

Dare I Blame God?

by Jonathan McRostie

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's goodness and sovereignty in the midst of suffering and adversity.

Duration: 1:03:30

Scripture: James 1:2

Topics: "Blaming God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the challenges faced by individuals going through divorce and the impact it has on their relationships. They emphasize the need for support not only for the individual but also for their family. The speaker shares a personal experience of being in a wheelchair and how relying on God's power in their weakness brought them comfort. They also recommend a tract called 'It's So Daily' as a helpful resource for those going through long-term trials.

Transcript

All right, I am going to begin And thanks for your help and recording this session. Let's pray together Father we ask that you would make our time together Yes beneficial for your kingdom for your glory for our good in Jesus name Amen Dare I blame God is Is the title that Peter Conlon gave to myself and to my wife Margie So we will have a little Contribution from our gate a bit later on and that of course is why you came is really to hear her Not here so much from me The subject is suffering and adversity Adversity The first thing I want to say is that suffering and adversity are common to all Because even those who believe that you shouldn't suffer They will die and They will lose through death Some people they love a lot So whatever one's theology there will be Some pain and suffering and sorrow in this life There is no choice When I say it's common to all it's very common a Few quick illustrations Rhonda It's terrible to hear of a global Inter-tribal slaughter in Belgium. We hear a lot of it since it was a former Belgian colony.

I Have a friend and his wife who could not have children and they adopted finally a handicapped child Who came from Rwanda the man who helped them with the adoption is married to a Lady from Rwanda His sister-in-law was running an orphanage for these handicapped children 17 and Right at the beginning of the outbreak just a few weeks ago He heard that his sister-in-law was killed. His parents-in-law were killed and they didn't know whether the 17 orphans Handicapped had been killed or someone was taking care of them or not The End of March I was in the hospital for two days of tests And one of my roommates was Marcel from Rwanda. He'd been in an accident and was a paraplegic just going through the beginnings of

Rehabilitation and therapy I saw him last week and He said that since the fighting broke out no communications from Rwanda So for two weeks at that point no news of his wife no news of his four children That personalizes global suffering Of course, we know Larry and Dorley Smith and we heard this morning or you heard that Just this past week their 20 year old daughter because of severe Depression and schizophrenia Disease committed suicide Larry's the one that when he led the team in Zaventem for a year Led a local Zaventem fellow to the Lord who is now the pastor of the church the Evangelical Church in Zaventem And it's done a great work but they Of course grieve the loss of their daughter Babcock's Dave Babcock who's here their son Just last year the age of what 20 21 Heart failure and died just like that on the way here Margaret and I had 20 minutes with Philip and Rosemary Morris and they have to make a decision by the 11th of May whether to undergo an operation in Which for two weeks They remove all the white cells so there's no defense against any infection in order to put in a transfer of baby cells Which they say could heal the cancer of the small intestine that Philip has But of course if you get an infection during those two weeks It's usually fatal it's got to make a decision and that affects not only Philip but his wife and two daughters My brother and his wife who were missionaries 20 years in Morocco and continue to serve the Lord in Brussels They had a daughter born of a degenerative brain disease Beautiful beautiful child But when she passed away at the age of seven It was a very sad sight to see hair all over her body and being blind bedridden I Guess that's enough to tell you that suffering and adversity Happens to some of the most righteous people and the unrighteous suffering is very It's varied tremendously buried there are natural disasters and God doesn't promise that Believers are going to escape every earthquake and typhoon Some of them may miss us Others might hit us There are Yeah, they're suffering did because of accidents catastrophes negligent Mistakes bates, I guess we would say in French God doesn't promise that if you slip and fall God will suddenly say Gravity stop.

