

# The Glory of the Impossible

by Devern Fromke

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*God takes His people into difficult circumstances to demonstrate His glory and to educate them, not to punish them.*

**Duration:** 1:14:07

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 10:1

**Topics:** "Impossibilities", "Faith in Trials", "God's Faithfulness"

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## Description

Devern Fromke shares the profound truth that God often leads His people into impossible situations to reveal His glory. He reflects on the Israelites' journey from Egypt through the wilderness, emphasizing that their challenges were not punishments but opportunities for growth and deeper relationship with God. Fromke encourages believers to recognize the difference between mere provision and true blessing, urging them to seek God's purpose in their trials. He highlights the importance of being sensitive to God's voice rather than relying solely on principles or past experiences. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper understanding of God's faithfulness and the transformative power of trusting Him in the midst of the impossible.

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## Transcript

I want to assure you that it's a real joy to be back. And to say once again that these years, I can't believe it's ten years. I don't think that's right, but anyway, we'll let that go for now.

We've not been on the East Coast much the last few years. I was thinking as we flew in this afternoon, well, why haven't you been back for a number of years? We would start in Norfolk and work all the way up to Jamaica, and it's been years since we've been here. And I guess the answer has been, after we moved to Indianapolis, I was traveling most of the time, and folk would ask me, well, what's happening in Indiana? And I always said, not very much.

Seems like it's the hardest place I've ever gone. And in the midst of it, one day the Lord said, maybe you'd like to stay home and let something happen there. And I said, Lord, it's impossible here.

I'd rather go other places. And I really went through a battle for two or three years, enjoying traveling other places, and finally I came to grips with the fact God was saying, I moved to Indianapolis. I want you to stay there and let the Lord work.

And I can say tonight God has wonderfully moved in our area. Even Billy Graham has tried to have a couple meetings in Indianapolis, and they were difficult. So you see how difficult it really was.

But we have seen the Lord raise up a number of fellowships throughout the central area, and once a month about 50 of the elders come together. I'm no longer identified with the fellowship that we started, but we sort of move around. They call me pal, pastor at large.

And it's not easy. I sometimes rather stay with the group we were with than you only have one group problems. And now I've got 12.

But I bring greetings from my wife. She was planning to come until noon yesterday. We weren't sure.

We thought maybe we'd drive through. We had a dear friend visit us from New Zealand, and the place we had been three years ago in the south part. She flew in from Singapore and was spending the days with us.

We didn't know how long she was going to stay. And of course, you know, you don't get up and leave company usually. So my wife had to stay home.

But she's with you tonight, with us here. And what I want to share with you is just a word that God's been developing in my own heart having to do with the impossible. If the Lord's been speaking any one thing to my heart, it's the fact that He seems to delight to take His people into very difficult circumstances in order that He can demonstrate through it the glory of the impossible.

I was invited by Jamie Buckingham about three years ago to go with him to Sinai. He had taken a troop of men about ten the year before, and we've been working with Jamie occasionally. And he wanted me to go on the next.

And so I started studying about Sinai and Israel's sojourn all the way through the wilderness. And the more I got into it, I came up with one question. Lord, why would a loving God take His people out of Egypt into the most desperate place, the howling wilderness, sand and rocks, and demonstrate that He loves them in the midst of all of that? Now, maybe you've never thought along that line.

I've only seen pictures of it. I have to say that after I really looked it over and prayed about it, the Lord said, Don't go. And I was glad.

First of all, it cost \$2,500, which I didn't think I ought to waste. And then I began to realize that there wasn't much to see. It was mostly going to develop some character in some men who had learned to live together.

And so I took the easy way out and didn't go. But in the process of it, I began to make some study into God's taking His people out of Egypt and His desire to bring them into the place, into the land that He had for them. And the question came up, Lord, why would You take a people into such a difficult situation? And He seemed to say to me, If you can understand this, why I did it to them, you'll understand why I take my people through difficult things now.

Maybe I'm in the wrong place tonight. Nobody here has problems or difficulties or wilderness or situation. I don't know.

But I'm convinced that there is something that God's been trying to say to my own heart for a number of years. And I just share this with you for a little bit tonight, trusting that the Lord will enlarge a little bit to our hearts. If you will, would you turn and let's read in 1 Corinthians.

Here's a portion that justifies our using this as an example over in 1 Corinthians 10. 1 Corinthians 10, verse 1. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.

But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples to the intent, we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. You'll jump over to verse 11 now.

Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition. Upon whom the ends of the world are come, wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no testing or temptation taken you, but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted or tested above that ye are able, but will with the testing also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it.

