

On Eagles' Wings Pt 145

by Don Courville

The sermon emphasizes the importance of suffering in the life of a Christian, as it produces the character of Christ and glorifies God, and calls for repentance and revival in the church.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: Acts 14:22, Philippians 2:14, 1 Thessalonians 3:2-3, 1 Peter 2:21

Topics: "Radio Show"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of truly desiring Jesus Christ in our lives. He warns against playing games with God and challenges listeners to examine their hearts and determine if Jesus is truly all they want. The preacher shares personal experiences of facing opposition and attacks from Satan, but also recognizes that these trials are evidence of God making headway in their lives. He quotes from 1 Thessalonians 3:3 to remind listeners of the potential for their labor in the Lord to be in vain if they succumb to temptation. The preacher concludes by highlighting the need for believers to be identified with Jesus Christ and to endure suffering and crushing in order to bring out the beautiful fragrance of Jesus in their lives.

Transcript

Well, I'm glad to be with you today on Eagle's Wings. Let me read a passage of Scripture to you from Isaiah, Chapter 57, verse 15. For thus saith the High and Holy One that inhabited eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Heavenly Father, I pray that we would have the humble heart, that we would be bowed before You as poor and needy, and that we would lift up our hearts to You and say, O God, would You meet my need. Father today, I pray that Your Word would go forth in power, I pray that You would minister to us, I pray for any that do not know Jesus Christ in a personal way, that they would come to know Him, that He is life, and You say in Your Word that He that has Jesus has life, and He that has not the Son does not have life. Thank You, Father, for ministering to us in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, I was glad to be with you last week, live, here on KKLL, and I'm recording this the day after, here in the studio before I head back up home, and I really appreciated getting to meet with some of you folks yesterday. You all came by the house and visited, and then we had a special time, two times, in a church that God seems to be building afresh here in this area, and we're looking forward to being back

down here the 22nd of November, and then as God leads, back again in the first part of December.

We are excited about Jesus. Now as I record this broadcast, I realize that the election has already happened. You're listening, and you know what's happened.

I'm sitting here, and tomorrow we vote. And I'll tell you, my heart is so turned within me that we, as a nation, can choose such ungodly men sometimes to be over us. We will cast votes for men that have principles totally against the Word of God.

It just moves me to think that many of us that call ourselves Christians will vote for men that will absolutely, if they get a chance, destroy us and the things that God wants. We need to turn back to God. Last week I got to go on in Jeremiah, and I could get to go on this morning, how I am convinced that our need in America is for the church to get right with God.

Our need is for the church to repent and to get back to a holiness, get back to a seeking after God and not going our own ways. We have gone so far from Him, we do not even know how far we've gone. But the Lord has given me some restraint this morning, and I'm going to share with you some more things about the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is my favorite subject. I really don't like to preach on revival and repentance and sin like that as much as I'd rather preach on Jesus. He's the one that we need.

But we know that before we can see Jesus, we must hear the preaching of the Word on the need for repentance and turning from our ungodliness in our own selfish, wicked ways. And many of us will not appreciate the things of Christ because we've never turned from ourself in our selfish ways. I want to take you into one of the special areas this morning in the area of suffering.

And over the next few weeks as God leads us, I'm going to take you through different areas showing you different things in the area of suffering that Christ has for you, special things. Now, many of you will not understand this because you have never let Christ be the Lord of your life. And you won't take suffering the way that someone will that knows Jesus and understands the life of faith and understands walking by faith and committing their way to God.

And they've learned to lean not into their own understanding, and they've learned to, in all their ways, to acknowledge Him. And He directs our paths when we do that. Now, the reason for suffering.

We started this little series off a few weeks ago, the reason for suffering. There's several different reasons that I'm sharing with you, but there's these reasons is that we would become Christ-like, that we would give God the glory. You see, suffering produces a spirit in us.

It produces the Spirit of Christ, the compassion of Christ, the love of Christ, the character of Christ, is actually produced in us when God brings us through the chastening times. To follow Jesus is to be called, now get this, in Philippians 3.10, to follow Jesus is to be called into the fellowship of His sufferings. And He said in Philippians 1.29, He said, For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

And the Scripture says, Don't think it strange concerning the fiery trial which will try you. Don't think it's a strange thing, because if you're going to line up with Jesus, you're lining up in the area of suffering. Christ suffered.

He was found in fashion as a man. He humbled Himself. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

That's the deepest level of suffering. And many of us, we cannot receive this area of death until we have been identified with Jesus Christ. We've been crucified with Christ.

As Paul said, I'm crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me in the life that I now live in the flesh. I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God.

