

God's School of Faith

by Jim Cymbala

God develops faith in us through difficult moments, and faith is the key to pleasing Him and entering the kingdom of heaven.

Duration: 37:14

Scripture: Genesis 45:5, Joshua 24:1, Psalm 23:3, Jeremiah 37:15, Matthew 6:33, John 1:11, Acts 14:22

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on a sentence from the book of Joshua that states, 'His thoughts are not our thoughts.' The speaker suggests that this sentence holds the key to understanding the challenges and experiences we face in life. They explain that Joshua is recalling the history of the chosen people of God and how they had to trust in God's plan even in difficult times. The speaker emphasizes the importance of developing faith through adversity and warns against losing faith when faced with challenges.

Transcript

How many books are in the Bible? 66. Divided by what? Old and New Testament. This book here has different kinds of literature in it.

There's poetry. There's proverbs in it. There's symbolic prophetic books like Revelation and some others where you have to try to figure out what is that a symbol of, the dragon and this and that.

There are letters of teaching that Paul wrote, let's say, or Peter, in the New Testament. But a good part of the Bible, like the Gospels and Acts in the New Testament and a good portion of the Old Testament, is history. It's historical narrative.

It's telling a story. In the Old Testament, the story is basically about God's chosen people, the nation of Israel. And Israel began who was the forefather and grandfather of the Jewish people? Anyone know his name? Abraham.

God came to Abraham, spoke, and then from his ancestors we see this chosen seed that God settled eventually into the land of Canaan, where still fighting is going on just like it was thousands of years ago. In the history of Israel, there's a strange thing that happens, which I'd like to point out to you. You might not have ever thought of it.

I never thought of it until I saw this some years ago. And in that strange thing that happened, there is a tremendous lesson for your life and mine. In fact, what I'm about to tell you here and show you is the secret behind every great man or woman in sports, in art, in music, in anything, but more important to us, all the great men and women spiritually who have become a blessing to other people.

You know, some people just think, give me, give me, and I want to make it through. Other people get a little bit more mature and they start thinking, God, work in my life so that I can be a blessing to others. But how God shapes our lives and how God works in our lives is very mysterious.

His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. And if you will listen here for the next 15 minutes, it might explain exactly what you're going through today or what you went through last year, or if you're not going through it today, it will explain something that might happen later this year.

But sooner or later, this will happen because it's the way God works in our lives. In the book of Joshua, at the end of the book of Joshua, they've gone into the land. Moses is dead.

Joshua is the leader and Joshua is giving the only like prophecy that is connected to his name. He's speaking to all the people before he dies and he is now recalling to their memory the history of the of the chosen people of God. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob have lived hundreds of years before, but now Joshua is reminding the people in this little sermon, which is very, I'm only reading four or five verses to you.

There's one sentence that's going to make us all scratch our heads, but it's going to explain a lot about God and about stuff that we go through in life. Look at it here in Joshua. Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem and he summoned the elders, the leaders, the judges, and the officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

And Joshua said to all the people, this is one of the rare prophecies where he's going to say, this is what the Lord says. This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says. Long ago your forefathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham, and Nahor, lived beyond the river and worshipped other gods.

So now he's going way back and he's saying the name of Abraham's father, which was Terah, and they lived in a way east of where Israel is now. They lived in what we would now call Iran, Iraq, Iran area. And he said, now remember, way, way back, let's look at our history and find out where we came from, people, and let's remember God called Abraham from the way he, where he was living, and he lived beyond the river.

And whenever the Bible says the river with that capital R, it's speaking of the Euphrates River, which is way east of the land of Israel into that area of Iraq and Iran. And they worshipped other gods. In other words, they weren't serving God.

God, by his grace, interrupted Abraham's life and said, don't live that way anymore. I've got something better for you. And he spoke into his life.

Let's read on. But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the river, the Euphrates, and I led him throughout Canaan. That's the land of Israel.

