

impossible...but God, Testimony

by Earnest Clark

Speaker Earnest Clark shares his testimony of God's faithfulness and sovereignty in the face of impossible situations.

Duration: 1:08:15

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-5, Isaiah 43:19, Isaiah 46:9, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of facing a life-threatening attack and how his faith in God sustained him. He references the story of Job to highlight the purpose behind difficult circumstances. The speaker also shares a story of a struggle in selling a property and the subsequent decision to start farming. Through these experiences, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having an intimate relationship with God and relying on His word to navigate through challenges. The sermon concludes with the speaker's unwavering belief in God's existence, His faithfulness, and His ability to fulfill His promises.

Transcript

It's a joy to see so many of you here. I thought that you would either be so weary by this that you'd be in your bed sound asleep, or that you'd be so anxious to get home you would have burnt up 20 miles on the road already. But it is great to see you here and I trust that our time together will be interesting, but far more than interesting, that it will be a time in which we will see and recognize the faithfulness of our God.

I've been asked to share my testimony. I asked for the liberty at the end to take some of the message that God was saying to me and to share it as a message and a challenge to you as we leave. And so at the end there will be that little extra twist.

But let's just bow our heads in a word of prayer please. Lord I pray that as I share with these dear folk your faithfulness in my life, and as I share all that you have done, the many impossible situations that you have solved and seen me through, that it may be very abundantly clear that it has nothing to do with me and everything to do with our mighty and wonderful and faithful God. A God who is willing and ready to enter into the life of any human being who will turn to him and ask for forgiveness and to ask you to fill us with all of your fullness.

And that your faithfulness of old is still available today. And so Lord we want to hear from you. We want to hear you speak to us.

We want to hear of what you are ready to do for each of us still today, even as you have done it in my life, even as you have done it in the lives of people of old. And so Lord I pray that they may not hear my voice, but instead we may pray, speak Lord in the stillness. Hush my heart to listen in expectancy.

For the words that thou speakest they are life indeed. And then Lord at the end when we do take your word and look at it and see the challenge that you would have us to leave with, I pray that you take your word and break it small, taking one portion to meet the need of one, and yet another portion to meet the need of another. But grant dear Lord that our hearts may be cheered and encouraged as we leave, because our God is faithful and he is our God.

For we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. I was born in Jamaica some 40 odd years ago.

And it's a beautiful country and it was a lovely place to grow up as a child. On my father's side of the family they had been in Jamaica for over 200 years. My father's side of the family had come to Jamaica, some of them as missionaries with the Anglican Church, and the other side of his family came as planters to grow coffee.

And I had the privilege and the joy of my family and I living in the old family home that had been built 200 years ago. That's where my wife and I lived while we were in Jamaica. My mother, on the other hand, she came from Washington, Seattle, Washington.

And she went to Cuba as a missionary to serve the Lord there in the days when Cuba was not communistic. And it is quite a miracle how my father met my mother, and time does not permit that. But my father wanted to start a Bible school in Jamaica to reach... He, by the way, my father was a farmer.

He did grow bananas and coffee and he did raise cattle. But he was a man who loved God. And he had a real burden to start a Bible school and so he was advised to go to Cuba and see one that had been running there in Cuba for a brief period of time.

And that is where he met my mother and they got married and they came to Jamaica and they started that Bible school in Mandeville. I was saved at the age of four. My father was in a week of evangelistic meetings and as a little boy I just sensed that I had sin in my life and that I was not right with God.

I knew that I needed to get right with him and I needed to confess my sins. And I think to the surprise of my father, this little four-year-old boy got up and started walking down the aisle. That was the beginning of the first impossible.

How does a child get right with God? How does a child get right with an almighty God? It's impossible. But God sent his son to die to save me. I continued to grow in a Christian home and that was indeed a privilege.

A home in which missions was very part of our life and our testimony, in which indeed my uncles were involved in missions. One of my uncles went to Peru some 70 years ago and founded the Peruvian Bible Institute and spent his entire life in Peru. Two of my other uncles were two of the three founders of HCJB radio station and they went out many years ago and were there in the very first day when HCJB sent out its first radio broadcast out of a sheep shed.

And so indeed it was a privilege to grow up in a Christian home. I was educated in an English school system in Jamaica and I think that one of the next impossibilities came when I was 13 years old and my mother and father sent me off to this boarding school. And at this boarding school I was in a dormitory in which 40 boys slept.

There was no privacy. You were being observed morning, noon and night, 24 hours a day. How does a 13 year old live the life of a Christian, honor his God, in a school when you're being watched 24 hours a day? Totally impossible.

But my God said, you are not alone. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. At the end of my four years in school we had a dinner of the boys that were in my dormitory before we left.

The schoolmaster that was in charge of my dormitory, he was a Rhodes scholar. He had been to Oxford. He was not a Christian, an extremely intelligent man.

And at that dinner he got up and he said, there are only two Christians that I know. One is Mr. Richard Roper and the other is Ernest Clarke. I was shocked, I was amazed.

Unknown to me, the life of God had been flowing out of my being and had been a blessing even to my schoolmaster. That's God. Impossible, but God.

After leaving school, I knew that I wanted to farm. My heart is on the farm. I knew I loved the cows, loved the smell of cows.

