

The Discipline of Difficulty - 18

by Jack Hibbs

The sermon emphasizes the importance of embracing life's difficulties as purposeful challenges that strengthen our faith and relationship with God.

Duration: 50:37

Scripture: Matthew 28:18

Topics: "Discipline", "Embracing Difficulty", "Purpose in Trials"

Description

Jack Hibbs emphasizes the 'Discipline of Difficulty,' explaining that challenges are an integral part of life and serve a divine purpose for Christians. He encourages believers to embrace their difficulties as opportunities for growth and deeper faith, reminding them that God is present in their struggles. Hibbs highlights that while everyone faces hardships, Christians can find meaning and instruction through their trials, ultimately leading to a stronger relationship with Christ. He urges the congregation to recognize that difficulties are not random but are tailored by God for their spiritual development.

Transcript

Pray now that you'd bless the going forth of your word to our hearts. And Lord, you've been preparing us actually for this discipline tonight in and with our lives. So Father, please help the going forth of your word now in Jesus' name.

Amen. We'll grab your Bibles tonight and turn, if you would, to Matthew chapter 28. Put your finger there, Matthew chapter 28, in the theme verse for the entire series of the Disciplines of Life series.

Matthew chapter 28, verses 18 to 20. You know that by now. And once you get your finger there, I'm going to want you to go back a little bit and mark Matthew chapter 9. Matthew chapter 28 and Matthew chapter 9, the Disciplines of Life series.

Tonight we come to the Discipline of Difficulty. The Discipline of Difficulty. What can that mean? And I got to tell you right now, while you're going there, it is absolutely impossible for me to not only cover this in detail, even if I had all the time in the world, it's impossible to do that.

Here's the reason why. God has allowed, ordained, engineered, uses to his glory difficulty. And here's the worst thing of all, is for the person tonight who might be here or who may be listening or watching right now to say, I will not confess that, Pastor.

I will not see difficulty. Oh, yeah, you will. No, I'm not going to confess it.

Not going to say it. Well, you're going to have it. And just when I say it like that, there's a little bit of a cringe because you might think, oh, no, it's kind of like when somebody says, yeah, yeah, to pray for God's will for your life.

And then instantly your emotions lie to you by telling you, oh, no, if you pray for God's will in your life, he's going to send you to Detroit or something like that. Or whatever. I didn't mean Detroit.

I just realized people are probably watching from Detroit right now, and it's not a good thing. But why do we do this is because we don't understand, first of all, the very nature of our God. But when we talk about difficulty, every one of us to some degree or another has gone through, is going through, shall go through difficulty.

It has to happen. It's part of life. But if you are a Christian tonight, it comes with great instruction.

It comes with great purpose. In fact, listen to these verses, Matthew 28, 18, Jesus said, all authority has been given to me. And remember, he's your pastor.

He's the shepherd of your soul. All authority has been given to me. Jesus said in heaven and on earth, go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, not some of it, all of it, because it's good that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always, even under the end of the world or the end of the age, the culmination of time. Now, Matthew chapter nine, listen to this beginning at verse nine, as Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office or the collection gate, the toll booth in our day, literally on a Roman road. And he said to him, follow me.

And so he that is Matthew arose and followed him. And now it happened as Jesus sat at the table in the house that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisee saw it, those are the professional religionists.

When they saw it, they said to his disciples, why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? I want you to circle the word there that they followed, that he Matthew followed in verse nine, that he followed Jesus. That word in Greek means that he decided in an instant, in a moment's time to get up and go in the quote, same way. That's what that word means to go in the same way or to journey our video on demand.

Our internet television program is called journey. Why it's a form of discipleship. It's following Christ.

When you follow Jesus, when he says, come and follow me, my goodness, last Sunday, by the end of third service, we saw close to a hundred people make decisions for Jesus last Sunday. And what was he saying to them? Why did they respond and make a decision for Christ? He was saying to them, come and follow me journey with me. We would also use the word to pilgrim or to venture with Christ to take a journey with him, to accompany him.

Jesus is inviting us. Noah Webster in his dictionary defines the word difficulty. That which is arduous.

Do we even hear that word anymore? Arduous. That which is arduous, a thing that is hard or hard to do, hard to understand that which is occasioned by labor. Listen to this by perplexity, hardship, something that which requires perseverance, something that is to be overcome, to be solved, to be defeated an obstacle, which is between you.

