvation and justification? You're justified in a moment of time. It is an act of God takes place in the mind and the heart of God, not in the emotion of the believer, but in the mind and the heart of God.

When you are justified in a moment of time, he declares you righteous. How righteous does he declare you? He gives you the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He takes your life and all that you have lived out and he takes it away and he imputes to you a righteousness as though you lived the life that Christ lived.

The righteousness of God in Jesus Christ is given to you as a free gift because Christ bore your sin and mine on the cross and rose again. So positionally, I am in Christ, righteous in Christ clothed in the robes of his righteousness. If I could put it that way, when God looks at me, he sees me ever and always in Christ.

If I am born again, I am always in Christ. I will always be in Christ. He will always see me in Christ.

So he sees the righteousness of God in Christ. Oh, I love that. Now I can come back to James 5:16 and start praying and believe that it will avail much.

You say, well, wait, you're talking about positional righteousness. Yes, I am. Isn't there such a thing in the Christian life as.

Practical righteousness. Yes, there is. So let me ask you, do you think God puts the heavy emphasis on practical righteousness, the way you live to answer your prayers, or does he put the heavy in on your positional righteousness? Let me just put it to you like this.

God honors your prayers because he's honoring his son. That's why every prayer that was ever answered in the final sense that you prayed was because God honored the fact that you are in Christ and Christ is eternally righteous. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

And guess what? As you continue to thank God that you're righteous by the blood of Christ and fervently pray, what's going to happen to you if you fervently pray a lot? You'll get more practically righteous. You will in the process. God is good the way he works things out, isn't he? I'm so glad.

So fervent prayer begins with the blood of Christ and it presses on through the pauses of Christ. So what is that? That's what we have right here. Saul of Tarsus is converted on the road to Damascus.

He is led by the hand into Damascus to the house of one called Judas, a different Judas, of course, and he's on a street called Straight. And he's there for three days. Now, look at this.

Here he is. He's going along. God suddenly, dramatically works in his life and he does nothing for three days.

By comparison, he's just sitting alone. He's not eating. He's not drinking.

Listen, if you think that when he got to Damascus, born again, Christians ran out from behind buildings and embraced him, lifted, hoisted him to their shoulders and carried him through the streets to this house and sat him down, said, well, we're going to take care of you. Listen, if that's your picture, forget it. He was on his way to Damascus to arrest and take people away, drag them to Jerusalem, imprison them and see them put to death if he could.

He's taken into Damascus by a bunch of Christ rejecters who aren't sure what happened. They dump him off at this place and they split. And he sits there for three days, that's a pause.

This huge work of Christ on the Damascus Road and then for three days there's this pause on the part of Christ and he's just sitting there. And then Christ speaks to Ananias and then at the same time, Christ is

revealing himself to Saul in a vision and speaking to him. But there is a pause.

Have you found that he pauses in your life? He will act in such marvelous ways and then he'll pause and you're going, Lord, this the longest pause yet. You know, when are you going to act again? You see, fervent prayer presses on through the pauses of Christ. In the book of Revelation, we studied it recently, a hand came out from the throne holding a scroll and a voice came saying, who is worthy to take the scroll and loose its seals? And everybody was silent and nobody stepped forward.

And there's a long pause. And in the long pause, John said, I began to weep and he wept and he wept. You see, what happens to us is very much like what happened to John.

We get caught in a pause with Christ and nothing is happening and we start to weep. Lord, this the longest pause ever. In fact, I'm pretty sure you're not going to pick up where you left off and I'm going to be left here.

Listen, let the Lord pause. Because in his pauses, he's still active and in his pauses, he's really wanting us to meditate. Meditation, let me tell you, meditation will bring application to your life from what you of what you know.

It will be bring healing to your life as you reflect on your life with God and Christ and other people you know. And it will bring instruction to you as you digest the things you've learned. Listen, how many things have you been taught from the Bible and how many of them do you really apply? It's a rhetorical question.