Had a great time listening to them move through the bedroom window where I was staying. Brought back memories. But I also knew that I loved my God and that I had to share with others the God that I knew and loved.

And so I wanted to preach whenever God would give me the opportunity. My father was now 68 years of age and the choice was quite simple. That it would not be possible for me to go to an agricultural university.

And he advised me and I did go to Bible school for one year out of a two-year course. It wasn't, I suppose, too difficult to live the life of a Christian in a college where everybody else is Christian. But I think maybe the greatest test in my life, the greatest temptation to give up my faith in God took place in the year in which I was at Bible school.

Because while I was there, some of the boys came to me and they said, well, how do you know that God wants you to go back to Jamaica? By the way, Bible school was in England. How do you know God wants you to go back to Jamaica and to preach? How do you know He doesn't want you to be a pastor? How do you know He doesn't want you to go to the mission field? And I gave all the logical reasons why I should go back to Jamaica and do what my father had been doing. And the last thing I wanted in the world to do was to become a minister in Great Britain.

Couldn't think of anything worse to do. And finally I gave in and I said, okay, Lord, I'm willing to do that. But yet still God didn't tell me what He wanted me to do.

And the temptation came, Lord, you cannot tell me what you want me to do. You can only tell my parents. Are you really there? Impossible it was.

Impossible to find out what God wanted me to do. Pressure from the principal of my Bible school. Pressure from my parents.

My father said to me, son, if you're coming back to Jamaica, we'll keep the farm. If you're not coming back, we'll sell it. But God, but God provided a counselor, a man of God.

Some of you may know him, George Duncan, one of England's great preachers. And he advised me to return to Jamaica and to continue the plans to work on the farm and to preach. He had been to Jamaica.

He had preached at Keswick in Jamaica and he had met my father and he had known what was being done through my family in Jamaica. And I thanked him very much and I had peace. It was six weeks later.

By the way, that advice was given to me while my parents were in Great Britain on vacation. And six weeks after I had been given that advice, my father died in Great Britain. Ten days before we were due to return.

Not even ten days, less than a week before we were due to return to Jamaica. And God crystallized for me, yes, I want you back in Jamaica. At that time, my brother was fifteen years old.

I was, my father died three weeks after my nineteenth birthday. I returned to Jamaica to take over three farms, one of which was in excess of two thousand acres of land. And we were employing some fifty or sixty people.

How does a boy run three farms and help take care of his home and his brother and his mother? Impossible. Totally impossible. But God said, My grace is sufficient unto thee.

And he provided the land for me. And in other areas. In nine, as time went by, I found I was getting older and older and my mother got more and more concerned that I wasn't married.

And as we looked around Jamaica, we could find not even one other person that was a Christian, not one other girl that was a Christian of my race. I did want to get married, it wouldn't be a bad idea. I was willing to be a bachelor if that's what God wanted, but it did sound nicer to get married.

But it was an impossible situation. What do you pick from when there's nothing to pick? And so the many counselors and advisors came and said, Well, get on a plane and go to the United States and start hunting. As twenty-five, twenty-six and twenty-seven came along, the advice came harder and harder.

But I felt very firmly and with a very, very strong conviction that if God wanted me married, he had only one, one, only one person for me to marry. And my reply was to many, many Christians, God has one girl for me. Where is she? What do you mean go and hunt for her? And the reply came back, What? Do you want God to pick her up and bring her to your farm and plonk her down and say, Here she is? I said, I don't know, but if necessary, he will do it.

And sure enough, time doesn't allow me, but sure enough, one day, let me give you a little bit of it, I suppose you've all got excited about it. I was on the board of the deaf school and there are several American and Canadian pastors that helped to support the school and one of these pastors came down and he saw the work and he was interested in it. As a result, the manager of our school went up to his church to present the work of the deaf to his church.

While they were there, the pastor's mother and his sister were present and they both said, You know, we've got a little bit of free time, we would love to go to the mission field, not to stay for an extended period of time, but let us say two weeks to two months to see what mission is like. And so the manager of our school said, Well, fine, come to Jamaica and see the deaf work. And the pastor's sister was a nurse and they said, Well, maybe you can do a little bit of nursing at the school as well as in the island of Jamaica.

So, lo and behold, one day, this pastor's mother and his sister arrived in Jamaica and they needed somewhere to stay other than the school, since their visit was going to be somewhat extensive. And lo and behold, they ended up staying in the other half of a duplex that belonged to the secretary that worked at our farm. And she hadn't met this girl very long before, the secretary hadn't met this girl very long before she started quizzing, Do you have a boyfriend? Are you married? Are you single? Are you engaged? What's going on? I was on vacation with my mother and with some of her relatives.

And lo and behold, the next thing we got was a phone call from the secretary to say, I have a very nice lady and her mother here were coming down to stay in the hotel next to you to visit you while you're on vacation. So, did the Lord plunk her down on my farm? Of course, he did. Was she a good choice? She's absolutely wonderful and God has enriched my life with a very wonderful person and I thank God for it.

Where do you find a wife? It's impossible but God. But God picks and God chooses and God prepares one person and he brings that person to you when the time is right. He did it for me and I bless him and I praise him for it.