I'll help my servant Most of us have stubbed our toe or bruised our head or cut our finger sometime in life Sometimes it's because of sin directly Sometimes it's just neglect Sometimes God may use it to get the attention of people Sometimes it's just an opportunity for God to display his glory as Jesus said in one of the Gospels that this blind man did not sin nor did his parents But it was for the glory of God. I Think the worst kind of Suffering in this world is basically due to the evil of mankind By far that's the worst because the people even who have a problem Most of their suffering is because of the attitude or rejection or lack of love on the part of other human beings and the intertribal warfare whether it's Rwanda or Bosnia or The split up of families It's from the evil of man's heart Now there are Certain trials that are especially for believers and God allows them to develop and build up test the faith of believers God does have a discipline program for us and that of course is taught in Scripture and it's for our good Actually non-believers believe in Discipline in the body, which is a certain kind of suffering I mean doing exercises with weights I don't find enjoyable, especially if the weights are about two and a half or three kilos If it's only one or two kilos, that's easier But if it's over three then I prefer that the physiotherapist would stop counting to 20 and stop at 10 But she never does it's always 20 But it's good for my body and There aren't people who win gold medals at the Olympics that haven't suffered The discipline of their body in order to win a prize. So there's that kind of Suffering also in this world But the purpose is good of course, there's persecution for believing and There's difficulties for doing good and There's some tremendous examples Probably most of you read the testimony of Mehdi Dibaj from Iran.

I Read it and it was so great I got someone in my assembly in Brussels to translate it into French So I no longer have an English copy, but I keep a French copy with me And he said this and it just shows That In Certain kinds of suffering that have mystery and are hard to understand nevertheless There is good That comes as a result. The mystery is there but there is also good and there are an incredible number of

examples Mehdi Dibaj said this the God of Job Tried my faith and My commitment in order to strengthen my patience and my faithfulness During these nine years that he had spent in prison two of them in Isolation in a cell about one meter by one meter as I understand it. He says during these nine years He delivered me from all my other responsibilities So that under the protection of his blessed name I Might pass my time in prayer and the study of his word with a heart hungry and broken and Grow in the knowledge of my Lord.

I Praise the Lord for this unique opportunity You have given me liberty in my Imprisonment My terrible Privacy Deprivations Have brought me healing and your goodness has Revived me. Oh How great? The blessings are that God has reserved for those who fear him Good as a result of Suffering that's hard to understand and God spared Dibaj, but took hate God delivered Peter, but took James So there are questions to ask But there's other good Sometimes a child is born with a handicap mental or physical or both I Just read Mayweights prayer letter and she writes of Cherith Porter Neil and Joy Porter were several years on the ship Neil was the captain of logos Cherith was born 16 years ago with Defects Interesting Recently she had to go to one of the top psychologists in this country to be assessed and here's part of their conversation The psychologist asked her Cherith. Do you know what nails are? Cherith replied.

Do you know who Jesus Christ is? Psychologist He was a man who lived a long time ago Cherith well wicked men took him and nailed him to the cross Good Out of what some people would say was a tragedy greater spiritual discernment from a 16 year old mentally and physically handicapped child Than a top psychologist Jeff Richards who's here at this conference told us in our fellowship group yesterday that about three years ago when His father died and on the same day his 20 year old son who had epilepsy and in the grief of his father grandfather's illness forgot to take his medicine and Died the same day And Jeff said through that at least one of the things God did was help him and his wife to focus more on people than projects good that comes out of suffering So my first main point besides suffering being common and varied and a mystery and yet In God's grace there can be good So my question is How do we deal with adversity in our lives Actually for me adversity is easy daily frustrations That's a pain in the neck that is a Greater difficulties not really adversity. It's just irritations Great adversity Yeah to me that's a little easier to handle Maybe it's because my heart's not so sensitive and a little hardened or something. But but I find the the irritations of life They aggravate me more and if you're wonder what I mean by that you talk to my wife afterwards She'll fill you in with vivid details if you want them.

Ah the big question is How do we react to adversity in our life it will come You've got no choice. I have no choice. It will come.

