

Perils and Sorrows of a Contrite Heart

by David Wilkerson

God's covenant is not just about blessings and promises, but also about our willingness to change and be broken in spirit.

Duration: 56:40

Scripture: Genesis 29:17, Psalm 34:18, Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 57:15, Isaiah 66:2, Matthew 6:33, James 4:10

Topics: "Contrite Heart"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Jacob from the Bible. Jacob finds himself in a difficult situation with two wives who are arguing and accusing each other. He is also facing slave labor and changing wages. Despite these challenges, Jacob encounters a beautiful woman named Rachel and is filled with excitement and gratitude for God's guidance. The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a tender and teachable heart like David, and highlights the significance of God's presence and guidance in our lives.

Transcript

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None of these messages are copyrighted, and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. The perils and sorrows of a contrite heart. Heavenly Father, there are people here this morning that don't understand their sufferings, their pain, and their sorrows because they have been praying, they love you, they serve you with all their heart, and yet they're going through a trial they don't understand.

And I pray, Lord, that you bring us an understanding by the power of your word this morning. I pray for an unction and anointing of the Holy Ghost that is beyond me. Lord, I can't produce it.

I can't produce conviction. I can't make this word effective. You have to do that.

Cleanse me, sanctify me. I pray for the wonderful cleansing and covering of the blood of Jesus, and that everyone in this building be able to hear what the Spirit has to say. Father, I take your authority in Jesus' name over every principality and power of darkness, and I speak by faith that they are gone, that nothing can hinder the word of the Lord from going forth.

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Hallelujah.

The perils and sorrows of a contrite heart. Now, to me, one of the most interesting of all Old Testament characters is Jacob. Yep, the cheating, deceiving, manipulating, supplanting Jacob.

This man is incredible, and yet God loved him, and he loved him dearly. In fact, his life is absolutely filled with marvelous lessons about God's dealings with human nature, and I want to go into his life with you this morning and teach you some things the Lord's been teaching me. Now, let me pick up a story as he's fleeing for his life from his brother Esau.

Now, remember he has just, he's already tricked his brother out of the birthright. That's the right of the firstborn to be the head of the clan, and all the, he got a double blessing. He got a double portion of all his father's belongings, possessions.

He got to be ruler over the whole clan, his brothers and sisters, and more than that, he was the progenitor of the covenant that would bring Jesus Christ. He was to be of the seed. He was to be a patriarch through which the seed of Christ would come, and that was a very spiritual thing, and that shows us the awful thing that Esau did in giving up this inheritance, giving up the firstborn, the rights of the firstborn, and then he pretends to be Esau, and his mother covers him with a skin because he was fair and smooth-skinned, and his brother Esau was hairy, and he goes in and pretends to be Esau and gets the blessing.

Esau comes in, of course, you remember, and the blessing is gone, and Esau says, he supplanted me two times now. He took away first my birthright, and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father had blessed him.

And Esau said in his heart, the days of mourning from my father are at hand, then I will slay my brother Jacob. He was determined to kill Jacob. Of course, Rebecca, hearing this, goes to Isaac, his father, and tells the story, and so they send him off on a trip to Paddan Aram to her brother Laban's house to find a wife, and his mother as well has said, go and find a wife, not a Canaanite wife, but among our own kind in Paddan Aram, and come back when your brother Esau cools off.

And we pick up the story in Genesis 28, if you'll go to Genesis 28, if you will, please. Genesis 28. And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

Arise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethuel, thy mother's father, and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother. And God almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people. Verse 7, Jacob obeyed his father and mother, and was gone to Paddan Aram.

Verse 10, Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went unto Haran, and he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set. And he took the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and he lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

Behold the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac, the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, thou shall spread abroad to the west, to the east, the north, and to the south. And in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Now that was speaking of Jesus Christ and the family of God. And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee. Listen to these covenant promises as God now makes covenant with Jacob.

And behold I am with thee, and I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land. For I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.

He's afraid and said, how dreadful is this place. This is none other but the house of God. This is the gate of heaven.

God does an incredible thing. He gives an open heaven to this man. Now this ladder that Jacob saw with angels coming and going.

Now this really in the original is a staircase, a passage by which angels were going to and from the throne of God. Now this was not staged for his benefit. This was not some special effect that God was giving to him for the sake of a vision.

He was literally taking back the curtains showing him the activity that's going on all the time. These ministering angels coming down to earth to minister to men, to guide, to lead the aims of the Lord that camp around about them that fear him and keep them from dashing their foot against the stone. The angels that guard children, the angels that are sent on his behalf ministering to the children of God.