What else happened? Well, we have three children, that's good news and we thank God for them. We face another impossible situation. How do you raise them in the United States of America with all the corruption that's taking place and keep them true to God? I don't have all the answers but God does and as we go along, he shows us and I'm confident he'll continue to see us through.

But this now is 1975 that we got married and just about this time some dramatic changes started to take place in Jamaica. Jamaica had been a capitalist country very similar to the United States and then one morning we woke up and we heard that Jamaica was no longer going to be a capitalist country, it was going to be a socialist state. Immediately the money started to flee out of the country and businessmen started shutting down their factories and their stores and things began to go into absolute chaos in the country.

Before long we heard that Cubans were coming in to be advisors in various areas of government and before we knew what happened, every two hours you saw another Cuban somewhere. There were doctors, there were engineers, there were surveyors, they were training the army, they were training the police, they were everywhere. And before long a lot of corruption and a lot of crime and killing started to take place and a lot of hatred was built up within the country and the hatred became exceedingly great.

There was tremendous hatred against anybody who had anything. It was all a plot to try and get out of Jamaica those who would present any form of opposition to the government. This hatred particularly was shown towards people who had farms and land.

Many owners of farms had their homes burnt down, had their women raped, had their children beaten. It was frightening, it was absolutely terrifying. The crime was just with no reason.

Somebody would ride by on a motorcycle, shoot a man and keep riding by and never even take his wallet out of his pocket. People became really terrified and scared. Our homes turned into prisons in which every door and every window was grilled with steel and you felt like you were in jail.

And with all of this chaos the economy began to crash and as a result things on the farm began to crash. We couldn't buy parts for the tractor, we couldn't buy fertilizer and for me on the farm it meant that I needed now to dispose of some of the cattle that we had. There was no fertilizer to produce the amount of grass that was needed to keep them.

There were shortages all around. One day you couldn't get flour to buy and the next day you couldn't get rice and the next day you couldn't get sugar and the next day you couldn't get salt. You never knew what you could get.

To buy your groceries was a chore which you started at eight o'clock in the morning and you finished at six o'clock at night going from one store to the other to find what you could get. I recall a story of one lady that was on the side of the road and she was weeping bitterly and somebody went to her and said, why are you crying? She said, please sir I cannot find any soap to buy to wash my child's clothes so they can go to school and get an education. The crime and the killing got extremely great and in the year 1980 in that little country of Jamaica where there were only a little over two million people, nine hundred and thirty three people were killed violently.

In the midst of all of this we began to sense that maybe God wanted us out of Jamaica and in 1977 we started the process of trying to sell our farm. 1980 had come along and we had still not sold it and then in 1980 my wife was expecting our youngest son. She was now seven months pregnant and the doctor said there is no, she should not travel for the next two months and I knew for a month or two after she was in no condition to leave and travel.

I said Lord the only thing for us to do now is to get out for if any crisis should come I don't know that we could get her out safely and we left in 1980. We turned the key in the door of the two hundred year old family home and we never thought we'd see it again. Walked away from the farm and thought the only way I'd have communication with that again was through correspondence and through tapes.

The month in which we left was July and in the month of July one hundred and twenty five people were killed violently in that month alone. Impossible situation, yes, but God puts his guardian angels round about his children and he protects them and nothing can happen to them and I don't know what all God protected me from in leaving Jamaica, only he knows and only eternity will tell. In 1980 I got to the United States and couldn't find a job.

I tried to find a job as a tractor driver and I couldn't get one. Nobody would employ me. Finally I was persuaded by my wife's family to try farming.

The long and short of that was that it was a disastrous year, drought was severe, the crop was a failure and we lost everything that we had managed to get out of Jamaica in that one year of farming in 1980 in South Carolina. At this time there had been a change of government and the communists were out and a conservative government was in and I had just received a letter with three different people interested in buying the farm in Jamaica and I said to my wife, well farming is over in the US, let's go back to Jamaica and sell the farm. We packed our suitcases planning to stay five weeks, we ended up spending five years.

We got down there and this one wouldn't buy and that one wouldn't buy and the other one said next time and what have you and what have you. And so for a period of five years it seems as if for six months we were negotiating a sale and it was eminent and it was to be signed and then it crashed. And then we made a plan, well maybe the Lord doesn't want us to sell, maybe what we need to do is to farm.

And so we started farming and then after two months of farming somebody came along, I want to buy and then there was four more months of negotiations and that crashed. And this went on for five years. Impossible, yes.

Devastating, yes. Darkness, yes. A dark cloud, yes.

Is God your heavenly father? Not too sure. Is God really love? I wonder. To add to the turmoil the workers on the farm joined the union and then we started having trouble with them.

And I recall that after one union meeting I was informed that the workers had said that they were going to capture one end of the farm and that I was not to come up there and if I did they would kill me and that the only way I'd ever get back to my farm is if the Jamaican army was to bring me there. I prayed about it and I said Lord, what should we do? I went back. But God is able to keep his own.

I remember after another union meeting there's only one road that goes into the farm and it climbs one thousand feet in one mile and that's the only entrance and exit to the farm. After the meeting I'd gone up, I was on the farm, I was working and about two o'clock in the afternoon I was informed that the one road coming into the farm had been blocked by stones and trees that the workers had put there to trap me within the farm. I got scared because my uncle some years before that had been trapped on the farm like that and was almost killed.