No, we don't need to Ask for it Johnny Erickson Tata Said this last year when she was speaking in Paris And she said I am NOT trying to magnify or exalt suffering We don't have to seek Suffering but rather choose God and When he and when we choose him Then we triumph over the devil suffering in itself is neutral The same match Can begin a barbecue Or can set off a forest fire You don't blame the match depends on how you use it Don't blame the suffering. How do we use it? And she says well, it's also saying the same with our sexuality so she says When we what counts is what we choose to do In suffering either to live according to the plans of God Or the plans of the devil with anger and bitterness So really the question is dare I blame God or Should I rather accept and trust God If we blame God or blame other people or anything else It seems to me that we simply lose out on God's blessing And if there's any benefit at all to be learned from the trial or the adversity we lose it Because if we are so busy blaming Trying to figure it out trying to find an excuse trying to fix with bitterness The blame on someone else, especially God Well, there's no time nor energy nor our hearts or minds Receivable to any kind of benefit or lesson to

be learned through it and We certainly lose any sense of well-being because peace and joy go out the window if we're busy Trying to figure out and blame God or others for the difficulty we may be going through Rather it seems to me when adversity comes Two things we should ask We should ask God And I'm impressed in the Old Testament That we can ask God very honestly and wholeheartedly Why? Maybe as my brother said we should rather say why not me rather than why me maybe that's a more unselfish question Really, isn't it better if I as a believer? Have to go through some suffering than an unbeliever that doesn't know God and doesn't have a real fellowship of believers to encourage and help They are much more vulnerable to bitterness Than the believer But I noticed that David asked a lot of questions how long and in fact some of the Saints in Revelation seemed to ask the question to how long the heart and When we see certain things in the world Lord, how long are you going to put up? With the wickedness of mankind Maybe we should ask how long you're gonna put up with my own impatience and wickedness Job certainly asked questions Habakkuk Asked the question why and how long? And I noticed that God listens and God doesn't say stop quit talking He listens, but I would just add this it seems to me. It's important We can ask honestly we can ask wholeheartedly with all our hearts Lord.

Why how long are you going to put up with the wickedness of mankind? But then we should listen God will listen to us, but he expects us to stop and listen to him then and What we should not do and I think What we should not do is what leads to begin to blame God and that is we should not bargain with God It seems to me that often is the root of a lot of disappointment and bitterness because we say if You will do that then Then I will serve you and do this and so much of our agony and disappointment comes Because we bargained with God If you will bless me like Jacob Then I will serve you well Jacob still had God's blessing, but he didn't really get it full force until he was broken and Disabled at the brook in his wrestling with the angel of the Lord After we've asked honestly and wholeheartedly then we need to accept and trust and The people that do that are blessed and good comes out of it Two or three examples Jill Johnston Wrote a letter to some friends in December 91, which was a Year or so before her death She sent a copy of this letter to Margie myself And she stated this and notice notice the attitude She said last Christmas I was so ill with the cancer I Had two broken vertebrae in my thorax I had been in pain for months and couldn't move without pain unless I had just taken pills And then she said this Christmas I cooked Christmas dinner for 67 people My son Timothy left for the doulou on the 7th of January for two years and neither of us knew if we would ever See each other again on earth. Although they did And she describes Radiotherapy, all my hair is falling out My face and Stomach are swollen like footballs muscle tone is a bit pathetic But I believe if God wants to live in me in a cronky old body for the time being That is his business. Not mine Because of the steroids I'm on I lie awake a lot.

Actually, I started typing this letter before 6 a.m These times have become glorious. Sometimes God has given me things to do which have proved amazing in both timing and results And then she talks about Being able to complete the children's edition of Operation world. You can change the world Which is one of the good things that God Has left us through Jill Johnston the wife of Patrick Johnston And then she says this and I think this is the kind of attitude I have come to see God Not I as the center of the universe.

