

The God Of The Valleys

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon emphasizes the significance of recognizing God's presence and power in the valleys of life, where challenges, battles, and growth opportunities are found. It highlights the need to trust God's provision, seek His guidance, and experience victories even in the midst of difficulties and uncertainties.

Scripture: 1 Kings 20:22, Psalm 23:4, Isaiah 41:18, Deuteronomy 11:11, Psalms 65:13

Description

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Transcript

Praise God. I want to move on here this morning. I want you to turn to 1 Kings chapter 20 very quickly with me.

1 Kings chapter 20. Find 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles. In the midst of that you have 1 Kings chapter 20.

And I again just want to move on to a few short messages here on Sundays. This is something that's rolled with me for at least five months. And do you know what? This was confirmed in our testimony seeing the new year and at least three people testified the statement that I'm going to preach on here this morning.

And during Candice's last months, this was something she repeated time and time again in prayer or in fellowship. But obviously it's something that's affected people here. If I could hear it in the testimonies in new years, and yet I've never even mentioned it in recent times, I thought it was very interesting because I had this rolling with me.

And as a preacher, you just note those things and just hide them away. And so I'm bringing you to a very important statement, truth, biblical teaching. And this is my title series, but it's also the title of my message this morning.

This is it, the God of the valleys. Reading from 1 Kings chapter 20 and verse 22. And the context here is the armies and the king of Assyria coming to Israel against the king of Israel and the armies of Israel.

There's a war about to take place. And I'm jumping over half the war or the first war. And I'm going to read about the second half of it or the second war.

Reading from 1 Kings chapter 20, 22. And the prophet came to the king of Israel and said unto him, go strengthen thyself and mark and see what thou doest for at the return of the year, the king of Syria will come up against thee. And the servants of the king of Assyria said unto him, their gods are the gods of the hills.

Therefore they were stronger than we, but let us fight against them in the plain. And surely we shall be stronger than they and do this thing, take the kings away and every man out of his place and put captains in their rooms and the number, a number, the army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, chariot for chariot, we will fight against them in the plain and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice and did so.

And it came to pass at the return of the year, then Hadad numbered the Syrians and went up to Apec to fight against Israel. And the children of Israel were numbered and were all present and were against them. And the children of Israel, and note this very carefully, the children of Israel pitched before them, and I love this, like two little flocks of kids.

But the Syrians filled the country and there came a man of God and spake unto the king of Israel and said, thus saith the Lord, because the Syrians have said, the Lord is God of the hills, but he is not the God of the valleys. Therefore will I deliver this great multitude into thy hand and ye shall know that I am the Lord. And they pitched one over against the other seven days.

And so it was that in the seventh day, the battle was joined and the children of Israel slew of Syrians, a hundred thousand foot men in one day, but the rest fled to Apec into the city. And there a wall fell 20 and 7,000 of the men upon 20 and 7,000 of the men that were left. And Ben-Henad fled and came into the city into an inner chamber.

Father, we do thank you for your word, O God, and the teaching of your Holy Spirit. I pray that here in this message, in these few messages over these weeks, will you show us that you're not only the God of the hills and the mountains, but you're the God of the valleys. Lord God, that you take delight when the enemy says that your people are defeated in the valley, that they will lose the war in the valley, that they're down in the valleys where they're going to be defeated, that you're a jealous God, you're a holy God, that you're a God that comes forth to show that you are also the God of the valleys, that you bring victory in the valleys, that you defeat the devil in the valleys, that you defeat our enemies in the valleys.

Lord God, though we be small and little in number, Lord God, yet it's got nothing to do with that. You are the God of the valleys. And Father, I pray, O God, here this morning, show us what the valley represents.

Show us how to win the victory in the valley. Lord God, show us what your desire and your testimony is in the valley. And Father, I pray in each one of our lives, Lord God, don't let us lose the battle in the valley, but O God, raise up a glorious testimony that you're not only the God of the hills, but you are the God of the valleys, that you're triumphant, that you're the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Whether we're in a mountaintop experience or in the lowest valley, you are the very same God there. You're the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. You're the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And we love you with all of our heart in Jesus' name. Amen. Praise God.

I feel like I've already preached. I've only read my text. I've only prayed, but I feel like I've already preached.

Our text is taken here from verse 28. Notice what the enemy says to their king, the servants of the Syrian king. They're looking at the God of Israel.

They're looking at God's people, and this is what they say. Sorry, let me say that again. The Lord God is the God of the hills, but he is not the God of the valleys.

I actually believe this teaching of the enemy, this lie from hell, so easily gets into the church. I believe you and I are in great danger of believing this, that on the mountain, on a mountaintop experience, in an ecstatic experience, caught up with the Lord, and it's the clear vision of God, hearing his voice, enjoying the blessings, seeing everything. We're in danger of saying, that's where God wins the victories.

But when we're in the valleys, God isn't the same God. And depending on whether you're on top of a mountain or in the lowest valley, depends whether you think there can be a victory or not. You say, I'm convinced that you are a victim of that lie, and I believe I am, and I believe the church at large is.

That there's a great danger that you think God is greater on the mountaintop than in the lowest valley. And yet God hasn't changed. Your circumstance have changed.

Your situation has changed. Your vision has changed. Your feelings have changed.

Your perspective has changed, but God hasn't changed. And so you are in serious danger that when you find yourself in the valley, you think your God is smaller. Oh, you would never say that.