And the army, the English army, the English regiment that was in Jamaica was necessary to get him out. And I was reminded of it too by the workers. I said Lord, what's happening? Well a truck had never been on the farm for about three months because we didn't have anything to go out.

But would you believe it on that particular day it wasn't a truck to come for bananas or a truck to carry cattle, a truck had come to buy a load of timber, of logs. And he had a pile of men with him with chainsaws. And he was on the farm when the road was blocked and he had to get out.

And so he and his men started down the road and they rolled out the stones and they got out the chainsaw and they cut the trees and they opened up the road. Ernest Clark was trapped but God sent a truck and eight men and chainsaws and they opened the road and I drove behind and got out. Impossible but God.

He says that he cares for us as he cares for the sparrow. I guess one of the highlights of all of this was in 1986, 9th of April. I was on the farm, I'd been driving around in the Land Rover and I saw three young men coming along carrying bananas and oranges.

And I had a suspicion that they'd stolen them on the farm and so I didn't pay any attention but they kept walking straight towards me with them. I had no option but to face them and say, where did you get that? They said the workers on the farm gave us. I said that shouldn't be, let's go and check it out, jump in.

At which point one of them hit me in the chest and I tried to grab him around the head. And another one, six feet away, picked up a stone that was at least that big and threw it at me and hit me in the head. It cracked my skull in four places.

It cut me above the eye, I had thirteen stitches over the eye. It minced up my temple. It damaged the jaw so that I couldn't chew.

The eye itself was bleeding internally. The nerves to these teeth were severed and my front tooth was chipped. One of the cracks went way to the back of my head, the other came to the sinus cavity.

And the doctors were scared that infection might get in through the cut, follow the crack into the sinus cavity and get into the brain. And so I was in hospital for thirteen days, flat on my back. And they weren't too sure whether or not I'd make it.

There was blood running everywhere, all over my face, out of my nose, over my shirt. And while I was in hospital, I didn't mind too much the idea of dying. As a matter of fact, it was a nice idea to go and see the Savior.

I had a lot of peace about that. I said, but Lord, my wife and children, what will happen? Well, Father, I commit them to You. And then I said, but Lord, what about the ministry to the deaf? For these past few years, You've been burdening my heart.

What about the ministry for the deaf? And He didn't give me any answer. I had to trust that in His hands also. But one thing was abundantly clear, that the devil was at his work and that God had granted him permission to go so far.

And like in the case of Job, He allowed him to go so far and then God said, but not his life, that is mine. Don't touch it. And that gave me a tremendous sense of peace.

It also gave me a tremendous sense of responsibility, a tremendous conviction, that God had something that He wanted to do with my life. All these years of confusion, of selling the farm and not selling and now all of this, what was it all about? And God was at the point of beginning to show me the reason for all of the darkness. I had been either vice chairman or chairman of the board of the deaf school for twenty years.

And during the last five years of my stay in Jamaica, God began to open my eyes and to clarify for me certain things. He began to open my eyes to the fact that there were about 2,500 deaf children in Jamaica, of which only 150 had heard the gospel. And the Lord began to impress upon me that something needed to be done.

He began to show me that Jamaica is a gospel saturated country, but in the midst of this gospel saturated country, which has had it for over 250 years, here was a group of people, a tribe of people, that had never heard His good news and He said to me, what are you going to do about it? At that time there were about 80 or 90 children in our school and I said, Lord, but look at what we're doing at the school, isn't that great? Come on, pat me on the back. He didn't pat me on the back. He didn't even look at the 80 children.

He said, well, what about the other 2,300? I said, hmm, see your point. And so the Lord began to ask me to start another school in Jamaica. I said, Lord, but what's a farm, how is a farmer going to start a school for the deaf in Jamaica? Where is the land going to come from? Where are the missionaries going to come from? Where is the money going to come from? Lord, in fact, where are the students going to come from? And when I shared my burden with some of the members of my board, they made fun of me and said, well, there are 80 children in our school right now and we have none on the waiting list, where do you believe the rest are going to come from? I said, I don't know, but research has shown that there's a whole

pile out there.

And the board refused to go ahead with starting a new school. I was broken. But God wouldn't take away the burden.

The long and the short of that is, where are we today? Today that 80 student body has gone up to 155. And today, without any effort of trying to find students, we have 77 on the waiting list. How does a farmer start a deaf school? Impossible.

But God turns up 77 children on the waiting list. Today we have seven and a half acres of land donated to us for a new school. Impossible.

But God provides seven and a half acres in the tourist capital of Jamaica. Where does the money come from? Impossible. But today there's \$130,000 in a savings account ready to start that school, God willing, early next year.

How does a farmer in Jamaica find the churches to get behind it and to keep this thing going? How does he find six churches that will give \$2,000? When I share that with some people, they laugh at me and say, you're dreaming. Which church is going to give you \$2,000 a month? I said, I don't know. But I know we can't wait 21 years to reach those 77.

And that's the burden that God has given me and he's asked me to trust him and I'm trusting him. Impossible? Yes. But God, yes, but I don't know the answer yet.

He'll show it to me in his time. And then in 1984, that was 1982 now that we had the concept of the school. It hasn't started yet.

