

# On Eagles' Wings Pt 148

by Don Courville

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*Suffering is a consequence of the fall, but it can also be a means of refining us and bringing us into deeper fellowship with God.*

**Duration:** 43:15

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 8:3-14, Proverbs 3:13, Isaiah 40:28-31, 1 Peter 4:1-2

**Topics:** "Radio Show"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the topic of suffering and how it can lead to happiness. He emphasizes the importance of suffering for well-doing rather than for evil. The preacher quotes from 1 Peter 4:1-2, which encourages believers to arm themselves with the same mindset as Christ, who suffered for us in the flesh. He also mentions Proverbs 3:13, which states that happy is the man who finds wisdom. The preacher highlights the need for Christians to rely on every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord and to not forget His commandments. He concludes by reminding the congregation that those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength.

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## Transcript

Hast thou not heard? Hast thou not known that the Lord, the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

Heavenly Father, we commit this time to you today. Thank you, Father, for bringing me and my family in safe through the southern part of Arkansas last night. Father, I thank you that we're here, that we can watch you work.

We thank you, Father, that we can walk with you. We can walk by faith, not by sight. Thank you that you provide for us as we go.

You told us as we go to preach the word, and as we go you'll provide our needs. Father, I pray that today your word would not return into void, but that it would accomplish that. Would you please? Father, I pray

for those that are hurting, those that are discouraged and broken, that you would minister to them through your word.

And I pray for those that are without Christ, that you'd open up their hearts to see that without Jesus they don't have anything. They don't have life here. They have no joy here, and they won't have anything after they die.

To be absent from the bodies, to be present with the Lord for those of us that know you. But Father, for those that do not know you, we have a burden that they would know Jesus. And I just pray, Holy Spirit, that you would draw them to the Lord Jesus Christ.

For you say in your word, he that has the Son has life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. And we know, Father, that your word says that if we don't have Jesus Christ as our Savior, the wrath of God abides on us. We don't know how bad we are, Father.

So open up your word. We thank you, Father, that you love us. You loved us enough that you sent your Son into the world, not to condemn us, but you sent your Son to die for us on the cross.

Thank you that the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and that he rose again. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And you say, Father, he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.

And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. We yield our time to you now in Jesus' name. Amen.

My, it's good to be back with you. I think it was about a month ago I was here, and I didn't know if I'd make it back this Sunday or not. We got down there in Louisiana and God opened up and had a good time to share in my home church.

And then Friday we got on the radio station down there, on a new radio station, and had a good time sharing on what God's been doing in revival. And you pray for us, they'd like for us to put the program on down there and break it up in five-minute sections. I've never done that.

I'd have to have a hard enough time trying to get everything recorded for this program. But God is able, if He's in it, we'll see it go. And there's some neat things happening down there.

You know, I've been sharing with you on suffering, and I haven't had the time that I wanted to take you into this area to study it out and to prepare the messages. And last week, I guess you noticed that there was a replay on last week's message, and the Spirit of God would not give me any peace on playing the other side of that tape. And I didn't know if it was from God or the devil, so I wasn't going to take any chance.

If God didn't want it played, then I sure didn't want it played. So I've got it in my pocket, and I'm going to listen to it and see what was on there that maybe the Lord didn't want you to have. So that's why we played last week's.

This area of suffering, God has been opening up my heart to see this, and I'm not any kind of specialist in this area. I know that there are some of you that could share volumes with me about the area of suffering, but I see that this is the deepest area of walking with Jesus that there is. The area of suffering the Scripture has much to say about it.

I've been going through Scriptures, and God's been showing me neat things. I spent almost all day Friday with a doctor down in Alexandria, Louisiana. Actually, he was in Pineville across the river.

He's the one that got me on the station down there. And he shared a passage with me. I knew about it, but I just forgot about it.

I hadn't thought about it in relation to suffering. And it's in the book of Deuteronomy in chapter 8. Remember how God took Israel through the Red Sea and into the wilderness? And He did all of this stuff, and He took them through all these experiences for a reason. It's said in verse 2 of Deuteronomy 8 that He said, that thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee and to prove thee to know what was in thine heart.

So here's some reasons for suffering to show them what was in their heart. In verse 3 it says, and He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. And of course, this is what the Lord Jesus Christ quoted in Matthew 4.4. So sometimes God lets us go through dry seasons of different things, maybe food literally, maybe finances, maybe even the joy of the Lord.