And I gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac. And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau.

Okay, let's stop there. So God is saying, now remember the history of your people? He says, Abraham was the one I called. And then Abraham and his wife couldn't have children.

What was Abraham's wife's name? Sarah. And they couldn't have children, and they were old. But what did God do? He blessed them with a child.

Who was that son, that special son? Isaac. Now Isaac's wife couldn't have children. But then finally she became pregnant, and she had twins.

And what were those twins named? Jacob and Esau. Now, one of them was chosen by God to do great things. Who was that going to be? Jacob.

The other one didn't have a heart for God, didn't have a heart for spiritual things. What was his name? Esau. Esau was the one who sold his birthright, special privileges for what? A bowl of soup, lentil soup.

It was good, but it wasn't worth the birthright. And he was the one who didn't have a heart for the things of God. But Jacob did, although Jacob had some very crafty characteristics in his personality.

Okay, so far so good. Abraham begot who? Isaac. Isaac had two children, Jacob and Esau, but the chosen one was Jacob, right? And now from that seed is going to come all the people of Israel, and in fact, who else is going to come from that seed? Jesus.

Jesus was Jewish from that seed. Okay, so here's the verse. Here's the sentence.

I assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau, but Jacob and his sons, and by the way, Jacob's 12 sons were the 12 tribes of Israel, right? All those, Reuben, Judah, those are the sons of Jacob, whose later name became Israel. Esau got the hill country, but Jacob and his sons went down to... Well, that makes no sense. That makes absolutely no sense.

Something must be wrong with the Bible. Are you sure that's from the Bible? That's right, right? It's from the Bible, but does that make any sense? So let me get this straight. Esau is the one who doesn't want God.

He's not the chosen seed that the line is going to run through. He gets Mount Seir, or the land of Seir. So if this is Israel, if this is Israel, if you're looking now here at Israel, right? North, South, West, and East.

Mount Seir is down over here. It became known as the land of Edom. In fact, Esau is the father of the Edomites, and they become enemies of God's people many times in the rest of the Old Testament.

So God says, I'm going to give Esau, Edom, Mount Seir. Now, what was that like? It was not pretty country, rocky, but what it was very good is you could defend yourself because once you settled in the heights, back in those days, the high position meant everything in warfare. If you had, like in the Civil War, most battles in the Civil War of our own country were lost by the people who had the low ground because they would have to charge up, and they would get massacred.

So Edom was not very pretty, but he gave them that land to Esau and his descendants. But Jacob, the one that I favor, I'm sending him to Egypt. No, but I know about Egypt.

You know about Egypt, don't you? Who was the son of Jacob? Who was the son of Jacob who became known as Israel? Who was the one that was rejected by the brothers and sold into thing and ended up in

Egypt? Who was that? Joseph. And then the famine came, and then all them came down, and then things were, they were in fat city for a while, right? Because what happened? Pharaoh gave them the best land because he loved Joseph, and they were living in the land of Goshen. But then a pharaoh came who didn't know who Joseph was, and then what happened to Israel? What happened to the Jews? Slavery.

There's something wrong here. If you have a favorite, you give him the best land, and you make things easy. If you have a one that doesn't want God, you send him into slavery.

Let him get beat down. You don't send your favorite, the one you're going to bless, you send him down to Egypt. Yeah, you let him have plenty, and you bless him for a while, but now he's in slavery for hundreds of years.

And when Moses was called, they were trying to kill all the male children. You know that story, the beginning of Exodus? They're trying to kill all the male children, and God finally speaks to Moses in the back side of the desert from a burning bush, and says, I've heard the cry of my people Israel. I've heard the cry of my children, and I'm sending you to go to Pharaoh, and tell Pharaoh, Pharaoh, let my people go.

Well, that makes no sense to me. I never said this publicly, and my mom probably won't feel that good about it, but it's true. My dad had three children.

