

Full Surrender

by Keith Daniel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of full surrender to God, recognizing our weaknesses, and understanding the role of suffering in spiritual growth.

Duration: 1:23:34

Scripture: Isaiah 64:8, Jeremiah 18:1, Matthew 11:28, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 12:7

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Heart Renewal"

Description

This sermon is about the importance of surrendering to God, highlighting the struggle to let go of our troubles and the unknown hindrances that hold us back. It emphasizes the need to ask Jesus to reveal and search our hearts so we can fully surrender and experience God's compassion and love.

Transcript

Jeremiah 18 verse 1. The word, the word which came to Jeremiah, the word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, Arise and go down to the potter's house and there I will cause thee, I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels, he wrought a work on the wheels and the vessel that he made of clay was marred, the vessel that he made of clay was marred, was ruined, was ruined in the hand of the potter. The vessel that he made of clay was ruined in the hand of the potter.

So he made it again, he made it again, another vessel, another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord? Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them. Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord. Behold, I frame evil against you, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you.

Return ye now every one from his evil way, return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings God's. And they said, and they said, Well, what does a nation, what does a nation

say in their hearts to God when God sends a creature like Jeremiah with such a message? And they said, This is the heart of a nation responding to the message of a man sent from God. And they said, There is no hope, there is no hope, but we will walk off to our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart, we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.

Verse 18, Then said they, Come and let us devise devices against Jeremiah, for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come and let us smite him with a tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words. I would like for us tonight to look very carefully, I would like for us tonight to look very carefully and caringly, and caringly at the life and ministry of a disillusioned preacher.

I would like for us tonight to look very carefully and caringly at the life and ministry of a disillusioned preacher in a decadent, doomed nation, in a decadent, doomed nation. And perhaps it would be good for us, perhaps it would be good for us to all look back to the beginning. Jeremiah looked back to when God had first called him to preach.

Jeremiah looked back to when God had first called him to preach, and he wrote in chapter 1, verse 4, Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb, before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot, I cannot speak, for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak.

Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said unto me, Behold, behold, I have put my words, I have put my words in thy mouth, I have put my words in thy mouth, Years later, years later, deep into his ministry, deep into his ministry, in chapter 15, verse 15, a disillusioned, bitter, confused, and spiritually wounded preacher stands before the God who sent him, and prays, and prays, O Lord, thou knowest, thou knowest, thou knowest, remember me, remember me, and visit me, visit me, visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors, revenge me of my persecutors, take me not away in thy long-suffering. Know that for thy sake I have suffered with you, thy words were found, thy words were found, and I did eat them, I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart, for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.

I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced, I sat alone because of thy hand, for thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual? Why is my pain perpetual? And my wound incurable, which refuses to be healed? Will thou be altogether unto me as a liar? Will thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail? Therefore thus saith the Lord, the next verse says, therefore thus saith the Lord. Well, what can God say to a man in such a state as this? What can God say to a man in such a state as this? Therefore thus saith the Lord, if thou return, if thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me.

And if thou take forth the precious from the vial, if thou take forth the precious from the vial, thou shalt be my mouth. These words that God said to Jeremiah in verse 19 are staggering words, beloved. They are staggering words.

One of the greatest theologians in the history of the church said that the most accurate interpretation, the most accurate interpretation of what God was actually saying, the meaning of the words that God was

saying to Jeremiah in verse 19, would read like this. If you give up this mistaken tone of distrust and despair, if you give up this mistaken tone of distrust and despair, cleansing your own heart from unworthy suspicions concerning God's faithfulness, cleansing your own heart from unworthy suspicions concerning God's faithfulness, you shall be as my mouth. But if you don't, child, I can never use you again.

I will never use you again, child, if you don't. If you give up this mistaken tone of distrust and despair, cleansing your own heart from unworthy suspicions concerning God's faithfulness, you shall be as my mouth, Jeremiah. You shall be as my mouth.

But if you don't, child, I cannot use you. I will not use you again, ever again. It would be the end of his ministry if he didn't do something about this distrust and disdain.

I want us all to take careful note here. I want us all to take careful note here. God does not come to this man.

God does not come to this man and say, oh, Jeremiah, I'm going to take out of your life and circumstances all the things that are hurting you. God does not come to this man and say, oh, Jeremiah, I'm going to take out of your life and circumstances all the things that are hurting you, the things you feel I should never have allowed to come in your life in the first place. No, beloved, God does not come and say that to this man.

These things were never meant to destroy you or your faith and trust in me, child. These things were never meant to destroy you or your faith and trust in me, child, though I allowed them. I allowed them.

The Apostle Paul realized why God allowed these things in his life, and he wrote in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 7, lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations and lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations that was given to me of form in the flesh. The messenger of Satan, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord Christ, that it might depart from me, that it might depart from me.

And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee. My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness, in weakness, in weakness.

Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.

For when I am weak, then am I strong. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong.

O beloved, Jeremiah sank in despair and bitterness in his difficulties and troubles. Jeremiah sank in despair and bitterness in his difficulties and troubles. But Paul, in the same difficulties, wrote in 2 Corinthians 4 verse 8, we are troubled.

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, not distressed. We are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. O most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. It's a staggering statement, beloved, but in the school of God, in case you don't know it, God will not rest until that is your testimony from your heart.

In case you don't know it, in the school of God, God is not interested in your comforts. There will come a day when God requires of you to say from your heart to him, therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities and weaknesses, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong. O beloved, be honest, even if it's going to be just one night in your whole life, in the meeting you're required to do so, every one of you, be honest.