That's the next thing he said. Many of us know that one verse, but we don't know the next thing he said. He did not frustrate the grace of God.

And you can do that if you will not let Him be the Lord in your life. Now, I want to take you into another reason of why God allows us to suffer for Him. I've covered with you a couple or three of them.

I think the first one was to get us to Jesus. That's the first thing. And then the next thing was to make us like Jesus.

And then last week, or the week before, it was God allows us to suffer to purify us. We must have that purifying so that we'll fit in. He's preparing us for eternity.

One of the days I'm going to talk to you about eternity, how He's preparing us for eternity. But today I want to share with you this thought, that suffering is one of God's special privileges that He allows us to have. Now when I was overseas, I lived in Turkey.

During the Vietnam War, I was stationed in Turkey, and I was stationed at Chile Air Force Base. And near there was a town called Izmir. Izmir, in the New Testament, was referred to as Smyrna.

If you remember in Revelation 2 and verse 8, God said unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, and Smyrna had to do with suffering. These things said, the first and the last, which was dead in his life, I know thy works and tribulation and poverty. But thou art rich, and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Two churches out of seven that were pure churches, suffering churches, and the other one was Philadelphia, Church of Philadelphia. Philadelphia comes from the idea of love.

But He says, don't fear those things which you shall suffer. He says, behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation. Ten days, be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Now listen to this. He said, he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

How we respond to suffering will affect us adversely in our walk with God. You must be very careful in your trials that you do not give off an evil report, an evil testimony to those around you about your suffering, like God has let you down, like God has forsaken you, like God has departed from you and you're going through this strange experience. No, He is there all the time.

You know the little picture of the footprints in the sand, how the person that wrote that thought God had left them, and then it was expressed that no, that He had kept, He had picked them up and carried them through those troublesome times, and the footprints were His. The footprints in your life, my friend, are the footprints of God. Even in the life of Job, as we shared last week, the footprints in his life were the footprints of God.

So if you're going through a tough time, it's God that's trying to get you to a point of being like Jesus. I was doing a little study in here a little bit ago on wheat, and on the word in Romans chapter 5, the word tribulation, look at Romans 5, 1 through 5, and those verses, it talks about tribulation, worketh patient. The word tribulation is the idea from the word of a frail.

It was used to beat the chaff off the wheat. And let me tell you something, we never do, and I've done some farming out in the West and in Wyoming and Nebraska, and the wheat is always harvested when it's ripe. And that threshing machine comes along, we combine it, and it beats off the chaff, and then just the kernels of wheat are taken in to the bins.

God will not let you be thrashed before you're ready. There's different stages and things like that. Let me share this Scripture with you, and I have so many things to share with you, and sometimes I can almost get ahead of myself.

But there's a special passage in 1 Thessalonians chapter 3, verses 3 through 8, where there was concern. So Paul had sent Timothy about the Christians there in Thessalonians. He was concerned about them.

In verse 2 he said, Timotheus, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow labor in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and to comfort you concerning your faith. Why? Because they were going through tribulations. And he said to them in verse 3 that no man should be moved by these afflictions.

Don't let those things move you away from abiding in Jesus. If anything, he wants you to come closer to him, snuggle up to Jesus when things begin to get really tough. And I believe that our country is in line for some tough things.

We're in line for chastening, unless we will repent as a church of our wickedness, unless we will repent and really seek God's face, I am convinced, and the spirit of the prophets around the country is bearing witness with my spirit, that God is going to chasten us. If he doesn't, he's going to have to make some apologies to Sodom and Gomorrah. He's going to have to make some apologies to other lands that he's chastened that haven't even, that weren't even as bad as we are.

But God wants to purify his church, and he wants us to do it now. Now, he gives us a special privilege sometimes to suffer for him. And Paul said that no man should be moved by these afflictions.

For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto, 1 Thessalonians 3, 3, for verily when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and you know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor be in vain. Oh, what a sad thing that the labor of God could be in vain in your life, my friend.

In one moment, in one day, we can choose to wash out everything that God's been doing for years in our life. We have to be so careful. You know, just like you're driving down the road, one careless moment taking your eye off the road, you could wreck your life and the lives of others for years to come, even

destroy life.

We have to be careful in life. We have to walk careful. And one of the things that's grieved my spirit, and I know it's grieved the Spirit of God, is that we're so careless in our churches today.

We're so careless about the things of God. We're so careless in our worship services. We're so careless in our choosing of pastors.

We're so careless in our choosing of the elders and the deacons and the leaders in our church and the Sunday school teachers. We do not fast and pray and seek the mind of the Spirit of God. In other words, we go the way of man.