You don't have to answer it. I'm not going to ask for a show of hands. We know a lot more than we apply because we meditate so little, right? So.

Pauses on the part of God are good times to meditate. And to continue to pray, and that is why you find in the Bible it says it is good to wait on the Lord. It is good to wait on the Lord whenever he has acted and he pauses, he will act again.

But in the meantime, he's acting behind the scenes. You just don't see it. So we continue on through the pauses.

Do you know that when God rejected Saul as being king because he was so disobedient? He chose a man after his own heart, right? And Samuel was there and he brought in all the brothers of David, sons of Jesse. He brought them all in and he filed them by and he's going, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, not the one, not the one, not the one. And he goes, isn't there another one around here somewhere? Yeah, but he's young.

He's little. He's a ruddy youth. You know, King James talk.

And so they bring in David and Samuel goes, yeah, he's the one. Fantastic. And he takes out this big thing of oil and he dumps it all over his head and anoints him to be the king of Israel.

And about 12 years later, if not more, he became the king of Israel. Long pause, huh? David goes out drenched in oil. Who feeling good, Lord, going to be king.

Pause. Long time later, after over way over a decade, moving toward another decade, he finally becomes king. You know, Lord, that was the longest pause yet in my life.

Yet you find in that time. If you read your psalms, what do you find? Saul persecutes David, doesn't he? All over the place. A psalm of David written in and getting as Saul was persecuting him.

And they're full of prayers, aren't they? Fervent prayer presses on in the midst of the pauses of God. It's one of the greatest things we can ever learn in the Christian life. John Bunyan said John Bunyan, who wrote Pilgrim's Progress, he said, you can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.

Get it? You can do more than pray. After you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed, because praying is the greatest thing you can ever do. Prayer sets in motion the omnipotent power of God.

Because he has chosen and ordained that it should be so in your life, that's why. Now, because he's our genie, because he's not. He doesn't respond to formulas and, you know, naming and claiming and commanding him what to do.

But he does respond to real faith in the heart. Lord, could you do this? Will you do this? And I love what John Trapp said. God never denied that soul anything that went as far as heaven to ask for it.

Ooh, that is so good. So how is the life transformed? It is transformed by faith in Christ and by fervent prayer and then by God sending a faithful disciple to you, somebody who's ahead of you in the Christian life. So practical, so lovely.

And Ananias is that man for Saul who becomes Paul. God will bring faithful disciples who are ahead of you to help you grow in the Lord. And I'm going to give you five words fairly quickly that I find that rise to my heart.

They're not necessarily in the text, but it's what's going on here. Five words that describe this faithful disciple, Ananias, who was sent to Saul to help him go forward and grow in the Lord. First one is certainty.

What you find about a faithful disciple is certainty. Acts 9, 10, now there was a certain disciple named Ananias. Do you realize that all disciples that are real disciples are known to God? They are all certain disciples to the Lord.

This man is known in Damascus as a converted Jew. We find that out from Paul preaching later in the book of Acts, Acts chapter 22. He's known throughout Damascus as a converted Jew who really knew the Bible.

He is, in fact, a certain disciple. You are a certain disciple. You're not just a number in the kingdom of God.

Isn't that good to know? I mean, Jesus said God knows the very hairs, the number of the hairs on your head. Now I know how hair falls out every day when you wash and brush and stuff. I know that when God comes to recount on mine, he's like done, done really quick for some of you, takes longer.

But isn't it good to know that you're not just a number in the kingdom of God? You are a certain there. Every disciple is a certain disciple. And this man is a certain disciple in Damascus.

He is a certain disciple because he is known there as one who really knows the word of God. And he is a certain disciple because he is certainly chosen by God to go and to help Saul. It's not a random choice.

It is a certain precise choice on the part of God. Because of the man's background. We find out in Acts 22, as I said, that he knew the law.

He was a converted Jew who knew the law. He is the perfect one to go and talk to Saul. And in fact, Acts 22, 14, when he goes to him, Paul's recounting the story and he says, then he said, the God of our fathers has chosen you.