I Don't have to demand what I feel may be best for me But simply trust in God who knows what is best for his kingdom My death when it comes will be the glorious gateway to life Not a dismal failure. I Will have more joy and dying than 99% of the world have in living Attitude towards suffering I could give you a few other testimonies, but I better stop there Let me ask Margie to come To bring it a little more personal since she's had a couple heart operations and I Used to joke that when we got married for better for worse. I was the better.

She was the worse and Then I finally caught up with her my time in the hospital How to deal with adversity particularly living with some sorts of husbands When I saw the title and there I blame God I could honestly say that never crossed my mind somehow, I think all of us are the Lord's and We've heard so much about suffering and we knew that God wasn't taken by surprise And somehow he had a plan or purpose with it on And like Jonathan said earlier often In the big crisis week we trust God somehow we know he's there and at the time we sensed so much Yeah, that we were like carriage. God was there people calling from all over the world letters the family of God has been just so Precious I think any of you looking around you have gone through hard times You've appreciated the Privilege it is to be part of God's family and that that was true for us That's why I frankly have never asked why neither have I noticed you ask why? Why God why us somehow we knew God was there and allowed it for a purpose which we didn't understand Obviously that doesn't mean It's been easy We We Would just praise that or we would go out for suffering. I think that would be Ridiculous God knows and we feel in our case God allowed it for our education, whatever Different things he pointed out suffering makes us more understanding with others detaches a little bit from from things down here What is being much harder is being the daily nitty-gritty sense Also often due to my my own weakness it seems It's just so little strength and energy left.

Like you said, I've had two heart operations one in 77 then 82 was the accident. We can't everything before and after the accident so it's sort of like a Dividing line and then the other one just two and a half years ago and There have been times and there still are where we just cry and say Lord. Yeah, how long and what is hard often? is when Jonathan gets very frustrated and Maybe some of you who've helped him have seen him when he gets quite upset.

I admire him a lot because he just Keeps going he first things first when there's a prayer meeting church you go I don't always go and I don't feel guilty about it, but he goes then often doesn't have somebody to help him and So I think well, I just cannot keep up with him And I think and this is at the same time a prayer request that God that the Lord shows us When to go ahead and push and not see maybe the easy way out But also feel free to say I cannot keep up So in our area, I guess we keep on learning it's been 12 years since the accident I've just asked Peter Maiden if he can Give an idea to have somebody who it will be on the diary committee for Jonathan because I feel he says too quickly Yes, and I cannot keep up at the moment. We have only one of our children at home She's 25 and it's not always easy for her to cope with our Frustrations it's maybe a bit too much for her at times too But hearing who was it this morning who shared out here to Briscoe who related one incident where She was giving hospitality grudgingly because she had looked forward to a weekend with her family and here she was Asked by a friend. Can you welcome these eight different missionary kids and she says oh Her prayer request was the Lord Just don't let them feel I do it against my will and Later on many years later.

She found out from her daughter that one of those girls in the group actually Helped her daughter to come over some very serious problems so with regards to our children, I We believe that God has Had his hand on it all we know it he has and so far all three follow the Lord and want to serve him Again a lot depends on on our attitude on my attitude if I feel Martyr complex for me then of course it communicates the same message to to the family What has been a big help of course has been the Word of God and the family of God Often in a time of extreme need I would just cry and didn't know where to look Somehow somebody would just write a letter and just the word we needed to hear and For myself often these passages in 2nd Corinthians We have this treasure 2nd Corinthians 4 7 we have this treasure in clay pots as George sometimes used to say So that his power God's power might shine through And like Jonathan said often we are at the end of ourselves. We have no answers, but then God's patience and Yeah, infinite grace

through with us another passage that often has been such a tremendous Help was my grace is sufficient for you so that God's power my power will be made perfect. Well will show up much more in in your weakness and there again Guess ourselves in ourselves.