If it wasn't for, if you had no weaknesses, no infirmities, no problems, no difficulties, no trials, you would never once in your Christian life had to look away from your own strength and had to look to God for his strength for you to be able to survive. You would never once have proved the power of Christ in your life. You would never once have had to.

You would have had your own strength to do it. God would never once have had to make his power available to you. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

God would never have had to make his power available to you to survive if it wasn't for all these things that make you know you are weak, and without his strength you cannot survive. God wants that in the school of God from every one of you. He's not interested in your strength, child, in your abilities, in your gifts.

Don't you know that that's why the things you cry out, Paul? Three times he cried, not just three prayers, three times he got so desperate with something in his life that the devil sent. It was the devil, but allowed by God, because God knew this is needed. For what I seek in his life, the fruit I'm looking for is not the food you're looking for.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. There's no comprehending fully the thoughts of God in his dealings with us, but do you honestly believe God just has lost control or isn't even looking when you despair over things the devil is bringing in your life? Why does God leave these things that make me feel weak? Oh, Jeremiah, if you give up this mistaken toll of distrust and disdain, cleansing your own heart from unworthy suspicions concerning God's faithfulness, you shall be as my mouth, Jeremiah. But if you don't, child, I cannot use you again.

How can you install faith in others if you have no faith in yourself? If you have no faith yourself, child, you know God does something to all of us when we're saved and in the school of God, and that happens the day you will get saved. You enroll in a school, you enroll in God's school, and trust me about this the day you enroll in the school of God, and you want to serve God, and you want to walk with him, and you want to be your best for him. God does something that almost seems cruel, that seems cruel and unreasonable.

God gives every one of us, no matter who you are, a thorn in the flesh, a thorn in the flesh. Do you know what a thorn in the flesh means? God gives us something that handicaps us. Don't doubt this.

Don't doubt this, or you won't know anything about what's going on in the heart of God or in life once you're saved. If you doubt this, he does something that makes you feel like, boy, I've got to get this out of

my life. God has to deal with this.

God has to deal with this thing in my life that the devil sent him to buffet me, you know. Do you know what buffet means? To punch so hard, literally, that I lose balance. Some think God lets the devil have consciousness of the new life that will literally make you lose all balance.

God does that. God stands back and allows that. Why? Why does it seem God would allow such a cruel...why would God...it seems like it's cruel in the heart of a perfect God that I don't want this.

I don't want this. I've sought God three times. Three times, he laid down everything in life, not just three prayers.

He laid down life. He withdrew everything in his despair of what was in his life, and he sought God to deliver it, that it might depart from it. But do you know, God didn't.

Paul, my ways are not your ways. God didn't deliver it. I want this thing, child, to make you bring fruit that you're not looking for.

The things you think God needs to deal with is not the things God wants to deal with. The things you're despairing about are many times the things God knows he's not going to take out of your life, because that's going to bring the fruit you're not looking for. God's looking for different fruit than you and I are looking for in our lives, you know.

God's looking for brokenness. And let me tell you, young man, brokenness is not a tragic thing. It's the first step to greatness.

There's no religion. There's nothing. There's nothing to compare with Christianity.

There's only one way, friend, in God's eyes, and that's to get you broken itself. And you can see that written across a man a mile away, if God isn't having his way. It's not nice to see it in a Christian, but oh, Christ begins to come out through a man.

When God starts making a man conscious, he's nothing. He's too weak. His gifts aren't good enough.

His own strength isn't good enough, and he begins to reveal Christ. Oh, God's ways are not our ways. God gives us a thorn in the flesh deliberately, in mercy, in love, in wisdom that you and I don't have.

He gives us a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to bop at me, to hit me hard. It is Satan sent by Satan to destroy me, allowed by God to make me. Do you honestly think God loses control when the devil comes and really makes you lose balance and stagger? You're so staggered, you despair.

What was despairing? Don't doubt that. A thorn in the flesh. You know, when I was a little boy... Now, let's see how little I was.

I suppose as little as you were, right in the middle there. Now, everyone is going to look at you, so that's how terrible I am to make you get embarrassed. All right, how old are you? Yes, ten.

That was it. I was about ten. Don't doubt it.

I probably looked a lot like you. Well, as a boy in Africa, in South Africa, my daddy didn't like a city very much, but he had to be there, but he built our home on the edge of the city, way out on what we call the

wilds. I tell you, you people call woods like forests what we call forests, but in Africa we get thickets.

It's like what you people would refer to as jungles, you know. It's really thick. You've got to be small to be able to get in there.

You know how we got in, the monkeys and the baboons? They made paths through all the thickets, and yet we loved those paths. Well, we were like monkeys. The big people couldn't get in there.

We would run, you know. You couldn't believe it. We knew like the back of our hands all the monkey trails through all the thickets, what you people call jungle.

Oh, big people would be scared to venture in there, many of them, but well, that was our playground, and a little crowd of boys, we would run. You wanted to see me. I was always the first, you know.

I was very proud of it. Always ahead of everybody. We even went on the monkey ropes, you know.

They didn't like it. They chased us one day. Those monkeys and baboons, one day, got so upset with us that they decided enough is enough, you know, and they chased us.

We were running screaming. They rushed out, and they even came out on the road to look at us and say, now don't come back, you know. Oh, but we did go back.

We were really crazy. Children do wild and ridiculous things, but oh, it was fun. It was fun.