He saw this, and by the way folks not one of those angels have aged a day or a month or a week or an hour. They're the same angels and they're still there. The ladder is still there.

The passage is still there. Those angels are coming and going. Hallelujah.

Folks, I've seen the work of angels all around me. I don't know if you have or not, but I've seen. I don't worship angels, but I know they're sent to minister to the children of God.

Those angels are still there. Jacob sees the Lord above it all. The Lord brought Jacob into the covenant blessing of Abraham and Isaac.

In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. He's saying, I have accepted you into this seed. You are the firstborn.

You have the birthright now because you have the birthright. Now I'm going to bestow on you the covenant blessings that your father Abraham and Isaac. And it will be, we even today we talk about the father, we serve the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And behold, listen to these promises. I am with you. I will keep thee in all the places where you go.

I will not leave you until I have done all that I have spoken to thee of. Now, Jacob is given by an oath. God said, I am not going to leave you.

Every step you take, I'll be with you. There's never going to be a move you make that I'm not involved in. And he says, I am going to ultimately bring you to the purpose that I have.

My eternal purpose for you is going to be fulfilled. No matter what it's going to be accomplished. Now I'll look at that picture and something rises up in me.

I say, now, wait a minute, Lord, do you know who you're making these wonderful promises to? Have you forgotten who he is? This man has just, just come hours before from one of the worst deceptive, uh, manipulative moves in history. He goes to a blind father who can't see, weak, bedridden, cooks him a good meal. His mother cooked him a meal and he, he is lying three times.

He lies to this blind, uh, weak father and he steals the blessing. He's a manipulator. He's a thief.

He's covetous. And I'm, I'm trying to search the scripture to find some reason why God would bless him. And I can't find any faith in the man.

I can't find any goodness in the man. I can't find any grace in the man. I said, God, why would you say you love this man? He saw I hated and Jacob I love.

Why did you love this man? What did you see in him that shortly after you're not, you're not correcting him for this? I know that you, there is no, uh, sin in my heavenly father. I know that you don't endure these kinds of things. Why did you endure this? Why didn't you correct him? Why are you blessing him just hours after he's stolen something? Well, you have to go to the scripture because only scripture answers scripture.

I'm telling you, God loved this man and God saw something in his heart that brought forth this love and this great desire to bless him. And I'm saying, God, why did you appoint him the birthright from the womb? Remember Jacob came out of the womb with his hands grabbing Esau's hill. It says, no, it's mine.

And God honored that God had chosen. In fact, God came to his, his mother when both boys were in the womb and there was a struggle and she couldn't, she couldn't explain and ask God for explanation. He said, it's because there are two nations in you and the elder will serve the younger.

He's going to have the birthright in otherwise the younger God, this was all God's mind. God saw something in these men. He, you'll see it unfold as we go on.

I don't want to get ahead of the story. His very name, Jacob means supplanter. That means one who trips up another to take his place through scheming to overthrow another to replace him.

Now, certainly God took this all into account because he's a God of holiness. He does not stand for manipulation, cheating and obnoxious ways. And Jacob at this time is old enough to know better.

He's at least, he can be no less than 40 years of age and some believe he was at least 70. He was not a boy. He should have known better.

There should have been some, something in his character by now that shows. And I asked the Lord the question, what do you have to see in a man before you make covenant with him, Lord? What is it that you, you, you are looking for in this human vessel that you can bless? What is it was in Jacob? What did you see? And so we go to the scripture for the answer. Now I found it in Isaiah 57, 15.

I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that's of a contrite heart and a humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble, revive the heart of the contrite ones. He is here by his spirit reviving this man. This man is dejected.

He's on the run and God by his spirit is reviving him. He is blessing him. He's honoring him.

The scripture also says in Isaiah 66 too, but to this man will I look. You can finish that, can't you? Even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembles at my word. Now man's always looking on the outward appearance, but God is always looking at the heart.

Man all can see in Jacob is covetousness. All they can see is the greed and the manipulation that God saw beyond his flesh. He saw something in his heart.

He saw a contrite broken spirit. He saw something that was willing in his heart to be changed. He knew what he was, but he was wanting to be changed.

It was always there and the story will unfold. I can prove it to you in the scripture that that's what God saw. You see, God is always looking for that broken contrite heart that he can work on.

He can't do anything for an Esau type who takes the things of God for granted, who weeps just phony tears of repentance. This man's heart was hard. He was sensuous.

Esau was sensuous. God, you don't find him suffering. There's no evidence of him even suffering, even though he's a part of the covenant.