Listen to this. I love it. An obstacle, which is between you and your intended goal.

Difficulty. It's been said that the greater the goal in life, the greater the level of difficulty. And no one wants to sign up.

Let's be honest for difficulty. Maybe you're here tonight and it's your first time in church and. Your friends have brought you and believe me, let me tell you, they've been praying for you and they want you to come to Christ.

They want you to make a decision for Jesus. They've been loving on you. They might have been buying you lunch or doing things to you all because they love you.

They want you to be born again. Jesus said they want you in heaven with them. But let me be the first to tell you, you make a decision for Jesus tonight and it is difficult, but it is a difficulty that comes with great reward.

You see, Jack, you're not encouraging my friend to choose Christ tonight. Are you? I am because listen, everybody in life will have difficulty. Only the Christian has it with purpose, has it with meaning, has it with an intended goal in sight.

There's a reason for our suffering. A lot of people, I don't know what's going on. I honestly, I'm going to report to you something that I'm hearing in the last couple of months by so many people.

And it's not only here in this church, I'm getting emails. People are stopping me at other churches where I might be speaking and I'm hearing this. And I don't know, look, I don't put any stock into this because God can show me.

He hasn't shown me this. I'm not saying he can tell him if he wants me to know. But so many people are saying, Pastor Jack, the Lord is showing me great, great destruction.

And I see visions of tremendous difficulty and peril coming to America and the world. I saw a vision of this happening in the Middle East and all of these words of foreboding and impending judgment and doom. And listen, I'm not discounting that.

I haven't seen it. Do I doubt such things could happen soon? I don't doubt it. Is America certainly worthy of discipline from God? Yes, we are.

But without those things, life is still difficult. But with the world going on the course that it is around the world and all the threats that are out there in Europe right now and in China, Russia, United States, under constant terrorist chatter and threats, something's supposed to happen. What should that do to you? Well, number one, as a Christian, you should make sure that your faith is rooted and grounded in Christ and that you're not soon shaken by these things.

Jesus said everything that can be shaken shall be shaken and only that which can remain shall remain. So your life needs to be anchored upon Christ. You need to be trusting Jesus.

And things are happening in the world that is encouraging us really and is pushing us onward to trust Christ. But no one wants to sign up for difficulty, I think. And the reason why I put that in there is because when we begin as Christians to embrace the discipline of difficulty and understand that there is a growth and a maturity that comes through hardship, trials, that arduous journey of following Christ, you can't buy it.

You can't go to Bible college and get it. You can't get it anywhere but walking with Jesus. There's no other way.

And in your life, you're going to have a hardship. You're going to have difficulty, no matter who you might be. But I thank God that for the Christian, the Lord grabs our hand, does he not? And does he not walk us through every difficulty? I have to confess, I've gone through difficulties and I'm going through them.

And what's interesting, we're all praying backstage earlier tonight. And in my prayer with the guys, I said, you know, Lord, it's amazing how good and kind you are because I've been going through stuff for so long in my own private life. Everything's great with my wife and I. We love each other.

We're crazy about each other. All that's fine and dandy. My kids love Jesus.

Everything's good. I'm talking about just physical things and continuing on and decision things. Lord, show me and what's next.

And if you don't come back, what about the next 20 years? What about the next 10 years? And all that stuff and people's problems, your problems, your situation, all that stuff weighs on your hearts. And you ought to hang out with Lisa and I someday. You probably never want to hang out with us again, because when we're away from you, we're talking about you, not about you, but about you.

We're praying for you and we're discussing, well, what do you think we should do? And what about that? And he said this to her, and she doesn't want to be married anymore. And then the child came home and she's pregnant. And the father wants to throw the little girl out and all the stuff, difficulties.

And you have a tendency to say, oh, man, this is too much. And then you realize, wait a minute, in my own life, as we were praying backstage, Lord, there are difficulties in my life that are now so constant, so there that I'm used to them. And I, I want to tell you right now, publicly, I thank God for them now.

So how can you say that? Pastor, don't say such things. I thank God for them now, because it has brought me to a place of knowing Jesus, his faithfulness, his constant presence in your life. Listen, we haven't even gotten to the message.

This is going to be I'll just, I'll just keep doing the introduction until we run out of time. Listen, here's the thing. It's human nature for us to ask this question.

Why do people suffer? That's human nature. The whole world asked that question. Why are things difficult with people? Why does it have to be difficult? Somebody's asked this question.