I see two things that come into this. One is, some may need admonition tonight, lest there become carelessness or a little bit of casualness. Others may need the word where God says that he is faithful, the Lord is faithful to take his people through.

I want us to bow for a moment before we go any further, and ask that God will have a personal word to our own heart. I said this before and I need to say it again. One of the most difficult places for me to come and minister is where Brother Kong has shared with the rich ministry.

And for days as I've been praying, it seems as though all I can hear is what could you ever say to those people? But I have to reject that and believe that God has a word to our hearts. But you'll have to claim it too. Do you understand what I mean? You've forgotten my habit, haven't you? When I put my hand like this, I mean it's your turn to respond.

Ten years, forgotten. Well, let's pray, shall we? All right. Father, we're not here just for Bible reading tonight, but we're here for you to sort out a personal word to our hearts.

And Lord, I refuse any intimidation and claim that somehow the Spirit of the Lord will bring that anointing that makes things very real and very personal to our hearts. So we thank Thee. We know that You're faithful.

God is faithful. We stand on that tonight. You're able to meet our needs and to sort out a special word to each heart.

We believe You're able to bring admonition to someone who maybe just has been drifting or has been a little casual. Lord, You speak to the heart tonight according to their need. And we'll be sure to give Thee the praise, the honor, the glory, for we ask it in Jesus' lovely name.

Amen. Amen. One thing that I was impressed with as I began to get into this study was the fact that in God's working bringing a people out of Egypt and bringing them over to the land of Canaan that He had

promised to them, these years that they had been in Egypt in servitude and bondage 400 years, had really played its toll.

But you know that the time came when God, through Moses, led them across the Red Sea. And they were out approximately two years. And they came to a place called Kadesh Barnea.

It was a very crucial place because there they sent spies over into the land to see if it really was what God had promised. And you know how they came back and the hearts of the people melted with fear. Now, what I'm interested in is this.

Here they were for two years during which time God gave them a place to worship. Someone has said, and I think the Scripture verifies that they went through ten murmurings during those first two years. But would you believe that God was very patient, almost as though He didn't hold it against them, the murmurings they went through.

But once they came to the place called Kadesh Barnea and the choice was made, they from that time on began a wondering. In fact, we come to our first real distinction that I want you to consider tonight. Up to this time they had been pilgrims.

But now they become wanderers. What's the difference between a pilgrim and a wanderer? Could it be that we look at a people back there and say, my, too bad they missed it. Thirty-eight years wandering around in the wilderness as wanderers.

If I understand the pilgrim quality that was in them as Moses led them out, there was first of all a sense of the purpose that God had to work out. And there was something of a sense of destiny. They enjoyed during this whole period of time much of God's provision.

But there came a point when they just became wanderers. Then God began to speak to my own heart. Vern, you know a lot about the Bible.

How do you know you aren't a wanderer? How can I be sure that you haven't lost the sense, the keen sense, the awareness, the destiny, the thing that God really laid hold of you for? Well, that began to bring me to this distinction. I believe there's a difference between a goal and a destination. A destination has primarily to do with a place.

And I think we'd all agree that Israel was interested in getting where? Into Canaan, land that had been promised to them. It was a wonderful place that had been promised. And they were place conscious.

But a goal, at least as we're going to use it tonight, has to do more with a purpose. By that I mean, I think it is possible for people to reach a destination and miss a goal. What do you mean by a goal? Well, a verse we know real well over in Romans says, For we know that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Now, this shocks people. I just want to shock you right off the bat. I don't believe that heaven is our goal.

I heard a lady one day in a meeting, dear elderly sister, get up and say, I just have one goal in life and that's to make heaven my home. And the sad thing about it is everybody sort of amen'd as though that was wonderful. Except that in my own heart there was a growl and I said, Oh dear Lord, she's really coming short.

Heaven is not our goal. Heaven is just a destination. Somebody says, Are you going to take heaven away from me too? No, no, no.

Cheer up now. Jesus said, I go to prepare a place for you. I go to prepare a place.

I'm not taking heaven away. But what's the goal that God really wants to work out? Well, the very next verse says, For whom he did foreknow. And it goes on in that verse.

We often stop short. But you see the thing, as we so well know that God's working out, is to bring us to the conformity of His lovely Son, the Lord Jesus. And the goal has to do with something that God gets.

If He can conform me to the likeness and image of the Lord Jesus, then it brings glory to Him. And He says, as He said of His first Son, This is my beloved Son. I'd like many more just like Him.