That's seven years ago. In 1984, I was sitting in a graduation ceremony and while I was there, I saw 13 of our fine graduates graduating. They were skilled in vocational skills.

They could do compound fractions. They could read. They could write.

They were beautiful, bright faces, laughing and smiling. They had been taken from darkness and not even knowing their name and they were expectant of great things to becoming teachers and what have you. And the Lord said to me, where are these children going to work? I said, Lord, I really don't know.

I hadn't thought about it. And the Lord began to show me that most of our graduates when they leave our school cannot find a job because hearing people don't want to employ them. And so they go home and they sit down and there's no money to buy toothpaste and no money to buy food.

Many of the girls end up selling themselves and many of the boys end up hanging around the village bar being a comic. And to compound that some more, they cannot find any real deep meaningful friendships because there's nobody around them who knows sign language. And so they become depressed after all of that expectation and now thrown into depression.

Where am I going? What am I going to do? Nobody loves me. My mother and my father rejected me. My school has rejected me.

My God, have you rejected me? And to make that even worse, when they go to church, there's no one to interpret the message for them. No one who will sit down and pray with them. No one who will counsel

with them.

Nobody that can take concern and care for them. And I said, my God, this cannot be right. The work cannot be finished.

What are you trying to say to me? And the burden that God has put on my heart is for the deaf organization to start a factory in Jamaica to provide employment for the deaf. And because the deaf are scattered all over the island, we're going to have to provide housing for them around the factory and bring them to the workplace. The factory will provide the job.

The houses will provide the community and the friends and they can develop friendship. And at last we have in enough deaf in one place that we can justify a church for them to have their pastor and someone who can pray with them and counsel with them and have Bible study time with them. And so the farmer looks and he says, well, what's needed to do this? We need somewhere between 50 and 100 acres of land to build this village.

We need several million dollars to build the factory and the houses. We need a deaf pastor. We need a company in the United States that will give us some work to do for them.

Impossible, impossible, impossible. You're a dreamer. Impossible? Yes.

And I've been laughed at? Yes. But God, folks, listen to what God has done today. Today we have one company in Jamaica that is negotiating right now and has indeed promised us between 50 and 100 acres of land on a long-term lease with an option to renew it.

That's almost like a gift. What else has happened? We needed an American company to give us a contract and some work. And I got a letter from a company called Graco in Pennsylvania.

They make strollers and cribs and play pens and children's swings. And they asked me if I would be interested in making some things in Jamaica with the deaf that I have. They heard about it.

Time doesn't permit. I went up and saw them and I met with the vice president of the company. By the way, the company has sales of 100 million dollars a year.

I met with the vice president and he showed me two of their factories and after that he said, will you go to prayer meeting with me tonight? I said, what's going on? Great. We got to prayer meeting and the minister said his peace and then the minister said, well, I want you to break up in two and threes and pray. I knelt on the floor with the vice president of that company and we prayed for Graco, we prayed for the deaf, we prayed for his family, we prayed for mine.

And I learned that that company's policy is they're in business to make money, but if they cannot give it to the Lord's work, they don't want to be in business and they're interested in missions. And my God is so good, so good. People laugh, but if God has told you, hold on to him, but God is able.

We got up from prayer. He said to me, come, I want you to meet a few more people. I got up off of my knees and he says, this is the vice president of Graco financing in prayer meeting on Wednesday night.

This is the vice president of Graco marketing in prayer meeting. This is the vice president of Graco expansion. This is the vice president of Graco factory management.

And I want to introduce you to one of the two owners of Graco. And the second one is on vacation. All of their top management in prayer meeting on a Wednesday night.

I didn't go in there to strangle him and see how much money I could get out of him for the deaf. He looked at me and he said, how much money do you want? I said, brother, as much as you can give me, but you know, you're in God's business. I'm in God's business.

You know what it costs you to make your product in the US. You know what it will cost in Jamaica and all that. Split it.

Wonderful. In less than 48 hours, the owner of Graco, one of its vice presidents and another of their assistants will be flying into Roanoke, Virginia to meet with me to discuss it some more. The possibility of starting a factory in Jamaica.

Will you pray with me? Well, that's 1984. In 1986, God began to burden me that Jamaica is not the only place in the world that has deaf people. He looked at me and he said, well, what about the deaf around the rest of the world? I said, hang on, dear God, take it easy, will you? First a school, then a factory and everybody's laughing at me.

And now you're showing me the globe. I'm just a farmer in Jamaica. I have no degrees.

He wouldn't ease up. And finally I said, okay, Lord. And so in 1987, after God had taken five years to give me the total vision of the ministry that he wanted me to do, God then did the next impossible.

After 10 years of trying to sell the farm, more than, yeah, 10 years, God sold the farm. And he sold the family home. And somebody said to me, but how was it giving up your family home and your farm to move to another country? Listen, dear ones, I am not my own.

I belong to the Master. I am His. And when I am His, that's a place of safety because I am His possession and He has responsibility to look after His possession.

And I am His. And when He calls, you go. And you go with joy because you love Him.

And so with a mixture of sadness and joy, we left our home in 1987. Sadness because we are human beings and we are full of sentiment and I am the greatest of them. But also joy because you know the Master is leading you to something else.