Why do bad things happen to good people? Do you want Francis Schaeffer? You ever read Francis Schaeffer? Anyone ever heard of Francis Schaeffer? Hello? Read the guy, Francis Schaeffer. Francis Schaeffer said it's an easy answer to that question. Why do bad things happen to good people? You ever asked that question? The reason why bad things happen to good people is because there are no good

people.

So I find I'm highly offended at your statement right now. I mean, come on, what's going on here? No, the truth of the matter is, why does anything good happen to us at all? Have you looked around this world? This world's nuts, man. It's out of control.

But God's good. The Bible tells us that every good thing that comes to our lives comes from the father of lights. I love that.

The father of lights. God is the light giver. But it's also Christian nature to ask why do God's people have to suffer difficulty? In fact, in Genesis 47, seven, I love this in Genesis 47, seven, it says, Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before the Pharaoh.

This is cool. Watch this. After now watch after Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

This is awesome. Look, Joseph brings in there in Egypt. Joseph brings Jacob his pop before Pharaoh, the the earthly God of the world to the Egyptians into the world.

And look, watch what happens. After Jacob blessed Pharaoh, I love that. Pharaoh asked him, like, I don't speak Hebrew didn't understand a word you said.

No, he didn't say that. He doesn't say, my these are nice sons you have. He doesn't say Joseph, you raised a good boy.

He's a great guy. He's really saved our neck here in Egypt. No, he didn't say that.

He says, how old are you? And Jacob said to Pharaoh, the years of my pilgrimage are 130. That's years. And my years, he says, have been difficult and hard.

Look at they have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my father's. Hey, I'm 130 years old. I've had a hard life and I come from a long line of people who have hard times.

You ever feel like that in your family? I come from a long line of losers. I come from a long line of difficulty who cannot say that we all can say that. But here's the tendency of our culture today.

I'm the only one. Whoa, is me. I'm a victim.

Hey, let's get over that once and for all right now. All right, let's just join this club. All right, Adam and Eve ripped us off.

Okay, want to blame anybody blame Adam and Eve. All right. Here's the deal.

If it would have been Fred and Wilma or Barney and Betty, they would have blown it too. And if it would have been you, you would have blown it too. Okay, so we just need to get over that.

As long as we see ourselves as the victim, always, we will never conquer our own lives in Christ. We've got to take the difficulties of our lives and lay them down at the cross. We need to come to Jesus and say, Lord, this is the beef that I have with my life.

And I'm giving it to you. I can't figure it out. I can't do it anymore.

And Jacob says my life's been difficult. Every believer can say my life has been difficult. But what if the very things that you and I listen, despise tonight as a Christian that's taking place in our lives? What if the very thing that you and I despise in our lives is the very thing that we have failed to recognize that has been engineered by God and given to us? Watch this.

Don't think for a moment that the world has slapped you or hit you with some difficulty. Are you a Christian tonight? The world does not slap you or hit you with a difficulty. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm here to tell you church family that may be true for the nonbeliever.

And that's even a big maybe. I think God is in God's more involved in the nonbelievers life than the nonbeliever would ever dare to think, because I know how he was involved in my life before I came to Christ. And I thank God now that he was involved in my life before I even knew who he was.

But in my life, in your life, Christian, everything that comes to your life is handed on a tailor made golden platter in the sense that it is engineered by God. Did you get a flat tire on your way to church tonight? God knew about it. He's doing a work with that flat tire.

So I don't believe that. Well, then you have a long line of difficulties to continue on in before you learn the lesson. Jesus said a sparrow does not fall to the ground without my father's notice.

How much more does God love every step you take, every move you make? He's watching you. It's true. That's why, listen, that's why the amazing truth of God is that all of this stuff you've never honestly, listen, you may be here tonight and you are so not with God, but you can honestly say to yourself tonight, you'll never say this out loud, but inside, you'll agree with me that down deep inside, there's been a nagging constant thought that God may be real.

What if he's real? Is it Richard Dawkins? Is that the guy, the famous atheist admitted on film? You can watch it, YouTube it, that there may be a God after all. This guy's the pillar of a long line of losers saying there is no God, there is no God. And he said, well, I mean, you know, there could be, but, but there can't be, there can't be the very one that you're kicking against as a nonbeliever is the very one that you want to run into his arms and be squeezed by him and be hugged by him and bring all your stuff to him.