But the place has to do with what we get. Oh Lord, won't it be wonderful when we get to heaven? Yes, it will be. But it very quickly reveals, you see, the center, the real throb of our heart.

Oh God, what are you getting out of it? What will satisfy your heart? Or what am I going to get out of it? You say, Brother Byrne, you haven't changed your theme. No. It's every chapter in the Bible.

What does God get? What do I get? The goal then has to do primarily with what God is getting. And I believe that pilgrims have a quality about them that says, Oh Lord, just so your heart is made glad. Just so you're getting something out of my life.

And then I'll be satisfied. You see. Amen? Well, I didn't think that was new to you folk.

So a destination's alright. But thank God we have something more. And I believe that Israel primarily centered in just getting into the land.

Just getting into the land. Well, let's go back and read a little of it over in Exodus, if you will, please. Let's pick it up in chapter 15.

Exodus chapter 15. Verse 21, we start, I guess. Do you sing this one? Verse 21, And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously.

The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. Here we are now. They've come out of Egypt.

Moses has led them across the Red Sea. And they just get across the Red Sea. Verse 22, So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur, and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

Well, here they are, three days out. Just across. And they come to a no water situation.

How many have ever had a no water situation? That means no job, no money, no friends, nobody understands. A real no water situation. The first tendency for folk when they get into that kind of a situation is to say, I must be backslidden.

I must have missed God's will. I must not be where He wants me. And if you don't think that, there's someone who will come along and whisper in your ear, because he's always accusing, saying, you've really blown it.

No job, nobody understands, no water. I think you know what a no water situation is. How many of you would agree that Israel hasn't really had time to backslide yet? I mean, just three days out.

It only takes an hour, I know, but anyway. Three days out, and a no water situation. Well, I think what God is saying to us at this point is, that the God who loves, and the God who's prepared something for His people, is going to bring us into conflicts.

Conflicts come because God is primarily concerned in developing character, in bringing us into the place where we will learn to trust, to get to know Him, that is. And people need to make the distinction then between conflicts and consequences. Consequences.

A consequence comes because of disobeying a law or violating a principle. We'll get into that. A consequence comes because I am reaping for something I've done.

But here is Israel, three days out, and I believe it's not a consequence, but a conflict. I have to be honest. I thought I'd really arrived at something when I made that little discovery between conflicts.

Then I read at the bottom of my school field Bible the very same thing. And I thought, Lord, how did I miss that? I've used this for over 30 years. This is the same Bible.

I mean, not the same one, but the same, you know. Let me read what he says. These bitter waters were in the very path of the Lord's leading, and stand for the trials of God's people, which are educatory and not punitive.

God isn't punishing them. He's brought them out into the schoolroom to train them. It's a conflict.

The conflict that comes. Education. And I began to look back and realize how many times I had joined sides with the enemy or with people in thinking that what I was going through was something the enemy had brought or was a consequence.

And here God, in His wonderful mercy and His wonderful preparation, was bringing me right into the conflict to educate, to teach a conflict. You know, it's interesting. When you look into the Scripture, suddenly you begin to realize how many situations that we've misinterpreted were really conflicts.

Let me give you one. Read over in 1 Samuel, where there was a lovely handmaid by the name of Hannah. Hannah was the favorite wife of Elkanah, her husband.

She did have an adversary by the name of Peninnah, the other wife, who was very fruitful in giving many sons to Elkanah. And then one little phrase says about Hannah, that Hannah was barren. And the last phrase says, but the Lord had shut up her womb.

Barren, but the Lord had shut up her womb. Now, I believe that if Hannah had been like the other wife, fruitful, she could have gone on on a certain plane for quite a while. But God has something very distinctive to work out through Hannah.

And he comes in and she is one of seven women in the Bible who are barren. Very interesting, but God uses that barrenness as a way, somehow, to move in and get something of His purpose. You see, the history of the time was that Israel is in decline.

And God, knowing it, is secretly working on a man that is going to be born as the means by which He is going to bring back Israel's glory and some restoration. And so He comes down, the little handmaid, and brings a conflict into her life, into Hannah's life, and closes up her womb. And do you know what Hannah does out of her crying and bitterness? She finally gets around the place where Hannah says, Lord, Lord, if you'd just give me a son, I'd give him to you.

And I think all the angels say, Hallelujah! It's what we've been after. God was wanting someone who was not turned in and concerned for a son for herself, but a son for God. And this is the way Samuel comes on the scene.

So I say that the barrenness, the barrenness of Hannah was a conflict. Agreed? Brought about by who? By God. God, you mean you set up conflicts in our lives? Yeah, I'd delight to, He says.