You think he is lesser. You think he is less able to give you the victory. And I want to absolutely shatter that life from hell here right now.

Let me give you the context of what we have just read. Israel, the nation of Israel, the 10 tribes of the north, remember there's two in the south, have just gone through a three year famine. The king of Israel is Ahab, a wicked king.

And yet God still moves. This is one of only two times that this wicked king of Israel, called Ahab, who's married to Jezebel, actually shows a willingness to obey God. And God responds to that.

So we have Ahab caught up in this situation where God in his mercy and his grace comes to intervene. It's the end of a three year famine. And at the end of that, King Ben-Hadad, king of Syria, he invades Israel.

He says, they are awake. They're at a low time. They're a vulnerable time.

They've come through three years of famine. Now is the time for us to move in. When you read this entire chapter, you read that he brought 32 kings with him.

He had joined himself with 32 kings and their armies and they all joined together and they march upon Israel and they begin to besiege the city of Samaria, which was the capital. He begins to talk to Ahab and he says, look, I won't destroy you. I'll let you survive if you give me all your silver and your gold and your wealth.

So Ahab makes an agreement with them and says, look, here's all my gold. Here's all my silver. In fact, let me go further.

Let me give you all my concubines, all my wives, all my family. You can have my children. You can have it all as long as you will allow us to survive.

Well, the king of Syria, as soon as he got everything, like you see with politicians in our day, he got given everything and he wanted more. That wasn't sufficient. So he sent another message to Ahab and said, no, no, no, that isn't enough.

I want to send my servants to walk through your corridors, your palace, your buildings, to go into the homes of your council leaders and that they can take more of anything that they want. What Ahab very wisely done was went back and talked to all the old godly elders. Notice Jezebel is in the story.

That's why he's listening to God. You know why God intervened and blessed in this situation? Because Ahab is being influenced by godly mature elders, not by a wicked wife. That's what made the difference here.

Jezebel wasn't the influence behind Ahab. He goes to the elders and he says, look, they said this, what should we do? The elder said, that is utterly unacceptable. We cannot allow that.

So Ahab sent back to the Syrian king and said, no way, not a chance. And the king says, well, we are going to come invade you and destroy you. Ahab listened to the elders and then turned to God.

And you know what started happening? God sent prophets. God sent a man of God. You see, if you're open, I don't care what your past has been.

If you're open to God, I don't even care what your failures or inclinations are. If you're willing to listen, God, he will send a messenger. He will speak to you in a very direct and a clear way.

And the prophet of God begins to reveal that the princes of the enemy armies are drinking. They're in a condition of being drunk. And so God sends this prophet and he says, here is what you're going to do.

Ahab, if you want to win the victory against this great army, and listen, this is the second battle. Do you realize before this about a year before or early in the year, there'd been a previous battle and they came and invaded and guess what? Israel defeated them. Can you imagine this great army with 32 kings being devastated and defeated? They went back to Syria and said, how could Israel defeat us? How could they have won? Well, his sermon said, this is the answer.

Their God is the God of the hills. That's the secret. That's the secret.

That's why they won. But you know what? Their God is not the God of the valley. So the first war that we waged against them, we lost, but let's go up again at the right time.

But this time we're not going to fight in the mountains. We're not going to fight in the hills. We are going to change the position.

We're going to fight in the valleys because you know what? This God of Israel is not a God of the valleys. Yes, he can win victories on the hills. Yes, God's people are on the mountaintop.

They can win the victory, but they can't win in the valley. Do you realize the devil still thinks that? He thinks if you're on the mountaintop, I cannot touch you and that's why you win. But if I can get you down in the valley, I'll defeat you because your God cannot give you the victory.

That was the entire situation here. So here comes this great army again. And listen, the prophet speaks to Ahab and says, find 232 princes in the land.

Let them be the leaders. I want you to fight in the valley. I want you to fight on their ground.

I want you to fight at a disadvantage. I want you to go right out into the open and you're going to have 7,000 men and you're going to go out and begin to fight them. And so that's what we begin to see here, that the Syrians begin to think, what happened? They go, if we change the position, the strategy, we'll take away the 32 kings.

They're like politicians and we'll appoint captains, military men. You know what the problem was? Politicians are a big problem, aren't they? That's why we lost the war. So let's get rid of all the politicians and let's bring captains in, real soldiers over the army and we're going to win.

We're going to fight in the valley. They were convinced that the God of the Bible was not a God of the valley. And we are told here that as the two armies pitched with this valley in between them, there was a mountain outside with all the Syrians.

There's mountains outside with Israel and Israel says pitched before them like two little flocks of kids. There is a massive Syrian army on the mountains. But here on Israel's side, there's like two little flocks of lambs, not even sheep.

That was the comparison. And you've got Ahab as your general. God says, Ahab, you're going to lead the battle.

You're in the valley. You couldn't have a worse king leading you. You couldn't have the odds more against you.

And now you're going to fight in the valley. And you know the enemy saying, you can't win in the valley. This is the worst place for you to fight in the valley.

Your God can't come through for you in the valley. Everything is against you. And you're locked into that situation.

For seven days, they sat and looked at each other. Then in one day, they engaged in a battle. Do you know what the Bible says here? In one day, Israel killed 100,000 of the Syrians in the valley.