You go through a dry season where He withholds from you some spiritual blessing so that we might know that He is our life. He is all we need, but it takes us a long time to come to the point to where the Lord Jesus Christ is all we want. So this is a neat passage.

And also over in verse 11, He said, Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God in not keeping His commandments and His judgments and statutes which I command thee this day. You slip down to 14. He says, Then thine heart be lifted up.

He's talking about after they've prospered all their herds and flocks and multiplied. He said that they are to be careful that their heart not be lifted up, that they forget the Lord their God which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. And down in 16, He said that He fed them in the wilderness with manna, which their fathers knew not that He might humble thee, that He might prove thee to do thee good at the latter end.

And this is the point of suffering. God is not hurting us for no reason at all. He's not letting us go through trials and suffering for no reason at all.

It's that He might do us good. He is interested in you. He does care.

He knows where you're at. He knows your problem. He knows it because He has custom-designed the trials for you.

And what He does many times is He takes our own blunderings, He takes our own mistakes, He takes our own misjudgments, and sometimes some of these are very hard, and He works these things out for good to build into our lives the Lord Jesus Christ. And God, my friend, if you're not saved, He is trying to get you to Jesus. And you may be kicking and spitting and cursing and hollering and complaining and bitter and mad, and all the time God's trying to get you to Jesus.

If you don't get to Jesus, you won't make it anywhere but to hell. I'm sorry if that offends you, but this is the Word of God. If we don't make it to Christ, we don't make it to heaven.

We go to hell. That's our designation right now. We started there in Adam, and the whole human race has been heading that way, and God's got a rescue program called Calvary, where the Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood for you there at Calvary.

Well, listen, I've got some more new stuff on suffering I wanted to share with you today, so let's just get into it. And if you'd like to talk with me, we'll take a few minutes at the end of the program. You call me here at the station.

I'll be in the area here for at least probably a couple days, and maybe the Lord might want us to get together or something. But you get a hold of me. I've got to get back.

I'm down south of town staying with some friends, and I ran off with my girl's hair dryer this morning, so I've got to get back so they can get the hair done ready for the church that we're going to be going to this morning. Now, listen, suffering is a consequence of the fall. Suffering in the yielded believer's life will produce, if you let it, it will produce the character and disposition of Christ.

But suffering is a characteristic of the fall. We all suffer. But suffering, God uses this to get His diamonds the sharpest and the brightest.

He uses suffering to get us just to the right position that He needs us to be in that Christ might radiate through our lives. Suffering will produce in your life a spirit of compassion which will be necessary for ruling with Christ in the future. Now, this is a new area.

I haven't even explored this one out. But, you know, God is preparing us for eternity. One of the points that I have today that I want to share with you is this, that Christ is preparing us for eternity.

Remember that Jesus was a man of sorrows, and He was acquainted with grief. And Jesus said, Come unto me, all you that labor and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. He is our rest.

What do we do? We go to our counselors. Many times we run off to our pastor when that's all right. But you need to go to the shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ first, and go to Him and get with Him.

Many times He's got something for you personally. But we go to counselors. We go to other people.

We take our pills. We do this and that. And then many times God is wanting us to come to Him.

You see, He desires to have close fellowship with you through the day. He desires to walk with you, to talk with you. And He does in our spirit.

He talks to us. If we abide in Him, Jesus said, Abide in me. He said, Without me, you can do nothing.

You know, you need to get along with God. Maybe you just need to pull away for a week somewhere or at least a day or half a day and just get with God. Get your Bible and get along with God and let Him speak to you.

One of our problems in praying is that we think that we have to talk all the time. And really, we don't have too much to say to God. By the way, one of the deepest areas of prayer, when God takes you into praying, He would take you into the Word and you will begin to pray the Word back to God.

Our thoughts without the Word of God are vanity. Our ideas without the Word of God to back them up and be saturated with them are vanity. And I don't care if you've got a vision or whatever.

If it's not grounded on the Word of God, it's suspect. It's suspect. And God tells us to take every thought captive.

You see, these demons that are around, they work in the area of thought. And they're continually bombarding us with things. Yesterday morning when I got up, I was reading in 1 John 4 on how love, as it saturates my being and God saturates my being, it will cast out all fear.

Well, as we were coming through the mountains last night, down through the western side of Arkansas, we came all the way up the west side. We drove in rain and sleet and slush and some ice. And God just comforted my soul with this.