My brother, me, and my sister. His favorite was my sister. When he died, they discovered his will, and he left more to my sister than he did my brother and I. Why'd he do that? I don't care.

I mean, I don't care personally, neither does my brother, but it was a kind of a little dirty trick he did pull on us. Why'd he do that? Because he loved my sister. He always wanted a girl.

You know how fathers are with their daughters, and mothers are with their sons? So he gave my daughter more of a percentage of whatever the inheritance would end up being, right? And someone once heard of that and said, that's not right, that's not fair, but he did it because you usually give the best to the ones you favor. You know, it's not good for parents to have favorite children. That's a way to get in a lot of trouble.

That's how Joseph got messed up, because Jacob favored him, and the brothers didn't like it. Were any of you the favorite child of your parents? Anybody here your mom and dad's pet? Raise your hand so we can all just, we don't like you, and we want you to know that right now. Anybody here the black sheep of the family? You didn't fit in with the rest? Yeah, that's me.

All right. Let's try to understand this. God, Almighty God, has Jacob and Esau.

He's going to bless Jacob, not Esau. So he lets Esau have the land of Mount Seir, but he sends Jacob and his descendants down to Egypt. That explains a lot about your life.

You see, what you have to understand, brothers and sisters, you got to really focus in on this. When God chooses someone and favors them and blesses them and brings them into his family, he's into character development, and he wants to make you and I into somebody that he can trust and someone that will bless other people. And one of the tools that he uses, whether we like it or not, is hardship.

Difficult moments make for strength. When you lift weights or you do isometrics, the whole thing that the pain of the lifting or doing bicep curls, the whole thing is the weight is working against you, and gravity, so that when you lift it, you're working against resistance, but that's what builds the muscle. Muscles aren't

built in the air going like this.

No, you got to have something working against you. That's how you get muscles. And God in our lives permits hardship.

Even Jesus, his own son, the Bible says that Jesus learned obedience by the things he suffered. Paul told the early Christians, nobody who lives a godly life will escape persecution and trouble. Paul says to the church in another part, these are the things you won't hear so much from Christian television, the televangelists who are not rightly dividing the Word of God.

It says that through much hardship, we must go through much hardship to enter the kingdom of heaven. All the great Christians in the Bible that you read about, not one of them had an easy sledding. Not Moses, not Joseph, not one.

Everyone had difficulties. Jeremiah, the prophet, was arrested and thrown into a prison. Joseph, think of what he went through.

All the great people in the Old Testament went through difficult moments. Why? Because Jacob, the one I favor, I'm sending him to Egypt. In the New Testament, Jesus, our leader, our example, he went through Gethsemane and the cross.

He was rejected by men. He came to his own, but his own received him not. He was applauded against.

He was slandered. He was lied about. They plotted his death when he was healing people and bringing blessing and love to the population of the land.

He ended up dying on a cross between two thieves. The people who succeeded him went and suffered persecution. The apostle Paul was in prison, got beat up.

In 2 Corinthians, he gives a list of all the stuff he went through. And to the American dream and to the people who are into the false concept of faith and prosperity, they don't want you to notice those verses. But it's true.

If you live a godly life and you love the Lord Jesus Christ, sometimes you'll be in a heap of trouble. In other words, that formula of serve God and nothing will ever go wrong, that is a lie. That is a lie.

That's not reality. That's not the Bible. That's selling Christianity.

Preaching godliness is gain from such turn away, the Bible says. So Christianity is not about gloom and being depressed. That's the other extreme.

Christianity is not we're just waltzing through the tulips and everything is always fine. And Christianity is not being depressed and the more unhappy you are and the more depressed you are, the more holy you are. That's wrong too.

In the middle is the Christianity of the Bible, which is this, that when you serve God, there are wonderful moments of peace and joy and blessing, but you sometimes have to walk through the valley, and in the valley, He restores your soul. Come on, let's put our hands together. Say amen.