Well, one day, me and my friends were running, and I, as usual, were in the front of the row, silly Billy, and I was running. Oh, and we were going cute, and there was on this little path, I don't know how it got into the thicket, a little plank, a piece of wood with a nail through it, a rusted long nail. I don't know how that ever got that far.

Nothing else was there but the big wild trees and things, you know, and here I was running, and my foot went on this nail with this plank. The nail went right through my foot, and the blood just squirted like a tap, you know. Well, I just fell down on my back, you know, and I screamed with my legs very undignified.

Oh, it was, oh, what did my friends do? Helpful as they were at that age, they all just stood there screaming. Well, we all stood there screaming. It wasn't very good.

In the end, they decided, because I wasn't going to stop bleeding or screaming, they decided they'd better do something. So they were very, one took this arm, the other took this leg, you know, four of them carrying me, very undignified. I was being run through.

And they ran somehow eventually we got out of the thicket. By the mile of running, we got back to where they had a pharmacy. You people call a pharmacy.

I can't believe what you've got in our country, a pharmacy is where you get medicine. Not everything else in the world like America, but we had a pharmacy, a chemist there, and the old chemist knew all the children. He was an old uncle, you know, and, well, they lay me on the table.

He put me down. They had snapped the wood off and there was the nail and a piece of wood left. But there I lay still crying.

I was in a state and he, of course, pulled this thing out and put antiseptic, anything to try and help it to stop and get it healed. But you know, I, I couldn't walk. I had to be carried.

There was no such a thing as standing or taking a step. There was, I was finished with what went through my foot. I couldn't walk.

I had to be literally carried or have laid there, unable to get a step. But the thorn in the flesh is not like that. A thorn in the flesh that God allows, you can walk.

You can walk, but you know it's hard. It's not easy to walk when there's a thorn in the flesh. Oh, you're conscious all the time.

There's something that makes you have to walk carefully and slowly. You can't walk like you want to walk. You slow down.

It's like a handicap. You're conscious all the time. This is difficult.

This makes it difficult. This makes it hard to walk. It's hard for me to walk now with this thorn.

God, God, God in His wisdom that we don't have the slightest ability to even begin to reconcile apart from His Word and really thinking and allowing the Holy Spirit to give us revelation. He allows this to happen in His, into every one of our lives, every one of our lives. Why does God do that? Why does God do that? Now, we must take careful note.

What to one person is a thorn in the flesh is not necessary to another person. That's why don't expect sympathy from anyone on earth concerning your thorn in the flesh. People will look at you and think you're absolutely weak or crazy, so don't even tell people about your thorn in the flesh.

If you notice, Paul didn't name it. You dare not either. Most people won't identify.

How can that, how can that be such a crippling thing to you that you're so despaired? No. What to one person is a thorn. Do you know D.L. Moody? Moody was one of the five greatest soul winners in the history of the church.

Don't doubt that. One of the five greatest soul winners that ever lived in the history of the church was D.L. Moody, your D.L. Moody from America. He brought Scotland to God.

John Knox brought Scotland away from Rome, but Moody brought Scotland to God as no other man in its history. Scotland began to seek God truly. Moody was amazing.

They say one million people came to God through him without loudspeakers, but they're wrong, you know. That was far too conservative. Other books are written saying it cannot be the million like the original book ends off telling us of his biography.

Approximately one million of people came to Christ. No. He brought whole nations back to God.

Brother, sister, Moody brought millions. I would say four million. As a conservative, that's not taking a chance, so don't just go by this one million.

Oh, he was one of the greatest soul winners in the history. One man without radios, without loudspeakers, without televisions or videos to spread his ministry. One man.

Four million people, very conservative amount. Moody was turning the world upside down, even in America. But now Moody, Moody, what to one person is a thorn in the flesh is not to another, and Moody proved that.

One day, D.L. Moody was walking in Chicago. Now, Chicago knew who Moody was, let me tell you something. Everyone knew in that city.

He walked down the street with a president one day, you know, a president. And you know what made him walk away from the president? A drunk in the gutter. He left the side of the president, never to be near that president again in his life.

That wasn't to him what was needed. He went down, he couldn't pass a soul that he so needed. He had this compassion knelt down in the gutter.

Oh, no wonder God used Moody. No wonder God used Moody. All he saw was the soul, the need.

Oh, God was good to him. Now, Moody one day was walking down the street in Chicago. He had his old suit on and his old bowler hat.

I don't know if you've seen the pictures of Moody with his old suit. I think he used the same suit most of his life, once he put in a bit of weight anyway. Well, he was walking down the street now in Chicago, and Moody was doing something strange.

He was looking down. Now, that's not a good thing for a Christian to do. You're supposed to look up, brother.

But he was looking down, and here he was, this great soul winner stirring the whole world, becoming a household name across the world. Moody was walking down the street now, and he was beginning to really worry. Something was really hurting and grieving and great concern.

Do you know what it was? Nothing has gone wrong for two full weeks. Now, he's worried about that. Well, I wish I could worry about that.

Nothing has gone wrong. Two weeks, nothing's gone. Does it mean the devil isn't worried about me anymore? Oh my, now he's really getting worried.

The more he thinks he's going into darkness now. What's wrong with me? You know, he's getting heavy now. Suddenly, the devil had a very uncouth, hard, cruel man standing on the other side of the street who was full of sin, and he recognized Moody, and he shouted as he was standing there by the tram stop, waiting for the tram with a whole lot of people.

He sees Moody, and he shouts, There is that mad man. There goes that mad fanatic. Moody, you fanatic.