We choose by logic and feelings and position and rank and power, and we choose by the ways of God. And many of us have departed from being led by the Spirit of God in our churches. We are in desperate need for revival.

But if God does choose to let you to go through a special area of suffering, let him have his way with you. Remember last week about the blind man that was born blind from birth, and they said, who, what's it with it, this man, the disciples wondered about this man, you know, what's the problem? And Jesus told them, this man was born like this for my purpose. He was, that the works of God would be manifest in his life.

You can go back and read that in John chapter 9. In Acts 14.22, Paul warned them, he said, we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And if you remember in 1 Peter 2.21, for even here unto where ye call, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow his steps. Now I want to take you into this area of special suffering.

I was thinking back years ago when I was at a Bible camp at Ridgecrest out in North Carolina one summer, there was a man there. I don't know if he was a Christian or not. I think he probably was because he was around there all the time.

He was handicapped and his name was Paul, I believe. But I remember Paul sold balloons and he couldn't talk very well. And I remember the kids made jokes about him.

They laughed at him. They made fun of him and mocked him. And I just wonder, I was thinking about this morning and I was trying to remember, oh God, did I do that too? I just couldn't remember if I did that or not.

But how, if that man was a Christian and God had allowed him to go through that special area of suffering, designed him special with those handicaps to test the spirit of Christians on how they felt about God, what a tragic thing it would be to stand before God at the judgment seat of Christ and he would say, why did you mock me and make fun of me? And you're standing before Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And he would say, why did you mock me? And we'd say, when did I mock you, Lord? When did I mock you? And he said, I was in the life of that man, Paul, there at that camp. And you made fun of me day after day when you were there that summer.

And I had designed him special for that reason, that I might manifest my glory through his life in a special way. And you made fun of me. Oh, what a tragic thing.

We have a little boy in our church who has a deformed ear and his face on one side is sort of twisted up. And I remember that little boy here a few months ago telling me that he was going to get surgery someday for his ear to get his ear fixed up. And he wore his hair long down to cover up that ear.

And I thought about that and I said, oh, God, how many times were like this? We'll waste our sorrows instead of instilling into this little boy a love and a trust in God that God had designed this supposedly defect for a reason to show his special love in his life. We waste our sorrows on wanting to cover up these things and get rid of these things instead of letting him have his way with us. Wasn't it far better that the man was born blind and lived all those years blind that God might glorify himself in that life? And Jesus manifested himself as God by healing that man.

Wouldn't you rather go through your affliction so that God can be glorified in your life? I was just thinking of a passage of Scripture back over here that says in Philippians 2, in verse 13, Do you believe that? It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. And I was reading in this book on tribulation on how so many times we want to change all these things instead of accepting God's will in our life. You know what we're saying to God is, I don't think you're doing a good job.

I think I can do better than you, and I think I'd like to try. And so what do we do? We try to play God in our lives, and we've got this kind of theology in our churches. And we think that we can run God with our prayers.

We think because we're children of God, we've got some kind of power that we can tell God what to do. God operates according to his word. He operates according to his will.

He operates according to his divine purposes and plans. And it's not for us to get God to line up with us. No, it's for us to get lined up with God.

Then the power of God will be in your life, the blessing of God will be in your life, and the world will see Jesus. The reason people aren't turning to Jesus, and God help you, my friend out there, if you have not found Jesus as your Savior. But don't think you can get away with getting into heaven by telling God that these Christians got you astray.

It may be true they got you astray, but you still have to give an account to him for your own sin and why you would not trust Christ as your personal Savior. Oh, you turn to Jesus right now. Eternity in hell is not going to be a party with your friends.

It's a place of gnashing of teeth and weeping, eternal sorrow, and it's a place of no hope of ever getting out. And for all eternity, you'll burn and you'll be in pain. So don't you think, because some Christian's not doing right, that you have an excuse to get by Jesus Christ in the blood of Calvary, the blood, the precious blood that Jesus shed for you on the cross, the agony and the pain.

It was so terrible a death, he said, my Father, if it be possible any other way to get around this cross, oh, oh, let me go around it, but nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done. It was such a terrible death for him to take upon himself our sin for you. That was how terrible it was.

Because he didn't want to do it. But he did want to do it if that was the will of the Father and the only way you and I could get to heaven. So don't think you have an excuse.

There is no excuse for not accepting Jesus as your Savior, for coming to him by the blood. And don't think, by the way, also because you've gone to church, some dear grandmother or grandfather out there, all your life you were baptized, you gave to your church, you've been a member and attended Sunday school, that God's going to let you into heaven. No, you only get in because you're trusting the blood of Jesus Christ.

