

# The Point of No Return

by Jim Cymbala

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*Faith in Jesus is trusting in Him completely, without relying on ourselves or our own abilities, and it is at its purest when we have nothing else to lean on but Him.*

**Duration:** 26:11

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 1:8, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:13, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 5:7

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this video, the speaker shares a personal story of a Muslim convert to Christianity who faced persecution from his family. The convert's brothers became angry and chained him on a rooftop, threatening him for turning his back on Allah and embracing Jesus. The speaker emphasizes that even though we may not face such extreme situations, as Christians, we will still experience times of trouble and stress. He references the apostle Paul's own experiences of enduring trouble and feeling overwhelmed. The speaker encourages the audience to remember that in these difficult times, we should not lose hope but instead find strength and joy in our faith.

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## Transcript

I prayed last night and just got a whole bunch of verses in my heart that I said, Lord, whatever, in whichever meeting, whatever time I have, I want to share, obviously, something from God's Word to help you. And I really believe this is what He wants me to tell you in this service. Let's look up at the screen and look at 2 Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 8. We want to remind you, friends, of the trouble we had in the province of Asia.

The burdens laid upon us were so great and so heavy that we gave up all hope of staying alive. Whoa. We felt that the death sentence had been passed on us.

But, big important word, but, but, this happened that we should rely not on ourselves, but only on God who raises the dead. From such terrible dangers of death, He saved us. And He will save us.

And we have placed our hope in Him that He will save us again. And then He adds something interesting about how they looked at prayer. As you help us by means of your prayers for us.

Notice you can help even someone like the Apostle Paul by praying for him. Notice what the end result is. So it will be that the many prayers for us will be answered, and God will bless us, and many will raise their

voices to Him in thanksgiving for us.

The more people that pray when the answer comes, the more people that praise God. Only two people pray, only two people can praise God that He did it. You get a couple thousand people praying about something, and then you got all those thousands of people saying, yes, God did it.

So here's our thoughts for today. Number one, this passage tells us, as Paul writes to the church in Corinth, this is his second letter. He actually wrote three, but we don't have in our possession one of the letters that he refers to.

But in 2 Corinthians, he tells them, I don't want you to forget this one thing, that I was in Asia, which we now call Turkey, I was in a heap of trouble. I was in a heap of trouble. It was beyond what I could endure.

In fact, it got so bad, I thought I had the death sentence. Now that, to our Western ears, and especially the hype of American Christianity, which many times departs from the Bible, those are strange things for us to hear. Christians don't have trouble.

You just serve Jesus, and you kind of just tiptoe through life, and you never have a problem. How many know that is false? From your own testimony. Lift your hand, right? So that tells us, I don't want you to forget.

The Bible tells us there's many things to forget, and then there are some things you must never forget. And one of the successes in life is to know what to forget and to know what to remember. And if you want to mess up your life, you will forget the wrong things, and you will remember the wrong things.

Many people are in a quagmire because they keep remembering things that God says, forget. And they can't have strength because they forget the things God says, remember, I will be with you. I will help you.

It will be worth it all. Pray. He has promised he will answer when you pray.

Remember that. But we forget that, and we remember a lot of negative stuff. Paul says, I want you to remember this.

When I was in Asia, what minister would do this? This is not an American style of ministry, obviously. What minister would get on television or stand up and say to his folks, by the way, I just came back from a mission trip, or I just want you to know, I was really in trouble. Where's your victory? Where's Jesus? Where's your maturity? No, this tells us that while here on earth, when we serve Christ, there will be times of trouble and stress.

How many have had even certain seasons in your life where it was very difficult? Lift your hand. All right. What we must remember is not to say, what's happening? What's going on? If it happened to Paul, it could happen to us.

We still have joy. We still have peace that the world can't take away. But Paul is being honest, and he's saying, I really went through some trouble.

He said, not only did I go through trouble, he uses Greek words there, which are translated. That's from the Good News Bible. And the translation can be best said in these words.

I was stressed out beyond my human ability to endure it. And he was Christ's servant doing Christ's work. I was stressed out beyond what I could bear.

Hasn't that ever happened to you in life? It's happened to me. And we don't like to talk about these things often, but they're true. And then what happens is people go in the closet and keep that under wraps.

And I can't tell anybody, like, I can't take it anymore. But Paul says, no, I want you to know freely. I couldn't take it anymore.

I was not only in stress and difficult times, but I was stressed and stretched, I should say, to the point where I couldn't deal with it. I could not deal with it. This sounds so different, doesn't it, to our ears? Because in our wanting to sell Christianity and make it look good so people will convert, we kind of like give this false kind of story.