And I was able to try to minister to my wife. This is an area where she's tested in to be in mountains and places that are sort of dangerous. And God has been showing us things about how this fear will rob us of the fellowship with Jesus.

And you may not have a problem with fear. You may have a problem with anger, self-sufficiency, bitterness, lust, immorality, or whatever. But whatever it is that you've got, it will rob you of that fellowship with Jesus if you don't get victory over it.

So God's going to bring things into our life to test us, to draw us out, to get that out of us, so it doesn't block off that fellowship. Suffering is for our good. It is for our good.

Excuse me, getting a little clogged up here. Now, to follow Jesus, is to be called into the fellowship of His sufferings. Remember Philippians 3.10, Paul said that I might know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings.

That is the deepest area of walking with Jesus, I believe. Are you, my friend, a partaker of Christ's sufferings? Or are you a shirker, a complainer, a murmurer? Are you prepared, as Chambers said, for God to stamp out your personal ambitions? Are you prepared for God to destroy by the inworking of the Word of God through the Holy Spirit? Are you prepared for Him to destroy your self-life and to destroy your individuality and to reproduce the image and the character of Jesus in your very being? When people see you, they will see a glow in your life, there will be a peace in your life, and they say, wow, what is it? And you just say, it's the Lord Jesus Christ, my friend. Let me share with you about my wonderful Savior.

Oh, let's get into something. We've shared about how suffering is to get us to Jesus, how suffering is to make us like Jesus, how suffering is to purify us, and I think the last time I shared with you on how suffering is one of God's special privileges that He allows us to have. I was just thinking about a little poem here I got by Madame Gunion.

She spent ten years of her life in French prisons, and you know that Bunyan did, too. He spent a lot of his time in the prisons, and all that suffering produced Pilgrim's Progress and his other works. But all these years that she was in prison, from 1695 to 1705, she was free.

Listen, here's a little poem she wrote. She said, A little bird, am I? Shut up from the fields of air, and in my cage I sit and sing to Him who placed me there, well-pleased a prisoner to be, because my God it pleaseth thee. Nothing else have I to do, I sing the whole day long, and He whom most I love to please doth listen

to my song.

He caught and bound my wandering wing, but still He bends to hear me sing. Thou hast an ear to hear, a heart to love and bless, and though my notes were ever so rude, thou wouldst not hear the less, because thou know'st, as they fall, that same sweet love inspires them all. My cage confines me round, abroad I cannot fly, but though my wing is closely bound, my heart's at liberty.

My prison walls cannot control the flight, the freedom of the soul. Oh, it's so good to soar these bolts and bars above, to Him whose purpose I adore, and in thy mighty will to find the joy, the freedom of the mind. Jesus loves you, my friend.

You know, a few weeks ago I received a letter from a man in the area, and I don't even know where this city is. And by the way, sir, I'm here at the station, I'll get your tape out in the next day or two, as soon as I can get it copied off. Mr. I think it's Robin Cosman, Cosane, not for sure, but in Stark City.

Can I read this to you? This came to me November 8th, so it's been about a month, and sometimes it takes a while for me to catch up with my mail and also get tapes made, but he said, Dear sir, writing to me, I just heard your broadcast on brokenness and shaping of living stones. Can you send me a copy of the broadcast? I needed that very message. Thank you.

He says, I suffer bad. God, and I'll get your tape to you, thank you for writing to me, I appreciate that, but God is letting you go through suffering. Let me say this, my friend, God's letting you go through the suffering, and thank you for writing.

He's letting you go through that for a reason. So keep your eyes on Jesus. Don't keep your eyes on your suffering.

Keep your eyes on Jesus. We just glance at our suffering. We glance at our circumstances, and then we keep our gaze on Jesus, and this is what keeps us from getting so discouraged, and sometimes the pain is so bad that it gets to the point where we can't even hardly keep our mind on the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you're going through suffering, you're dying of cancer, you've got a tragedy or whatever, but ask the Holy Spirit to help you keep your gaze on Jesus. I have to do this. I forget the Lord sometimes through the day.

I feel so bad that one of my continual confessions to the Lord is that I forget Him. I'll just forget to think about Him as I'm doing things and going places, and He said to abide in Him. Now, suffering is a special privilege, and when we get to the point where we recognize this, we will get into some deep fellowship with Jesus.