He's the perfect one to go and relate to this man. I've I've often seen him as just some random guy who's praying and gets a vision and then he gets to go be the one to pray for him. No, it's because of his background, because of what he knew, because of the way he was converted and because of how he could relate to this man.

He is sent by design, precise and certain. Another thing is that it's not only a certainty, but his availability in Acts chapter nine, verse 10. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias and to him, the Lord said in a vision, Ananias.

And watch this. He said, here I am, Lord. You know what it literally means in the original.

I am all here, Lord. Oh, I love that. Ananias, I'm all here, Lord.

What do you want me to do? I'm all yours. That's exactly what he said. It isn't just here present.

No, I'm all here, Lord. I'm all yours. That's so great.

Certainty, availability. I'm all here. Clarity.

Those that God uses to take you forward have clear direction from the Lord. Clarity in verse 11. So the Lord said to him, this is clarity.

Arise and go to the street called straight and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him so that he might receive his sight. Clear direction.

God loves to give clear direction by the work of his Holy Spirit. In Jeremiah 33, verse three, God says, call to me and I will answer you and I will show you great and mighty things that you do not know. Do you realize? Do you realize there are Christians walking around that are learning great and mighty things they didn't know before? Those are the ones that we call on fire.

Because they are seeing great and mighty things they did not see before. Believe me, the Bible broadens and deepens with years, and there are so many great and mighty things there that we have not seen before that he wants to open up to our souls and then apply them to our hearts and come to us by the spirit and speak to us. When you read that word in Jeremiah 33, three mighty, it could be rendered fenced in, cut off or inaccessible.

Those things that are in the heart of God, not only to God, he makes known to us at just the right time. Certainty, availability, clarity. Then comes the difficulty.

What he's asking him to do is not easy. He is as Ananias is going along in his life. He's loving the Lord.

He's known around town as a guy who loves the Lord, knows the word. Suddenly God comes to him with the greatest difficulty market, the greatest difficulty of his life. He says in verse 13, I have heard from many about he calls him this man, this man.

Which you don't get in the Bible, you read the words, this tone of voice. I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to the saints in Jerusalem and how here he has authority of the chief priest to bind all who call upon his name. It's difficulty because of who Saul was.

Further, it's difficulty because of how fast he had to obey Ananias, arise and go. How fast he had to obey verse 17, it says, and Ananias went his way. He went further, it's difficult because of get this, how much he had to forgive.

You know, it's possible that this Ananias, he's a Jew, it's possibly is driven to Damascus because of the persecution of Saul. It's possible he lost a brother or a sister or a wife or a mother or a father or an uncle or a cousin to Saul's persecution. That is very possible.

And because there was such close people, it is highly possible that he lost someone who died, was dead because of this man. Now he is to go in and of all things, lay hands on him. You mean I have to touch him? Do you realize how hard that would be? And so it's difficult because of who Saul was, of how fast he had to obey and because how much he had to forgive.

And in verse 17, we find that he did forgive. Ananias went his way and laying his hands on him, he said, what does it say? Acts 9, 17. Brother Saul, you imagine how comforting that was to Saul's heart.

Oh my, for three days he's been blinded by the light of Christ. He's not eating, he's not drinking, he's not doing anything but meditating and thinking about his life, where he's been and what he's done. And you imagine how bad he felt because now he knows how wrong he was, how many people he killed, he murdered them.

He was inhaling murder, we saw last time. He had to be feeling as bad as a human being can felt. I know it's true because at the end of his life, he said, Jesus Christ, 2nd Timothy, he wrote, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I was chief.

No, I'm chief, I'm chief. Why? Because he persecuted the church and he did irreparable damage. Listen, when someone's dead, it's final, isn't it? So Ananias had to go to this man and say, brother, Saul, he went with the forgiving heart of Jesus Christ.

Can you imagine the comfort? But you see, that is our Christ. No matter how much you have sinned, no matter how far you've gone into the darkness, there is still forgiveness for you in Jesus Christ. And you need to know that today and come to him today and receive that forgiveness.

Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me, the Lord Jesus, who you saw on the road to Damascus. He has sent me one more confirmation that what happened was true. And the Lord does that in your life.

He'll convert you and then he'll send others to confirm to you that it's real. It really has happened. So the certainty, the availability, the clarity, the difficulty you see being used of God to lead others and disciple them is not easy, but it sure is rewarding.

Finally, when that fifth word nobility, I guarantee you. Though this was the most difficult thing he ever had to do, it was the noblest thing he ever did. Can you imagine being the one to lay hands on the man who becomes the greatest man who ever lived? Saul of Tarsus became the apostle Paul.

Other than Christ, he's the greatest man who ever lived. Can you imagine being the one to go and pray for him so his eyes are open and then the life of God, the Holy Spirit comes upon him to empower him, the one who effectively launches him? Can you imagine how many times he told that story later in his life that I ever tell you about the time I was there praying and God appeared to me and he said, I want you to go down a straight street and lay hands. Did I ever tell you? Did I ever tell you that he became? Well, you know, he became the greatest apostle of them all.

He wrote into the letter to the Corinthians. I labored more abundantly than them all, though it wasn't me, but the grace of God within me. By the grace of God, I am what I am.

Can you imagine being the one to do that? God is so good at surprising us with blessings that are above and beyond what we would ever imagine he would do with us. And sometimes between that great blessing and where we are is the biggest difficulty of our life. And we have to step out and faith and believe in the sufficiency of Christ to see us through it, to get us to the blessing he wants to give.

And finally, we come. How is the life transformed? We'll end with this by faith in Christ, by fervent prayer, by faithful, forgiving disciples who lead us. Some of the greatest people who have ever helped me in my life have been the greatest forgivers I've ever known.

And I have learned more about the love of Jesus Christ through those people than almost any other source. So faithful disciple. And finally, the fantastic plan God has for your life.

Ananias was commissioned by God to lay out his plan for Paul's life. And I want you to see basically this before we end that the plan included the positive as well as the negative. I wish somebody would have told me before I came to Christ, it wasn't going to be just all answers to my problems.

And my felt needs. But rather that there would be difficulties as well. And all they would have had to say, you know, you're going to really suffer.

But you'll suffer anyway, whether you know Christ or not. So at least it'll be suffering. It'll be used for your good.

And when God sends this man, he gives him the negative and the positive. He goes to him and he tells him in verse 15, the Lord sent me. The Lord said to him, go and tell him he is a chosen vessel of mine.

Vessel elected is literally what the original language says. Vessel elected. And how much in keeping that is with his ministry and his teaching.

He taught so much about election, didn't he? No wonder he is a chosen vessel. Go tell him he is to bear my name. Verse 15, a chosen vessel to bear my name before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel.

And I might add in that order, that's how he did it. Do you realize that in the process, what happened to this man? Never put God in a box because you don't know how much he can do with you or will do with you. What happened to him? Well, just to give you a brief list, he became a great preacher.



And he knew that he used affliction to refine him in his life. All things work together for good for those who are the called of God. And they work together for you.

You're good. Romans 8, 29 says to conform you into the image of Jesus Christ. It's the refiners fire.

Refiners fire. God's good, isn't he? And he's going to keep on showing you that he's good. And if you're in a pause, you'll come out of the pause.

And you'll find out he's been working on a long. Let's pray, shall we? Father, thank you for your goodness to us that you do change our lives and you do such a good job of it. When you make us free, we are free indeed.

And thank you, Lord, that. You, Lord Jesus, ever live to make intercession for us, and even when we don't feel you or see you or hear you, you are still working. And we bless you and we praise your holy name, that there's new life in Christ and there is always, ever and always, forgiveness in the blood of Jesus.

Forgive us, Lord, for our sins this day. Wash us clean as the driven snow, and may we rejoice in that forgiveness. May we go out with great joy this day from this time with you, and we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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