You'll hear it from preachers and gospel musicians, like there's never any problems. But that's a lie. That's a lie.

I've been doing this for a while. I can't tell you all the tears I've seen shed in my office. Why? Because we go through things.

And it shouldn't be unusual because Paul tells the church there, I not only had trouble, I had trouble that stretched me beyond my ability to handle it. So when that happens to you, get ready now because the answer's coming. But when that happens to you, don't throw your hands up in the air and go, where's God? Where did I go wrong? What sin is in my life? I bind you, Satan, and all of that stuff.

Paul says, I was going through it. And then he says something that probably none of us probably will ever face because of the day he lived in and what he was doing. He said, it not only was beyond what I could handle, I got the sentence of death.

He's probably speaking about the persecution that came. You got to remember that on some of his trips, he was stoned. He was thrown in prison.

He was cast into the sea. Well, what kind of Christianity is that? The Bible Christianity. That can happen to you.

Brothers and sisters, let's be real. Let's keep it real. What's happening to Christians right now over in Iraq? Children being crucified? Are we going to just shut our eyes to that and say they don't really know the victory? Or should we admire them for having the courage to stay faithful to even to the end? How many admire them and look up to them? Yeah.

And I once spoke in front of hundreds of Chinese pastors from mainland China, and half of them had been in prison for Christ. And God knows I'm telling the truth. I wept on the side of the auditorium when I saw them worship.

And I said, God, I don't want to preach. What am I going to tell them? I live in Brooklyn, and they've been in prison for you. And yet right now, China has the strongest number of Christians, the fastest growing, most Christians of any country in the world where it's illegal.

You can't stop Jesus. Come on. Can you stop the gospel? Never.

Never. Never. You can't stop it.

Someone was saying to me, you know, they're taking away our freedoms in this country and all of that, and we should stand for our freedoms. We have every right to practice our freedom of religion. Nobody can stop us from believing what's in the Bible and from worshiping God.

And we should be bold for that. But no matter what happens and how they try to take away our rights, the church grew in the New Testament when it was under pressure, not when everyone was encouraging it. And in China now, they have the most Christians.

And in a lot of the provinces, the pastor sat with me and we ate Chinese food together. And they told me that in some of the provinces, you can't witness, you can't invite someone. How they get people to come, you can only in that room share Christ, and then nobody can talk about it.

And they don't even know the name of other Christians in the town, because should someone get arrested, they don't want you to be able to give up names under torture of the other Christians. That's the real world. This is a dream what we're doing, talking about, praise God, I claim that Mercedes, praise God.

I want those alligator shoes that I saw in that window. So then Paul, because of that situation he was in, he said, not only did I endure trouble, not only was it beyond me, but he said, I got the death sentence. In other words, I said to myself, it's over.

Maybe none of us will ever face that. It's over. One of the testimonies in this video is going to be of a Muslim convert to Christianity who's here today, who when his family found out he was Christian, his brothers got so angry, they brought him.

By the way, it's the next last chapter in my book, Storm. There's a lot more detail and it's powerful, powerful, powerful. They took him up on the roof and chained him.

He wasn't sure if they're going to throw him off the roof or what they were going to do to him. You're a disgrace to the family. You turn your back on Allah and you believe this Jesus stuff.

He wasn't allowed to go to his mother's funeral. Oh, this is the real world. People are suffering for Christ, but it will be worth it all.

How many believe it will be worth it all when they see Jesus? Well, that's it. Paul says this, but it all happened so that we would put no trust in ourselves, but only in God. God permitted it all so that I had nothing left to lean on.

Trouble, no money, no connections, trouble beyond what I could endure. So I can't even tough it out. And now a death sentence that I said, and he said it all happened so that I would give up and put all my trust in God.

And now he says something that we need to hear today. Faith is at its purest when you have nothing else to lean on, but Jesus. As long as you and I have a plan B, faith will never reach its full richness and maturity.

As long as there's a plan like I pray God, but if it doesn't work, you know, I got, I'm going to run over here and do this. This is why I believe in mission fields where there's no medicine and no doctors, you see some of the most miraculous healings. Because in America, we all have a plan B I'll be prayed for.

But if not, I can go and get that antibiotic and this and that. But in places where there's not like back in Bible days and now they had, it was Jesus or nothing. And because of the blessings God has given us, we have helps and different situations that are good.

But then sometimes in a situation, we learn that our faith in Christ is not a hundred percent. It's a 60, 65, 70, because in the back of our corridors of our mind, we got like, and if this doesn't work, this is what I'll do. And Paul says, God took it all away from me.

I had nothing but him. And you know what? When I threw myself on him and him alone, he saved me. I didn't die.