And there's something real about it. Let me give you another illustration. Here is King David.

We'll get into that a little later, maybe Sunday. David has finally succeeded in bringing the Ark into Jerusalem. And that day as the parade goes down Main Street, Jerusalem, the priests are carrying the Ark.

David is so excited, he's so elated before the Lord that he throws off his outward garments, his kingly garments, and he dances before the Lord. They say that sometimes they would have a buffoon or a clown doing it, but this day it was the king. And do you know peeking out the palace window, who was looking on? It was all the rest of Israel enjoying the procession as it went down Main Street, Jerusalem.

But Michael, David's wife, wasn't with the crowd, wasn't a part of the great jubilation. And that night when David gets home, he's had a wonderful day, just excited before the Lord. Only married men would understand this, I guess.

He gets home after a wonderful day, walks in, and first words his wife says is, My, the king was all glorious today, dancing in front of all Israel without his kingly robes. What a mocking accusation. I just have to stop and tell you that I didn't understand that for years because I didn't realize that there were two sides to our ministering to the Lord.

There's the side in which we stand as kings and put on the royal robes and we represent Him. The key word is for. We are representing God.

We are something for Him. And I really love that. And then one day I saw the other side that God uses to balance out our life where we become as a little child.

And we lay aside all the royal robes and we become unto Him as a servant. And I said, Lord, I feel called to the fore. Give me the robes.

I'd like to represent you and sometime later become unto you. And God said, I'm going to so balance your life that they'll not only be the representing for me, but they'll be the ministering unto me. And that brought a great liberation in my life.

Some of you would never believe it, but I was able to dance like David even. Shock, isn't it? Well, praise the Lord. It's just one of those things, but God works the balance.

Well, anyway, that day when Michael met David as he came in, she made an awful accusation. You know what the next line says? And Michael was barren from that day forward. I want to ask you a question.

Hannah's barrenness was a conflict? Michael's barrenness was a what? Consequence. I believe that. Somebody said, Brother Byrne, I don't know whether I've got conflicts or consequences.

I don't know which it is. You want the good news? You can get the same lesson out of both. I mean, you don't really have to know right now.

You can just say, Lord, consequence or conflict, you get out of it the education for me that I need. Are you there? People get so stalled. I don't know whether it's conflict or consequence.

Well, don't worry. Get the lesson. Get the lesson.

God is quick. If there's a barrenness, it could be sin. It could be violating a principle, breaking a law.

It could be. It could be a conflict. And God is saying, I'm trying to squeeze you into a new level where I can get some real fruitfulness of your life.

After I found this, I was visiting with a pastor, very godly man, been much used to the Lord in his area. In fact, been really a soul winner. And he came so puzzled.

He sat down. He said, Brother Byrne, I don't know what's happened, but the last two or three years seems like my life has just become barren instead of being able to win souls. I'm just in a drought period.

And I probed a little bit, asking if the Spirit of God was dealing and speaking anything special. Finally, I just looked and I said, Do you know the difference between a conflict and a consequence? And I explained it. I said, I believe this is a conflict.

And if God left you on this level, you'd just continue on. But God's trying to crowd you into a new place where you can get a new fruitfulness out of your life. Maybe the Lord has shut up your womb, like Hannah.

Otherwise, we would just go on in the course of things. Well, we're after something here. Notice in chapter 15 now.

It says, There was no water. Verse 23. And when they came to Merah, they could not drink of the waters of Merah, for they were bitter.

Therefore the name of it was called Merah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? This is one of those first murmurings. Here they are, just a couple, three days out.

I wondered many times why they didn't call a group together and have a prayer meeting and say, Lord, we're just excited. We've seen how you got us out of Egypt, how you got us across the Red Sea. We're beginning to learn your ways.

We're just wondering now what you're going to do. We can hardly wait. That's what we do, isn't it? Lord, a new opportunity, another classroom, another opportunity to learn of you.

Ten murmurings. Yes, ten murmurings. And it could have been ten opportunities to get to know him.

See, my burden is just simply this tonight. The God who brought this people out there into this terrible howling waste sand and blowing wind, just nothing but a place to help them learn to know him. It seems to me God says, I delight to reveal my glory in the impossible things.

That's dangerous because you have to be sure that you're not in a consequence, but this is a conflict that God's taking you through. But in the midst of the impossible, you begin to say, Lord, no water. Here's this conflict.

Here it is. My heart's open. Begin to ask how your glory can be really demonstrated in the midst of the impossible.