You don't see that at all. There are Christians that seem to be able to just float through life because there's no eternal purpose for them. They're just trying to make it through life.

God has no plan for their life because God does not work in these kind of situations. He's looking for the Jacob type. Oh, there are some people you say, how can God ever use him? How can God ever use her? My goodness, there are some of you saying that to yourself right now.

Lord, how can you ever use me? I'm so weak. I've got so many inconsistencies in my life. This man was totally inconsistent as far as humanity is concerned, according to those who see him by the flesh.

But the Lord says to this man, he's looking at Jacob, to this man, Jacob, I'll look because he is poor and spirit of contrite spirit and he trembles at my word. Now I know that he trembles at the word and I want to show you something. I believe that all his lifetime, Jacob heard Isaac, his father, tell about his father, Abraham, about the time that he was laid on an altar and my father lifted a knife and God stopped him and there was a lamb and he told this story.

My father, your grandfather went into covenant with God. God had made an agreement and he was a holy God and all his life he heard about this birthright that goes to the firstborn and all his lifetime he remembers the dream his mother had that he, Jacob, was going to be that. And Jacob must have thrilled at the thought that this man, who is the head of the clan, who carries on this torch, that he's going to be one of those in the lineage of a Messiah that was to come.

There was a great spiritual thing to this that Jacob saw and Jacob looks at his brother Esau. He knows he's a profane man. He's married two Canaanite wives.

He's grieved his father and his mother. This man is earthly. He's sensuous.

He has no life or love for God whatsoever. And Jacob says if he gets this, this holy seed is going to fall into the hands of a polluted man. And I believe there's no way, I don't, a 40-year-old man is not going to go into this agreement with his mother.

His mother knew that too. She knew the sensuality of Esau. The whole clan is going to be in the hands of a sensuous, polluted man.

Never. This man, Jacob, knew something about the spiritual impact and the meaning of the covenant and of the birthright. And he says, I want it.

There's no evidence that he wanted for selfish purposes because he flees. He's gone for at least 20 years. He's not the head of the clan.

He doesn't make any effort to get an army, come back and possess it. It's clear in my mind that Jacob had a spiritual hunger. There was something deep in his heart, a yearning, a longing for God.

And I want to tell you, no matter what you're going through now, if you have a heart that reaches out to God, repentant, you tremble at God's word, God is going to touch your life. God is going to use you. God sees beyond all of these inconsistencies to that heart that's broken and knows how to go into his presence and yield to the word and to the spirit.

I see now the reason why God would allow this plan to go on. I see now the reason why God didn't come in and interfere. He saw something in Jacob's heart.

He saw the spiritual meaning of these actions. Now God has given to us some wonderful new covenant promises. He's promised to keep us from falling and present us faultless before the throne of God with exceeding joy.

He's promised to bless us with all heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus. He's promised us as he did to Jacob to be with us every place we go, every action, every work of our hands. He's promised to fulfill his word.

He's promised to fulfill his eternal purpose for every one of our lives. He's made us those same covenant promises. But God does not covenant with anyone, with everyone who claims to be a believer.

God does not work in covenant with everyone who claims, who cries out, Lord, Lord. No. He only comes to those who have this broken spirit and a contrite heart, who have a heart for God.

God can love and bless the Jacob type, the one who knows he has inconsistencies. He knows he needs a lot of work in his life. He knows he's weak.

But he has a willingness to be changed, to be molded by the hand of God. There's something always breaking. There's always something yielding in the life of Jacob.

Now, contrite means broken in spirit by a sense of guilt, a condition of being sincerely repentant with a hatred for sin and a willingness to change. That's what contrite means, even in the dictionary, in Webster's dictionary, a detesting of sin and a desire to change, a repentant, a broken spirit because of a sense of guilt of having done wrong. David was such a man.

He was a man of many weaknesses, inconsistencies, and corruption. He had a sensuality problem. He murdered a man.

He was caught in deception and adultery, just like Jacob. He had inconsistencies. Oh, but David had a tender heart.

He had a teachable heart. He had a heart that was willing to be changed. No wonder David could say, the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and save us such as be of a contrite spirit.

So, Jacob sets off to Paternarum under covenant now, and he's so happy. He says, God go with me every step. And sure enough, as soon as he gets into the land, there are some shepherds.

They know Laban, and they say, oh, by the way, there's his daughter. Here comes a beautiful young lady by the name of Rachel. She's leading the sheep to water, and there's a big stone there.

So, muscle man ready to show off. He goes. It's not even time.