I'm still alive. He delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, but he brought me to a place where I have, I had nothing but him. I didn't have him and something, him and my ability, him and my intelligence.

I was brought to a place of nothing but Jesus. And that's what God will do in our lives. Sometimes.

Haven't you ever been in those situations? You come to a place where there's nothing you can lean on. He takes away every problem. There's nothing.

I've had to exercise faith for my own life. And many times, many times for the life of this church, because God placed me here years ago as the pastor. I have great associates who have their own life of faith, but I have learned a lot about having nothing but Jesus.

And I know when I'm half trusting, and then my mind is maneuvering and I could do this and I'll try that. And when God brings you to that place where you have nothing but him, you can't believe the power that is released because you have nothing. That time when I was in Argentina, ministering to people.

And right before I left, we were just in the middle of constructing this building. And a man called from the lender who was lending us money. And he said, we made a huge mistake, pastor.

We're lending you millions of dollars, the Brooklyn Tabernacle. And we found out that you're \$6 million short. You can't even get the auditorium done.

HVAC, heating, air conditioning, all this stuff, steel in the basement. You can't even get it so you can meet with your church people. You're \$6 million short.

How are you going to get that money? Because they told me to call you. And I said, I don't know how I'm going to get that money. I said, well, we're going to trust God.

He said, you're going to put your faith in God? I said, yeah. He said, that's good. He was a Christian.

He said, that's good. Now, how are you going to get the money? And I said, no, you don't get it. When you trust God, you don't know how you'll get the money.

Then he went over a line with me to be quite honest with you. And he said, I hear your church has prayer meetings and you fast sometimes. You're going to call prayer meeting and you're going to fast, shut down everything.

He was familiar with the church. I said, yeah, we'll do that possibly. He said, you mean just shut down everything and cry out to God? I said, yeah.

He said, that's great. Praise God. Now, how are you going to get the money? And when he said that second one, I remember something that wasn't of God passed through my heart.

And I said, I'm terminating this phone call because this is not going to a good place. And then I hung up and I think it was like in within 24 hours, I was on a plane to Argentina and we had borrowed all we could borrow. And now I'm thinking, and the devil is telling me, you're a jerk.

You'll never get that building done. No one ever worship in that building. You're not going to preach Jesus in that building.

You didn't count the cost. How are you going to get 6 million? Who do you know? I don't know anyone. I don't have a national pulpit.

I've written some books, all the royalties and the advance had gone to the church, but still \$6 million is \$6 million. Maybe you've had trouble facing some bills. Let me assure you \$6 million will get your attention.

That got my attention. I had balked it out for a few days, to be honest with you. I was busy ministering.

And then that number, like an attack. Have you ever had an attack of fear and anxiety where you thought I can't bear this? And I couldn't. I heard people laughing at me.

I heard your crying and disappointment. He began something and God didn't see him through. I thought, what am I doing in Argentina? Why am I trying to help poor pastors I should be back in New York trying to raise money.

What am I doing? And I got in a flurry. And whenever your mind gets shaking and baking, that's not a good sign. So I said to my wife, I'm leaving the hotel room.

I'm going for a walk to pray. I walked for hours and I got to the place that Paul's talking about. I don't know anyone who has 6 million.

I can't raise 6 million from the congregation. I can't borrow 6 million. I got nothing left.

But Jesus. And when in that walking, I can see myself. The water was on the right.

These trees that smell good were on the left. And I just walking and walking, crying, lifting my hands. I didn't care what anyone thought and just calling on God.

And I remember something passed in my heart where I said, God, I have no one but you. I have no one but you. You are the only one who can help me.

If you're here today and you feel like no one can help you, you're in the exact perfect spot. As long as someone can help you, you'll never see what God can do. As long as you're depending on your own resources, you'll never see those answers that are supernatural in nature.

And at some point in there, I felt the Lord speak to my heart. I just turned it to him. I said, God, what am I going to do? It's yours.

I give it to you. And I felt a whisper in my heart as best as I can understand. And God spoke to me and said, I got it.

Don't call anybody. Just go back when you're done and see what I'm going to do. The tears stop, the stress stop, the peace came.

I didn't have one dollar in my hand. Nobody called me. Nobody did anything.

It was just, you know, when God answers you, he gives you a peace that passes all understanding. It has nothing to do. Let's put our hands together.

It has nothing to do with what's around you. I got back, took an overnight flight from Buenos Aires, got in. Like Secretary Matti told me at that time, you better come in.

There's stacks of stuff. So I changed and cleaned up, came in. And it was that day.

Praise God. At 12 noon, I opened an envelope exactly at 12 noon. And I read it and it came from a man in Chicago who said, your choir sang a song and there's a lyric in the song.