In one day, they killed 100,000 of the enemy. Then as the enemy fled to Afic, an entire wall of the city fell and killed another 27,000. And you've got the Syrian king goes into an inner chamber and he hides himself.

And you know what, out of all of this, the first battle, God showed himself as the God of the hills. The second battle, God showed himself as the God of the valleys. What an extraordinary thing.

And I want you to hear and see here this morning that God is the God of the valleys. And in fact, he's so jealous that he wants to reveal himself. When you go into the Old Testament, listen to what Moses said to

Israel.

And God said to Israel about the land they were to go into, Deuteronomy 11, 11. But the land, notice it's the physical land and the physical land represents something. Mountains represent something.

Valleys represent something. The land, whether ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys. This land represents your Christian life, the life of the church, the life that you're to walk through as a Christian.

The hills represent certain times, seasons and events in that Christian life. All hills are different. All valleys are different.

No two of them are exactly the same. It could be a valley, but it looks different than other valleys. That's why they're named differently.

All hills are not the same. And yet look at God, he's saying, the land that I'm sending you into, you need to walk on it. You need to possess it.

You need to fight the enemy wherever you find them. I want you to possess all the hills of the land of Israel. I want you to possess, and you may not like this as much, all the valleys.

See, for your Christian life, it's God's will that during your lifetime as a Christian, you are to possess all the valleys. Oh, maybe in the past you've rejoiced and said, give me this mountain. Oh, let me possess and inherit all the mountains, but let me take you somewhere else.

God's plan for this Christian life is that you inherit every single valley. You say, but there's monsters in those valleys. There's giants in those valleys.

There's enemies in those valleys. I know it. I absolutely know it.

I'm not ignorant. And listen, it is a land of hills and valleys, not just hills. Some people's Christian lives, it's all hills.

That's all they talk about. Some churches that you go to, every meeting is a hilltop experience. I want to tell you, that's not only unnatural, unnormal, it's unbiblical, and it's unhealthy.

God says, I'm giving you mountains as well as valleys. Isn't this like last week and the previous weeks of the four seasons, that this diversity is vital for your life? You can't always be on a mountaintop. There's got to be valleys.

Do you think the valley is less God's will for your life than the mountaintop? You see, if it's all hilltop experiences, there's something very wrong. And drinketh in the water of the rain of heaven, a land which the Lord thy God careth for. The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it from the beginning of the year unto the end of the year.

So we see the hills and the valleys. God's eye is always there. He looks after the hills.

He looks after the valleys. He's got a plan and he's telling you, I want you to go into those valleys and possess them. I don't want you to be scared of them.

You know, Israel, when they went into the land, they tried to live in the hills and they're scared of the valleys. We know you're the God of the hills. We know we can have experiences with you.

We know we see you clearly up here, but I don't want to go into the valley. The new Christian life is going to be greatly lacking in that environment. Our Christian life is made up of both hills and valleys, and they're all important.

Paul writes in the New Testament, Philippians 4 and 11. He says, I have learned. He didn't just know it naturally.

He didn't begin like this. I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. Really, he was saying, whether it's a mountaintop or a valley, I have learned over the years to be content and satisfied.

If I'm in a valley, I'm as much in the will of God as on a mountaintop, and yet they're radically different. And so we see in the Bible, the Bible all through talks about valleys. I think there's at least 40 valleys named that I could preach on.

Can you imagine me preaching on each of these valleys over the next 40 weeks, going place by place? You'd be amazed what the Bible teaches. You see, how are you going to possess a valley when you don't even know that valley exists? You've never went there. You've never read about it.

You don't even know it exists. You could walk into a valley saying, get me out of here quick. Don't you know God wants you to possess, to own, to rule, to reign, to walk in that valley.

The valley isn't a bad place. It's not a nice place. It may be a hard place, but it's not outside of God's will.

When you go to the Old Testament, you have at least five Hebrew words for the word valley. So when you read in English, sometimes you read about the word valley. Other times, veil, plain, the dale, or the brook.

You know, when you think of a brook, you think of water running. But listen, the word brook in the Old Testament, it means that the river runs in it during the winter, but dries up during the summer. So it becomes a valley that you can walk through.

So what is a valley at another time? Could be a riverbed, but yet it's all talking about these same valleys. What is a valley? It is a low plain with either mountains close by sharply hemming you in, or it could be a wide expanse where mountains are at a distance, but you never get mountains without valleys. If you want to live in the mountains, I want to tell you, you cannot have mountains without an appropriate valley.

For every mountain, you get a valley. For every valley, you get a mountain. If you're in a valley here this morning, just keep walking.

There's a mountain up ahead. I want to tell you and warn you, if you're on a mountaintop experience this morning, just you keep walking, a valley's coming for you very soon. You'll want to just stand still on the mountain.

You remember Peter with his three friends, with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration? Remember, Christ was revealed on the mountain. You see, mountains are a place of unusual, extraordinary manifestation. I mean, things happen on the mountain that never happened in a valley.

And so Christ is revealed in his glorified state. What did Peter say? Master, will we build some houses here and let's just live here? That wasn't God's will. Peter says, I want to stay on the mountaintop.

I mean, I've heard the voice of the father speaking about the son. I have seen Christ in his glory. The rest of the disciples hadn't.