But as a believer, whatever you're going through in your life and whatever you've gone through has been God's engineering thing. Difficulty. It's an amazing thing.

Point number one, it may be our only point tonight. The discipline of difficulty jotted down. It's this it's discovering God in the difficulty, discovering God in the difficulty.

And that comes this way, discovering the purpose of what that difficulty is discovering the purpose of difficulty. The Bible is the book of deliverance. You will never find another book in all of the world that will help you assist you and rescue you from the dilemma that you're in every year.

God's book is the number one bestseller wherever it's offered all around the world and where it's not allowed. It's stolen, smuggled, brought into. Hey, listen.

I'm not going to point to these people, but in that we have criminals in this sanctuary right now, we have masterminds in this room. We have people that are dangerous in this room right now, dangerous to the kingdom of hell. There are people in this room right now that would cause a demon to tremble.

And here's the reason why these people take their own money. They take their own vacation time. They literally dress up like tourists.

They get a camera and hanging around their neck. They have suitcases with false bottoms and inside woven inside their, inside their stuff are Bibles and Christian material. And hang on.

They, they, they go on vacation and a certain, a certain country that doesn't allow Jesus. Jesus is not allowed. And that particular country to give you a hint owns this country.

And they take Bibles in there. Some of them have been caught, but because they're Americans, they're not allowed in the country. And they're told to get back on the planet, go back to insane Southern California, where you came from.

But there are Bible smugglers in this room. Think about that for a moment. That's bringing the word of God, the greatest book that brings deliverance to a man's heart and a woman's soul, the Bible.

And when Jesus said, and when it's recorded there in Matthew chapter nine, it says now that as it happened, look at as Jesus sat at the table in the house. And I love this that behold many tax collectors, many IRS agents, really of our day and sinners. That's where you and I would be sitting.

There's the IRS guys. And then there's the sinners and they're all around the table. So we're all sitting there and they came and sat down with him and his disciples.

Isn't that beautiful? What does that tell you about Jesus? What does that tell you? If Jesus walked through this room right now, roll the hands of time back 2000 years ago, and Jesus walks through this room. According to my Bible, are you listening? According to my Bible, every tax collector and sinner, that's a whole lot of people would have gravitated towards Jesus. If you and I would have seen Jesus walk by, we would have said, you know what? I'll be back later.

I'm, I'm going with him. Who is he? I don't know. I'm going with him.

There's something about him, which is radical because the book of Isaiah says regarding Jesus's physical appearance, he was not beautiful to look at. There was no beauty nor comeliness that when we beheld him, that we should desire him. There was a sense of compassion, of love, of care that a harlot, a tax collector, sinners gravitated toward him.

Does this world not need Jesus today, man? Imagine if Jesus showed up on Madison Avenue today, tonight in New York or on Hollywood and Vine. Oh my goodness. The absolute freaks of humanity on Hollywood and sunset.

And Jesus would be there. The people you and I are afraid of, you know, you've been there walking down the street. Holy cow.

Crossover. What is that common? Is it honestly, you've been there? Is it male or female? Or is it, what is it? Is it even of this world? And Jesus would have been right there. He didn't care.

So we'll leave. Maybe they're from Mars. Jesus would have given them the gospel.

He's there in the heart and the lives of people in difficulty. He's there. And I love how that verse goes on in Matthew nine, when it says in verse 11, and when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, why

does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? They didn't have enough guts to ask him himself.

Why didn't you ask God, ask God? He's sitting right over there. And when Jesus heard that, can you imagine that they're all eating? Oh man, they got hummus falafel going. They got it all happening, man.

They're eating. They're having a great time. They're sitting around talking.

Jesus. Can you imagine God in skin is looking at these ones that are the off scouring of the planet that nobody wants. And what was going on in the heart of God? I bet you, if you could have stopped right there, Jesus would have been able to turn to the camera and say, you know, to Wolf Blitzer, I'm having an awesome time.

Why are you having an awesome time? Look around this table, sinners, tax collectors, rejects of humanity. These are the ones who need me. And look at them.

They're eating. They're talking. They're sharing conversation.

And by this interaction, they'll follow me. They'll follow me right into eternity, into heaven and all of their difficulties. Think about it.

What qualified them to be a sinner? Listen, what qualified them to be a tax collector and the Roman view tax collectors were extension of the Roman arm, the Roman power. Matthew was the worst of the worst. He was a Jew turncoat working for the empire.