I guess I began to really face that in Indiana when the Lord said, just stay home for a while. Don't run all over the country. There are people here who need the Lord.

But Lord, this is impossible. This has been a burned over area. I could give you all the ten reasons why it was impossible.

Furthermore, we had a group of older brothers there in the fellowship who had been brakes. You know what a brake is? It's something that says, no, it won't work. We've tried it.

It won't work. And I was the steering wheel always trying to give them vision and all I had was brakes. And I began to cry out, Lord, there are other places that are ready.

They've got a motor out there. There's some young people that are ready to go. They need a steering wheel.

No brakes in that place. And it was in the midst of it that God began to speak to my heart and said, I want you to dare to believe that I can do something even in Indianapolis and central Indiana. And I know the Lord put it in my heart.

I began to claim that you give me twelve young couples. Old people are impossible. Anyway, I won't say that.

But they're difficult. Lord, give me twelve young couples that they're moldable and they're enthusiastic. Let them be the motors.

And I began to claim it and then forgot about it. He asked me to stay home for one year and not travel a bit. And in 18 months, I suddenly realized I'd had six weddings among those young people and he'd brought some others in.

And it utterly changed the whole character and the whole outlook. Now, you understand, we older brothers were really the stable part of it. But I saw what God could do through young people who were alive and reckless for the Lord.

And it began to be the change of a whole new thing. And I came to realize that God was asking just one thing. And that is that we began to accept that the impossible was the way He always delighted to reveal His glory.

How many of you know an impossible thing tonight? Really something difficult, something impossible around you. God's saying, I'm in it. I'm there.

I may not have maneuvered it, but I'll sure use you in it. I can work some glory out of this until everybody will have to say, it surely wasn't Frankie, it was me. That's the way of the Lord, the glory of the impossible.

How could God take a people out and going to bring them to the land, into this awful school room where they were for two years? You remember their question was, can God furnish a table in the wilderness? I don't know how many people there were. Some folks say two million. Friend of mine says that the Hebrew is a confusion there.

It's probably a couple hundred thousand. But I can accept the fact it's still a miracle feeding 200,000 people in that howling waste. And the first was giving them water and then giving them manna.

And God says, this is all written for your encouragement as an example. Cheer up, I got a wilderness for you and you and you. The glory of the impossible being revealed.

Well, I read a little further. And I saw they were saying, what shall we drink? Verse 25 says, And he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet. Now I believe that God hides a principle here and it is this.

He is saying, I want you to know at the very outset that all through your journey, all along the way is going to be one governing principle. And if you don't learn this, everything will be bitter. But if you learn this, you can turn everything into sweetness.

How many would like to know that principle? You've heard it. It's a tree. Cut off from its source.

A tree that was put in. It is the principle of the cross. God is saying, all along your pathway under fruitfulness and reaching the goal, the instrument I'm going to use is to somehow always bring you up into my viewpoint so you can see what I'm doing in it.

And as you look at this situation and the cross is working to cut you loose from your plans and your own getting and gaining, you'll see in it how I can turn everything into sweetness. Everything into sweetness. Then I read the rest of that footnote.

There it was all the time. Strange, isn't it? The tree is the cross which became sweet to Christ as the expression of the Father's will. When our merits are so taken, we cast the tree into the waters and guess what? They become sweet.

I don't believe there's one thing we can go through. But we begin to look at it and say, Lord, what are you doing? What's this conflict? What is this? And he says, it's a means by which I'm going to work out some character and strength and some conformity in your life. But more than that, cause you to be poured out wine, a blessing to somebody else.

Say, Lord, I've been praying that you'd use me. A little differently, but I've been praying. Are you there? You mean that this is the first principle that we learn? Bitter water becomes sweet? I'm going to take you ahead because we need to learn this.

In chapter 17. Well, let's go over and read it, shall we? Chapter 17, verse 1. And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin after their journeys according to the commandment of the Lord and pitched and rified him. And guess what? There was no water for the people to drink.

Another no water situation. And can't you just see a Moses saying, no problem, folks? Principle A. Anytime there's no water, you just cut off a tree. This works.

Except that God, God, this time, has a way that's higher than our way. And he says to Moses, well, we'll read it, shall we? Verse 2. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses and said, give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, why chide ye with me? Wherefore do you tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water and the people murmured against Moses and said, wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto the Lord saying, what shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me.

And so he's crying to the Lord and the Lord says what? Moses, remember that rod of authority that you used that parted the Red Sea? I want you to go up and strike the rock and water will come out. And incidentally he says, Moses, this is principle B. Principle A, you use a tree. Principle B, you use the authority of the rod.