To Jacob, I will send him down to Egypt. So what happened in Egypt that God wants to talk to us about today? In your Egypt and my Egypt. You know, I'm the pastor here along with other pastors who helped me.

We work together and I counsel people, if you only knew what some of the people sitting, I just noticed the face of a couple, a couple of faces that I know who I know a lot about their life. If you only knew what people have gone through in their walk with the Lord. You can't even imagine what some folks have gone through.

How about the man I just met over in Bangladesh last week while I was ministering to these pastors in Bangladesh, this young minister being persecuted by the Muslim population. Somebody came with a gun because someone got converted in their family. He didn't like it.

I think that's the story and he shot him in the mouth and it didn't kill him, but it messed up their scars on his face now. But there he was happy, praising the Lord, going to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ with a bullet in his jaw. And we think we have a problem when the transmission is slipping in our car.

Come on, isn't that the truth? But you got to flush America out of your system. And you got to step back and look at this spiritually. What was it that happened in Egypt that was so important that God said, no, Jacob's descendants are the chosen ones.

They got to go through a couple things that are important in the formation of their lives. What is it that you and I are going to go through or are going through or have gone through or will go through again? And this is important because you might say to me, Pastor, I didn't come here on Sunday afternoon to hear about that I might go through difficult times. Well, that's denial.

It's like going to a doctor and the doctor says, you better sit down. I want to tell you about your blood pressure and your cholesterol. Hey, doc, doc, I didn't spend my good money to have you give me bad news.

I'll find another doctor who will tell me something else. And the doctor would say, look, I'm not here to tell you good news or bad news. I want to tell you the truth.

If we don't understand this when we go through these moments, this is how people lose their faith. Remember the seed that was planted, Jesus said, in shallow, rocky ground. Sure, it sprung up, it had life.

And what was the seed? The seed was the word of God. But when the sun came and things got difficult, it said it died. Why did it die? It had no root.

And there are all kinds of people who are all for praise God all the time. God is good all the time and I'm serving Jesus. And the minute things get tough and difficult, they throw Jesus under the bus and they're like, no, where's God when I need him? So this is important.

How many are with me so far? Say amen. This is important so we understand this, so that we can hug this and grasp it. God sent Jacob's seed to Egypt because he wanted to teach them to have faith.

And you only develop faith when things are difficult. Do you get it? Am I right or wrong? When the sun is shining and everything is going your way, where is faith in that? But when things are difficult and the promises of God don't seem to be coming true, that's where you got to dig down real deep and say, no, I

will not give up. I know in whom I have believed.

I'm persuaded that he's able to do what he said he would do. In other words, I'm trusting God. I'm putting my confidence in God even though it doesn't look the way I want it to look.

That's the only way faith is developed. Faith is never developed when the wind is at your back. Faith is only developed when the wind is blowing in your face.

That's the way you develop endurance, for tribulation works endurance. It's when we go through hard times. Be honest.

How many of you are Christians here? And since you've been a Christian, you've gone through some really difficult time. Just hold up your hand, right? Will God permit that? If God's got the whole world in his hand and he can control anything, why would he let you and I go through difficult moments? Because he's after something more than your comfort zone or my comfort zone. He wants to put faith in me.

But how am I going to develop faith to help other people? The world has people by the billions who are giving up and feeling sorry for themselves. How in the world are we going to lift them up and help them if we haven't been through our own trouble so we can say to them, No, don't give up. I'm going to pick you up by the hand.

Oh no, you don't know what I'm going through. I do know what you're going through. I was there, but God brought me through.

And because he brought me through, I know he can bring you through. Come on, let's say amen to that. That's how faith is developed.

A lot of us are very self-indulgent and we're babies. And we love to feel sorry for ourselves and we're focused on how we're feeling and all of that. We're not seeing the bigger picture.