They're not supposed to roll up stones until all the sheep are in, and she's one of the first, and he gets in there and rolls the stone off and starts watering the sheep, and he says, I'm Jacob, Rebecca's son. And that was her aunt, and she runs off. Of course, he kissed her right off.

I would say he kissed her and wept, and can't you imagine the excitement in Jacob? He said, this covenant life is something. This is wonderful. Look how God's, just like he said, he's going to lead me.

He led me to the most beautiful. She's going to be my wife. That's good, Lord.

I love covenants. He can't wait to get to Laban's house. He's there, and he's received, and he's hired immediately as a shepherd.

And Laban says, now, even though you're my nephew, I'm not going to have you work free of charge. What do you want for wages? I want her. I'll work seven years for her.

And by, can you imagine 2,555 days? I counted seven years times 365. And he said, those seven years were but as a day. There's nothing because of the love he had for Rachel.

Can you imagine all those nights? Cold and, and, and heat, and he's got this great love. This is wonderful covenant leading, just as God said he would do. Love at first sight.

So seven years are finished, wedding day, and Rachel comes. They have the celebration, and it's evident that he married Rachel. But as was a custom, they had a celebration, and when the celebration is done, Jacob, as custom, went, went to his tent.

He waited for his veiled bride to be brought by the father to the tent. The celebration is over, the ceremony, everything is over, and Jacob goes to his tent. But Laban has another idea.

He said, in our country, in our society, you don't marry off your younger daughter first. The older gets married first. So he works a scheme with his oldest daughter Leah.

Now, Leah is weak-eyed and not very pretty, evidently. She's not attractive. Now, she had to have been in love with Jacob, too, or she wouldn't have got along with this, I assure you.

Nobody wants a husband that bad. I don't know. I don't know.

I'd take that back. They have this scheme. She dresses up.

She puts on her bridal gown, and of course, she's veiled, and it's late at night, and it comes Leah into the tent. Of course, there's probably not a sound unless her voice gives her away, and she wants no light in

the tent. She blows out the candle, and of course, she just whispers unless her voice gives her away.

What a time that must have been. I wonder how many sweet nothings, sweet things he said into Leah's ear calling her Rachel, and I wonder how many dreams he shared with her. I wonder if he talked half the night saying, oh, I want how many children? I want ten children.

I want twelve, really. I want twelve kids, and he's sharing all his dreams and everything, thinking this is Rachel. He's finally got his love, and he never knew that night that the woman in his arms was another woman by the name of Leah, the older daughter, until morning.

Morning always tells the truth. Do you want to know what I look like? Look at me in the morning. He gets up.

You're not Rachel. He runs to Laban. He says, you deceived me.

Now, that's something coming from Jacob. You deceived me. He said, well, it's the custom here, and so I'll tell you what.

You fulfill her week of honeymoon, and then you take Rachel also. And the scripture says, and he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years. Now, listen to this, please.

It says he loved Rachel more than Leah. He has two wives now. This man is now a bigamist, or what do you call that's more than one wife? Bigamist? All right.

And he's got a polygamist. That's it. He's a polygamist, and you know something? These sisters despise one another.

The scripture makes that very, very clear, and it says he loved Rachel more than Leah, but the scripture really bears out that he hated Leah. In fact, the next verse says, when the Lord saw Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. Now, I want you to picture it.

Time goes by. A little time goes by. He's got two women now.

He's got two wives at home arguing. Leah, the scripture says, accused her of stealing her husband. He was rightfully mine, and somehow you must have seduced him, and this thing is going on, and now he's tied down to seven years of slave labor, and his wages are going to be changed on him ten times, and he's out in the open field, and now he's looking at his covenant walk, and he's saying, knowing human nature, I know he had to have it out with God.

He said, Lord, how did I end up in this kind of mess? If you made me a covenant, and you told me that your hand is upon me, and that you love me, and you would walk with me, and you would guide me in every step that I take, you would be there. Why didn't you stop this? Why didn't you hinder this? Why am I now in the midst of a marital problem, and I'm sure he surmised all the problems this is going to cause him right down. He had seen this happen in his brother Esau's life, and he says, here I am now.

I am no position to provide for my family. I have, I can't make future plans because I'm tied down to this evil man for the next seven years, and I know he's going to cheat me. He's going to try to rob his daughters of every bit of their inheritance.

I won't have an inheritance. I have no future. Lord, what kind of covenant walk is this? You know, we have the idea that you come to the Lord, and you pray, and you have a broken heart, and you serve him.

God loves you. You have these wonderful promises of God. God says some wonderful things to your heart, and you say, surely all things now are going to work together for good to them.