You know, Chambers, back on November 1st, if you read that blessed little devotional booklet, he said, Know ye not that ye are not your own? Isn't that good? Don't you know that you're not your own? Like that song, Let him have his way with thee. Let's don't struggle on the operating table of suffering. Chambers said, There's no such thing as a private life, a world within the world, for a man or woman who is brought into fellowship with Jesus Christ's sufferings.

For God breaks up the private life of His saints and makes it a thoroughfare for the world on the one hand and for Himself on the other. No human being can stand that unless he is identified with Jesus Christ. One of the reasons that we complain in our suffering is because we're not there.

Are you there? Well, I wish I could say I was there, but I have to confess that sometimes I complain, sometimes I murmur, and when the Spirit of God comes back and He points that out to me, I feel so bad because I know it's against Jesus. Chambers said, No human being can stand that unless he is identified with Jesus Christ. We're not sanctified for ourselves.

We are 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.

If you do not, instead of being of the slightest use to God in His redemptive work in the world, you will be a hindrance and a clog. The first thing God does with us is to get us based on rugged reality until we do not care what becomes of us individually as long as He gets us, gets His way for the purpose of His redemption. Why shouldn't we go through heartbreaks? Through those doorways God is opening up ways of fellowship with His Son, and this is the key.

God is opening up ways of fellowship with His Son, and this will be what God will use to draw others to Jesus through you. Most of us fall and collapse at the first grip of pain. We sit down on the threshold of God's purpose and die away of self-pity, and all so-called Christian sympathy will aid us to our deathbed.

But God will not. He comes with His Son, and He comes with the grip of the pierced hand of His Son, and says, Enter into fellowship with Me. Arise and shine.

If through a broken heart God can bring His purpose to pass in the world, then thank Him for breaking your heart. Isn't that good? I don't like to take a lot of time to read stuff, but I will if it's good. And comes what I sense from the Holy Spirit.

So let Him have His way with thee. If through a broken heart, if through a disease, if through a tragedy, God can bring His purposes to pass in the world, in your life, then thank Him for breaking your heart. We belong to Him.

You know, I was looking back over in Matthew 26, how the disciples, they denied the Lord. They denied Him just before He went to the cross. And I was looking at this, how He came to them in the garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26 and verse 36.

And Jesus came to the garden there with them, and He said, Sit ye here while I go and pray. Would you sit here while I go and pray yonder? And so He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and very heavy. And then He said to them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, tarry ye here and watch with Me.

And He went a little farther, and He fell on His face, and He prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. And He came unto His disciples, and He found them asleep.

And He said unto Peter, What, could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and He prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.

And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy, and He left them. And went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came back to His disciples.

You know what? God spoke to me, and He said, I wanted some fellowship in My deepest hour of trial. I wanted some fellowship. The Lord Jesus Christ wanted some fellowship in prayer.

He needed prayer at that point of time. And they failed. And we fail.

You know, you don't need to be more busy. You don't need more things to do. You need to pray more.

And you need to get with Jesus. And He left them. Oh, what a tragedy if He would come to our life today, to you or to me, and He would want the fellowship of sufferings.

He wants to produce into our life that deep abiding fellowship with Him. But He can only do it through that fine instrument of suffering. But He won't, we won't let Him do it.

We keep shirking it and pushing them away. What a sad thing would be if He would just leave us. I do not want Him to leave me.

I want to fellowship with Him. You see, God is bringing into my life and your life the things that I need, the people that I need, the circumstances that I need. And He does this to show, as He did the disciples, they saw what was in them.

They saw how weak they were. He does this to show what is in our heart, weakness, and then also to get us into fellowship with Him. So He will pound on us to destroy the self-life to produce the life of Jesus.

And most of us fall and collapse at the first grip of pain. We sit down on the threshold of God's purpose and die away of self-pity, as Chambers said. Suffering is one of God's special gifts, my friend.

I have a little book. I was reading some stuff on this, and I don't read much. I don't have much time to read, and there's not much worth reading out there.

I mean, if I went into a bookstore and picked out the stuff that would probably be worth reading, I could walk out with it in my hands, all the stuff in there. There's just a lot of stuff that's written. But sometimes God will bring into your presence something that's good, and I don't know if I'll take the time.

I don't think I'll take the time today to read through this thing, but it's called Tried by the Lord. You know, we are tried by three ways. We're tried by people, and then we're tried by the suffering.