We are we are no good, but through God we can Continue what a day at a time that's often been a comfort to a day at a time Maybe I should stop here because time goes by Don't know what Jonathan has on his list still ready for questions So we are still learning Let me just give some recommendations There is a tract put out By a group of the Christian League for the handicapped in the United States, and it's called it's so daily It's actually the testimony of someone Who is in a wheelchair has made some progress She's actually able to Get dressed get out of bed and into her wheelchair It takes her a series of 55 moves. She's counted them But she mentions it's so daily and she quotes the verse my grace is sufficient for thee a very good tract to give to someone who may be Continuing a long time to go through a particular trial For books that I would recommend a Book by Philip Yancey, where is God when it hurts? Where is God when it hurts by Philip Yancey? Not Easy answers, but realistic Realistic answers Two books by Johnny Erickson Tada a Step further which is written by her and Steve Estes a step further which examines some of the Theological and biblical implications of suffering And then a book called friendship unlimited which is excellent for How to reach out and encourage and help those who may be going through suffering friendship unlimited also by Johnny Erickson Tada a fourth book which is new and I have not read it, but Philip Morris just Recommended it to me and said it's not on George Burroughs book table yet. It's too new.

He says by Ron done Ron done when heaven is silent when heaven is Silent I Have a Moroccan friend Who does radio broadcasts for North Africa? And I heard him give a message one time on the book of Job and he said Job was tested in three ways He says the first way he lost all his possessions In fact not just possessions, but it included his children He did not curse God he blessed God And secondly he lost his health his own physical health And even there it doesn't seem like he Blamed God or rebelled against God He got frustrated with his so-called friends Who tried to say that it was all the devil's fault and well, not the devil's fault.

It was their fault very discouraging reading from his so-called friends But the third way he was tested and maybe that's where It took some time to finally get so tried that he finally broke before God and Came forth as gold ultimately But the test is he lost the presence of God He did not really lose God's presence God was there But Job did not feel it or sense it in any way He felt that God was not speaking and I think for the spiritual believer the one who really wants to follow God with all this heart to her heart That's the hardest when it just seems there's no answer There's no answer to our prayers it's clear in Scripture God hears but There's no clear-cut pattern of how fast he's going to answer and What all he's trying to accomplish in our lives while he waits and it seems to me the big test Is not so much the adversity that comes it's not the trial that happens The big test is the temptation to abandon faith To abandon faith in the middle of the trial That's what sometimes happens to me at least temporarily fortunately doesn't last too long but it's It's just say well, what's the use?

Lord, it'd just be better. Why don't you just take my life and you know, everybody will get blessed and that's What what I think a few times? That's my reaction And really in a way it's not blaming God, but it certainly is a discredit to God Because it's denying That God is there and God is faithful and God is good It is it's erode an erosion of our faith and confidence in him And I think that is the big test all the time Will I trust or will I abandon my trust in my hope?

For biblical help Three passages and I'm not going to go through it Romans 8 verse 18 and then verses 28 to 39 I Consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing With the glory that will be revealed in us From verse 28 to 39 The one word that is helpful to Circle and that's the word all It's in all things God works for the good of those who love him Later on He says if God is for us Who can be against us he who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all How will he not also along with him graciously give us all things and In verse 37 he says no in all these things We are more than conquerors in all these things is an awesome list of Tribulation Trouble hardship persecution famine nakedness danger sword All These things in all these things We are more than conquerors that to me is the encouragement from Romans 8 And he gives hope He doesn't say I understand all these things.