This is all through the Bible. Look at the rejection Moses went through. Look at the trials Joseph went through.

This was all putting that iron in their soul of faith. You only learn to have faith when things are against you and all you have is the promise of God. You're not in the land, but God promised you the land.

They're whipping you and making you make bricks without straw and you're still holding on and saying, I know God can do this. So faith, remember, the thing that God's most interested in is not how Jim Cimbala feels. It's, I got to develop faith.

For the Bible says without faith, it's impossible to please God. God wants you and I to trust Him at all times and the best way to develop that is in difficult moments. I wish there was another way that God did it, but I got to tell you the truth.

God develops faith at difficult times. And if you're going through something today, don't throw up your hands and think God forgot you. See, this is what happens to a lot of people.

If you don't have faith, you give up. A lot of folks, instead of faith, they throw up their hands, they feel sorry for themselves, and they live as a victim the rest of their life. I got relatives like that.

My wife has relatives like that. They're victims. Instead of trusting God and saying, yeah, that didn't work out the way I thought it would, but I know God is still on the throne and He's going to work in my life.

No, what they do is they throw up their hands, they get bitter, they get angry, they have that little edge when you talk to them, they got an edge in their spirit, they get cynical. Instead of blessing anybody, no, no, you have to put them on the sideline. They can't be used, because instead of developing faith, they got angry at life.

Don't be angry at life. Don't give up on God. God hasn't given up on you.

He's got a plan. But Pastor, I'm in Egypt. Yeah, well, Jacob was in Egypt.

We've all been in Egypt. How many have been in Egypt for a few days in your life? We've been there. It didn't feel good.

It wasn't nice. But boy, it was working out things for us. That's where you get strong.

You know, when you're young, you don't understand these things. I had a high school basketball coach named Bernie Kersner. He coached Erasmus Hall High School, great coach.

And I had skipped a grade, so I was younger than everybody else. And here the senior year, I became the point guard and played, and oh, man, was he on me. He was on me, yelling at me.

And he's the one who changed my name to Symbola. My name is Symbola, but he started screaming at me in the practices. Why don't you throw that ball the other way, Symbola? And I would go, it's Symbola.

He said, yeah, shut up, Symbola, throw the ball the right way. And for the rest of my life, my mother would tell you till I was out of college, I only was called Jimmy Symbola, Jim Symbola. That was my only name.

And it all started, basketball, Jim Symbola, whatever. I played wherever I went. I stopped.

I gave up on Symbola. This coach was so, like, I thought he picked on me. He picked on me.

He would yell at me. And one day, we were playing on TV, the first year they ever had high school games on television. Those of you guys that follow basketball, you know the name Coach Bobby Knight, the coach who's known for his temper and whatnot.

So we were playing Wingate High School, and one of the greatest players that ever came out of New York, a guy named Roger Brown. And we were playing, and he got upset because I threw the ball away. And not knowing the camera was on the huddle, he slapped me across the face.

Feel bad for me? I was in Egypt for a little while there. And the calls came in to the school. There was a big furor.

But back in those days, you could get away with a lot more than you get today. Anyway, he slapped me. And then when the year was over, and he had made me into a much better player, I was getting these scholarship offers.

And I played in Madison Square Garden on the all-city basketball team. And I went to Coach Kersner. And I said to him, you know, Coach, I really didn't like you this year.

Because you were so nasty to me. And he said, don't you get it, Jim? Jimmy, he called me. Jimmy, I saw something in you.

But there was a lot of other junk in you, in your style of play. So I had to bring out the best in you. If I didn't care about you, I never would have screamed at you.

I said, well, that's a funny way to show that you really care about me. But when God puts his hand on you, he doesn't baby you. He puts you in the furnace to get rid of the impurities, to get rid of the junk that's in our life, the selfishness.

So faith is only developed when there's opposition, and difficulty, and trouble. No one great in faith in the Bible ever had it easy. Not one.