The ones down in the valley, remember, they're waiting and there's going to be a kid there that needs delivered. They're binding, they're loosing, they're rebuking. They can't get the child delivered.

They're up on the mountaintop. Peter is seeing Christ in his glory. Wouldn't you want to stay there? Wouldn't you begin building the stone, say, man, I'm going to make sure I build a house here.

No one's going to get me off this mountaintop. I mean, where else would God want you? You're seeing the glory. You're hearing the voice, audible voice of God.

Just to note over in Peter, Peter says, we've got a more sure word of prophecy than hearing an audible voice on that mount. You know, super spiritual people who say, I have heard the audible voice. Peter says, there's a more sure word of prophecy than hearing the audible voice of God.

And that wasn't saying that didn't happen. God can speak audibly in very life changing ways. But he said, this is more sure.

You're hanging around saying, God, speak to me. I want to hear your voice. You have a more sure word.

So the danger with the mountaintops, you want to stay there. As you read through the Bible, you have many mountaintops. You have Mount Moriah where actually you'll be called to lay down your life.

Son, what does God do? God provides an angel of the Lord will come to say, don't do that. I know you fear me. And look, there's a ram.

That's a mountaintop experience. Or what about Pisgah with Moses meeting God face to face. Remember God come down on the mount and the glory of God was there 40 days in the presence of God.

This is mountaintop experiences. Or Elijah on Mount Carmel where fire comes down and destroys all of this false religion. Hills and mountains are all through the song of Solomon.

They're very important. What about Christ on the Mount of Olives? He gives you prophecies about the last days. And so a mountaintop experience, you could have things revealed to you that won't happen for 2,000 years in exact detail.

There was the Mount of Transfiguration called Tabor as we said, or in Revelation 21 verse 10, John the apostle, listen, it says, he, God carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. I could preach an entire series on all of these mountaintop experiences. And you know what? You need mountaintop experiences.

If your entire Christian life is valleys, there's something wrong with that. If you live in valleys, walk in valleys, if you're stuck in valleys, there's something lacking in your Christian life. You're to possess the mountaintops.

Why haven't you been to Pisgah? Why haven't you been to Moriah? Why haven't you been to Carmel? Why haven't you visited the Mount of Olives and all the other mountains? You know there are mountaintop experiences where you see the glory of God. You find out the will of God. You meet with God face to face.

They are very, very real. But I want to show you there's more than that. Listen to the lies of the devil.

God is confined to the mountaintops. Your victory can only be found on the mountaintops, not in the valleys. I know none of you's have heard the devil whisper this.

It's only me. And it's only those in the Bible. You hear all the time.

Yeah, you can win the victory in the valley. But here they're saying you need certain mountaintop advantages if God is to give you the victory in the valley. Let me give you six points here about the valley.

And I'm just laying an overall view, the normal picture of a valley. What is a valley? What does it mean in your life? And listen, as we look at it, you're going to see a valley is a very important place in your spiritual walk. If you're in a deep valley, you've just come from a mountain.

If you've walked into a valley, you weren't always there. Where were you before? If you're in a deep valley, if you keep walking, you're going to walk out of this, guaranteed. Let me give you six points on what the valley is.

Number one, it's a low place. It's a spiritual place in your Christian life that you are to go into and possess. You're not to be dragged into a valley.

But when a valley appears, when you descend from heights and begin to walk, you need to go possess places like this. It's a spiritual place in your life. But what is a valley? It is a low place.

Listen to some of the names of valleys in the Bible. The valley of weeping, the valley of dry bones, the valley of death. Do you know there's a valley of hell, Gehenna, just outside of Jerusalem? Do you know there's certain valleys none of you want to go to? Because it's as close to hell, if not hell itself.

And I'm telling you, sinners who don't know Christ are in the valley of Gehenna. They're only a hairbreadth away from an eternity in hell. I hear sinners all the time saying, this is hell.

Oh, no, it's not. The worst of things anyone you've ever met has suffered in this lifetime is not hell. It definitely isn't hell.

They don't even know what hell is, if they can say that. But there is a valley of hell the Bible talks about. I don't want to preach on that here at this time.

But it's very real. And so we see the names of valleys are not nice names. Do you know there's a valley called the valley of giants? Do you want to go to that valley? Not one giant, not one glad, but a valley filled with giants, enemies that hate your guts.

Do you want to possess that valley? So there's not nice names for these valleys. A valley is a low place, a dark place, a hidden place. It's not ground level.

It's usually below ground level. It's a drop down in your walk. It's a descent.

It's a decline. It's a time when you're moving into something and you go, it's dark, it's gloomy, it's dangerous. I don't like the name that was at the entrance.

That name ought to have warned you what you're walking into here. It's a low time in your life. It's a low place in your Christian walk.

It's an actual situation, a period of circumstance, impossible situations. It is an atmosphere that you're surrounded by. When you walk into a valley and walk through a valley, you're literally surrounded by it.

It dominates how you think, how you see, how you feel, how you decide things. But notice a valley isn't a pit. You could get put in a pit, a hole in the ground like Joseph was.

That's not a valley. In a pit, you're static. But a valley is a long running thing.

You don't know how long it runs. You don't know when it begins and when it ends. You don't know all that is going to be in there, but you have some idea by the name that's given to it.

But it's not a pit. It's not a hole. You're actually walking in a valley.

You're not standing still. You're not sitting there waiting for it to pass. If you don't walk, you're going to stay in that valley.