I would die. But he's screaming, you mad thing, you are. A bit of abusive language, I believe.

He was a really uncouth man screaming across the corner. Now, Moody was, looks at this man, and what does Moody do? Takes off his hat, he throws it in the air, he jumps up, and he says, Hallelujah, the devil still hates me. That must have confused the devil.

But brother, if somebody did that to me, I would die. I mean, I would just scream, in the streets now. Not to one man is a thorn in the flesh, it's not to another man.

Here, exactly opposite. He wouldn't understand, he wouldn't identify without you going through with that. You must remember that.

I want to read something to you, and I want you all to listen carefully, very carefully. Our thorn in the flesh may be so different to other people. Now, what is your thorn in the flesh? Will you listen, every one of you, and let God point to you, why he's allowing this.

I think it is to others who might not understand. To some people, the thorn in the flesh is physical. You've been given some physical setback or sickness, a handicap that you must bear all your life.

God allowed it. It slows you down, it drives you to despair. But you cannot understand why God doesn't.

You can't be what you want to be for God, what you want to do for God. You're so conscious. To some people, the thorn in the flesh is physical.

You've been given some setback and a handicap that you must bear physically all your life, it seems. To others, the thorn in the flesh is something about your character. That you become conscious is a deep setback in your life, where people misunderstand you because of this in your character.

They misunderstand you constantly. You know, we have in our mission, which is probably the oldest missionary society in Africa, one of the oldest in the world, to survive when other missions collapse. Our mission has been there many, many years.

It's had many godly people. When I was a young missionary in Africa, our leader, he had been 50, I think, 55 years in full-time service for God, just burning his life out for souls. And his wife, he had been a leader in this mission for many years, respected, revered, but he was now old.

And they had this big farewell, you know, in the great hall, and the missionaries and the fruit of the mission came in their throngs to hear them speak. And they let his wife speak. She was allowed to get up and share a testimony at this farewell.

As she was saying goodbye and withdrawing now from full-time capacity and leadership over this mission, and she testified something that staggered that congregation to the death of their soul, this godly woman. She testified. She said, none of you have known, I have had in my character something that has kept me in the dust all through the years, every day.

People were scared of me. But as I had more and more leadership, because my husband was an authority, the ladies had to be dealt with. If something went wrong with the lady missionary workers all over South Africa and Africa, it was my responsibility to confront them.

And I didn't want to, but I had to. My husband didn't go to a lady to tell her I was the one as the leader's wife. And oftentimes I had to, but there's something about my character that people were offended at.

I became conscious of it. It seemed like I was angry and people became fearful of me. I couldn't get over this.

This began to really stagger me that people were so wounded by the way I spoke. I didn't mean it intentionally as sinfulness. And I began to weep before God when I realized the hurt and the shock.

And she said, I came before God one day and I said to him, I wish God that thou would make me like this Ethelbert Smith. Ethelbert Smith was one of the greatest preachers in the history of South Africa. He was probably the most loved man in our country's history, apart from Andrew Murray himself, who turned our whole nation to see God when he was alive.

Ethelbert Smith, she said, I would like to be like him. He never gets angry. No matter what people do wrong.

As a leader, he just so gently, there's no anger, there's no harshness in his, no strength in his words. He's just love. You know, when people fail, what does Ethelbert Smith do? He goes and puts his arms around them.

When another man wants to get angry, he wears the whip with them, you know, try and look for anything to encourage them with. You know, he really was an amazing person. Nothing made him angry.

He was the gentlest. And then God said to me one day on my knees, when I was weeping, please God, if he can be like that, I want thee to make me like him. God said to her, in her heart, Ethelbert Smith was born like that.

He didn't acquire that through going through with God. Some people are born with a gentle character. It isn't a matter of a work of grace.

He just happened to be born like that. That's his whole character. You are like your mother.

Do you remember when she thought about it? You're not full of sin. You've got your mother's character. She was like that.

When your mother said jump, everybody jumped. Just the way she said it. Now you've got your mother's character.

It's not that you're sinning against me and that. And then God said to me, but in spite of this in your life, I can still bring grace. I can give you all the grace to make you Christ-like as you stay in the dust because of this thing.

Something great can come out of it. She said, you know, I was in the dust daily. I went down before God and I would groan before God.

I would cling to God as very few people might ever need to, so that I had the grace to walk out and not react as my character naturally wanted me to. And would just react without sinfulness in my heart. I had to stay down at the cross daily through the years as very few people, conscious of my desperate need for God to keep me quiet, to hold my lips, and to give me somehow wisdom to know what to say in spite of my having to be a leader that wouldn't wound.

It kept me in the dust, this thing God left in me. Some people, the thorn in the flesh is physical. To others, the thorn in the flesh is something about your character.

That you become conscious is a deep setback where people misunderstand you constantly. But God doesn't take it out of your life. It's not sin.

It isn't as if it's going to be refined by the blood, but controlled by the Holy Spirit because you need grace, and God gives grace to those who know they need it. It kept you down. It kept you careful to make sure you draw strength to others.

The thorn in the flesh is psychological. You could have a deeply negative character, a hypersensitive spirit that the devil aims at always to straggle you through insensitive, harsh, and cruel people. I'd like to repeat that.

To some, the thorn in the flesh is psychological. You could have a deeply negative character, a hypersensitive spirit that the devil plays chaos with you. He aims at always just knowing what to do.

He's got enough insensitive people in the church, let me tell you. He just knows what to do to set them off through insensitive, harsh, and cruel people. The devil is staggering you.