And not one through church history ever had it easy. Secondly, that's the first time in the Bible we ever find them praying collectively. All through the book of Genesis, you never find the Jews praying.

Abraham walked with God, but you never find Jacob's children praying. No, they're doing nasty things. But when they're in trouble, they learn to cry out to God.

In fact, God, when he comes to Moses, says, Moses, it's time, because their cry has come to my ear. I have heard their prayer. In other words, it's hard moments that teach us to pray.

You never learn to pray when things are easy. We should pray all the time. Men ought always to pray and never give up.

But how many have found when your back is against the wall and you have nowhere to go, oh my goodness, do the prayers start flying out of us? Don't they? So God is developing faith, which is so important, because the just shall live by. And he's developing prayer, but the prayer only comes to heartache and trouble. I'll be honest with you.

I got scars in my heart, and my wife and I have been through things. And I've been through things as a pastor and faced difficulties and mountains. I've learned to pray not from some book.

I confess this. I've prayed my best prayers when my back was against the wall. How about you? Anybody like me here? And see, that's precious to God.

He keeps the prayers of the saints in a bowl in heaven. That's how precious they are. And how many have found in your own life when you get sloppy and you stop praying and you stop trusting God and you start getting overly absorbed with the things around you, God has a way of just shaking your little boat.

How many have ever had that happen? He rocks your boat just a little bit and suddenly you're, help me Jesus, help me Jesus, right? Come on, have we had that happen to us? Put your hands together if you know what I'm talking about. All right. When things are difficult, remember, Esau, he can never eat them.

But my chosen one and his seed, Jacob, they're going to go down to Egypt first season, this first season. Then I'm going to bring them out. And that leads me to my last point.

They learn to trust. They learn to pray. And here's the best one.

Please, take this home with you. Remember, in Egypt and coming out of it, they got a testimony. Not many people have a testimony.

See, God wants you and I to be a blessing to the world. But one of the strongest things we can tell people is our testimony. What's our testimony? I was down and out, didn't know where to go.

Things did not work out the way I wanted. I had all kinds of opposition. Didn't know where to turn.

Bottom fell out. People against me. But I turned to God.

And somehow, He helped me to trust Him. And then I cried out to Him. And He delivered me.

And He brought me out. And look what He did. And I give you the specifics.

And the people say, God did that for you? Oh, man, I want to trust in a God that can do that for me because I need that. In other words, you get a testimony. But you can't get a testimony unless you be in Egypt.

You can't be talking about the Red Sea opening until you're in Egypt. You can't talk about the pillar of fire and the manna and all the blessings of God until you're in the bad spot so God can bring you out. That's the way His name is glorified.

God is glorified by us getting pulled out of situations that are difficult. His name is praise. And then we're able to minister to other people.

Come on, let's say amen to that. Amen. You take your scars.

You take your problems. And don't feel sorry. Don't live like that.

I know that's a tendency in all of us. Sometimes I feel this terrible, terrible in my life. Sometimes I feel this ugly.

I've never said this publicly. I feel this ugly undertow wanting to pull me down to just feel sorry for myself. You know, just you get tired and all the battles you've fought and people let you down and you're trying this.

And sometimes, you know, self-pity is a horrible thing. It's a horrible thing to live woe is me. I'm a victim.

You don't know what happened to me and all of that stuff. No, no. God permitted it for a reason.

All things work together for them that love God and who are called according to His purpose. So, we're going to learn to trust Him. We're going to learn to pray.

That's what happens in Egypt. And lastly, we get a testimony that we can share with the world. Pastors send emails to me.

Now, you all come here, so you know me. I'm just very ordinary, full of faults. But people who have read my books or heard how just different things that have happened here.

They, you know, the guy who was translating for me in Bangladesh said, I read your book in some Indian tongue language that had been translated into. And my dream was to meet you. You're my hero.

