

You Dont Have to Understand Your Afflictions

by David Wilkerson

You don't have to understand your afflictions, you've got grace.

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Scripture: Psalm 34:19, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 12:9, James 1:2

Topics: "Afflictions", "Grace in Suffering", "Trusting God"

Description

David Wilkerson delivers a powerful message on the theme of suffering, emphasizing that understanding our afflictions is not necessary because we have God's grace. He shares personal stories of pain and loss, illustrating that asking 'why' is a common human response, but ultimately, we must rely on God's grace to endure our trials. Wilkerson encourages believers to accept their suffering as part of their journey and to trust in God's strength, which is made perfect in our weakness. He reassures that while we may not receive answers to our questions, God's grace is sufficient for every challenge we face.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit Series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, PO Box 260, Lindale, Texas, 75771, or calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted, and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. Now my message is a little, the title is a little lengthy, but my message will not be lengthy. My message is entitled, You don't have to understand your afflictions, you've got grace.

You don't have to understand your afflictions, you've got grace. And I hope after this morning you will never again ask why. Never.

Happiness with God is never having to ask why. Heavenly Father, oh Lord, I need you. I can't preach this without you, Holy Ghost.

I don't have anything to say to anybody. Unless you come down and anoint me, oh God, everything falls to the ground. It's just a sermon.

It's dead and it's dry and there's nothing to it. But Holy Ghost, when you come with your fire, when you come with the anointing, I know when you come upon me, Lord. I sense it.

I pray, Holy Ghost, that you come upon me mightily. I've sought your face. I've come from the throne room of God to this pulpit, and I pray, Lord, that what you put on my heart, let it flow.

Let me say things that I had not even contemplated saying, that they just come from your heart and your mind. Because we're open, Lord. You've sanctified us, Lord.

Give us ears to hear what you have to say to us. Lord, we're going to talk about suffering this morning. There are people here that are really going through it.

They're going through the time of their life. God, give us an understanding today, more about what this is all about, and how to handle it. Lord, I give you everything from the innermost of my being now to speak your word in Jesus' name.

Amen. A fine Christian lady wrote to us this week from our mailing list, and she said, In 1972, we lost a Down syndrome boy to 17 months old of pneumonia. And in 1979, five years later, we lost our 15-year-old son, who was electrocuted in our backyard while climbing a tree.

And also, our 24-year-old has diabetes. I have cancer, and I'm undergoing chemotherapy, the mother wrote. I ask sincerely, is it a sin to ask God why? Does he understand our humanness? Pastor Dave, have you ever been angry at God for a season? I have, and I know it's wrong, and I feel so ashamed having such thoughts, but I get so confused trying to understand why Christians suffer so much.

I know we're no more deserving than others, but I'm shell-shocked at all the suffering we're enduring. I have fear and anxiety, but Pastor Dave, I really want to replace all my fears with a strong faith in spite of my sufferings. But still, I keep asking, Why so much suffering? How long will it go on? I can't tell this family why they're suffering.

I can only conceive what it's like to go out and find a 15-year-old boy laying on the ground and electrocuted. I don't know whether it was in a thunderstorm. I don't know whether there was some wire up there.

I can't tell you. She didn't explain it, but you can imagine the consternation when she goes out and finds her son laying on the ground dead. I can only try to contemplate what it's like when she goes to prayer that day, that night after burial, and says, God, two sons, and now my third with a disease that may kill him.

And I am sick with chemotherapy and radiation, and I have cancer. And Lord, why? Why all this suffering? Why does it not end? All my boys, all my family, I can't explain that, why she goes through that, but I can tell you it's not a sin to ask. It's not a sin to ask, and I can only tell you that Jesus, our blessed Savior, asked the same question when he was on the cross.

He asked it very clearly, but I believe Christ fully understands those times, that humanness when we crowd. Lord, I don't understand. Why are you putting me through this? Why are you allowing this in my life? Even though it doesn't come from your hand, why are you allowing the enemy to harass me? Why do I wake up every morning with this heavy sword over my head, this despondency in my heart because of problems in my home, my marriage and the children? Oh, God, when does it end? Have you ever asked that, God, when does this nightmare end? Have you ever been in a nightmare? If you... That was... I didn't hear from very many.