He was the worst. Surprisingly, in fact, his life would have been under constant threat from his own countrymen because he was an absolute trader. And then to the religious zealots, these sinners, they didn't even deserve to occupy a place on the earth.

And when Jesus heard the criticism. I'd love to have seen that. Maybe his jaw got a little set.

I don't know. I don't know. Did you look over at those Pharisees? Some of the strongest language found in the Bible is the language of Jesus when he said unto the Pharisees, woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.

You travel land and sea to make one convert to your cult. And after you've converted him, you make him seven times the child of hell. Then you are yourself.

Woe unto you. The word who I who I. In Greek for woe unto you. Is condemned or damned be you.

You are a child of hell and you're leading people astray and you're condemned. From the words of Jesus, woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, those who look down their noses and say, this person is not worthy of eternal life. No man on earth has that ability or power.

We are to instruct. Yes, we are to give by line upon line and by precept upon precept. But no man has the authority to say.

You're condemned. And Jesus comes along and looks right into the heart of the human being and into the heart of these soul judges. It's been said that they were fault finders and sin sniffers and all that stuff, you know, sin sniffers, sniffing out sin, pointing it out in everybody's life.

But what did he say to them? He says, you point at the splinter and you've got a beam stuck in your own eye. You think Jesus was a wimp, man? And then he says, listen, in verse 12, he says, when Jesus heard that, he said to them. Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

That's his answer. So what kind of answer is that? Jesus was, listen, Jesus was calling the tax collectors and the harlots and the sinners and all that were there, sick people. They were sick.

They were S I N positive. They were sin sick and they knew it. That's what he's meaning.

That's what he's saying. You think he's insulting the center? Listen, you think he's insulting you tonight because maybe you're convicted because you're thinking I'm not walking with Jesus and I'm not a Christian and, and I don't, I feel uncomfortable. Wait a minute.

Wait. When Jesus says the center is the one that is sick, he says, I've come to heal those that are sick. I have not come.

He said to heal those that are healthy. It's a, it's a backhand. He's saying to the Pharisees, you guys, you guys don't need help.

You don't need a doctor. You are so self-righteous. You are so healthy spiritually in your mind that you've become your own savior.

You don't need me only people. Listen, only people who can recognize their need of the savior see themselves as sick and see me, Christ Jesus as the healer. And so those are the ones I've come for difficulty in life causes you and I to see the purposes of God.

We don't like to hear this, but it's true. Listen, no one loves their eyesight more than those who have it threatened. What are you going through tonight and your life? Are you on the brink of losing something? Is the, is it the life of your child? Is it the life of a parent or what is it? You never appreciate it more unless you're on the brink of losing it.

And I think about my eyesight, whatever's dear to you. We all need our eyes, of course, to, to live, to do our stuff, to do what we do. I read tons all the time.

And I think, well, if I, if I lost my eyesight, I'm out of a job, let alone out of a calling. And then I have these things. Well, it's just, I'll just have to teach and preach from memory from my home God.

And then I think about my memory. Oh God, my memory. And then you start appreciating every day.

I remember something. I go, yes, I remember that. I remember that.

Hey, I remembered that. It's a good day. Years ago, obviously Ashley was only one year, maybe two.

I don't know. She was young. I was, we had just moved to Chino hills.

I mean, just moved like right then and there. And it was night. We were not familiar with the street and we were taking a walk.

And I was walking with Ashley in my left hand. I remember picking her up, walking on the sidewalk. I picked her up and I looked at her and I'll never forget it because of what is about to happen.

I take a step and I look up and there was a branch hanging from a pine tree and it went right in and punctured my cornea and into my eye. And without dropping my daughter, I, I went right back and I set her down. I, the first thing that I was terrified about, and forgive me for not remembering the name of that fluid, but I, I immediately went back and held my head up because if you puncture it that bad, that miraculous God-given fluid can come out of your eyeball and you're messed up.

You're blind and went to the hospital. It was horrible. And it took a long time to heal.

Let me tell you something. Ever since that day, when somebody moves something fast near my eye or somebody grabs a piece of paper and you know, brings it, I flinch because automatically I remember how precious the thought was of the side of my left eye or whatever it might be for your life. And when we have difficulties, my friend, listen, when we have difficulties, it brings us to a point of appreciation that otherwise we would not have.

There's no way. And so for that, we embrace difficulties. You're, going to have them.