But have you noticed something about such people? I'll tell you. Pick up their Bibles, and you'll know immediately, if you want to know the mind of Christ, why God didn't just take it out of their hearts that they're not insensitive anymore. These people, they survive by the Word of God.

Every page, it's almost like you can see the seeking for God to comfort, to heal the wounds daily. They devour the Scripture. They identify with every promise.

The dates are there, the marks of what God promised concerning the hurts, concerning the people that were hurting. They had drawn near to God in a way no one would ever draw near to God for survival. They devour the time with God alone.

They have to. They seclude themselves every moment they can get for healing, for comfort, for faith, for something to get them up and go back in spite of the cruelty that's going to hurt them, and they know it. Oh, God has His way in not taking out of their lives.

They're somebody who devoured the Word of God as a source of survival that others who are not sensitive will never devour the Word and identify with every promise. The Book becomes theirs to do, to survive. Oh, God knows what He's doing, that's all.

See, others with thorn in the flesh can be a person, a messenger of Satan, sent by Satan to buffet me, like John Wesley. Do you know who John Wesley's thorn in the flesh was? You know, Wesley, they threw him off a cliff, left him for dead. He got up and he walked to the men who threw him off the cliff, I mean a high cliff.

He was left for dead. They were scared that what was happening in all the towns and cities would happen in their town, these men of sin. He got up, he walked into the town.

Oh, he was in a state, covered with blood and bruised and limping, and he led the whole town to God, beginning with the men that threw him off. Nothing could discourage him. They stoned him.

Do you know they stoned him for fear of what was happening? That the stones literally covered his whole body, these about a hundred men, stoning him. We don't want this to happen here. And they walked away, he's dead.

He wasn't. He pushed the stones off the bench and he got out. Oh, he was in a terrible state, but Wesley, what did he do? He didn't go and say, oh, what have they done to me? Bring the law, you know.

He walked in there with this terrible state. He was in a terrible state. And he stood there and he called out to them in a way, and they all came to God.

The whole town turned to God. The drinking places closed, the dance floors, the world places closed for some 200 years. They wouldn't allow alcohol after Wesley had been in these places.

Do you know that? Do you know what God did there? He was a very short man, you know. I'm glad I wasn't that short. Now, Wesley was about this short.

Think about it. Imagine being a preacher and being that short. But he was discourageable.

About 20 men one day were punching because they were so enraged that he was daring to come near their way of life. And 20 men lay unconscious and Wesley walked away because he was short, you know. They had knocked each other out.

It's good to be short if you're a preacher, I think. I'm not sure. But Wesley had had his good points.

Nothing would discourage him. They said nothing discouraged Wesley, nothing, nothing. No matter what they did, he didn't come up with venom.

He didn't come with anger. He had this gentleness. He had nothing of angering him against men that, in the end, the king of England, by law said, the stops.

By law of the king, all this persecution against Wesley and his followers stops because there's a bloodbath in France and Europe. Most of nobility was killed. They were guillotined by that time through the anger and the hatred and the resentment of the poor who had been unjustly treated.

But Wesley stopped. One man stopped this bloodbath through England. It was going to start, don't doubt it.

And the poor came to Christ in their masses, and they forgave the rich. They didn't have anger, and the rich came to Christ in their masses, from the royalty on. And they found suddenly compassion to the poor, and they began to set up a nation where no other nation was doing these things of good, coming from those who had wealth, because God brings healing in a land.

And he did through this one. The king said, this land, the history of England is changed through one man, and we've been spared of a bloodbath. We've got to acknowledge it.

No man is to touch this man or his followers again. By law of the king, let God turn us all together to God. Oh, it was wonderful.

But one thing, one thing only drove Wesley to despair of life. They say he despaired, but he sobbed. He sobbed.

Only one thing, nothing, not stoning, not throwing him off, leaving him for dead. Not a hundred men trying to murder him in their anger. That didn't make him despair.

That didn't set him back one iota. Only one thing made Wesley despair of life was his wife. She was godless.

She, at some point, decided she didn't want God. She hated God. And she ridiculed him.

She made his life such, it was like a scourge came upon him. You knew nobody judged Wesley. Not one, even the unsaved, didn't dare to judge him and say, how can you preach church if your wife doesn't even love you? Everyone knew it wasn't Wesley's fault.

It was Charles Wesley's fault. His brother, his brother in those days, a brother, older brother, had authority, a great authority once the father was dead. The oldest brother was the authority.

It was just that way of life. And Charles Wesley stopped John Wesley with marriage and chose someone else for him. And he made a mistake.

It was his mistake. It wasn't what Wesley wanted. There was even some sort of a stand trying to stop him.

But because of Charles' insistence and strength of character, Wesley submitted and he made this terrible, terrible grief, because this woman, this woman made him despair. It drove him to his knees that he sobbed and sobbed again and again, but nothing else made Wesley sob. God didn't want it.

It was the devil's doing, but God allowed it to a man that led a nation to God. To some, the thorn in the flesh can be a person. Listen carefully here.

Oh, how often the thorn in the flesh is a person sent by the devil to stagger me, allowed by God to help me spiritually. A person who thinks it is their God-given duty to criticize you and undermine you and cheat you with content because of something the devil has told him about you. Oh, how often it's a person like that, that God allows to come along your way, whether you're a preacher or someone just wanting to go through with God.

The thorn in the flesh can be a person who thinks it's their God-given duty, even in the church, to criticize you and undermine you and treat you with contempt because of something the devil's told them about you. At times you will think it is their life mission to destroy you. It seems that nothing will ever pacify them until you're destroyed.