Some people are not being honest. If you haven't, it's coming. Don't worry about it.

You're going to see. The secular world cries out. Now for an explanation to all the pain and suffering that's in the world today.

They demand an answer. They're saying if God is real, if God is a good God and he's a loving God, why are all the floods permitted? Why all of the difficulties, especially poor nations, the famines, the floods when hundreds are wiped away, they're poverty stricken and the little shacks are washed away. I've heard it all.

Why such killing around the world now? Millions of people being annihilated in countries where they've never known peace and they've never known prosperity and now after all of that, incredible suffering. Why does God allow AIDS to take the lives of millions in the continent of Africa? And I have heard many people tell me, I can't believe in your God, Mr. Wilkinson. I can't believe it at all because if I were God, I would stop this.

I must have more love than your God has because I would stop it if I had the power. And I can't believe in a God who allows all this suffering in the world today. You may be a Christian here wondering why you've been allowed such affliction in your life, such deep trials and overpowering temptations and you're tired of trying to figure it out.

You're tired of all the advice from other Christians who only make you feel worse. They're always trying to tell you why you're suffering and they're always wrong. I don't tell people anymore.

I try to figure out why they're suffering, not after what he's been showing me. I used to, but not anymore. I did it when I was in my 30s.

I don't do it in my 60s. You see, sometimes you get very weary of what you're going through and so I'm tired of trying to figure this out. I'm weary of what I'm going through.

I can't figure it out. I don't understand. My faith is strong in the Lord.

I pray, I love God, but I'm going through it and this battle doesn't end. It just keeps going on and on and I'm weary of it. Lord, why and how long are you going to allow this to go on? Well, first of all, when we talk about suffering, I'm not going to try to answer this demand of the world for a reason why God permits suffering.

The Bible makes it clear that Israel suffered great calamities. The scripture, if you read it, you see them, not just under Hitler, but all through history, they faced holocausts. The scripture says there were diseases, unique, incredible diseases, unique to Israel, not just from the Egyptians, but their own unusual kinds of diseases, captivity, strange diseases, economic collapse, suffering so horrible that even their enemies pitied them, the Bible says.

And all because they pursued God and turned to idolatry and witchcraft. This was the reason for their suffering. And I know that the blood of thousands of missionaries has been spilled all over the continent of Africa.

For the last 200 years, missionaries have poured into Africa, South Africa, all the way from border to border, from coast to coast. And millions and millions of Christians have been murdered and slain by those who prefer darkness rather than the light. And the scripture, many of these nations are poverty-stricken just like Haiti, because they have rejected, they have killed the missionaries, they have rejected the

gospel, and they have done away with any desire for the truth, and the scripture said they prefer darkness rather than light.

We got a letter this past week from missionaries that we've supported in the past in Haiti, and asking, in fact, begging for prayer, because this past week, neighbors on the right and on the left were beaten and robbed, and their house, they believe, was marked next, and they needed prayer for protection. And they said that Haiti is absolutely going berserk. And I've been there, and I've preached in Haiti, and I've seen the poverty, and I've talked to witch doctors, and I've seen the voodoo.

And the reason for the poverty, the reason for the suffering, is because this nation has been so evangelized. Voodooism and witchcraft is almost the state religion in Haiti. And wherever you find idolatry, wherever you find people turning away from the gospel and turning to witchcraft and idolatry, you're going to find poverty, you're going to find suffering.

We have a generation now that wants promiscuity, they want multiple partners in sex, and they wonder why AIDS is spreading all over Africa. Promiscuous sex, even those of the United Nations going in to teach abstinence are mocked and laughed about. It's not just Africa, it's Haiti and all over the world, but especially here in the United States.

And blame God for the spread of AIDS. We pollute the atmosphere, we pollute everything, we pollute our food, we pollute our oceans and our skies and our land, and it causes atmospheric changes, and it causes floods, it causes all kinds of storms and floods and famine, and we blame God. Don't blame God for this, God had nothing to do with it.

Now God does chastise, he holds in his hands the winds and the waves and the storms, they're all in his hands, and God does use that for judgment. There's no question about that. But much of this, like in Africa, those famines are caused by pollution, and we blame God.