He simply says in all these things God is there and then James 1 verses 2 to 8 The Emphasis there that I would underline is that the trials that God allows I Know James says count it all joy. I At least take the liberty to say Lord before the joy give me some wisdom Enough wisdom to understand that you'll bring joy out of it ultimately because The emphasis there is on asking for wisdom and we we ask for wisdom for all kinds of things But it seems to me in the context. It's asking for wisdom Enough wisdom to understand how I should react and What I should do in the midst of the trial so that I grow from it because according to James The only way to grow up into maturity and to become perfect and lacking nothing is to let the patience in the midst of trials Finish its perfect work And if somehow we can say Lord give me enough wisdom to understand this process that you're working in my life That's what we need to go back to Not to know or to explain all that happens But enough wisdom to to accept that God will accomplish his purpose And that takes faith as We ask for wisdom Then in first Peter chapter 1 verses 6 to 9 He also talks about the trial of our faith being more precious than gold and there he makes an emphasis on The purpose of purifying our faith and the purpose of bringing glory to God And he emphasizes that we are to give joy in the salvation that God has given us Even in the midst of the trials which are temporary Even though they are very grievous, but they are temporary And he says it will It's to strengthen and purify our faith and it will bring praise and glory and honor When Jesus Christ is revealed.

I Corinthians chapter 4 as a reminder To help us as we deal with adversity in our lives Let's go on to Briefly consider some advice to those who would help the suffering And then I want to open it up for questions and answers or contributions because some of you probably can supplement Probably replace some of what we've said with some better illustrations and deeper insight Because I doubt if there's anyone in this room that has not undergone some kind of trial It just it just isn't that way we all have gone through it It's important that we learn how to deal with it in our lives But then it's important that we can help others and again, I don't think it's easy answers Sometimes and I would just throw out just a few things that I think could be helpful Just to understand to understand What people are going through and to listen to them maybe probably One of the purposes of a certain amount of adversity and weakness in our own lives is so that we better understand others I am NOT a man of patience. I Think I think I'm a bit more patient now with others Than I used to be. I think I'm a little more understanding and compassionate with others than I used to be and It's even in little things.

I remember Many years ago. I was in Italy and at that time I used to in my heart criticize those who got the flu Because to me it was simply a cold and I said why can't they get out of bed in the morning and work There was no need until I got the flu and I tried to get out of bed and I did until finally I couldn't even get out for three days to go and preach or teach and I realized that the flu is not the same as a simple common cold And Often it's when we have experienced some kind of weakness ourselves then We begin to understand and have compassion on others and actually the Lord Jesus Though he may not have

suffered illness as far as we know, but he understood absolutely weakness and rejection and misunderstanding And all the temptations and trials that we face he understood That's why Hebrews tells us he's able to understand and help us and finally in talking with some people the the final Reason or encouragement you can give is simply this if you understand nothing God does he may not explain it, but he has experienced he has experienced it In the person of Jesus Christ So God understands and that means we his children. We should understand those who are going through some kind of suffering understanding and listening to the people Not making a visit to the hospital or to somebody's home that's just grieving or gone through or is going through some illness or Whatever kind of trial whether it's loss of business.

I have missionary friends in Senegal they retire this year and The center where they had all there they weren't living there But it was the church a bookshop and all their goods and papers It was all burned to the ground this year It's a different kind of trial But it's not easy to see all your personal papers correspondence burned up last year of work after 25 30 years of work in Senegal. You're just going to retire and that's what happens But God understands We don't but God does and we need to When we visit people going through something Listen and not talk too much When I was in the hospital I had different kinds of visitors I had some that came and they talked a long time Some came and they had all the answers Just enough faith. It's all you need And it's your fault, you know, if you don't have enough faith, that's that's why you're there It's not really the edifying encouraging type of Visit to those who are going through some trial Patience patience when the person who is going through grief or pain Doesn't always react normally And that's why sometimes family members have it the hardest because it's really difficult if someone that you've known all your life as Loving and kind and bright and helpful and then they get senile at the end of their life or they lose their memory That's hard.

It's tremendously hard And yet how to show a gracious love and acceptance in the midst of that But patience patience in the midst with that person Valuing the person that's going through it because often they can feel this has happened to me. I'm no good. I'm of no value and We need to reaffirm their value Because even some that are severely handicapped have great great value in the eyes of the Lord But I would also say we should be firm with them I have no easy answers, but I do know there are times When instead of just kind of comfort, that's too bad So sorry, I'm with you.