And so we moved. Oh, here I am. It's going to take off now.

The deaf ministry is moving. Oh, no. Got to the United States and I was told, don't get into the deaf ministry now.

Take the money you've got from your farm and invest it in something so that it will earn you income to support your family but won't take all of your time. And then you can give all of your time to the deaf work. And so for two years, I pursued that course trying to build up a housing development.

And after two years, God still didn't open the door. And in the month of July, just gone, I wrote to my board members and I said, I've been here two years. Look what's happening with this school.

Look what's happening with the factory. Do you still want me to wait or do you want me to get on with this? And on the 28th of July, the board met and said, no, wait no longer. We want you to work full time with us and to go and start this school and to start this factory.

And so I started on the first of August, not quite five weeks ago. Dear ones, you know, let me try and wrap it up quickly. It's very exciting to talk about all of these exciting things with the deaf and these concepts and these ideas and these possibilities and these challenges.

And it sounds thrilling. But there's another side to the coin. The question is, will God do what he said he's going to do? And I take that challenge for myself.

I'm sharing with you more of my testimony, but I want to kind of twist the testimony around to you and say to you that over this weekend, God has shared with you certain things. Number one, he's given you a massive challenge of committing your life to him. Now, is he going to do what he has promised to do as you commit your life totally to him? He's calling on some of you to go and to confess grief and to confess bitterness and sorrow and resentment and to make all situations right and to share the love of God with others.

Is God going to see you through? For some of you, he's given you a vision and a concept of what he wants you to do. Is he going to really see you through? Is God going to do what he says he's going to do, even when many years go by? Well, let me tell you this. Whenever God does give us something to do, opposition will come.

Not maybe, it is a guarantee. And whenever God gives us a concept of what he wants to do, watch for the opposition. And if we are to be able to accomplish whatever it is that God is asking us to do, as we leave this conference, as we come off of this mountaintop, as we go down into the deep, dark valley of bitterness and hatred and resentment and difficulty where the powers of the evil one are set loose, the only way we will make it through is to know that we have an intimate relationship with our God.

Is to be feeding on his word daily, is to be drawing from him. It is to know God so well and to have such an intimate faith with him that I have total faith and absolute confidence in the fact that number one, there is a God. Number two, that he will do what he says he's going to do.

Number three, that he will not let me down. Number four, that in fact, he will see us through step by step as we go back into this dark, demon possessed valley. But the only way we can see it through is to have such an intimate relationship with God that I know him because I cannot trust somebody I do not know.

And the only way to have that intimate relationship with him and to feed it and to let it grow is to have a daily quiet time where I take time to talk with God, where I take time to read his word, where I take time to be quiet and to meditate upon my God and listen to what he wants to say to me. This is the key to becoming a man of God. This is the key to becoming a woman of God.

And one of the ways in which God will purify and strengthen our faith, purify and strengthen our relationship with him is by putting us through trials and testings. Nothing has strengthened my faith and my walk with God more than when I am in the crisis, than when I face the impossibility. Then my faith grows and is strengthened.

And this is one of the reasons why God allows times of testing. And they come in different forms. They come in the form of God causing us to wait, to wait a long time.

Secondly, they come after God has shared with you the things that he wants done. And when he shares with us the things that he wants done, we get the impression he wants it done tomorrow morning, if not today. And when God does not do it immediately, we begin to question and to doubt God.

And that is the second area of testing. We ask, did God really want this work done? When my board wouldn't take the new school in Manteca Bay, did God really want it done? Was it all my imagination? Am I really a quirk? Maybe I was wrong. Maybe I misunderstood God.

In fact, the darkness gets so great. Is there a God? You ever been there? And we begin to question and to doubt God. But if we have our daily quiet time and our relationship with him is strong, he will encourage us and he will feed us and he will carry us through.

We get so discouraged, we get so downhearted and ready to give up. It seems like nobody else cares and understands. We feel so alone.

And when years go by and things still have not happened, you wonder, will it really happen? The manager of our school in Jamaica today, 15 years before he got to the mission field, he knew God wanted him as a missionary to reach the deaf. Was God telling him a lie 15 years ago? No. That was God's purpose, but the time hadn't come yet until the 15 years were up.

And precious ones, what I am trying to encourage you with is this. When one year goes by, when five, seven years go by and still the vision that God has given you this weekend is not fulfilled, do not give up. Trust him and believe him for his perfect timing.

The third area in which he tests us is in the area of health. And I've already shared with you the attack which nearly took my life. And my family and I did not understand why all of these things were allowed to happen.

But one of the things we've got to remember as his children is that there's another dimension. And it is God, but God. My family and I were stunned by the attack on my life.

We were grateful that my life was spared. And we were very aware that like in the case of Job, God had a purpose, even though it was not clear. And while I was on the hospital bed, an elder of my church brought to me a few verses of scripture and he read them to me and I want to share them with you.

And it's in Isaiah chapter 43, verses 1 to 5. And I believe that these verses are for you and for me as we leave here after this tremendous weekend of conference, after this refreshing time of meeting with God. Look at it, Isaiah 43, verses 1 to 5. But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Ernest, and he that formed thee, O Ernest Clark, fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, and I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. Look at what it is saying, what God said.