We have murdered here in the United States 40 million babies, 40 million. And now there is pending in Congress now a law that a woman can choose, a girl can choose, if that baby comes through the abortion process and still lives, as many of them do, she has an option to kill the baby, even though it's alive. Nurses now are telling, they're coming forward from all over the United States, because they can't sleep at night, they're hearing the screams of these babies, saying, I want to live, and they're coming forward, they're saying, the doctors who, the baby comes forth, and the baby is still living, they're putting them over in closets, they're letting them die out without any food or anything else, letting them die.

40 million! Such disregard for life, and then we blame God for what's happening in our schools. Why such blatant killing of kids among kids? Because we have taught them that there is no regard for human life. We are reaping what we have sown, 40 million babies dead.

Don't blame God. All these people in the secular world saying, where is God in all of this? God is weeping, that's what he's doing. But my focus is not in trying to answer their secular questions.

My message is focused on the afflictions and suffering of God's people, God's people. I want to use Saint Paul, I want to use Paul as, by the way, Paul was no more saint than I am. You can call me Saint David, because I have the, I have the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

I am righteous in Christ. I called him Saint Paul, I don't know why. I'm going to use Paul as an example of how to deal with our sufferings and afflictions as he did.

No other man than Jesus suffered as much as Paul in so many ways, in so many places, by so many hands. Now we know that at his conversion, Paul was forewarned, forewarned by the Lord that he was going to suffer great things for the name of Christ. Acts 9, 15, 16, I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

I will show him the great things he must suffer for my name's sake. Now, I hear preachers, and you've heard them too, preach. These are prosperity preachers here in the United States and around the world.

They're carrying the same gospel over to Russia, they're carrying it all over the world. They're saying if Paul had the proper kind and amount of faith, he wouldn't have had to suffer. Now that is outright blasphemy.

Do they not read their Bibles? Here's what Jesus said, Paul, I'm telling, this is Jesus talking. Why would we make Jesus a liar? This is Jesus saying, Paul, I'm warning you, you're going to suffer great things for the glory of Christ, for my sake. Now folks, I've talked to a man who went up to a prosperity preacher and just preached that and got the Bible out and showed him this.

I don't care what that says. If Paul had it right, he wouldn't suffer. Totally deny the Scripture.

You can't do it. And all those hearing me by tape all over the United States, video and audio, get your Bible out. It's right there.

You can't deny Acts 9, 15 and 16. Prosperity preacher, I love you, but you're wrong. You're not preaching the Word.

Paul stated that his life was to be a pattern, a sketch, a type. My mom used to make clothes. That's back before we had Walmart and all of these stores where you could get dresses cheap.

My mom would get her cloth and she would lay the cloth out and pin the pattern on there and cut around it. Do you know what I mean? How many women know what a pattern is? Some of you don't even know. Look, you can't even raise your hand.

You don't even know what a sewing machine is. Boy, you should know Walmart and Pennies and Sears. Boy, chasing a rabbit.

For this cause, I obtain mercy that in me first, Jesus Christ may show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. God chose Paul as a type, I believe, of suffering to show us how he deals with us and how our reaction, what our reaction should be to that suffering. And I'm going to use Paul as that example this morning.

Now, the pattern begins, number one, the pattern begins with an abundance of revelation. Go to 2 Corinthians, the twelfth chapter. 2 Corinthians, the twelfth chapter.

Quickly, please. I'm going to start reading. You can catch up with me.

Verse one, It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. Start in verse one. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

I knew a man in Christ above about 14 years ago. See, he's looking back 14 years ago. And he's talking about himself.

Whether in the body I cannot tell or whether out of the body I can't tell. God knoweth. Such a one was caught up into the third heaven.

And I know such a man whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell. God knoweth. How that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words which is not lawful for a man to utter.

Of such a one will I glory. Yet of myself I will not glory but in my infirmities. For thou would desire to glory I shall be a fool.

For I will say the truth. For now I forbear lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations.

I'm going to stop right there. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations that was given to me at the one in the flesh. The messenger of Satan to buffet me lest I should be exalted above measure.

Alright, look this way if you will please. Lest I should be exalted through the abundance of the revelation. Look at me please.

Give me your good ear. The most profound trials and the deepest sufferings come to those who have been given these abundant revelations. The more Christ is revealed in you and to you.