But these things will not destroy you, beloved. They will make you. Trust God about that.

They will make greatness in your life that would never have been if it hadn't been for the very thing you're despairing about. God doesn't allow anything that can destroy you. You only will be destroyed if you lose sight of him and lose sight of faith in him, that he is in control and he's allowing something for a very definite reason in your life that he's not dealing with, not to torment you, but to bring you to a place of greatness.

To others, it can be one of their own children. The thorn in the flesh can be one of your own children. Now, that's tragic.

When a man's enemies are the members of his own household, there's five verses in the Bible, five passages, sorry, where Jesus speaks of this and Micah speaks of it. Because of Christ, a man's child rises up against him, invariably, and begins to hate his father because the child wants the devil. All children who do not want to follow God, not to follow your God, they want the world.

That can drive a man to the dust, let me tell you, as very few things can. God didn't want it, but he allows it. He could deal with that child, and I've seen him actually do it when it got too much.

I have to speak about that now. A man said to me one day here in America, when I first started coming over here, he said to me, Keith, my boy, and I think all of you will know this man, a great man of wisdom, you want to be used of God, very few men, but listen carefully to me. If the devil sees he can't get you, Keith, he's going to aim at your children.

Now that you've made a desire to serve God like this, now that you have this desire to make a mark for God, in this world, Keith, I guarantee you the devil is going to come against your children. He can't hit you, but he sees what you're wanting to do, what you're wanting to let God do, and my boy, you can be sure the devil is going to aim at your children a million times more than what he does in other Christians' home, because if he can get one of your children, Keith, he'll have you in the dust. So much of your time will be in the dust, Keith, if that happens, groaning before God.

Oh, when that man said that, you know what I did? I started daily, including today, brother, a few times through the day today, and every day since that man walking down the streets while I'm preparing or praying, suddenly I diverge from everything, and I cry out to God with such a groan, God, whatever the devil is doing to try and put a seed in my children's hearts that might bring forth a hatred of God and God's ways and a love for the world, God, undo it now by the blood of Jesus. Undo that, that nothing will bear up the devil's efforts, Lord. Whatever he's doing, whoever he's influencing my children through, people, other Christian children who are just playing the fool with God who could influence my boy, God, protect anything the devil is doing, any seed, any word, anything, oh God, undo it by the blood of Jesus and mercy.

I am in warfare for my children daily since that man said that to me. I have said to God, oh God, if the devil gets my children, I will curl up. I will die right then if the devil, and God knows, I mean, but when it happens, and God allows it, don't think it's going to destroy you, it will destroy me, that's why God hasn't allowed it.

When a man's enemies are the members of his own household, and the children don't want to follow God, they want the world, oh, that can drive a man into the dust. It can drive a man into the dust. To some, the thorn in the flesh can be a weakness.

That could lead to some moral failure, a weakness you can't understand why God hasn't dealt with young boy, young girl, married man, preacher. To some, it can be a weakness that you cannot understand, though you've pled with God, though you've despaired, though you've begged God, dear, with this God, I want to serve you, but this thing is hitting me back. This is holding me back, God.

It can be the thorn in the flesh is a weakness that could lead to some moral failure, or that has caused moral failure in the past, but that God can give you total victory over it, and he reveals that to you as long as you draw grace from him and strength daily. You find a man with this in his life, or a young boy who really means business with God, he spends more time with God than anyone else who names the name of Jesus. He doesn't play the fool with his quiet time because he knows I can get up from my knees and through this drawing strength, God, something happens that makes me, in spite of this weakness, say no to the death that tries to get me.

You will have total victory, child, but I'm leaving that weakness to make you become someone who spends time with God more than others, way more than others because of that weakness. Greatness is going to come into your life through that weakness if you let God have his way. If you don't, it could destroy you now, sent by the devil to destroy you, allowed by God to make you.

There is nothing that will come in your life when you name the name of Jesus that isn't intended by God, meant by God, allowed by God to make greatness in your life, though you despair about it, no matter who you are. To some, the thorn in the flesh could be something in your past that the devil accuses you of and puts fear in your heart about again and again. I want to repeat that.

To some, it may be something happened in your past that you're so scared will be brought out and destroy your home, destroy people's respect of you, and how many have that? In a weak moment like David, even the man of the crown's heart, God's own heart, can have something in his past that he's so ashamed of. Something in your past that the devil continually accuses you of and puts fear in your heart again and again. Now, beloved, if that is the thorn in the flesh, God knows what's that man and that woman, what's the brokenness.

Brother Don was asking me about how many people I know that in the ministry fell into sin, and yet were restored and given the right. Brother, I didn't tell you fully, but many were given the right to get back in the pulpit, but every one of them, including some of the leaders, people who knew of this, and they made those men the leaders of the whole mission of the J.E.B., the largest missionary society in Japan. The leader had a time when one day he fell into sin, terrible sin, and all the reverence of the Japanese bowing to him because of the impact of his life in that town.

Suddenly, they laughed and said, take that train, until one day he met with God again. In brokenness, he went through with God. He got restored.

Eventually, he found a walk with God that he had never known before because there was something that wasn't there before. There was a brokenness, a brokenness of self, and so did he walk with God that eventually his life found more impact for God than before the fall. They made him the leader, the president of the J.E.B. in Japan, and they didn't make a mistake.