The devil will trick you if he can. There's all kinds of cults and theologies and systems and churches and everything out there, but it's only the blood of Jesus Christ that will set you free. And only by the blood do you get in.

Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes into the Father except by me. And when you come to Jesus, then you have this special privilege of walking with him.

So don't think it's strange when God, when you become his child, he moves in. Because the Scripture says, know you not that you're not your own, you've been bought with a price, that precious blood. So he's going to move in and begin to work in your life.

And you just don't have a private life. I don't have a private life. My life is open before God and the world, my family, my friends.

You don't have the right to a private life. Chambers said, if you remember last week, November 1st, if you read Oswald Chambers, that tremendous little devotional book, he said, for a man or a woman who is brought into fellowship with Jesus Christ, is brought into Jesus Christ's sufferings. And he said, God will break up the private life of his saints.

He'll make your life a thorough affair for the world on one hand and for himself on the others. And everybody will see what God's doing in your life. And some will laugh and some will mock and some will see Christ and will weep and say, I want this Jesus that I see in your life.

And it takes the suffering, it takes the crushing of the precious, beautiful little flower to bring out the deepest fragrance of that flower. And so it'll take the suffering and the crushing in your life to bring out the beautiful fragrance of Jesus. Chambers said, no human being can stand all this crushing unless he's identified with Jesus Christ.

And the reason that we go on and we do what Paul told us not to do in Philippians 2 and verse 14 where he said, do all things without murmurings and disputings, that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain, he says, I let Jesus crush me to pieces. He smashed me, he crushed me, he broke me. But when he did that, the fragrance of Christ flowed out of my life, he said.

Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all. Oh, let me tell you, my friends, sometimes to bring these messages to you, I have to go through suffering. My family has to take the heat when I'm away, and I've been gone about 20 days out of the last 30 from my family, and that's hard.

They've been taking some hits, Satan's been trying to hit us, and I have to almost pray continually that we can stay under the blood and under the protection and keep the angels around there. But when we're getting hit like that, I know that God is making some headway, and God's making some headway in your life. And who knows what this broadcast will do today in some lives to encourage you to walk with Jesus.

Oh, walk with Jesus. Chambers went on to say, we're not sanctified for ourselves, we're called into the fellowship of the gospel. And things happen which have nothing to do with us, God is getting us into fellowship with himself.

Let him have his way with you, my friend. And if we don't, instead of being of use to God and his plan of redemption in the world and reaching others for Jesus Christ, we'll be a hindrance and we'll be in the way. Oh, we don't want to do that.

And the first thing God does with us, Chambers said, is to get us based on rugged reality. You know, reality is life is real. We have pain, we have problems just like everybody else.

And we do not care. We get into the point where we do not care what happens to us. All that matters is that Jesus Christ will be exalted and glorified, whether in life or death, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

You see, the early Christians, when they received Jesus as their Savior, they understood that to be identified with Christ, they were dead, they were crucified with Christ. Their life was over and out as Jesus was their life. You read Romans chapter 6. You read it.

It's right there. So why shouldn't we go through heartbreaks? Why shouldn't we go through the doorways that God is opening up into this deep fellowship with his Son? Why shouldn't we go in there? If he went to the cross, why shouldn't we go to the cross? And there's the difference between the Christian and the one that thinks he's a Christian. The Christian is the one who says, if my Jesus died for me on the cross, then I will die with him on the cross.

I will identify with him. No suffering that I can go through for him will be too much because he suffered so much for me. And the pretenders will say, well, man, this is getting too, I could take the cushions and I could take the singing, the praise singing, and I could take all of the good stuff, but man, I can't take this cross stuff.

Then you need to get saved. You've identified with the false gospel that's been preaching around where all you got to do, brother, is just pray and receive Jesus. No, you've got to repent of your sin and pray and receive Jesus and be made into a new creature and the old things will pass away and the new things will come.

God is sick of all of this pretending stuff. And by the way, it doesn't produce any peace, it doesn't produce any joy, and it sure doesn't produce any Christlikeness and fruit. And that's why you can't memorize scripture, and that's why you've got demons bugging you all the time, and that's why your life is a mockery.

When you're at work, there's no power of God in your life to draw others to Jesus. You try to talk about Jesus to them and they laugh at you and they mock at you and they make fun of you, but there's no conviction in their heart because you're just trying to play a game. Well, I've got to go.

Time's up. I want to leave you with this thought. What is it you want? Do you want Jesus Christ? Is he all you want? Is he all you want? Let me tell you, my friend, he's all you need.

But until you get to the point to where he's all you want, you're just playing games with God. Until next time, may God bless you, my friend.

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