The more you set your heart to seek the face of God you are going to be setting out on a pathway of suffering and affliction and hard times such as never known in your life. Are you hearing me? If you're going to set your heart to seek the face of God you're going to pour over His word. You're not going to be satisfied to walk the walk of many Christians today.

You say, I can't live that sensuous life. I'm going to seek God with all my heart. I'm going to cross the line and I want Him with everything that's in me.

You set your heart on Christ and knowing Him in intimacy you are going to come to this point that we're going to talk about this morning of incredible sufferings. The word revelation means to take the cover off. Open up hidden things.

When he was converted Paul was not satisfied to sit down with the brothers in Jerusalem and be taught Christ. You can't teach the revelation of Jesus Christ. You can't teach it.

It comes to the individual that says, I want to know it. There are two kinds of Christians. There are Christians who said I have given my heart to Jesus.

But that's about all they can say. I'm not going to hell. I know that I'm going to heaven.

They want heaven. They don't want hell but they want heaven. And I've given my heart to Jesus.

Fine. Wonderful. But there's another kind of Christian who said I've given my heart to Jesus but I'm not satisfied until He gives His heart to me.

I'm not going to be satisfied until I know Him in His power and His majesty. I don't want to walk the way others walk. I want to talk like He talked and walk like He walked.

I want to be in Him and know Him. I want Christ in His fullness. Folks, that's the one desire of my heart.

That was the desire of Paul. So he goes not to Jerusalem. He said I didn't confer with flesh and blood.

Thank God for teachers. They can give you all the scriptures. They can give you the scriptures and open up the covenant and the wonderful names of Jesus and the revelations here of the body of Christ and the oneness in Christ.

No Jew, no gentile, no male or female one in Christ. You can hear all that. You can know the scripture.

You can quote it. But you're not going to get this revelation until you do what Paul the Apostle did. He went off by himself into Arabia for three years and he said I am not going to let anyone try to teach me the revelation of Christ.

I don't want it in my head. I want it in my heart. And he came out of that wilderness saying Christ revealed Himself in me.

Listen to what he said. It pleased Him to reveal the Son in me. I conferred not with flesh and blood.

Neither did I go up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me. I went into Arabia. Then I returned again to Damascus.

He said I neither received this revelation from man neither was it taught to me by man but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Until you have your own Arabia and that's your secret closet. Until you say I'm going to get a load.

You're not going to get it just coming to church. You're not going to get it just listening to tapes and sermons. You're not going to get it by reading books.

You're going to get it when God sees that you have shut yourself in and said Lord I am determined. I will not walk a normal Christian life like these supposed to be normal Christians around me. I know I'm not specimen Lord.

Put a hunger and a thirst in me after you. Let me seek your face. I don't care how the rest of the world goes.

Let them watch television. Let them get their R-rated movies. Lord I know you're coming soon.

I want to walk with you. I want to set an example for you. I want to be different.

You can't teach that. Comes in the secret closet of prayer and pouring over the word of God and a crying seeking heart that says Lord I will seek you until I find you. I tell God everyday in prayer I said God I told you and I mean it and you know I mean it.

I'll not let you go until I have your fullness. I won't let you go until I know that you said when you seek with all your heart you'll find me. Until I find you Lord I'm going to seek.

I'm putting you on warning Lord. I won't let go and I don't let go and I will not let go. Until God sees that determination in you you'll not get that revelation.

But be warned if you're going to set your heart to that be prepared to endure temptations like you've never known afflictions, sufferings, rejection, slander it's going to come at you from all sides. Paul said talking about the revelations he had I have not seen nor ear heard neither has it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love him but God has revealed them unto us by his spirit. He is one of those who first saw this great revelation all the things that God has prepared you will not have that revelation.

You have an abundance of revelation. God said things to you when you're reading the word that you didn't get from this church. You didn't get it from the book you got it when you prayed and God spoke you've had revelation.

I get letters from many Christians all over the world who send me prophecies that God gave them and they're scriptural and warning the people to prepare. They didn't get it from my books they didn't get it from any other prophetic teacher they got it sought along with God they had revelations. Now you don't live on those revelations neither did Paul.