If you find yourself in a perpetual valley, that's because you're sitting down. But you don't have to sit down in a valley. Do you know what you've got to do in a valley? A low place, a dark place, a hard place.

You've got to keep walking through the valley. Imagine walking through a place that you don't like. You've got to keep walking.

All the pressure's on you. Stand still. Stop.

Just sit down and say, I'm not playing until all of this is over. Then you'll die in that valley. I assure you, you'll spend 20 years in that valley.

Keep walking. You know what that's going to mean? You're going to have to walk by faith, not by sight, not by feelings, not by what you hear in your ears. You're going to have to keep walking.

Are you in a valley? Keep walking by faith. I know it's hard to do that. You say, is it more of the same? Yes.

You mean it's going to be like this tomorrow and next week and maybe the month ahead, maybe the entire year ahead? Yeah. Keep walking. But if you're walking in a valley, you have a promise.

There is an end to a valley. I don't read of one valley in the Bible that's perpetual, that's eternal, that circumferences, that girds the entire earth. I'm going to get in trouble again on that line for saying the earth's round.

Oh boy. But that's the issue here. Don't get sidetracked by that.

I want to tell you, when we're in a valley, you've got to walk by faith. You've got to walk with Christ. You've got to stir yourself, challenge yourself, saying, I've got to possess this valley.

Either that valley will possess you and rule you and own you, or you're going to say, I will overcome this valley. I'm not in this valley for it to destroy me or to mold me into its image. I'm here to triumph in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can I ask you, is your God the God of the valley? You're in a valley. Your God's dead. I'm in the valley.

My God's dead. He's deserted me. He's not here.

He's not speaking to me. Oh, that I was on a mountaintop experience again. Oh, I could see God up there.

I could hear God up there. He met with me. He spoke to me, revealed to me.

Down here in the valley, there's nothing. I can't see him. I can't feel him.

I can't discern his voice. I don't know his will. What are you going to keep doing? Is your God the God of the valley? You need to prove him in the valley.

Some Christians, when they're on the mountaintop, you go, wow, what a Christian. Then you see them in the valley and go, their God's died. Where is he? Oh, they're on the mountaintop and said, my God's the God of Pisgah.

My God's the God of Moriah. My God is the God of Carmel. Easy to say that when fire is coming down and destroying the false prophets.

Oh yeah, very easy. You look very spiritual there. You know, if you want to see who someone is, go and look at them in the valley.

Then you'll see who they are. No, you won't. You'll see who their God is.

God is proved in the valley. You've got to keep walking by faith. And so that's the first mark of the valley.

It's a low place. That's what a valley is. It's a dark place.

It's not an easy place. Number two, it's a visionless place or a place without vision. I've never seen anyone in a valley who had a clear, open, present vision of things.

You need to possess it. It serves a purpose. When you're in a valley, you cannot see like you could see on the mountaintop or as you're descending the mountain.

You know what you begin to ask? Why am I here? What is the purpose of being in this valley? How long am I going to be here? Where is God in the valley? You're starting to sound like a Syrian now. God isn't the God of the valley. When you can't see your God, then you begin to go, where are you? Don't you believe the Bible? It says, I'll never leave you, never forsake you.

You can't see me, therefore you think I'm not there. You can't hear me, therefore you think I'm not there. You don't feel ecstatic, therefore you think God's dead.

God, where are you? He's there going, I'm right beside you. Do you honestly think you'd survive the valley if I wasn't here? Don't you think I am closer to you in the valley than I was on the mountaintop? That's impossible. Do you honestly think that? Don't you realize God knows you need him more in the valley when you can't see him, hear him, feel him, understand him.

When you're questioning, that's when you need him more than on the hilltop. It's easy to be a Christian on the hilltop. I once met a Christian and he said, do you know what? I always have a mountain experience.

I said, what? Say that again. He says, I always have a mountain experience in my life. I said, that's impossible.

He says, let me explain. He says, sometimes I'm on top of the mountain, sometimes the mountain's on top of me, but I always have a mountain experience. It's one or the other.

I said, no, I understand. I can really believe that. You see, in a valley, you lose sight.

You're not on top of the hill, being able to see everything clearly and look into the heavens with glory. For six years, I lived in the valleys of Wales, a very depressing place, I want to tell you, especially since Maggie bulldozed all the mines in, it became a hyper-depressed place. But more than that, I noticed where I lived, I lived just opposite Aberfan in a little village called Merthyr Vale.

And I'd look out and I'd go, I'm glad I'm not in Aberfan. You know, there's hills all around us, everywhere, hills and valleys. The south of Wales is marked by it.

And I'd look over to Aberfan about four o'clock in the afternoon and go, I'm so glad I don't live in Aberfan. You know why? Because of the hills, they lose sunlight quicker than me. I've got about another hour or two hours or two and a half hours of sunlight.

Do you realise when you live in a valley, it can become a very dark place depending on where you are. And so there was an entire community lost the direct sunlight two hours quicker. Do you know why? The mountains shaded the sun.

And so when you live in a valley, hills and mountains become barriers and obstacles. If you're on top of them, they're a blessing. When you live in the valley below them, that same mountain can actually seem to be a curse.

It mocks you. It hides God from you. You look at it and go, oh, if I was on top of it, I'd have such an experience.