Actually, it could be periods, but we're tried by people, and then we're tried by the Lord Himself. We're tried also by our own mistakes and things. But when the Lord tries us, as it says of Job, the word of the Lord tried him.

Then we get into the deepest, dividing us under a soul and spirit. And some of the things in here were so powerful. Maybe sometime I'll share some of these things with you.

But when God Himself tries you, be careful you do not blame it on the devil. You see, Satan can't get through to you unless he has permission of the Lord Jesus Christ, because you belong to him, just like Job. Satan couldn't get through to him unless the Lord allowed it, and the Lord allowed it because he wanted to get to a certain area in the life of Job.

Job thought he was holy, that he was righteous, and he was. But there was one little area in his life that God hadn't got yet, and so he let Satan in. And when he was done, Job said, I am vile.

I am vile. And he was tried by the Lord, not by Satan. So be careful.

You might get into trouble. Now let me share with you another area. God allows us to suffer to bring happiness in our life.

You want to be happy? You know, I want to be happy. I'm a pessimist by nature, so I have to be filled with the Spirit. There is nothing showing but flesh, and that flesh, it's not very good.

Matter of fact, it's rottenness. It's from the pit. It all goes back to the source is Satan.

And so much of it, the deepest core of it is pride. It's pride. But if you want to be happy, then we have to do what God wants.

I was looking at 1 Peter 3 and verse 14. But, and if you suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, and neither be troubled. You know, many of us suffer because of illnesses and things, but when you suffer because you are righteous, you're filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Lord says, He says, don't be afraid. You're really the happiest person on the earth. This is a real, real loose paraphrase.

But He says, if you suffer for righteousness, for being filled with the Holy Spirit, having the character of godliness in your life, He says, happy are you. You are really happy. You've got what the world wants.

You've got Jesus living in your life. You're fellowshiping with Him, so don't let them trouble you. Many times Satan gets us by getting us down.

We've got the joy of the Lord, we're filled with the Spirit, and then we get blasted by somebody, maybe even somebody that claims to be a Christian, and we'll lose our joy because we get our eyes off on them. We get our eyes off on those circumstances. You've got to keep your gaze on Jesus.

And He goes on to say there in 15, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. Having a good conscience that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse you, your good conversation in Christ.

You know, it's a blessed thing for somebody to accuse you, but your conscience bears witness, the Spirit of God says, you're clean, you're free. But you know what, many times we lose it because we get angry at them, and then we lost it. It's just as bad as if we'd done what they accused us to do.

You know, so be careful. It's so easy to lose that fine walk with Jesus. And He says, for it is better if the will of God be so that you suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.

Wow. God allows it to come into your life, to bring happiness. In chapter 4, 1 Peter 1 and 2, for as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.

For he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. Sign 2. No longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lust of men, but to the will of God. Now you hang in here with us.

I've been given some permission to go on a little bit longer this morning, so I'm going to go. You give it to a preacher, he's going to go. Now this happiness that you want.

You know, Proverbs 3.13 says, happy is the man that findeth wisdom. Many of us Christians, we are all around the bush, but we never get right into the bush. We're all around Jesus, but we really never get right into Jesus, and let Jesus really get right into us.

You see, the Bible says, he that has entered into his rest has ceased from his own works. Many of us are so busy right now, we're burning out, and burning out, all that is, is activity in the flesh. You hear that term, burnout.

All it is, is that activity in the flesh, because when you're working in the Spirit, you won't burn out. But happy is the man that findeth wisdom, the man that getteth understanding. What is wisdom, my friend? The scripture tells us that wisdom is Jesus.

You go over to 2 Corinthians 1.30, Jesus is wisdom. Happy is that people whose God is the Lord. You will be wise, very wise, and very happy, if all you have in your life is Jesus.

You know, the Bible says, cease from man. And I'm going to get into that a little bit. This is one of the areas of suffering in our life.

We suffer from men. But if, are you happy? If you're happy, Jesus is Lord. And happiness, this is the blessedness.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. This is the blessedness the scripture talks about, this happiness. If you're happy, Jesus is the Lord.

If you're not happy, if you're struggling, if you're bitter, if you're confused, then there's an area in your life, or maybe your whole life, where Jesus isn't the Lord. Are you the Lord of your life? Or is Jesus the Lord of your life? Who tells you what clothes to put on this morning? Who tells you where to go? Who tells you what to eat? If the Holy Spirit is not telling you these things, then you are not letting Jesus be the Lord of your life. Now, another area.