Would you like to know something? They came to another no water situation. It was quite a while later. This time Moses inquired, says, Lord, what will we do? And you know what Moses did? He listened, but he didn't hear.

You know the story. He listened, but he didn't hear. God was saying this time, Moses, it's principle C. Principle A, you put a tree in.

Principle B, you what? Take the rod of authority. Principle C, Moses, this time I want you to speak to the rock. And the Hebrew word is different.

The first time where he struck the rock, it's a picture of Christ crucified. But the Hebrew in this is a picture of a lifted up rock, which is Christ risen and ascended. And we speak to him.

Well, you know the story. Moses listened, but he didn't hear. And he went out and he took the rod and he used principle B. If it had been me, I'd have struck the people, I think.

After all these years of wandering with them, God wanted him to speak to the rock. But he struck the rock. Now I'm after something.

You know what God began to show me in this? I guess those who teach maybe get to be guilty of it or victims of it more often. But it's so easy for us to get a hold of a principle of truth and to say, Lord, now I know what to do. Principle A. Principle B. Principle C. Do you know why God keeps taking us on? His ways are above our ways.

Do you know what the secret of it all is? One little phrase we need to read back here in verse 15. Verse 26. And he said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and thou wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear.

And suddenly, I knew what the Lord was saying. Because my proneness has been always to have a principle for every situation. And God said, you've missed it all.

I'm just trying to teach you that today you'll learn to hear my voice again. Suddenly I realized why he said, today if you will hear his voice. I made that generally, but I think he means today.

Today if you will hear his voice. Anybody guilty besides me is saying, no water. Praise the Lord.

I just cut a tree off. Worked last time. Only trouble is, it doesn't work then.

So you say, well principle B worked. Let me try that. And you are somehow depending on what? Depending on principles.

I never dreamt I'd say that. And God is trying to bring us to the place where we are dependent on who? On him. But you see, if I am knowledge-centered, then I am not him-centered.

And it's the most difficult thing. Somebody says, well what's the point in learning principles? I'm afraid I lost you now. Are you trying hard? Lord, make it a revelation of the heart.

There's nothing wrong with wisdom. Nothing wrong. God is trying to develop in us a sensitivity to hearing.

He may go back and say, use A over or B or C, but he wants the right to have our ear continually. And that's problem number one in most of God's people who are well-taught. Praise the Lord.

I got a verse. I know what to do. Got a principle.

And God is always taking us on. You don't remember this, but I remember when I was in the first grade and I learned to add. Two and two is four.

I came home and I said, mother, I know how to add. I felt I'd arrived. And do you know what that sneaky teacher did in about a couple of weeks? She introduced subtraction.

And I said, I'm not going to learn. It's enough to add. And my mother persuaded and said, now son, there's a couple of other things you'll be learning too, so you just won't get acquainted with subtraction.

So I settled in and mastered it. And then guess what he did? She did. Multiplication.

And then division and long division. And all of life's been something like that ever since. That's right.

God, who delights to take His children on, is saying there are new lessons, but the whole secret of it is to bring you to know Me. And I had missed, as long as I had read this portion, I'd missed the key over here in chapter 19. If you'll turn there, I'd like for you to read it.

Chapter 19. Here they are. Chapter 19.

Three months now. Two months out. The beginning of the third month.

Children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt. The same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai, for they were departed from Rephidim and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness, and there Israel camped before the mount. Two months out.

And Moses went up under God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you out, that I might bring you into the land. Just checking to see if you have the right version. Well, he brought them out to bring them in, didn't he? Now listen carefully.

He brought them out of Egypt to bring them into the land, didn't he? You can nod. That's right. Except that he has a way of doing it.

Do you know what it is? First of all, he has to bring them unto himself. He brought them out to bring them in, but the way he was planning to do it was to bring them unto himself. I brought you unto myself.

Oh, this is probably difficult to understand, but I think you can get the place where you say, Lord, if I just get acquainted with you, and you really bring me unto yourself, I'm not even interested in heaven. Come on now. You know why? Heaven's every place.

Heaven is him. It isn't a place. You brought me unto yourself.

You've occupied me with yourself. And the whole course of what he's doing, every one of these, no water, no food, every bit of it is to bring him unto an acquaintance of himself. I can just see people going out of here tonight saying, Praise the Lord, I've found the key.

Lord, would you bring some more conflicts quickly, so I can learn principle H and Q and W and X and get to know you better? You're going to pray that way, aren't you? Lord, hurry it up. I just want to come really unto you, be utterly occupied with you. You completely satisfy my heart.