Love God and call according to his purpose. Why should I have to suffer the way I suffer? Why should I have to go through this? I want you to know that it doesn't look like it, but God was still with this man. God still loved him.

Folks, we make choices in this life. We make our own choices. God has given us a free will.

That free will may be corrupted because of the fall, but we still have a free will, and we make decisions. You say, well, maybe he didn't pray about it. Maybe he chose by flesh.

He chose by beauty rather than taking it to God. Maybe Leah was supposed to be his wife. I know some ladies said, well, I don't look at the flesh.

I just want to make sure he has a good spirit, a good mind, and pretty eyes or something, but I don't care about muscles. I don't care about all of that. This is the end of side one.

You may now turn the tape over to side two. Beside the point, that's not the issue. God could have intervened at any time, but he didn't.

God didn't intervene. Folks, walking in covenant with God does not, there's no place in this book that guarantees that you will not suffer as a child of God, that you won't face peril. You will face all kinds of difficulties.

You will cry, you will weep, and you'll wonder sometimes, God, where are you? Why didn't you stop it? You can have marital problems and still be loved by God, broken in spirit and contract before God, and you still have marital problems. How many of you haven't had some marital problems? How many of you are going through marital problems now, and you say, Lord, I don't understand because I've never walked closer to you. I know I walk in covenant with you.

I know that my heart is right. I weep, I cry, I pray, I worship you in church. I'm faithful, oh God.

Why are you still allowing me to endure this? He said, many are the afflictions of the righteous, but delivers them, he delivers them not from them, but out of them all. You're going to see later how God delivered him out of all of his difficulties, but he allowed them to go through them. He allowed Jacob, what are you talking about time of Jacob's trouble? Taken from his very life.

Few men have suffered such family problems as Jacob. What tragic situations and sorrows of all kinds. His special love Rachel, he doesn't know, is a secret idolater, and that's why God shut her womb.

She couldn't have a child for years because she had stolen her father's images, his idols. In fact, when Jacob took off years later, in the middle of the night, had been gone three days, Laban would have left them go, but he discovered that someone in Jacob's clan had stolen his idols. And when he comes with his troop and accuses Jacob and his family of stealing the idols, Rachel runs into her tent and hides them.

Listen to what the scripture says, and she hid them in the camel's furniture because she had stolen them and set upon them. And she said to her father, now father came into the tent looking, let it not displease my Lord that I cannot rise up before thee, for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched but found not his images.

Jacob was totally unaware of all this. He was incensed that he would be accused of that. No way, knowing that his most loved, beautiful Rachel was a secret idolater, and so much so that she would lie and she would hide it from everybody.

It's a good thing Leah didn't know about it. She'd have ratted on him for sure. This had gotten rid of her competition.

All of this is unknown to Jacob. And meanwhile, Leah's giving birth to one boy, child after another. In fact, six sons.

And every time she has a son, she says, perhaps now my husband will love me. And every time she had a child, he wouldn't love her. And the scripture is because the Lord knows that I was hated.

Now think of what's happening in Jacob's life. Here's a woman whose whole life is ruined. She has a husband who doesn't love her.

She gives him one child after another. He still doesn't love her. Her sister isn't raised against her.

She has no future. Her life is in ruins. This is a troubled family, a very troubled family.

And Jacob has, first of all, deep marital problems. He's got family problems. Now he's got sorrow on the job.

You'd think at least one area of his life would be undisturbed. He's disturbed in the area of his life because now Laban is looking at him suspiciously and all the sons he's already stolen. The scripture says, the daughter said, he's devoured our money.

He devoured the inheritance of his daughters. And now Jacob is being blessed and he's jealous of his sons and they are speaking rebellion and mutiny against Jacob. And God again comes to Jacob in a dream and he says, go back to Bethel to the place where I first met you.

Go back and build an altar there as you promised. Now Jacob obeys God and he's walking now in total obedience. Now I want you to follow me closely.

Jacob is now going into the greatest peril of his life even though he's on the path of obedience. He's going to come to the brink of disaster. He's thinking in his mind that it's the end of all things because he's going toward Bethel now toward his homeland.

He's going back to Esau, face him. He's going back to his father Isaac. And a messenger comes and says, your brother Esau is heading this way with an army of 400 men and he's out to get you.

And the panic that hits this man. You say, well, why? Why now? Here he's got marital problems. He's got career problems.

He's got all of these troubles all around him. And now he's obeying God. He's loved by God.