That's the you'll see the point of my message was by revelation that God made known to Paul what was called the great mystery the mystery that the Gentiles and the Jews would be made one body and that great wall that they had erected would come down which in other ages was not known to the sons of men as it is now revealed under his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit. And Paul said this is that which was given to me for you he said God gave me this revelation I was the first to see it it was hidden from all ages but God revealed it to me. And now in the text that I've just read to you he's getting his supreme revelation now he's already had the revelation of Christ given to him the revelation of the mystery the body of Christ being one in Jesus no Jew or Gentile male or female we're all one in Christ the body of Christ all the covenant promises that God has given to us he understood he had a revelation of this he preached you'll find I believe these are his words in Hebrew even on the new covenant I believe with all my heart.

And now Paul is looking back here in 2 Corinthians 12 he's looking back 14 years prior he said about 14 years ago I had an experience now this is after all of these a multitude, abundance of revelations and now he's getting this incredible revelation the Lord took him into heaven he went into paradise and he said I saw things and heard things that are unlawful for a human being to speak I was told I can't come here and tell you I can't tell anybody but he said it's so incredible and I think that was one of the great things that kept Paul so intense in getting the loss to Christ this incredible walk through paradise seeing and hearing things he'd never seen in another world and he's looking back at this abundance of revelation that he had gained but he said immediately after this

revelation something happened he said what he's saying I entered into a new walk something happened because of this abundance of revelation he said that was given to me a thorn in the flesh and a messenger of Satan to buffet me the word buffet is to slap in the face he said God allowed the devil to come and hit me in my face and I'll tell you what that is in just a minute you see there are two kinds of sufferings there are sufferings that are common to all men both saints and sinners life with all of its problems marriage problems children's problems death it happens to all of us sickness, disease these are things that are common depression all of these things fear of the future these are all afflictions that are common to all men there are afflictions of the righteous many of the

afflictions of the righteous the Lord delivers them out of them all it doesn't say there's going to be a sudden deliverance from them all Paul is 14 years and he still hasn't been delivered except one day at a time oh

yes he's delivered but he's being delivered one day at a time he didn't get it the last 14 years no Paul was going to live from that time 14 years ago until he dies still facing affliction after affliction suffering after suffering but God did something for him that made it possible for him to have a fresh victory every day he not only died every day he came every day into a revelation of how he was going to make it through that day with victory and overcoming power and we'll get into that in just a moment but you see you're here this morning and you say well Pastor David

let me tell you something I have been in suffering and affliction well you ought to read some of the letters we get of young people in their 20s that say I was born in a home of witchcraft and beaten and drugged and one 16 year old said my dad and mom started me on drugs amazing letters of suffering and you're here this morning and you say I've been seeking God I've been praying I love him but I have just been going through it and even though I trust the Lord I'm not seeing deliverance well I'm not going to try to scare you but like Paul you may have an affliction not listed here is the many that are common to all men of these many afflictions you may have this special affliction that comes to those whose hearts are set upon the Lord where you're going to have to get up everyday day by

day getting victory through grace now follow me please don't get scared the appalling pattern secondly includes a thorn in the flesh and lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations there was given to me a thorn in my flesh the messenger of Satan to buffet me lest I should be exalted above measure now we don't know what that thorn is if anybody tells you they know they don't it's all speculation here are some of the things that they speculate was his problem eye problem ophthalmia bad eyes in other words people said Paul said you were willing to give me your eyes or others say it was a speech defect he couldn't speak very well maybe a stutter or a character flaw there's a whole one commentary has a huge a large message on his temper oh boy they went all

through the scripture and found you know when he called the high priest a whited supplicant and you know he couldn't get along with Mark so Mark goes with Barnabas he's got it all lined up I read it and didn't believe a word of it some say he had carnal cravings ridiculous demonic thoughts implanted in his mind one commentary one writer he got quite a sermon on this that it was an abusive wife I believe that more than some of this other stuff is there why why was Paul given a thorn in the flesh he said lest I be exalted above measure now I believe he's talking about self exaltation he can't be exalted by the public because he's been banned from speaking about it so it can't be that he's going to talk about it and give this go around and say I was in heaven have you ever heard these tapes