I can live in a howling wilderness with you and be perfectly content. Do you believe that? Well, I do, but don't try me. This just isn't Old Testament.

This is what it's all about. God takes his people into situations. Through these difficult things, the glory comes out of the impossible.

But we don't believe that, as we can add ten times ten murmurings, can't we? No, don't confess that. So he says, verse 4, And brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine.

And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. God was wanting to bring a people out and put them on pedestal, it were, as a display and say, this is what I can do through a people who are occupied alive unto me and have found me as their supply and their source. Now the strangest thing is, at this point, if you follow this through, I believe we need to make a distinction between provision and blessing.

I had this distinction for quite a while and was afraid to share it until I read in Watchman Nee's book, Twelve Baskets, and then I knew it was truth. I mean, I had verification. Expecting the Lord's blessing.

Let me illustrate it. Do you know something? There are many people who have their needs met. God provides.

And they say, isn't it wonderful? God's meeting my need. Look what He's providing. I must be where He wants me.

Oh, did God provide Israel all the way through the wilderness? How about the manna? How about the rock that followed them? How about the cloud that protected them in the daytime, turned into a street light at night? Provision? Were they in the center of God's will? So don't say that provision is proof. Provision is no proof that you are exactly where God wants you. The only thing it proves is that God loves.

That's all it proves. God's faithful, sometimes in spite of us. He provides.

But I hear people all the time saying, Oh, God's providing. And they have answers to prayer, and the manna comes. Something in my heart has said, Well, I'm glad they're thankful.

But that is no evidence that they know what blessing is. Because I believe blessing is something utterly different. You follow Abraham.

And blessing, it seems to me, always has to do with that which is God working through us unto fullness for the realizing of His purpose. And provision primarily centers in who? Me. But blessing always centers in God's flow-through that there can be adequate over, because there's an alignment unto purpose.

And you get that in two places. We'll not need to turn there, but you'll remember that Jesus was feeding the crowd that had gathered. What was it? 7,000 gathered.

There was nothing to eat. They gathered the little boy in and took his loaves and fishes. And He blessed the loaves and fishes and fed 7,000.

And the Scripture says there was 12 baskets left over. Something about blessing is that what God gives never is just for me or ends with me, but it has flow-through. There's always adequate left over.

Of course, I am in on the enjoyment. But there's always that which is left over. 7,000 and... Is that the number? I forget.

5,000 it was. That's right. 5,000, 12 baskets left over.

Jump over a chapter later and this time He's feeding 3,000. Was it 3 or 4? I've lost my numbers now. Anyway, just a chapter later and this time same loaves and fishes, so to speak, and there were 7 baskets left over.

When I read that, and so the Lord said, this is the way of blessing. There's always adequate left over because it's for others. Are you following? Oh, God! Don't let us settle as wanderers getting consequences just trying to get to a place with mere provision.

Give us the sense. Give us the sense that we've been laid hold of by God to be the channel of blessing, not just the object of blessing, but the channel through which... Now, I'm well aware as you are that there's a great prosperity emphasis going around the country today and it's abused and misinterpreted. The strangest thing is that there's an element of truth in the fact that when God really lays hold of a life and wants to use them in blessing, God isn't stingy.

I mean, how much flow through does He want? You see? The only safeguard to it is this. God says, because you're not the object, but you're the channel. Oh, how much He dispensed through Abram and through Job and through others.

Lord, make us world blessers. Don't let our little narrow horizon just center in on I know how to be prosperous and enjoy all the provisions of the Lord and call it that. When God has called us to be the channels, world blessers.

I don't know, but my horizon's been enlarged the last year or so. God's been saying, you're not expecting enough. Not expecting enough.

There's much more that I want to do. So, we center in this little phrase and I leave it with you tonight. God is saying that this people, a treasure unto Him above all people, ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation.

I think in the midst of this, we come to either prove the Lord or to provoke Him. Prove me, saith the Lord. Prove me.

Allow me to bring you into the full measure of what I long to do through a life that has come to understand something of the purpose and the goal and what He's really doing. When God can prove us, there's a difference between... I just say that over here, there's the test. Over here, we tend to tempt the Lord.

Somebody says, how do I know whether I am tempting the Lord or I am really stepping out and proving God's faithfulness? We won't go into that tonight. Just leave it there. Let me say this.