He's got a broken heart, contrite before God. And now he's allowed to go through the most fearful experience in his life. He almost said, God is not fair.

And he divides his clan into two groups. And he's going to send Leah and cattle and everything. And he's going to try to appease his brother.

And then the second he says, if the first group are slain, the second group can escape. Now here's where we find out what is really in Jacob's heart. Here's where we can prove to you that this man had a heart that's broken and contrite before God.

Look at chapter 32. Turn over to chapter 32. This is all going to come together for you in just a moment.

Chapter 32, beginning to read at verse 9. 32 verse 9. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac. He's calling on covenant partner now. His covenant partner.

The Lord which said unto me, return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. He's saying, Lord, you told me to go this way and I'm walking in obedience. I'm not worthy of the least of all thy mercies and of all thy truth.

There's his broken, contrite, humble spirit. I'm not worthy of the least of all thy mercies and all the truth which thou has shown unto thy servant. For with my staff, I've passed over this Jordan and now I have become two bands.

Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me and the mother and the children. And thou saidest, I will surely do thee good and make thy seed of the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude. Look at me now, please.

Now he's putting God to the covenant. He's saying, God, you made me. I'm not worthy of this.

I know who I am. I know what my name means. He said, but now you, in this path of obedience, you brought me to the brink of total despair.

God, you told me you would go with me. You made me wonderful promises. You spoke into my life and now look, I'm about to lose my family.

I'm about to lose everything. Where is your covenant? I'm not claiming any goodness. I'm not claiming any worth, but I know I love you.

I know that I'm obeying you. But it looks like everything is collapsed. Everything is blown up.

Everything is out of control. Everything is out of divine order because an army is coming down on him. Put yourself in that place and all the things that God has said to you and promised you.

And you look at the word of God. And then suddenly you're faced the situation that's life and death. You look at something facing you.

It looks like it's going to bring you down. There's no way out. Then you run to God and say, what about your word? And you hold God to the word.

And folks, that night, you remember that Jacob has it out with the angel of the Lord, with the Lord himself. And there he gets his name changed. He gets his character changed.

Of course, you know that God delivered him. And someone said, well, I know why God delivered. You see, up to this time, evidently Jacob suffered in his covenant walk because he really wasn't a prayer.

But now he is because he's been called a prince with power, with God, and he's prevailed. Now he has faith. He was weak in his faith.

And that's why he suffered walking in covenant with God. That's why he made all these mistakes. He didn't pray.

He didn't have power, but now he's got power. He doesn't have to suffer anymore. Oh, that's the theology that's in the church today.

You get your theology right. You get your power with God. You learn to pray and you don't have to suffer anymore.

You just rebuke the devil and he'll flee. You rebuke every devourer. You rebuke everything.

You've got the power now. You don't, Jacob, that's why Esau didn't kill you. You had the power now.

Well, Esau, he make up, go their way. Is that the end of the suffering for the saint? You've got power now. You have faith.

You don't have to suffer. Is our suffering a lack of faith? Is it a lack of right? Lack of righteousness? Is it a lack of power with God? No, no, no, no. This man who is in covenant, this man who has prevailed with God in prayer is told to go to Bethel and he stops halfway, even though he's now walking in power.

He goes halfway among the Hivites and he buys a piece of land from the Hivites from Shechem and he builds a house and he settles down halfway and it's there that his daughter Dinah is walking through the fields and a young man by the name of Shechem, a Hivite, attacks her and rapes her. And then he comes, he says, I love her. I know I forced her, but I love her and I want to marry her.

These are Canaanites. It's against the law, the law for them to intermarry. And so the brothers of Jacob, the sons of Jacob, unknown to Jacob, connive with these Shechemites and they said, all right, we'll, we'll let you marry Dinah and we'll marry your daughters and you can, we'll intermarry as long as you get circumcised.

So they circumcised Shechem, his father and all the Hivites in that tribe. And while they're still sore, Jacob's sons get swords and go in and kill every one of them, kidnap all their children and their wives and all their possessions. Here's a man with power.

Here's a man of prayer and he's having to turn with absolute grief at his sons who are murderers. He's looking at his family. He said, you have shamed me before the whole world.

What kind of men are you? What the grief this man had. He said, well, where was his power? Where was his protection? God says, I'll lead you. All guides of this man is still suffering.

All his lifetime, he's an older man now and a famine strikes the land. And before the famine, the worst peril of his life, an old man has a son named Joseph in his old age. And this young man, Joseph became the joy of his life.

He romped with him. He played with him. He taught him.