I'll just cry with you a little bit sometimes those of us who are Disabled or going through some trial. Sometimes we do need to be rebuked in a loving way and almost to say well, shut up Straighten up and get your mind on something else I Can't tell you exactly when to say it, but there are times when I need it There are times when when we all need that and even those who are going through grief and pain there There's times they need they you need the patience with them, but the discernment to know at times to be firm with them In the long run that's will be a greater act of love Giving help And I think it's very important not only the Individual going through the particular trial or difficulty but to think of the family of that individual how often it happens and the statistics are as I understand it in the case for instance of injuries where a member of the family is paralyzed if the divorce rate amongst so-called normal people is What 50% or a third or whatever When one of the partners Becomes disabled through paralysis They say it's four out of five of those marriages end in divorce so the pressure is enormously greater On all the relationships of that person So there needs to be help given not only to the individual but to that individuals family in Giving help I would just say this it's Ask how Don't force your help Well when I was in Bangladesh a couple two and a half years ago Actually, I I learned at first I just wanted to push my own wheelchair and we were taking a little tour of Dhaka and I had all the young Christian Workers, it was about 10 15 of them

at the time and they wanted to push me Well, I preferred push myself, but I went faster than they were walking and then the fellow said look Let let them push you they really they really want to do it.

So actually they took turns and they had a great time It helped me, but I realized it was it was good for them because they they wanted to do Now where they pushed me was easy fairly easy pushing there weren't a lot of holes and all that kind of thing because There I preferred to direct my own wheelchair because sometimes a person wants to push you and give they'll help but they don't look where you're going and I like to see whether there's dog dirt on the pavement or whether there's a hole that I need to avoid Because some people push but don't look in any case give help but ask And also treat the disabled person or the sick person treat them as a person You know, don't come into the bed and the person's sick there and then ask the relative does so-and-so Does the she like flowers?

Is he able to eat? You know, you can actually address your question to the person themselves And the same with a person in a wheelchair or whatever handicap Think of them as a person that is the golden rule of how to Genuinely help anybody with a disability or a weakness Obviously it needs to go with prayer both for the person and with the person But don't over force your help offer it take some initiative Make it positive and Keep it fairly brief, particularly if the person is really going through a lot of pain Takes wisdom not to overdo it.

Those are just a few quick thoughts in terms of helping people I Think because of time I should give you a chance to ask questions or you might just like to add something else either on Dealing with adversity or how to help someone that is really going through it So, I'll stop there even though I could say more that's for the benefit of the cassette Which is being recorded Any questions or contributions that you would like to make? Sermon is much much much more important And maybe it'll be a long time for its time to give any kind of sermon That's that's a very important point God does not have to explain what is going on and He didn't to Job Didn't actually give him an explanation at all Even after he was delivered and I I like What I read from Jill Johnston because she realized It wasn't explanations she needed it was simply whatever God wanted for the kingdom was more important than what happened to her and that Links in a lot with what we heard Stuart Briscoe saying at lunchtime to the men about seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness Because that's the overriding principle that needs to guide our lives because our natural reaction is What are you doing with me Lord?

I Can I grow what am I learning? We do learn usually through But we get very occupied with the whole process revolving around ourselves Instead of what is God doing for the extension of his kingdom the building up of his kingdom accomplishing his purposes Let me just give a couple other things When I got out of the hospital in 1983 a Christian group that is a fellowship of Christian medical personnel asked me to write an article And so I wrote an article one on Adapting to a handicap as a Christian and the other is on serving the handicapped as a Christian But I Mentioned some things that helped me personally during that year after the accident and in the hospital and It seems to me some of this could be very helpful as we think of helping others The first thing I mentioned encouragement through others and Margate and I appreciated then and still do belonging to God's worldwide family and This is a tremendous a tremendous benefit.