By the way, to avoid suffering is to shirk from the loving hand of God. To bring Jesus more clearly into focus in our lives. If you will avoid the suffering, you're actually saying, I want to be the Lord of my life in this area.

I don't want you to do this, Lord. It hurts. I don't think you're doing the right thing.

I don't think you're making a wise choice for my life. Then you're saying, Lord, I want to be the Lord, which is a contradiction, actually. You say, God, I want to be the Lord of my life and get it over with.

You need to let go and let God be the Lord of your life if you're struggling. Now, suffering will sharpen your spirit. I just want to touch on this, but fasting makes the body suffer, or so we think.

In reality, fasting is purging the body of contamination. And many of us are guilty, I am too, of contaminating the temple of the Holy Spirit with a lot of garbage. Too many sugar things.

Putting things in there that have caffeine and stuff. And I do this, too. But I try to watch it.

Sometimes you get into situations where you just, you know, you do it. And we know we shouldn't. But fasting reveals the poisons of pride and self-sufficiency.

David said, I humbled my soul with fasting, Psalms 35, 13. Many of us will not fast because Jesus is not the Lord of our life. As a matter of fact, the pastor I'm working with up there right now, he says, someone that does not have a surrendered will cannot fast.

You can't fast if your will has not been reached by Jesus Christ. And this is getting into the heart of the self-life, the will. I just wanted to touch on this this morning.

Now, another area of suffering. God uses suffering to break us free from man. Isaiah 2, 22.

Several months ago, God really spoke to me about ceasing from man. Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils. You see, millions suffer because of the things of man.

And demons can get into men and influence other people. You know, millions suffer in India because men have told them that cows are holy. And so they'll die of starvation where there's roast beef and T-bone steaks and sirloins right there next to them.

Living better than them because men have told them it's a sin to kill a cow. Now, that's not much different today. In our churches, Christians today suffer because of man's ideas of things that they should do or should not do.

And some of these things may be right, but when they're put across us in legalistic modes, then they can become a bondage. The Spirit of God has to be in it. Otherwise, it's for man.

When I was over in Rome many years ago, there are stairs that people were told if they will climb these stairs on their knees, then they can have their sins forgiven and be more holy. This comes from man. It's not from the Holy Spirit.

Many give their money to men that ask for it and beg for it so God won't kill them, so God won't shut down their ministry. And that's it, brother. It's their ministry.

And so some poor little widow goes and gets her savings out so this crazy old preacher won't be killed by God. And so she suffers as a result of that. And a lot of this suffering we bring upon ourselves because we follow men rather than God.

And we've got ourselves into all kinds of stuff. Why do we do so many dumb and useless things, often harmful in our churches in the guise of Christianity? I'll tell you why we do it. It's because we're man-centered and not God-centered.

We're not focused on what the Spirit of God is saying and doing. We're focused on men. We need to ask God, Lord, are you in this? Do you want me to do this? Do you want me to send money to this preacher that's asking for money? You know, the deeper you walk with Jesus, the more you'll learn you go to God and ask Him for your needs.

Because my Bible tells me that God will supply all my needs. We just went down to Louisiana doing some ministering down there. And we do this all the time.

We got some money. We got all our bills paid so we could get out of town. And, boy, we didn't have enough to get back.

The Lord said, go in my strength. And it was hard. We had a sick baby and the weather didn't look too good and it was cold and all that stuff.

But the Lord gave me an impression to go in His strength. Now, when I got down there, I know some people that have some money. And I get around and I'm around some people.

But God says, keep your mouth shut about your needs. I'll take care of your needs. You share what I tell you to share.

And God touched on two different people to just give us some money. And one gave us \$50 and that was fine. That would have got us back up to here.

And then another one gave us a large sum of money, which was really what was needed for the type of traveling that we had to do to get all the way back up and take care of things. God did it. He just, He said, here brother, this is from the Lord.

And I knew it was. I don't want anything that's not from the Lord. If someone offers me \$10,000 and it's not from the Lord, I don't want it.

Because if it's not from Jesus, I'm suspect to who it's really from. Things, when gifts come in that are attached, have strings attached, I get a little suspect of that too. And we bring upon ourselves many different trials and we suffer many different things because we are not free from man.