I was in heaven and they give this vision of heaven gold streets gold flowers everything gold last thing I want to say is a gold flower I told you the only one I believe was a little boy who said I went to heaven and Jesus played ball with me that was more believable than anything else I don't want to put all this stuff down but folks he's talking about self exaltation because see Paul had to die daily and I believe I know what he dies from he was a Pharisee the Pharisees were proud it was ingrained in them I'm glad I'm not like other people I'm glad I'm not like you choir I'm glad I'm not like you the rest of you sinners and there was a pride and he had reasons in the flesh to be very very proud and he had to die daily to this and this I believe that the devil knew that this was

ingrained in Paul even though Paul had a daily work of grace in him and he needed this daily work of grace now I used to believe that when it says that the messenger Satan was come this was a demonic entity that came and harassed him and I used to think well it's the devil lying to Paul it's the devil telling him all kinds of lies and harassing him trying to beat him down and discourage him but folks if here's the

way the devil works he feeds into our weaknesses he feeds into our inclinations so if he's going to feed into that and if he's ever going to get to Paul he's going to flatter him he's going to come and say Paul you're the only one who's had this revelation he's going to feed thoughts into him to feed his pride folks you talk about a thorn in the flesh let me tell you what would

be a thorn in my flesh the devil knows my weakness he knows your weakness he knows your inclination he knows that David's inclination was lust the devil fed into that by by he fed into that lust by having a woman bathing right in front of his eyes and and all kinds of thoughts that he was king and he could get away with his armies away nobody going to deal with him as far as those in the army nobody going to deal with him judicially and this is the way the devil if you talk about a thorn in the flesh it would be the devil coming to me feeding into a weakness in me and trying to give me opportunities and trying to justify it and I believe this is what this thorn to me this is what would be the greatest thorn in my life that the enemy would be allowed to test me and and feed into my

weakness and I believe this is what the devil is trying to do this is the messenger of Satan trying to to feed into something within Paul Paul was not divine Paul was a human being he went through things just like you and I do discouragement and fears anxiety sleepless nights Paul went through it don't try to make him some super saint he wasn't I can't relate to that because that's the kind of person I am nor are you well I know we've got some of these very sweet saints that outside look so pure and holy like whited supplicators that let him get home and listen to him chew up her husband and listen to him chew up his wife you show me a saint I want to talk to his husband or wife I want to talk to somebody in the family verify it Paul said 14 years ago I prayed diligently about this inner

struggle he said for this thing I sought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me he said 14 years ago I saw him with all my heart when Christ revealed himself in me he said 14 years ago I had my greatest revelation but at that very moment at that moment a full revelation of Christ and his glory at that very moment I entered a time of suffering and pain and agony there was given to me a thorn in my flesh now you know that the devil can't harass Paul unless God gave him permission he gave permission to Job he gave permission to the devil to tempt his own son I mean take him into a battlefield of temptation the Lord doesn't allow you to do the tempting but he allows you to go into these temptations he said three times I said why I asked God why for three times I kept beseeching the Lord

God how long is this going get me out of this I can't handle this anymore I can't go through life like this being slandered and I can't go through life with this messenger Satan I don't know what that messenger Satan is all about the Bible doesn't explain it all but let me show you what happened this moment of entering in and were you really suffering and it's going on and on think back was there a time earlier before all this happened was there a time that you got so hungry for God was there a time that you wanted him with all your heart and you were setting yourself on a road to Lord Jesus I'm going to serve you with all my heart God I want you and maybe you've forgotten that that may have been the time that all of this started because it did in Paul's life and he said I'm a pattern and

here he is entering in this he's had the revelation after revelation his heart is set on God here's a man who's not being tempted by any sexual lust because he said I have no need in that area you know that the man was oblivious to material things so it wasn't a material thing at all no Paul is being tempted he said lest I be exalted above measure and I believe it's the self-exaltation he's talking about and he said God had a purpose in it and he he comes to Paul now Paul was pleading with him and God doesn't give him an answer I mean he doesn't answer him the way he was the way he asked now let me thirdly bring it to this

point and I want you to hear this well although Paul is not answered the question he asked is why that was not answered but God gave him another answer he gave him