We have within OM or local church but the benefit of a really a genuine family spiritual family and I know that even our children were really ministered to by some people that helped them took them on vacation When it was impossible for us to do it Secondly for me Was the family in church? Close to the hospital where I was most patients aren't that fortunate, but it was a tremendous help to have the family and

church nearby and Then I was often refreshed and renewed Through a book an article sometimes just a song or music or a cassette God willing this week we hope to visit a family who have a Disabled child and the husband has gone through a lot of illness.

They used to be in Zaventem and They sent us a cassette of just worship music and actually we still listen to that cassette 11 12 years later, so we're looking forward to seeing this family Which we haven't seen for since before the accident up in Bristol.

I remember the fact it was Barbara Coles who's now just undergone an operation for cancer before she was married Came with a couple other girls when I was in the hospital and sang a song I think they only visited about a half hour not more But they sang a song for me that God makes all things beautiful in his time No easy answers, but I've never forgotten that song and that was a tremendous visit Just a song God works it all out. He makes it beautiful in his time a reminder that God's time is not our time I was helped by competent staff at the hospital where I was and Then lastly and this also I think is very important In The sense of helping a person who goes through a great struggle or the loss of something of it affirming their value and That is having some Some value something that we can do something that we can contribute For me accomplishing a ministry or task I Wrote is important to build more out. God allowed me to resume even from the hospital some correspondence Advising OM and local church members even being able to preach occasionally after the first few months This kind of fulfillment varies greatly for each individual, but every little bit of service rendered to others Aids our progress and I think that people who are ill people are grieving If there's some encouragement at the right time where they can even think of others Just do something for others they realize that they still have value Now It's by God's grace.

Obviously when Johnny Erickson Tata when she spoke in Paris she finished by mentioning some people that Have great handicaps and yet God's grace is manifest in them and she mentioned a fellow by the name of Cornelius a a Black man from Tennessee Who was living because of a machine? And he couldn't even move his head. That's how greatly he was paralyzed And she says he was in that hospital since the end of the Vietnam War Which was what back in the 70s. So close to 20 years ago But she says I have never met a person more living and happy than this man Cornelius She says this man Cornelius Is like those in suffering that find hope and peace in Christ and They become lights for an unbelieving world In seeing my friend Cornelius people of the world would say Well the God of that fellow Must really be something This the faith of this man, there's something true there.

I also want to live like it Doesn't mean we all become Cornelius's But it does mean it's not really the extent. It's not the extent of the adversity or the suffering or the loss It's what we allow God in his grace to do in his time and it may not happen immediately But in his time as he works it out And then she goes on to say this At the end of her talk. She says suffering is a necessary mystery In this world until the return of Jesus Christ She says I'm happy to know That the plans of God will triumph because they're perfect That's why we can glorify him Jesus said that the last would be first and the weak will become strong It's the weak in Christ Who are wise and the humble that will inherit the kingdom of God And she says this which is really great The blind will see the light The deaf will hear the Word of God the paralyzed will walk with their Lord and even the mentally retarded will have the mind of Christ and That's was the message that she gave in Paris a year ago and I think that gives great encouragement Whatever whatever the circumstance So, let's stop there and pray and if you want to discuss it, you're welcome to Father we thank you for this time together We pray particularly Lord that You would so work in our lives that we would be able to give some encouragement and help some understanding Some compassion To those who are hurting in this world and Lord, you know, there's so many of them and It's beyond our capacity We can't help everyone but

father lead us by your spirit To help those that you want us to help And to draw daily On your grace and mercy and again father.

We thank you for your patience with us You're working with us And that you are working out your purposes Even if we don't understand them, we thank you that we can trust you and not blame you at all We give you thanks in Jesus name

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/20/SID20825.mp3>

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