Even to receive from man. Gifts. We have to be careful.

We can lug around all kinds of luggage and baggage because we're not receiving from God. We're receiving from man things that God doesn't want us to have. So let's be careful.

Why do we suffer? Because we're not God-centered. Now ask this simple question. Is this the will of God? Or is this the will of man? Ephesians 6, 6 says, Not with eye service as men please, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will, doing service as to the Lord and not to men.

So receiving and even doing, we're to do it for man. Listen, Paul said in Colossians 2, 8, Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy. Don't receive these ideas.

Many go to Christian Bible colleges and schools and they get into the philosophy of men. And he says, They'll spoil you through vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Let no man therefore judge you.

Let no man beguile you, he said. And you go on down there. We suffer in our churches, in our personal life, because we're not God-centered.

We're not God-centered. I had a friend in a church down there, the other day, down in Louisiana. She came up and she says, she visited her daughter off in Arizona and she got into that church and she said, You know, they, she didn't use the term church discipline, but this is what she was describing.

She was saying, They use church discipline. Have you ever heard of such a thing? She didn't know about that. She said, I don't know about this.

My friend, that's the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is in your church, you're going to have church discipline. You're going to be dealing with people in the Spirit of God.

I just have a note that's been given to me, and I think the Lord wants me to give you this information, that there's going to be a church service today at Gary Hutchins home at 807 Highview Joplin at 10 o'clock a.m. This place is right behind Hardee's off of Range Line and 7th, right over there, 807. I'll just pass that on. If you're looking for a church, and by the way, let me say this, and I'm going to get into this more later on, if you're planning on leaving a church and going to another church, you let your pastor know what's going on.

Church hopping is not of the Holy Spirit. You let your pastor know. You talk to him.

You pray with him. Have him pray with you if you're not happy. Many times we can cause preachers to suffer, and preachers can cause us to suffer also, but you communicate.

Talk to him. Say, Pastor, I'm thinking about leaving the church, or I've left the church, and this is why. God might use that to bring revival in your church or in his life.

Show him a need. But here's a church that's going to be meeting a new church at 807 Highview in Joplin at 10 o'clock this morning, and I'll just invite you to come there. I've been invited to go there myself, and that's where I'm going to be.

But getting back to this area and closing up, if we suffer at the hands of men, many times we deserve it. Let's be careful that we're not turning off the Holy Spirit from working in our lives. You know, another area is God allows us to suffer to prepare us for eternity, and I don't know how much time I have left here, about three minutes, and this area is getting into a little deeper area, and I don't know if I have time to get into it, but you know God is shaping us, as I mentioned several weeks ago, to be living stones, to fit in to heaven.

Oh, what a sad thing to be off in the, and so to say, the backside of heaven, because we would not let God do what He wanted to do in our lives. Oh, what a sad thing. You know, I want to be as close as I can get to Jesus, and if I have to pay the price of suffering, then I want to pay it.

If I have to go through all kinds of stuff, then I want to go through it. I don't want to miss out on what He has for me. Let me close up with a word of prayer with you, and we're going to shut down.

I have a lot of things to share, but I have to learn to stop sometimes, and some of us preachers, we circle the field many times before we land, but Father, I just thank you for these folks. Thank you that they put up with me, and thank you for my wife. Thank you for giving me such a wonderful wife, and I know, Father, that if I had listened to you speaking through her back when we were first married, back in those early years, I would have avoided many things, many areas of suffering that I brought upon myself.

Oh, Father, help me to listen. Lord, I pray that you give me ears to hear and a tongue to speak, that I would hear what you have for me to hear, and that I would speak that which you have for me to speak. You say, if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability that God giveth, that God in all things might be glorified. Father, we want to glorify you. Father, we're so prone to self, so prone for our selfish reasons to lift ourselves up.

Oh, help us. Help us, Father, to be like Jesus. Thank you for the area of suffering.

Thank you for the trials that you bring into our lives. Thank you, Father, for my trials. I just praise you and thank you that you've given them to me as special gifts.

I pray for the folks out there listening today, that you would bless them, that they would come to know Jesus, that they'd learn to fly on eagle's wings, that they'd learn to live by the grace of God. Well, thank you now, Father, in Jesus' name. Now, in closing, friend, let me leave you with this.

Remember, Jesus Christ is all you need. He's all you need. But have you come to the point in your life where He's all you want? God bless you, my friends.

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