But you're not. You're at the bottom of it, living in its very shade. And when you're in the shade of mountains, it can get very, very dark.

You can't see the way out of a valley. You can't see the direction ahead. If you're on the mountain, you'd say, oh yeah, just go down that pathway, turn left, turn right.

You'll be out of there in five minutes. When you're in the valley, you go, there's no way out of this thing. I don't know how long this is going to last.

No vision of the mountaintops. You have no perspective. You cannot see the way ahead.

You can't even plan in a valley. My granddad was a man filled with wise sayings. He was a farmer.

He always said, what you've decided in the light, don't change in the darkness. See, as a Christian, see, as soon as Christians get into valleys, they want to change everything. And they begin to change.

Wait until you're back in the light. Never change your plans in darkness when the lights are out. Very dangerous.

You know why? You're not thinking clearly. You're not seeing clearly. And so when you're in a valley, be very careful how you think.

Do you remember Joseph when he was in the prison? God left him there years. He's in a valley for years. Do you think Joseph could see clearly? A clear understanding of God's plan in the prison? There he is.

He had a word from the Lord, a dream from the Lord. You know what? All your brothers, including your mommy and daddy, are going to bow down and reverence you one day. Oh, praise the Lord.

I'll go and tell all my brothers. Now he's sitting in a prison cell, and I bet it was a deep, low prison cell in Egypt. You know what he's going? What am I doing here? God's forgotten about me.

He starts looking at the man. You help me. You speak for me.

You act for me. You remember me. God says, no, it's not going to happen.

You know why? You need to possess. You will not get out of this prison until you possess this valley. Some of you are still in a valley because you haven't possessed it.

You're moaning. You're depressed. You're discouraged.

You're cursing the darkness. You know what God says? I want something more. I want you to possess and overcome.

It hasn't done its work. What about David in the caves being chased by Saul, who's got a spear? Oh, I'm the anointed of God. Samuel anointed me.

I've got a prophecy that I'll be king of Israel. And you're in caves being hunted for your life. And you know what? You begin to say there's only a breadth between me and death.

What's the point of all of this? Third of all, it's a place without advantage. In Judges chapter four, we read about Barak, who was helped by Deborah. And they're on top of Mount Tabor.

And they've got 10,000 of an army. And all of the enemy, the Canaanites, come and camp in the valley. I mean, a massive army.

You've got 10,000 men. Do you know what God spoke to Barak? You need to run down into that valley on your feet. They've got chariots.

They've got horses. They've got multitudes. But this is God's will.

Listen, Barak, if you really believe this is God, you need to run down into the midst of the enemy. And so a vision, you lose the advantage. You know, in warfare, the strategy is always take the high ground.

That's what we are taught in army. Always take the high ground. You know, it's easier to be on a mountaintop shooting down at the enemy than to be in the valley trying to fight your way up against the Japanese in the Second World War.

It's a massacre. And so the advantage is always on the mountaintop, naturally speaking. And yet God says, I want you to run down into the valley.

You know why? Because you're going to say I'm the God of the valley. Naturally, humanly speaking, the valley is a place where you lose all advantage. Good soldiers stay on the mountains and fight against their enemies in the valley.

If God is to be God of the valleys, there's times in your life where you need to be stripped of all the natural advantages. You're not going to have the glorious vision of Christ. You're not going to be hearing Him speak to you.

It's not going to be like dew falling on your head. You're not going to have an open vision of the future. You're going to have to go down into the valley and then you're going to say I am the God of the valley.

You want to stay on the hilltop? That isn't the place where you're going to grow. You need to descend. And you know what? You lose all advantage.

That's why when you're in a valley, you get scared, disturbed, worried. God, are you there? God, am I going the right direction? God, what's the purpose of all of this? It's because you've lost natural advantage, but surely that should be the time your faith is in God. If you're in a valley and you're getting scared, it shows you believed in the God of the hilltops.

You had faith that God is the God of the mountaintops. Everyone believes in God, that He is the God of the mountaintops and the hills. He reigns there.

He rules there. He's triumphant there. I can gain victories there.

We want to live in the mountaintops because we gain victories. We descend down into the valley. We go, I don't feel you anymore.

Does the presence of God depend on you feeling Him, sensing Him, seeing Him, hearing Him, touching Him, visions, dreams, prophecies? And I believe in all those things. You know that. I believe in all the hilltop experiences.

But listen, there are valleys to possess. Number four, it's a place of great battles and victories. What's the valley? This marks every valley in the Bible.

It's a place of great battles. Very few battles happen on hilltops. Elijah facing the 850 prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth was very unusual.

It's outstanding in the Bible that such a confrontation happened on a mountaintop. It's very unique. It's very unusual.

It was very rare. But battles between armies and armies, between the enemy and God's children, they always happen in the valley. Let me prove it to you.

We read in the book of Genesis about the battle of nine kings. The four kings of the Macedonians came across, came against the five kings of the Jordan valley. Remember, Sodom and Gomorrah was there and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were fighting.

So here's a great war and it's fought in the valley of Siddam near to Sodom and Gomorrah. There was a great war. Then they destroyed the city of Sodom and Gomorrah or ransacked it.

Remember Lot, that backslidden nephew of Abraham. In all of that warfare, he got taken as a prisoner, carried away. Do you know who hears about it? Abram, his uncle hears about it.