something better I want you to read it with me verse 8 again for this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me and he said unto me my grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in weakness look at me please is it a sin to ask God why is it a sin to ask God how long no but you might as well stop asking because he's not going to answer it David kept asking the Lord why is my soul cast down why this disquietness in my heart why hast thou forsaken me why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy and I find no record of the Lord answering that question don't find any answer to it Jesus asked why can't this come pass from me why hast thou forsaken me I see no record of the Lord answering that listen I am I ask that question when I was in my

early thirties and it's in the kitchen and I see Gwen doubled over in pain grabbing her side and now she couldn't hide a lump that she had been hiding from me for weeks and months and she couldn't hide the pain because it was like a night she said and we rushed her to the hospital and we were about thirty two and I had just twenty eight come to the city to start working with gangs and drug addicts and within two days after tests he was being operated on in the bowel and the cancer the size of an orange the doctor told me he said I think we got the most of it out and I still remember going out on the street and walking up and down outside that hospital saying God I don't understand we come here we give up everything and I'm walking the streets giving you my life I don't understand I'm on

the rooftops I'm walking the streets I'm winning souls are you mad at me is this wrath is this judgment what is it I asked that question five times with every five cancers that Glenn had I asked it once here in New York ten years ago when she had a second mastectomy I said Lord why ok maybe once maybe in El Paso Texas years later a few years later when Bonnie was in the hospital and now she's in a room and they're taking this they're walking with lead on them in suits and they're walking with this thing in the room and she's going to be in there three days being bombarded with atomic stuff for a cancer and the doctor comes out and said about a 30% chance she'll survive and I remember Lord you have to be angry at me there's got to be some secret thing in me that I don't see some sin of

presumption there's something wrong God how much do you expect me to take it wasn't me but folks sometimes you hurt more than the person there because it's overwhelming because the love in your heart there's nothing I can do I can't give her an organ I can't do anything she's on her own in that room and I told you the story how I went out on the road quiet road nobody around and I for two hours I screamed at God and I yelled and I cried and I said oh God I don't understand how long does this go on is there no end I give you everything the more I pray the more I seek your face the more suffering I see and I know what it's like in spite of all of that at the same time to have rumors spread false rumors loving my wife and family and still being called by some adulterer false accusations

they're incubated in hell with not an ounce of truth and to be rejected by friends no folks it's not an easy road well I know what it's like to have a thorn in the flesh and I know what it's like to have a messenger of Satan come and say this is because you have failed God I know what it's like to have that devil tell me every lie that he's ever incubated in hell I've been there I don't want to tell you not once has God ever answered my question why never I still don't know why I don't know why I've had a pain in my gut for five years I don't know I will never know probably until I get to heaven I don't know why I'm still being talked about as well as you God didn't explain anything to Paul he didn't grant his request for an exit out of his suffering God didn't remove the thorn God didn't

remove the messenger of Satan but he said I'll give you something better Paul I'm going to give you grace for every day I'm going to make it sufficient for everything you've been in Paul you don't have to know why you're suffering you don't have to ask why anymore it doesn't matter because you have all the power and grace to survive and I look back I look back over all these years now nearly 40 years and I can tell you his grace has been sufficient his grace Glenn sits back there healthy and strong Debbie healthy and strong Bonnie healthy and strong and the devil might as well quit lying to me because I don't hear it anymore because I have a history with my father I know that one day when I get to glory he's going to sit me down and explain it all and I'm going to say oh so that's how it

was he's going to tell me about a beautiful plan he had all along he's going to tell me how I learned grace I learned mercy through it I learned patience through it I learned to feel for other people in their hurts so many things I believe I'm a better person because of it his strength is made perfect in weakness I want to tell you my Bible says the steps of a righteous man or woman are ordered by the Lord so anybody that comes into my life has been ordered by the Lord if the devil sends somebody into my life I'm going to tell you it won't last long God I'm going to tell long God is somebody I'm to you won't long is going to be I'm you won't last long God I'm to you won't last I'm to you won't last long God not able to figure anything out, and say, Jesus, I rest in you.

There's suddenly strength like I've never known, peace like I've never known, revelation of Christ like I've never known. It all came in a time of great weakness and deep suffering.

I don't want to go through it again. There are a lot of things coming down the road, but you don't have to be afraid. You're going to get the same answer.

You don't need to know why or how long. You've got grace. You've got grace.