So embrace them. Don't deny them next week on this same topic, which is going to, we're going to talk about how to embrace them. Why should I embrace them? How do I talk to God in the midst of this discipline and the difficulties? How, how do you know? And a lot of people spend a lot of energy.

Is this from God or is this from Satan? What's this? You know, my house burned down. Is this from God or is this from Satan? Let me tell you something. It may be from Satan, but I'm a Christian.

And I read the book of Job. Don't Jack, don't say that book, right? Read the book. Job oldest manuscript confirmed manuscript in the world.

People will claim, no, there's, there's oriental writings older. Not so Job read it. Nothing can touch the Christian's life without God's permission.

Nothing. You need to understand that the moment you realize, wait a minute, this is going on. And God knows he not only knows he's got a victory plan.

All of a sudden now I want to back up and say, okay, Lord, get my emotions out of the situation. I want to be out of the factor. Lord, show me your will for this difficulty.

What's the problem. Think about it. What problems you got problems.

I got problems. All God's children got problems. And he asked God, Lord, what's, what's the answer to this problem? Show me the option is to panic.

You know what panic means. Some of you have been to Caesarea Philippi with this in Northern Israel, pan the temple of pan. That's where they get the worship act called panic.

They would not know what to do. They wouldn't know from pan like panacea, like panorama, like pantheistic. They wouldn't know what God to go to my life.

My life is freaking out. Where do I go? And they panic. Don't not knowing what God to cry out to the Christian never is supposed to panic.

Do we weep? Do we cry? Do we have anxiety? Yes. Do we even worry about things? Yes. But the reason why we freak out is because we're tempted to panic when there's only one real God to go to in the first place.

Yahweh Lord, he's the only one and we don't have to be involved in that panic. Our souls can be still and discover that God is in the midst of the difficulty and that there's a purpose to it. The Bible says in Philippians chapter one, verse 12, but I want you to know, brethren, the things which have happened to me, troubles, difficulty, says Paul, have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.

Wow. So that it has become evident to those. In the palace guard and to all the rest that my chains, so there you go, Paul got himself arrested.

Are in Christ and most of the brethren in the Lord having become confident by my chains are much more bold now to speak the word of God without fear. Did you guys all hear that? The purpose for Paul's difficulty in that situation to men, if God was with Paul, why did God love to get arrested? Because God was going to use that great. Fear that must have been in the minds of the first century believers that Paul was fearless.

Even in the face of being arrested for Christ, he got in trouble for preaching, by the way, we'll end with this. That the last tour that we had just this last spring with you in Israel coming out, we had our tour of Rome. And on your open time, your free time, you go to the northwestern side of the forum.

The famous Roman forum, and there's the Mamertine prison where Paul spent his last night on earth. And it's there. It's not one like it.

It's it. And it was the his resting place the night before he was beheaded. And I challenge you, it's very exciting.

Find out why. Go find out why Paul Paul was executed. You go search and see why was Paul, the apostle executed by the Roman Empire.

He was a Roman citizen. The guy had degrees on both sides of his arms. He was a genius.

He was a brain. We know this from the mail yields writings that he couldn't even keep Paul in books. He consumed everything.

He was brilliant. A Roman citizen. Why did they kill him? So, oh, man, you know, talk about difficulty.

God didn't deliver him out of that difficulty. Oh, yeah, he did. You think this body of yours is something to hang on to forever? It's amazing.

You guys, a lot of you fanning yourselves. Is it hot in here? Some of you feeling hot, maybe, huh? No, I'm kidding. I'm just we'll end with this.

I told you on Sunday that the Chilean miners had been rescued and the bells were tolling from one end of the nation to the other. And Associated Press reported when at least 24 of the miners had climbed up out of the rescue cage there, they were wearing their T-shirts that said, Gracias, Senor, which is thank you, Lord. And while on the back of their T-shirts, it was printed Psalm 95, 4, which says in his hand are the depths of the earth.

Isn't that cool? It came out of the ground. They had the shirt sent down. They said, we're going to pull you guys up.

And the Christian in the group that had decided, I told you this on Sunday, didn't I? For whoever didn't hear that, you got to hear this again. It's awesome. On the 17th day, when they had no news that there was any, they didn't know if up top, the people up top knew if they were alive or not.

Can you imagine being in a hole 2000 feet in the bottom of the earth and the bowels? It's 93 degrees at that point at 2000 feet below. And it gets hotter, the deeper you go. And they're in there.