He goes, man, I told him, I tried to speak. Don't go and stay in that valley of Sodom. Do you know there's some Christians, they've moved their house into the valley of Siddam.

It's a place of sin. They set their tent. You know how dangerous that is? This is a valley of sin.

And if you live in the valley of sin, you'll get in trouble. You cannot make your house in the valley of Siddam and think you're not going to get in trouble. It's a place of warfare.

But here's Abram comes down from Hebron, the mountain top of Hebron. And you know what he has? I think it's 350 odd trained servants, trained in his own home. He says, let's go get them.

Guess who won? Abram and his trained servants defeated all of these kings and their army and rescued Lot and all of the other treasures. You see, valleys are a place of warfare. In Judges chapter four, like we just said, Barak led his 10,000 soldiers into the valley and he defeated the enemy.

What about Joshua? When you begin to read about Israel moving into the land of promise, we read of one battle where Joshua moves into the valley of Agilon. And remember that he's winning the battle and he prays, Lord, hold the sun still. Stop the sun on its course while we defeat them.

If we have the sun go down tonight, they're going to get away. We need to utterly destroy the enemy. Do you know in the book of Joshua, we read a battle after battle after battle in the valleys.

We read of Joshua speaking and saying, go conquer the valley. And you know what the tribe say? What are you serious? There's our entire, it's down there. There's an entire army.

There's Canaanites and Amalekites and all sorts of other enemies. And you want us to go down and possess it? Yes. One of the tribes come to Joshua and said, look, these mountains are getting too small, too cramped for us.

He said, just move into the valley. That means warfare. That means battles.

Yes. Do you know what? If you're going to grow, you need to triumph in these valleys. You need to win victories over them.

Let me tell another valley. And you know this very well. All of you know this battle very well.

The valley of Elah. Who here knows what the valley of Elah is or what battle took place there? David and Goliath. Do you realize that David ran against, both armies are in hilltops.

Both armies for 40 days are facing each other. They're both trying to stay in the mountaintops. Goliath comes into the valley, says, send me someone to fight.

What does young David, without a thought, he runs at Goliath in the valley. You know, all the rest of the army was frozen. Saul was frozen.

But here's a young man at a young age, at an early time. You know what? He's so new as God. My God is the God of the valley.

My God is the God that will slay this Goliath. While other people are saying, look, look at the size of him. We can't fight him.

He's too big. You know what David says? He says, man, he's so big, I can't miss him. You think his size is a disadvantage? It's my advantage.

Why? Because God is on my side. I will overcome. There's the valley of Jezreel on the plain of Megiddo.

34 battles have been at least fought in the battle of Megiddo. Do you know Napoleon fought a battle in the valley of Megiddo? That valley is a battle place. Remember in Judges 7, Gideon fights the Midianites in the valley of Megiddo.

That's where he took them on. He proved his God was the God of the valleys. And you know, Megiddo is the place where the last battle is going to be fought against the enemy.

God's going to gather all the armies of the world. And in that valley, it's going to be the last war that happens of our history. All of the armies of the world will gather there to fight one another and to fight the armies of God.

And so we see the valley is often a place of great, unusual, overwhelming battles all through the Bible. But it's also a place of victories. You know, there's very few victories over the enemy on the mountaintop.

You think all the victories are on the mountaintop. They're not. Carmel was unusual.

Look how many times there's experiences on the mountaintop, but the devil doesn't get defeated. Armies aren't engaged. There's no destruction of the enemy.

Very rare on mountaintops. Oh, it's glorious, but you've never fought the enemy. You've got to go into the valley to engage the enemy.

That's where you fight him. You know, King Saul was also defeated by the Philistines in the valley of Megiddo. That's where he was destroyed.

And I want to tell you, I don't want to be in the valley when I'm backslidden, when I'm suspicious, when I'm disobedient, when I'm rebellious, when I'm going to witches instead of going to God. You will die in these valleys. Valleys are very dangerous places if you don't have the power of God on you.

And so the valley is a place of great enemies. You will find iron chariots there. You will find enemies that are despicable.

You will find a valley filled with giants. You'll find Goliath there. All these enemies are in the valley.

Do you know there's valleys waiting filled with enemies? They're just saying, come here, we're waiting on you. Because you know what? We don't believe your God is the God of the valley. Oh yes, you've had your ecstatic experience in the meetings and the conferences surrounded by Christians, caught up in the Lord.

You feel good. Come here to the valley and we'll see who your God is. This is where you prove who your God is.

Do you know the valley? It's a good place for warfare. It's accessible. Mountaintops aren't.

I used to go pray on a mountaintop. You know why? I could shout. I could pray.

I could say, hallelujah. And you know what? Where I used to pray, I could look down. It was Ruber's Lawn, Scotland.

And I'd look down any side. I've got about 30 minutes. I can see anyone coming.

If they come up this side, I could go down the other side. They'd be hours away from me. They wouldn't even get near me.

I could just be up there, enjoy my whole day or half a day seeking the Lord, reading, enjoying myself. Mountaintops aren't easily accessible. Valleys are.

Valleys are a logical place for warfare. There's plenty of space. There's that element of surprise if you're going to attack someone.

And so a valley can be a very dangerous place. But listen, the greatest victories of the Bible are in valleys, not on mountains, not on normal ground. They are actually in valleys.