That's all you need. You've got my strength. Will you stand, please? Hallelujah.

Oh, Jesus. We are so weak. We are so frail in our own bodies and our lives, but you are so strong, and you have everything that we need to endure.

He said, I'll make a way of escape that you may be able to endure it. Oh, God, that is deliverance. I get deliverance every day.

I am free. Lord, no matter what comes, God says, day by day, sufficient strength, sufficient grace to bring you through to victory. Hallelujah.

Folks, look this way. I've got victory. I've got a song in my heart.

I have a song in my heart. I don't know what you've been through. If we had time, it would take weeks and weeks, but we had time, and everyone here that loves the Lord came up here and told us what we went through.

You couldn't imagine the suffering and the pain and the afflictions. Incredible. Incredible.

It would break our hearts. But here you stand. You're still here? Loving Jesus more than you loved Him before? You're blessed.

You're blessed. Hallelujah. Thank Him.

Thank you, Jesus. Lord, we are blessed. We're grateful.

We're thankful. We are blessed. Hallelujah.

Lord, we are blessed. Oh, I love that song, Through It All, Through It All. Hallelujah.

Wish somebody knew that. You know that? Through It All? While he's singing that, I don't think the Lord would have put this on my heart if he hadn't known you'd be here. Those of you who are suffering, and those of you saying, you've talked to me in my heart.

This is where I'm at. I don't have any great words from the Lord about it. All I want you to do is step out of your seat.

Some of you that are going through the time of your life, you need some help this morning. You need a friend. You need strength.

Why don't you step out and come for the healing of that? And why don't you come say, I'm walking down here to never again ask you why. I'm just going to rest in your promise that you're going to give me the grace I need and the strength that I need in my time of weakness. Up in the balcony, go to the stairs, either side, come down in the aisle.

And in the annex, would you just go between the screens? Please walk forward between the screens. Please don't block the screen, but please go forward between the screens. And I'll pray for you as you come forward.

We'll be praying as those here, while we hear him sing through it all. If you're not saved, if you're not right with God, if your back's slid into your heart, why don't you step out and say, Pastor Dave, I'm moved. God's moved me.

The Holy Ghost has moved me this morning. That's God by His Spirit speaking to your heart. Today's the day.

Get in the aisle. Come and follow these. Please move in close.

Move in as close as you can. Make room for those that are coming closer. Raise your hands right now and tell Jesus you love Him in spite of everything that's going on, in spite of all your suffering.

Lord, I love you and I trust you. Tell Him you love Him first of all. Let's begin there.

Lord, and in the annex, raise your hands and just say, I love you, Jesus. In spite of my suffering, I love you. I know that you're on the throne.

You have not failed me. You're doing the work in me. Come on, praise Him right now.

I praise you, Lord. I love you and I worship you through it all. I worship you, Lord.

I give you honor and glory and praise. Hallelujah. Lord, we give you thanks.

No matter what we go through, we will praise and thank our way out. Hallelujah. Glory be to God.

Glory be to Jesus. Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Wonderful Jesus.

We praise you. We worship you. God, be glorified.

Lord, I pray for these in the annex, those here in the main auditorium that have come forward. Lord, there's a battle, a struggle, afflictions, hard times, things we don't understand, but we come to the throne of grace. You said, my grace is all you need.

You need look no further. My grace. I love you.

Grace is your love bestowed on us. We don't deserve it. Lord, some of us failed you.

We have failed you terribly, yet you're extending your love to us and saying, I care what you're going through. I care about it. And I want to deliver you.

I'll give you the strength that you need. My strength will come in fullness in your time of weakness. That perfection is fullness of revelation.

I'll give you full revelation of how strong I am if you'll trust me. Pray this prayer with me now. Jesus.

I thank you for loving me in my hard times. Times I don't understand even when I've questioned you. But help me now, Lord.

Forgive me. Blot out my transgressions. Forgive my doubts and my unbelief.

Oh God, whatever is going on in my life, you know all about it. You said you'd direct my steps. I love you, Jesus.

And I trust you now. No more questions. I know you've given me grace.

And you've promised me strength sufficient to meet every need and every affliction. And I accept that. And I believe it now in Jesus' name.

And I'll just give you thanks for that. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you all.

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