Number one, I created you. Number two, I formed you in your mother's womb. I know your name.

I know your personality. I know the things you find easy. I know the things that make you weep.

I know all about you. I know your name. And you are mine.

God says you are my possession. And as my possession, you are my responsibility to take care of. You are mine.

Verse 2, immediately after God encourages and cheers us with his love and with his protective care, what's the next thing he says is going to happen? When, not if, when, when you pass through the waters, I will be with thee. And through the rivers they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Dear ones, I am not saying when you go home, if you have trouble. I am telling you, when you come out from this mountain top, you will have trouble. And when that trouble comes, God does not say I am going to take you out of it.

He didn't promise you a rose garden full of the fragrance of roses. He says when you get into the flood of affliction, I will be with thee. I am not taking you out.

I am with you. He says when it comes like a mighty torrent and like a river ready to overflow you and to flush you out into the sea, I will not allow it to overflow you. When the heat gets too great and I can stand it no longer, it is not that I am going to put out the fire.

The fire will not consume you. Oh, the promises of God! Why is He going to do this? For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior. Reminds me of Moses going to the burning bush and God says take off the shoes off of your feet for the ground you are standing on is holy ground.

And that same holy God of Moses is our holy God today promising you and me that when we come off of this mountaintop, He is with us. Verse 4, Since thou wast precious in my sight, cannot bring tears to your eyes after all the bitterness and the unforgiveness, after all the rebellion. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable and I have loved thee.

Oh dear ones, let us consume the love of God. Let us drink it in and know that our God loves us and know that while He loves us we will be going through the flood, the river and the fire. God has promised to be with us.

He says I will be with you. I will be with thee. The I am that I am that sent Moses is the I am that I am that is sending you and sending me off of this mountaintop this weekend.

Verse 10, Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord and my servant whom I have chosen that you may know and believe and understand that I am He. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be any after me. I am He.

It thrills me to know that my God is calling me to be His witness, that He is calling me to live the life of a Christian, to allow the fullness of God to fill me and to flow out in my family and in my job. He has called me and at last He explains why He is allowing the flood and the fire and the river. That ye, that you may know and believe and understand that I am God.

It seems as if when the fire comes the uppermost question is, God are you God? Are you there? And God is saying if you will hold on to me, if you will trust me in the river, I am going to let you know in your head that I am God. I am going to cause you to believe in your heart that I am God. I am going to cause you to understand in your commitment, in your walk and in your actions and your attitudes that I am God.

That is why we go through the consuming fire, which doesn't consume us. Sorry, that's why we go through the fire, which doesn't consume us. God has told us that these things will come and He tells us that the same God who promises to love us and to protect us is the same God that will see us through and give us

fruit.

How good to know that these hard times are not punishment from God, but they are cause that we may know that He is God. Verse 13, the second half of it says, And there is none that can deliver out of my hand. I will work and who will let it? I am God and I, God, the I am that I am, will work and who is going to stop me, says God.

And He chose you as His agent and who is going to stop Him? No power in heaven, no power in hell, no power on earth will stop our Saviour. God then goes on to reinforce the fact that the God who promises to take care of us is the same God who did mighty things in the past. Look at verse 16, Thus saith the Lord, which maketh a way in the sea and a path in the mighty waters, which bringeth forth the chariot, the horse, the army, and the powers of Egypt.

They shall lie down together in the Red Sea and they shall not rise, they are extinct, they are quenched as coal. God says, I am the God of Israel who did those mighty things and I am the same God who is sending you. But now look at verse 18 and 19.

Do you believe it? Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. I don't believe it. God says, don't remember what I did before.

Don't consider, don't even consider the mighty things I did for Israel, the mighty things that I did in your life in the past few years. Don't consider them. Why? Verse 19, how exciting.

Behold, I will do a new thing. The mighty God of the past, He is ready and willing to go and do a new thing when you go down from this mountain top into the valley. Are you ready? Now it shall spring forth.

Shall you not know it? Won't you know about it? Of course. God says, I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. For me, God is going to make a way into the desert of the deaf, into the wilderness of the deaf.

And will you know it? By God's grace we shall. And the same is for you. Those things which I told you that I wanted us to do together, that is the new thing that I want to do.

Will you believe Him? Will you trust Him? Will you have confidence in Him? Will you watch Him do it? God wants us to be sure that we understand that He means what He has said. And so in chapter 46, verse 9, we read this. This is the last part of verse 9. I am God and there is none like me.

Verse 10, declaring the end from the beginning and from the ancient times the things that are not same. My counsel shall stand and I will do all, all my pleasure. And then verse 11 at the end.

Yea, I have spoken it. I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it.

I will also do it. Dear ones, I wonder if you are grasping what God is saying. God is saying, I have counseled you.

I have shown you what I want to do. I know that it is not yet done because I declared something that has not yet happened. I know it is not yet done.

But I have not changed my counsel. I told you about it and I, I, I am that I am, will also do it. Not you, not Ernest Clark, not you.

I am that I am. Will do it. Through my feeble hands, my feeble feet, my puny brain, the almighty God wants to come and fill our carcass with all of his fullness so that we might merely be the suit that almighty God is wearing in and around the world where we live.