Many people, there's things in your past that haunt you, and you have fear of the repercussions that are going to go into your dying day about, even if you're true. But listen, heaven help the man that accuses you of something in your past. Heaven help the man that touches you.

Who is he that condemneth? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather than is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Beloved, when God forgives a man, no man dares not forgive him, because then God will deal with a man or woman that doesn't forgive someone or something in their past.

Be careful. Be careful. I have seen God deal with men who rose up, who would not forgive somebody who God wanted to restore, because of something bad in their past.

They wouldn't give mercy, and when they fell, no one wanted to give them mercy, because they wouldn't. Be careful. It'll come back with you, on you like a vengeance that you are going to play upon somebody's past and think you can haunt them.

God will wipe you out. He will wipe you out if you dare to do that. So you people with something in your past, it's Christ that died.

When you get restored to God, that is. You, when you get restored to God, rather most of them got restored to God, or ministers, some leaders, but oh did God use them from then onwards, and no one wanted to bring up their past of the ones I knew anyway or prayed with, should I say. Why would God deliberately allow a man to be handicapped, a man who wanted to serve him with all his heart? Why would God handicap a man to the point that he is driven to despair? Because greatness is not wisdom, child of God.

It is not abilities or giftedness that God is wanting to use in your life. Brokenness is God's first step now to bring that into your life. Young man, it's beautiful.

When I hurt and lie crushed before God, when I hurt and lie crushed beyond belief, and I think I am so destroyed that I shall never rise again, God suddenly lifts me up to heights and opportunities that I never knew or dreamt God would ever trust me with, heights that no one ever, ever thought I would reach. My father-in-law, who is a loved preacher in our country and a man of great wisdom, and one of the greatest men of God I've ever known in my life, and I've known many of the world's greatest men of God, I guarantee you God's privileged me. You read their books, God mercifully privileged me to converse with them and pray with them, and befriend many of them.

I don't know why God gave me that privilege, but my father-in-law is one of the greatest men of God in the world today. He said to me, when I was once cast down and lying in the dust, wounded, oh my, let me tell you people something. You think there's glory in being a preacher.

There's no glory. You want glory, young man? Don't ever come to be a preacher. Go get some other profession.

There's no glory in preaching. There's no glory. You're in the dust most of your life if God's going to use you.

Trust me about that. If God is going to use you to the degree God is going to use you, you're going to be in the dust. You have to be.

That's God's way, and you learn to be comfortable there many times. Believe me, you're safe. There's two safe places for someone God will use.

One is in heaven. The other one is in the dust. Outside of those two places, there's no safety for anybody God will use greatly, let me tell you.

So you want to be used by God, don't come for glory. Come to the dust, brother. God knows why, and why he will do it to you, to safeguard you and protect you.

My father-in-law looked at me when I was cast down once, one of the times when I was down, staggered beyond belief, stunned, bewildered. I think like drunk, you could say, that such things were coming on me. I was just so staggered.

I was just losing balance. And my father-in-law looked at me in his great wisdom that God has given him, and he said, Keith, my boy, I've noticed something about you, and I want to share it with you right now.

Every time I've seen you go down like this, every time I've seen you thrown down, every time, it always was just before God was going to do something through you that would stagger this world.

So I'm not too worried, my boy. The thorn in the flesh sent by Satan to destroy me, allowed by God in his infinite wisdom to make me, to make me look to him for grace. So we see that it has to do with war between God and Satan.

Satan has the right there to destroy me then, and I could really make shipwreck, even though God meant this to make me. Satan sends something into my life, hoping to hurt me and destroy me. But if we keep our eyes on Jesus, then God stuns the devil, with most things he allows the devil to do, by using that very thing to bring out greatness that would never, ever, ever be seen in our lives, where we begin to glorify him.

Did you notice that in 2 Corinthians 12 7, the thorn in the flesh, there was first the desperation in Paul's life. It was followed by a revelation. Always you will find when you get desperate about God's dealing with you, God will give you a revelation.

Always. He doesn't leave you in the dark, beloved. God is love.

But you've got to be willing to hear his voice, even if it isn't what you want to hear about, the things you're praying about. There was a desperation, followed by a revelation, followed by resignation. Desperation, a revelation, a resignation.

That's what God wants of every one of you. Concerning the things you've been crying out and hoping one day he might deal with, when God, but I'll carry on until you deal with it, hoping I'm not going to deal with it, child. Maybe it's the revelation God gave you tonight.

In your desperation, suddenly God's given you a revelation here tonight, the revelation he gave to Paul. I'm not going to take it out of your life, child, for one reason. My strength is made perfect in your weakness, but that weakness, it won't destroy you, this thing in your life.

It will make greatness in your life. I want resignation, Paul, because I'm not going to take it out of your life, though you've been so desperate like this to get rid of it. My grace is sufficient for thee.

It's all you need to not be destroyed. For my strength is made perfect in weakness. There's greatness coming, child.

Strength, my strength is there. It's going to become evident in your life and your weakness. So God gives a man in desperation a revelation, waiting for resignation, a resignation to God's will.

Oh, most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, in my weaknesses. I'll tell you something, child of God, until you say that, not quoting it, but from your soul, in utter sincerity to God, you really are going to make a mess of things. Do you want that for the rest of your life, or will you no more getting aside, laying everything down, crying, get this out of my life, God, so that I can do something for thee? No, God.

If this is what the revelation is, if this is the answer of God to my heart, I have a resignation to perform to God's will. No more desperation. Most gladly.