And I went, I'm your what? No, you're my hero. And then when they told me, you're translating for Pastor Simbala in that first session. Oh, I got goosebumps all up and down my back.

I'm translating for you. I said, oh, yeah. Well, let me tell you about it.

I'm just like you. I'm very ordinary. But why did you think I'm... No, and then he started telling me all these things.

And you and your wife started and there were no people and there was no money and there was this and there was that. And then you trusted God. And is it true that in 10 minutes you got two gifts totaling \$6 million from two people you didn't know? Is that true? Yeah, it's true.

Oh, Pastor Simbala. Then I know God can help me. I need \$50,000.

If he gave you \$6 million, I know. Come on, let's put our hands together. Do you get it? How could I be a blessing to the guy unless I went through the deal? See, so when I went through it, I didn't like it.

But now that God brought me through it, I'm able to bring encouragement to other people because I have a testimony. And I want more testimony. Let's close our eyes.

Oh, this is a good word for us today. Anybody here ready to quit? Anybody here ready to give up? Anybody here... that pull? Maybe you're not a Christian. That's the worst pull, to destroy your soul.

But Jesus came to save your soul. He went through a suffering that you can't even imagine. See, death has to come before resurrection.

And he went through that for us so that we could have life eternal. And if you're not a believer and want to become one today in Christ, I would be honored to pray for you. But are there any believers here? And you say, Pastor, I'm making a tour of Egypt right now.

It's funny you should preach about that because I'm going through some Egypt moments. They're not comfortable. It's not what I wanted.

They're not the way I thought it would work out. But God has spoken to me today. I'm not quitting.

I'm not giving up. I'm not feeling bad for myself because I'm in God's hands. The steps of a righteous man or woman are ordered by the Lord.

And even though sometimes the road goes to places I'd rather not visit, God knows what's best. And I want to become a man or woman of faith. I want to be a person of prayer.

You come out of your seat like these people have already come before I could ask them to come. Pastor Simbala, I want to sing. I want to sing before I leave this building a triumphant song of faith, even if I have to brush away tears.

Listen, I've sung all kinds of worship songs brushing away tears out of my eyes. My heart's been broken and I've come to church and lifted up my hands. That's the praise that's most precious to God.

Anyone can praise God on top of the mountain. It's in the valley that you can praise Him. Oh my goodness.

That's when you really learn to praise God. You just come. Every eye closed.

Now join hands with the person next to you. Son, join your mother's hand. If she ever needed your prayers, she needs your prayers right now.

Jesus, we come to you and we confess that our ways are not your ways. We would not send our favorite one to Egypt. It seems like you cheated Jacob and you favored Esau, but your ways are not our ways.

Neither are your thoughts our thoughts. You're not looking for our comfort. You're looking for something much more eternal than that.

You're going to build faith in us. And we say yes to that. You're going to teach us how to pray.

And we say yes to that. And you're going to give us a testimony of your power, of your deliverance, of your provision, so that we can glorify your name and help other people to believe in you. How can we help other people to believe, Lord, unless we've been there ourself? Thank you for all the lessons you're teaching us when we go through these difficult moments.

We're going to come out better and stronger. It was good for me that I was afflicted, for then I learned your ways, O Lord. Today we rest in your comfort.

Everybody pray for the person right now who you hold by the right hand. Pray for the person on your right, everyone. Just lift your voice up a little bit and pray for them on the right.

You don't have to know who they are. Just pray for them. Bless that man, Lord.

Strengthen him. Bless my sister, Lord. Whatever she's going through, help her, Lord.

Keep her strong. Now, Lord, we're trusting you to provide. Even this week we're going to get a testimony from you, Lord.

And you've let this situation develop so that we could see your mighty hand, Lord. And now we commit ourselves to you. Let your face shine upon your people and help us to leave this building full of faith and full of joy and full of peace in the Holy Ghost through Jesus Christ.

And this we ask in His name. And everyone said...

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