And they for 17 days, they have no idea that the world on top knows that they're alive, that they started to beat each other up and fight over food. And that Christian man, even if I knew his name, I couldn't pronounce it. He said, grow up.

We're going to die like men. Stop it. We're going to have a service at noon and at 6 p.m. every day in this hole until we either get rescued or until we die.

So be here. Like they're going to. We're starting on time.

And when they were rescuing the miners, they sent down a team of rescue guys. And what's interesting was was not it was not readily reported, but now it has been. Did you know one of the big concerns for the rescue team and the reason why they sent down a contingent of guys into the hole to make sure after being in the hole in the earth for 69 days, they said, what's going to be the effects of a man? Number one, the one who's most weak, physically, mentally, spiritually, get him out first.

So the weaker listen, the weaker got out first. That's a great decision. By the way, NASA come to find out where the ones who said we've learned this in space stuff with the guy that's easier to crack gets out first.

The stronger guy gets out last, but even for the strong guy, they said we have to send down a team because here's the deal. We don't know what's going to happen if we send down the little escape module thing. If we don't send anybody down there to help him, no matter how strong he is, we don't know the spiritual and psychological effects that if we take there's only two guys, three guys left now, two guys left.

And then there's only one guy left that within an hour and a half, that's how long it takes to get the guy out in an hour and a half. They concluded that a man could go absolutely utterly insane in an hour and a half without hope. And so they sent a team down there of rescuers to put him in and send them up.

And I want you to think about that. Whatever you're going through in life, difficulty is not for you to lose hope. Difficulty is the opposite.

It is to build your hope. Financial stuff going on, can't afford stuff anymore. Our world is evaporating.

It's not bad. You think it's the end of the world because someone took your whatever. My friend, you thought you needed that thing and you're fine.

You lost your home and you're fine. Look, your life, the troubles and the difficulties of life, God has a great purpose for. Let's bow our heads reverently in prayer right now because you're going through something or you have or you're gonna.

And I'll be right there with you. But I want to ask you right now in silence, I want you to right now, right where you're at. Thank God for your situation right now.

Just thank him. Because one of the great things about understanding God's will is to always know it could always be worse. Number two, understand that he has never left you or forsaken you.

In fact, you've been listening to him more than you ever have. You've certainly been praying more and you've been seeking God more. The third thing is you don't need to be scared of what's going on in the world or in your life.

God is not panicking. He's not the God of panic. We get spooked and scared when we get our eyes off him.

Like Peter, when he sank, you got to get refocused on the Lord. And the next is for you to tell him right now, Lord, I'm giving you this concern of mine. I'm giving you this issue.

I'm giving you my difficulty. You're going to be tempted during the week to pick it up and take it back from him. Don't do it.

If you do do it, throw it right back at him. First Peter 5, 7 says that we're to cast all our cares upon him for he cares for us. The word in Greek means to heave it, throw it, to shop, put it back into his concern, into his care.

And you do that. Father, in our lives, there are things pressing. We're asking you, Lord, now in Jesus name, that you would give us the discipline of difficulty.

That is, we'll deal with it, not conquering it ourselves, not manhandling it or muscling it, not throwing money at it, not trying to deny it away, but to face it head on and to say, Lord, I can't do this. I'm asking you now, Lord, to intervene and show me your will and my difficulty. Show me your fingerprints, Jesus, on it.

Show me your spend. Show me your care in it. Show me your presence in it.

My friend, nothing's too big for him. And that means nothing can be too overpowering for you. I saw it tonight on the news of a abducted child.

I can't think of anything worse than to have your baby taken from you. And to not know someone's still where's the baby, what condition to think I can't imagine. And even now that situation, God knows.

And the fear that we might have that it might turn out bad, simply profoundly speaks to us that in the end, my friend, when we stand with him, I don't know how this is going to work. But in the end, the deepest, darkest, most painful thing of your life that's ever happened or shall happen when you stand before God in the end, it will be to your delight. I don't get it, but it will be to great joy.

The worst of the worst that you can imagine, he will convert. I don't know how it's beyond my ability to understand, but it says he will. And between now and next Wednesday, I'm going to ask you to have your eyes wide open and for you to recognize and to discern the purpose, the plan of God in your life so that none of these things may move you.

While we remain in this attitude of prayer, let's sing this song of worship unto the Lord right now in devotion to him, my friend.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/21/SID21848.mp3>
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