Oh, that's not easy to say, but I rather glory in my infirmities, my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure. Do you know what that means? Can you think of saying that? I'm

going to be happy about these things that have driven me to despair, these people and these weaknesses.

I take pleasure in infirmities from now on, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, I am strong. Do you notice that the Old Testament was never written as history? People think it's history, but it's not. It is the history of the people of God and the beings of God with his people, but it wasn't meant to be looked upon or read as history.

It is meant to be looked upon as the Word of God, as much as the New Testament, to your heart and mine. It was written for us, everything, every single incident, dealing with God. There was something of a spiritual significance in the names and the genealogies.

When you've been to the book a few hundred times, you just see, you don't stop at the story of David and Goliath and get excited as you did the first time through the Bible. Get through the Bible many times, you come to the genealogies of the first couple of times where it's just agony to get through. Suddenly you want to just stop.

Nothing is in the Old Testament that wasn't written to excite you, to thrill you, to give you some idea of the heart of God, of the mind of Christ. We'd be in poverty without the Old Testament. It's not meant history.

Every warning he gave to the people was the warning to us. Every dealing with a people was how he deals with us. If we murmur his grief, though he's great, he's chasing everything.

It's just God's cry to you as an individual and sometimes to a nation, to the Christians of a nation. But the majority of every dealing of God to his people in the Old Testament was meant for you and I to get a grasp, a glimpse of the heart of God, of the pulse of God's heart, of something of the depth of what he's doing, of what he's allowing. We get something of a glimpse as to God's dealing with us, what he's actually accomplishing.

And trust me about this, every promise that he gave his people is mine. I have held on to these promises, oh brother, and found God honoring me. Those promises God had me in mind when he let those words be said through prophets.

He had me, he had my name, he had my weaknesses, he had me in his sovereignty, in his greatness, and he wrote it down for me to survive and you and to understand and not to lose heart. Now Jeremiah was sent down to the potter's house. He was doing something with some work.

He was working on the wheels in the pottery. And God said, I'll let you hear my voice as you watch that man. I'll give you a message to take to this nation, Jeremiah.

And there was the potter, and suddenly that which he's trying to do lay ruined in the hand of the potter. It was ruined. What he wanted to do was destroy it, and that really wasn't easy.

But Jeremiah watched. What is God saying about this? So the potter made it again, another vessel. It seemed good to the potter to make it.

And what I do with you is this potter, saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so he in mine hand. How many of you sitting here? You're lying in God's hands, and what he was doing, you have just made a mess of because you didn't have resignation.

You just carried on in desperation. And you're like Jeremiah. And God says to you tonight, listen, I can make you again as much of a mess as you've made, though it could have brought greatness in you.

Your unbelief, your fear of me, and my will, and my ways, and my losing control, and my wrongness in treating you, my letting you down. Oh, Jeremiah, cannot I be with you now? Jeremiah, cannot I do with you what I said I could do to a nation? Listen, Jeremiah, if thou give up this mistaken, wrong tone of distrust and despair, cleansing your own heart from unworthy suspicions concerning God's faithfulness, if you do that, child, you shall be as my mother. That which I wanted in your life, I will do.

Glorifying my name through you, you'll be like the mouth of God. What preacher could ask for more for the will of God to be fulfilled? But, Jeremiah, if you don't, even I as God, God says to you, even I, Jeremiah, don't give up this distrust and despair because of things I allow in you. And I don't allow them in your life just for you to reach Israel, Jeremiah.

There's no such a thing in God's sovereignty as the preacher being destroyed. The preacher gets made by what he loves. In his sovereignty, everybody's in the school of God.

If there is deep desparations of what's going on about the thorn in the flesh that God is never going to take out of your life. Revelation tonight. Is that what's happening? One thing left, resignation.

Every single one of you sitting here tonight could say to God, from this moment, resignation, God. No more despair. I trust you with this.

Every one of you sitting here that God knows he brought this thing going on because of that thing in your life that you despaired about and wanted God to get out and haven't believed and distrust. Can't you confuse, your faith is staggering about God. This desperation ends now, child.

I give you a revelation and I expect one thing now, resignation. I want those of you that need to say God tonight, resignation. And from this night, most gladly, therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ be rest upon me.

Therefore I take pleasure from this night, God. I'm glad for the things that come on me. From this night, God, I take pleasure in infirmities and weaknesses and approaches and necessities and persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake.

For when I am weak, then am I strong. Those of you that need to have resignation by saying those words for the first time from your heart till the day you die, from tonight, I want you who desperately need to say it to God in resignation about the things you've despaired up through this revelation, to stand and say, it's me, God. And I'm going to pray for those that stand.

No one else knows, the devil knows what the thorn in the flesh is. Come all of you standing, come stand in the front here. Let's make something sacred of us.

Don't chip on the wires of this machine, please. Just forgive me saying it, but I see they're a bit hanging out. Just be careful as you come, but come, let's make something sacred before God.

This is the turning point of what the devil thought he would destroy you. God's going to be able to make you as never before. Just come.

Can you stand in the middle, please? Just keep coming toward the center, and let people come be part of this prayer. Oh, God doesn't despise you. God loves you.

You know, I often wish that God would just stand for one moment in my place and just move me aside and not say anything, just look at you. If you could just see his eyes when you yield to his will like this, just look at his eyes. All fear would flee from your heart forever if you could just see Jesus' eyes, no words.

If only God could just look at you as you yield like this, you'd never doubt again in your life, but he expects you just to look in his eyes and what you see in the word. Every one of you pray these words with me. Father, forgive me.

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