He made him a coat of many colors. And one day comes when this man of God, man of power, a prince with God, has to weep bitter tears because someone lays at his feet a bloody colored garment and said the animals have killed him. And you say, does it never stop? Is this what you get when you walk in covenant? You have a humble heart before God and you live a life of suffering.

God has never promised us in this book it would be smooth. He said, it's going to rain on the just and the unjust. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord will deliver them out of them all.

Out of them, not from them. Then he has to watch as the famine strikes the land. And he's there.

He says, am I going to finish out my days now watching my family starve one at a time? Then when word comes that his young Benjamin is kept as a captive, it's too much for the old man. He's near collapse. But I want to take you to another scene.

Take you to Pharaoh's court. Joseph, do you remember what he went through? No one was more called. Here's a man with great dreams.

Here's a man that God has spoken to so clearly. Fantastic word from God. And he ends up in prison.

He ends up a slave. He ends up suffering. One suffering after another as though God had forsaken him.

And it was all in God's plan. It was all God training a man to be strong in him. This is how faith is created.

This is how character is created through suffering. God has never created an ounce of character in me other than through suffering. If I have any character at all, any good character in me, it has been birthed in suffering and in fire.

Gold is only purified in fire. I see young preachers and I see God bless them. I say, oh, just hold it.

Oh God, there's so much yet. Oh, the suffering that's coming, but oh God, I'm not afraid of it for them because it's going to make them what they're going to be in Christ Jesus. Hallelujah.

It's going to produce the iron in their backbone. Here stands an old man, 130 years old. His own son now has embraced him.

His son is second in command in all of Egypt. Everywhere he goes, Jacob is, he's in Joseph's church. Everybody's bowing to his son.

He stands before Pharaoh and Pharaoh says to Jacob, and he does obeisance to Jacob. And he says, how old are you? And he looks at Pharaoh. He says, I'm 130 and few and evil have been my days.

You know what he's saying in the original Hebrew? In my time, I've seen a lot of suffering. That's what he said. But was it worth it? Now look back.

Here he stands before, he's been delivered from famine. His whole family, all 70 of them are safe now and they're planted now in the richest farmland of Egypt, have all that they need to eat. His family is safe and secure.

His son is on the throne and God is keeping his word. And he looks back and he thinks, my brother Esau threatened me. That looked like it was all over, but God brought me out.

God was there. Now he sees that God was there. He was there all the time.

Laban tried to destroy me, but he couldn't destroy me. God blessed me right under his nose and God delivered me from Laban. My sons tried to bring an army down to kill me, angry neighbors, but God kept me, put the fear of my clan on the whole, all the tribes around me and God delivered me.

And my, he looks now over his sons and they are now going to be prepared to be the patriarchs of Israel. His name is Israel, a prince with God, his sons to become 12 princes. He lives to see every promise fulfilled.

He lives enough time in Egypt to walk among grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren. And he sees a nation being built all around him and he dies a ripe old age, full of honor and grace of God. God kept his word.

God kept his word. The perils and sorrows of a contrite heart, oh, it's worth it. When you find yourself now in a situation that's overwhelming you, you look around you and you see suffering.

You see family problems with your children. And the devil comes to you and say, oh, so that's what a covenant walk is? So that's what you get when you humble yourself and you walk before God righteously and you weep before the Lord and you pray and God speaks to your heart and tells you what to do. And then you have nothing but suffering.

Oh, but the Lord delivers them out of them all. Is there ever going to come a time that you don't suffer? Not as long as you live. Only when you cross the great divide, only when you get to Canaan land.

And when you get to the promised land, then he said, he's going to wipe away all your tears, but not until then. You're going to have tears until he wipes them away in glory. Hallelujah.

So settle down. Don't worry about it. Say, Lord, I know you made me a promise that whatever I'm going through, you're going through it with me.

You're going to be there. Lord, I can't see it, but your plan is developing. You said at the end, you're going to fulfill your eternal purpose for my life.

Folks, I believe that. Oh, we have been through suffering in our family. My poor wife, God bless her heart.

25 operations, six for cancer, two daughters with cancer. I look back over it. There were times that, that I, I remember Debbie, a cancer, the same place her mother had and in the hospital in Houston and the chemotherapy doubled up in a fetal position, like a dying child.

And I, I said, Oh God, I'm on the streets working for you. And I'm giving my life and I love you. I walk honestly and wholly and purely before you.

Why are you taking her? It was enough. Gwen's over now, Debbie. And then when it hit Bonnie and on and on and on, and finally you come to a place where you say, Lord, I put my life in your hands.