God working through your suit. Therefore, Isaiah chapter 41 verse 10. Therefore, verse 10 of Isaiah chapter 41.

Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee.

Yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee with my right hand of righteousness. Verse 13, for I the Lord thy God will hold your right hand, saying unto you, fear not, I will help thee.

Verse 14, fear not thou worm, Ernest. Yes, Lord, I am a worm. I am a farmer from Jamaica.

In the vast United States, unknown by nearly everyone, in this huge universe, I am but a worm. And God knows it. And he says, fear not, thou worm Mary, thou worm John, thou worm Ernest.

I God, I am that I am, will do it. Behold, I will do a new thing, says God. I God, behold, I will do a new thing.

Let us awake, let us arise, let us go with God. Not ahead of him, not behind him. Isaiah chapter 40, verse 31.

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.

We are weak, but God says wait. If we will wait upon him, he will renew our strength. We will mount up as wings as eagles.

So wait. Why should I wait? Isaiah 30, verse 18. Therefore will the Lord wait.

One, that he may be gracious unto you. Two, and blessed are all they that wait upon the Lord. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, let us wait upon our God.

Wait that he may be gracious. Wait that he may bless us. It is worth waiting for God's graciousness and blessing.

So wait. Isaiah 49, verse 23 at the end. For they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

Precious ones, if five years go by and your vision is still not fulfilled that God has given you this weekend, do not let go. Do not be ashamed. God Almighty has said they that wait upon me shall not be ashamed.

Why? Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 3. For the vision is yet for an appointed time. But at the end it shall speak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it.

Because it will surely come. And when that time comes, it will not tarry. Praise God.

God says, I have given you a vision. But with the vision I have appointed a day and an hour when it will come to pass. And when that time comes, I will prove to you that I am not a liar.

And when that time comes, it will tarry no longer. It shall come to pass. When God's appointed time comes, that vision will tarry no more.

May God give us that daily intimate relationship with him so that I might have total faith and absolute confidence that he is and that he is faithful. May he give us patience to wait so that he may be gracious to us and bless us. May he give us courage to believe him and to trust him.

May he give us total commitment to himself. And may he give us wisdom to maintain a daily intimate relationship with him so that God can accomplish that new thing through you, through me, to his honor and to his glory, for the majesty, for the dominion and the power of the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and the master of the universe, and our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, we get so weak, so frightened and so scared so easily. And when things don't happen in a hurry, we are so ready to run and to flee and to be ashamed and to quit.

Dear God, your word has spoken to us this afternoon. And you have challenged our hearts to believe you that you will do a new thing. Lord, you have challenged our hearts with your faithfulness in the past.

And yet you say, don't remember that. Look for what I still want to do. I am alive.

I am active. I am in the saving business. I am in the keeping business.

We bless you and we praise you. And Lord, as we come off of this mountain top and as we are going down into the valley, we pray that we may be true and faithful to you. Lord, it is so easy to be a man of God if we will just be childlike enough to make time to love you and to walk with you, to read your word and to listen to you.

Dear God, give us the discipline, the desire and the ability to have meaningful quiet times with our God, that indeed we may be intimate with our God, not in the head, but in the heart, in the understanding, in the practice and in the power of God working out of us. Lord, we want to thank you for what you are going to do, because you said you have purposed it and you will do it. Thank you for what you are going to do when we leave this mountain top and go down in the valley, and we will be sure to give you the praise and the glory and the thanks.

And Father, before we close in prayer, I do believe that we ought to be praying for each other. And so Lord, I would like to give these dear ones that are here in front of me an opportunity of saying, yes Lord, I don't know how it's going to be done, but I am going to commit myself totally to you and I am going to trust you to do a new thing. And if God has spoken to your heart and you believe that God has a new thing for you to do in your behavior, in your attitude, in your vision, let us stand together as an act of commitment to God and also that we may pray together for each other after we go in the valley from here.

I stand before you in an act of dedication and commitment, in an act of thanksgiving for this weekend, when your voice has spoken so clearly, when your love has touched our hearts so deeply, when you have opened the insights of our mind and our eyes to understand some of the trials we have been going through. And Lord, as we leave this mountain top and go down into the valley, we know that the battle is going to be very, very hot, very, very difficult. But we just bless you that together we can stand before you and turn our fears and our concerns over to you, that we can look to you and depend upon you for your faithfulness to work through us and to do a new thing.

Father, on our part, we also wish to make a commitment to you that we will make time to meet with you every day regardless of what each day holds, that we will make time to read your word, that we will make time to talk to you, and we will make time to be quiet and to listen to you and to meditate upon you. I thank

you, Lord, for the tremendous relationships that are going to be built up as we make this commitment to you, that indeed we will know you intimately. And when we know you intimately, then without fear and without any doubt, with total and absolute faith and confidence, we know that our God will do a new thing.

Father, give us patience to wait, for you have told us that there will be waiting times, and during those waiting times may we be faithful in the things that are before us at that time. Thank you, dear God, for what you have done. We love you and we bless you for your forgiveness and for your patience, for your loving kindness and for your tender mercies.

We bless you that you are the mighty God, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, that you are Master of the Universe, and yet still you are our Father, and we are your children. Oh, dear God, we bless you for that relationship. We love you.

We love you with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind.

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