Seems to me that the difference essentially is that when we begin to ask beyond that which God is concerned to give and the spirit is the spirit of can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Can God... Do you know your spirit? Do you sense your spirit in it? Or the sense that comes when we begin to say, Lord, I have already discovered something of your faithfulness and I choose to just be an opportunity for you to prove yourself. I prove you. You prove me.

Allow me to go through in order that you can have an opportunity in the impossible to demonstrate your glory. Let me close with this. It seems that this people who came out into the wilderness, they were there these first two years and the principle that God was working on there was He gave them a dwelling in which He would meet with them, a dwelling for them.

The tabernacle as a place of sinful people could meet the Lord, find access into His presence. But He was building a dwelling, a dwelling for them. After God takes them along and brings them into the full thing we're going to be seeing, He's working toward building a people for His dwelling.

Let me see if I can make that clear. Here they met at the tabernacle, became a priesthood people unto Him and the emphasis on He was building a dwelling for them. Now we're going to see that He is building a people for His dwelling.

Living stones that He's fitting together that there might be the dwelling of God in our midst. And I question but what we can really move on into the fuller thing that God is after until we suddenly realize that we're not just individual stones. The most difficult thing these years is for me to discover that God is building His people into relationships and how much I really need one of my brothers on each of my blind sides.

In the corporate aspect, I've been such an individualist through the years. Lord, use me. Make me spiritual.

Let me be a blessing. And then the whole thing begins to change character and He says, I'm not interested in just a bunch of little individual stones, but I want a dwelling that I can express myself in corporately. Well, I don't have messages.

They just sort of start and stop and I feel this is maybe enough for tonight. Can I ask you a question? Is it possible? Is it possible that with all the grace that God has given in bringing someone out of Egypt, which represents the world, before they left there was the Passover and God by blood that night of the Passover used redemption separating them. Then there was the separation from the world through the Red Sea as

their old world passed away and they came onto new ground.

Someone says, I know I've experienced the blood of the Lord Jesus. I know in my baptism my old world was left behind and I've come onto new ground. But it's through this whole period right here that God's working another separation.

This time of our fleshly appetites and all that keeps us from really a single eye becoming a pilgrim quality. Lord, let all these things that take place in my life, difficult, impossible, let them be an opportunity, the conflicts, to bring about your goal, your purpose, that I might be the blessing. Let me prove you.

Let me learn that I have come out, but the primary thing is to come unto yourself. I know you've heard this a hundred times. If you haven't, you weren't listening because I know it's been said around here.

But I just want to underline it in a new way. Don't be too sure. Those, he said, who left back in 1 Corinthians.

Let's read it again, shall we, in closing. 1 Corinthians 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Strangest thing is that they drank of the rock, they enjoyed the spiritual meat, but he was not pleased.

Now these things, verse 6, were our examples to the intent we should not lust. Verse 10, verse 11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world the age are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

I need to hasten. I don't think the subject is salvation here. I don't think it's a matter of heaven.

I think it's a matter of falling from the full purpose, the full thing that God has. I'm really sure of that, because surely out of the million God took out, he could save more than Joshua and Caleb and that generation. The theme, the emphasis here, is not a matter of salvation, but it's a people pressing on to the full thing that God wants.

So he says, let it be an admonition. There is no testing taken you, verse 13, but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tested, to go through conflicts, go through anything above that you're able, but will with the conflict or the testing make a way. Take the words home.

God is faithful. Lord, I'm glad you're more interested in this than I am. You are going to pull me through if I can stand the pull.

You've got more at stake than I do. How many believe that? That God is faithful and in the midst of it all, he has us in a lovely schoolroom. Father, tonight, I cannot speak the word to any spirit, but I pray that you'll encourage your people that you're faithful, you are really faithful to maintain that pilgrim quality about us, people who are just sojourners here.

This world is not our home. We have our eyes on a city. We have our eyes on yourself.

We have our eyes on something else that's far better. And in the midst of it, we're believing, Lord, that you'll not let our spirit fall into the murmurings or the complainings. As we go through any situation, but you will develop in us a new thankfulness in the midst of everything, a new rejoicing.

We are in your schoolroom with Moses, learning the privilege of being occupied with you. Lord, I pray that now you'll help our ears to learn to hear today again. Today, if you will hear his voice.

Harden not your heart, as in the provocation wilderness in the days of testing. Not one of us tonight is going through without some no water situations, but all we rejoice in the midst of it that you have a tree. And like the Lord Jesus, we begin to interpret everything for what you get, what is working out for your glory, and of course how it will bring, even in us, a conformity.

Make it real to our hearts tonight. And we'll be sure to give you the praise and the honor and the glory. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen.

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