You made a covenant. I'm just going to walk in blind, simple, childlike faith. But folks, I would tell you something.

Here I stand. There's Gwen sitting there right now. God has been faithful.

He's kept his word. He's kept his word. And my standing before you right now in this work that he's established in New York city.

And the word that goes out from this church to over 800,000 people on a mailing list all over the world is a fulfillment of a promise God made me way back before the suffering started. And nothing that I've gone through has deterred, deterred the will of God and the eternal purpose of God for my life. And it'll be the same for you come hell or high water, come flood, come fire.

Come on. God's going to have his will. God's going to have his way.

Will you stand please? Hallelujah. Lord, we love you. Lift your hands and love him right now for his faithfulness.

Just love him right now. Lord, you're going to bring me through. Tell him right now, Lord, you're going to bring me through.

You're going to deliver me. This is going to pass. This is going to pass.

And God is going to get glory. Hallelujah. God is going to get glory.

Hallelujah. Lord, I don't know how to reach into the hearts of those that are here this morning, but I do know that this message was meant for some that have come today. Some for the first time visitors and also those that come regularly to this church.

Lord, I'm asking you to lift the burden, lift the fear and God bring a peace and a rest that we can enter into the covenant of peace and rest in the Holy Ghost. God, you're at work. You are at work in our lives.

You have not forsaken any of your children. You have not forsaken. Pastor Carter started the service with that, giving us the word, confirming what you've already said to us now.

Thank you, Jesus. If you're here this morning, balcony, the main floor, they said, oh brother, this message is for me because of what I'm going through. It's for me.

And some of you have been a bit confused by it. Some of you have been in turmoil. I want you to get out of your seat.

Now, if you've been backslidden, you've been running from God, you come also. If you don't know Jesus, you come. But mostly for those right now who say, brother, I have got to come to a place of rest.

I've been battling long enough. I want God to lift this. Now, I want to walk out of Times Square church today with peace of mind and heart.

Come follow these that are coming up the balcony. Just go to the stairs on either side. Then you come down any aisle and I'll meet you right here.

Amen. If the Holy Ghost is talking to you, if this message for you, obey him right now, whatever he tells you to do, you do it. Please move in close, make room for those that are coming.

This way, please. While you were singing that, I was praying and the Holy Ghost spoke a word to my spirit to give to you. Everybody look at me.

Look this way, please. Here's what the Lord told me to tell you. And it's just as clear as anything he ever told me.

No matter what it looks like in your life, no matter how bad it looks like, no matter what you're going through, God says, I have not left you. I am still with you. He said, tell them I'm still with them and get your eyes off of all that you see around you and just focus on him being there.

Forget your battle now. Forget what it looks like. Forget all your circumstances.

You understand? Don't look at it. Don't let it scare you. God says, I'm with you.

I am with you. Yes, there's suffering. Yes, there's pain.

Yes. But that doesn't mean you're out of the will of God. Doesn't mean you've been disobedient.

It doesn't mean that God isn't hearing your prayer. He does hear. But he is going to answer in his time, in his way, and never before.

Not until the lessons are learned, not until he accomplishes his purpose. And when he does, meanwhile, he said, I'll hold you. You're in no danger.

Look at me now. You're in no danger. Was Jacob in any danger from Laban? Was he in any danger from Esau? Was any danger from any of his enemies? Never.

He was never in danger. The whole time he's grieving, God is setting his son on the kingdom, on the throne. God is at work behind the scenes.

You don't see it, but God's at work behind the scenes in your life and mind. He's at work all the time. There's never a moment that God isn't doing something in our behalf.

He's working it out. So hold steady. Hold your faith.

Don't give up. Don't accuse God of neglecting you or forgetting you. He's not forgotten you.

He's busy. He's working. He's got angels coming and going on your behalf right now.

He's making a way where there seems to be no way. He says, now just trust me. Put your hand in mine right now and just trust me.

Let's pray. Pray this right out loud. Jesus, I want to trust you with my heart and my future.

Forgive me, Lord, of doubting your love for me. I accept your love. You do love me.

Come, Lord Jesus, fill my heart with peace. Give me a confidence that you're at work in my life. You're doing something that I can't see, but I know you're doing it.

And one day, you'll show me why you had to take me this way. But in the meantime, I'm going to trust you. Help me, Jesus, to endure my suffering, to endure my pain with the help of the Holy Ghost.

Now let me pray for you. Heavenly Father, I pray you smite all fear, all undelief, and oh Jesus, help us just to rest in you. Hallelujah.

God has everything under control. God has everything under control. This is the conclusion of the tape.

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