And God spoke to me as I listened to it and stopped me from doing something. And I found out that I would have lost all my money for my whole family if I would have done that. So I just want you to know I have a great gratitude for your ministry there.

And I'm sending you a million dollars. I have met him once. I wouldn't have known him that day if he walked in the door.

And then I went to the finance. I said, look, someone just gave us a million dollars. And they were like, praise God, praise God.

But I had other numbers in my mind. And I came back to the office. And as God is my holy witness, 10 minutes later, I opened another letter.

Dear Pastor Simba, I've never met you. I want to remain anonymous. And I've never met this person to this day, not even talked on the phone, a reclusive person.

But our foundation has decided we heard you're in a project and we're giving you \$5 million. How would they know that one plus five equals what? Come on, let's put our hands together. Come on, let's really praise.

Here's what I learned. When you're in a hard place and there's no wiggle room and no one else to lean on, you're in the perfect spot for God to do something beyond what you could ever ask or think. Listen, beyond what you could ask or think.

So don't think it's strange that you go through fiery trials because God is purifying your faith, taking away everything, all the little crutches. He lets us have them sometimes. But once in a while, he's going to put you in a situation, maybe today, where you have nothing but him with that daughter, with that son, with your finances, with a besetting sin, with a habit that you're trying to break, with crack, with whatever.

When you have nothing but Jesus, you have everything. When you have nothing but Jesus, then you have everything. As long as you have Jesus and something else, then I don't know how that will work out.

Let's close our eyes. If you're here today, God brought you here this morning and laid that on my heart so that we could minister to you and stand with you in faith. If you've got a situation this very week, you are

facing a situation where you realize, I'm going to stop fighting, stop worrying, stop trying to figure it out, stop trying to get plan B, plan C, plan D. I am going to plan Jesus, only Jesus.

I'm giving this thing to him. It's going to kill me, the worry. The worry will kill me.

Listen, that thing was eating me up my lunch out there in Argentina, \$6 million. If God can supply that for someone as weak and faulty as me, just because I was forced to trust him, what could God do for you today? Every eye closed, if you're here and you've got a situation and you want to give it to Jesus right now, 100%, not 90, not 80, not 70, 100%. Get up out of your seat.

Come up here quick. Come on, come on quick. Come from the balcony.

If you're across the street, stand where you are. But pastor, I got one that I must trust God with it. Now my eyes have been opened.

This is not unusual that I'm going through something. It's not unusual that it's beyond my strength. It's not unusual.

In fact, the tougher it is, God's trying to use it to get me focused only on Jesus. Come right to the edge. Come on, step forward.

Come on. No telling what God will do. Come on down from the balcony.

Oh, thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Everybody who comes to the front, lift up your hands and start thanking Jesus before you ask him for anything.

Just come on, lift up your hands. Don't be afraid. Don't be ashamed.

He died publicly on a cross. We can definitely praise him out loud in a church building today. Come on, just lift up your hands and say, thank you, Jesus.

I know you're going to help me now because I got nowhere to go. No wiggle room, no can't go north, south, east or west. It's you totally, Jesus.

I want to wait till those coming from the balcony come down. Jesus, we give you our situations. We give you the pressure that you've permitted us to get under so we could learn to trust you more.

We don't fight it. We don't fight it. We say yes to it.

For you have permitted it so that we would not trust in ourselves, but we would learn the power there is in trusting in you alone. You worked it out. You maneuvered us into this situation so we could see and have a testimony.

How great is our God? How great is my God? We stop leaning on all the human props that we have often leaned on, and we thank you for people that you've used in the past. We thank you for that. But right now you've got us right where you want us.

We have nothing but you. Nada, nothing. So now our hope is in the God who can raise the dead.

Nothing is too strong for him. Nothing is impossible for him. And in your presence, we are going to stand and worship you.

We commit it to you just like I finally, by your grace, handed it over to you that day. We hand over our problem to you. Come on, people in the front, do it.

Hand it over right now. We hand it over to you. We hand it over to you.

We can't take it too much. Demasiado, señor. Demasiado, señor.

It's too much. We give it to you. We're not going to worry.

You're going to fill us with joy. We're going to walk out of this building so happy in Jesus. Not because of anything we see, but because we know he will never forsake us.

He will never leave us. Blessed is the person who puts their trust in him. They will never be disappointed.

We stand on that word. We thank you, Jesus. And now we're going to just wait and see what you're going to do.

The timing is yours. The way you're going to answer is yours. But we know one thing.

The answer is on the way. The answer is on the way. Say it with me, everybody.

The answer is on the way. Say it again. The answer is on the way.

Your answer, God. Not my answer. Your answer is on the way.

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