And that's where we prove that our God is the God of the Bible. Number five, a valley is a well-watered place. Don't think it's just a negative place.

It is a well-watered place. You think there's nice streams on hillsides. That's nothing compared to valleys.

It says in Psalm 104 verse 10, He, that is God, sendeth the springs into the valleys. Springs may begin on mountainsides, mountaintop experiences. You may have met God on a mountaintop and a spring of water opens up.

Can I tell you where all the water's going to flow? Down into the valley. You may sip the water on the hillside, but if you want to really enjoy the benefits of it, it's going to flow down into the valley. And it says, which run among the hills.

All the rivers on the hills flow down into the valleys. All the blessings of the mountains are flowing down in. Do you realize that's why God gives you mountaintop experiences? That's why He speaks to you in the mountaintop.

That's why He reveals Himself on the mountaintop. You know why? To sustain you in the valleys. Everything of the mountains flows down spiritually in your Christian life.

Have you enjoyed mountaintop experiences? It wasn't to be enjoyed on the mountaintop. It is to help you in the valley. Why did God speak to you in the mountaintop? Why did He reveal Himself? Why did He show you something? It was that you can walk through the valley.

He speaks to you in the mountaintop because He's going to be silent in the valley. He shows you something on the mountaintop because you're not going to see it in the valley. He reveals something because you're going to need it in the valley.

And so these waters flow down into the valley. Deuteronomy 11, 11. But the land, whether you go to possess it as a land of hills and valleys that drinketh in the water of the rain of heaven.

You know in the valleys you get rain from heaven. The valleys drink in the water of heaven. Rivers flow there.

Streams flow there. You can have several mountains around you and all of their streams are flowing down into that one valley. A valley is a wonderful place of refreshing waters.

Don't you need it in the valley? You can't see, you can't feel, you can't hear. That's where you need these waters. These waters will remind you of God's provision that He is the God of the valleys.

In Isaiah chapter 41 and 18 He says, I will open up rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys. There are certain fountains you'll only find in the valleys. Do you know there's certain scriptures I've known all my life and it's only in the past five months they mean anything because of the valley I'm in.

You're going to find this in every trial in your life. You can know the Bible, read the Bible, memorize those scriptures but they don't take on effect until you've been in the valley. When I was 21 years old I went into an environment of deception, false teaching and confusion and there were mature Christians around me trying to deceive me and manipulate me.

I was very sincere before the Lord. You know when I came out of that and I went back to a real Bible believing church and they begin to sing the old hymns again and I'm there, I go, I was raised in these hymns from a little boy and I thought oh the old hymns, I love the new worship and for the first time at 21, 22 I stood there in church and began to weep and cry over the truths in the old hymns and I went hold on, this didn't affect me before, I didn't weep, I didn't understand these hymns before, I didn't even understand the words in them. How is that? It's because I've just been through a valley of deception where truth becomes so, so precious unto me again.

Sixth and lastly, a valley is a fruitful place and I'm going to finish with this. Do you realise very little growth takes place on mountaintops? Look at all the pictures, mountains, no growth on them. I know it's not always the case but the higher the mountain the less the growth.

The more open, the further you can see, the less growth there is there. If you stayed on the mountaintop there'd be very little growth there. You think that's where I'd grow, if God can speak to me I'll grow in my Christian walk.

If I see everything, God if you show me everything clearly, if you send me an angel I will mature, I'm going to grow, I'll be so spiritual. God knows that isn't true. All the growth happens in the valley.

You know everything flowing into that valley. That valley becomes lush, that valley becomes green. Oh I know it's not nice, there's enemies, dangers in that valley but everything is flowing into that valley.

In the Song of Solomon chapter 6 and 11 it says, I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley. There's a lot of fruit in the valley and to see whether the vine flourished. Where does the vine grow? In the valley.

And the pomegranates budded. Psalm 65 verse 13. The pastures are clothed with flocks.

The valleys also are covered with corn. They shout for joy and also sing. Where are you going to get the corn in the valley? Corn doesn't grow on mountain sides.

Corn isn't grown on hilltops. You will never feed yourself or bring in a harvest on top of a hilltop. You'll never do that.

What you get in the hilltop, you need it in the valley. You need it in the harvest but you'll never grow what you need to eat on the hilltop. You want to live there? Can you imagine if Jesus had said, yes Peter build your little hill or build your little house.

Let's just live here until you're an old man. Can you imagine the barrenness? What a false conception. Here's Peter the greatest apostle.

I just want to stay here. What build your little idol and say, do you know God audibly spoke here and I heard it. I'll write a book on it.

I'll start a website. I'll have a ministry. Everyone's going to come here.

They'll come and I'll say, yes let me tell you the story. For the one millionth time I was standing here, he was standing over there. I saw him glorified.

His garments turned white. I heard this voice. He never would have went anywhere.

He wouldn't have went and evangelized in Babylon. He wouldn't have went and preached the gospel in Cornelius's house. Can you imagine what would have been lost to the church? He wouldn't have written his two letters saying, you know what? You've got a more sure word of prophecy.

If he built a little house in that mountain, he wouldn't have believed that. He would say, I heard an audible voice. I want everyone to know.

Everyone would say, come see the man who heard an audible voice. He's writing a third volume about it from a different angle with some other eyewitnesses. But those two letters wouldn't have been written and he never would have written.

You've got a more sure word of prophecy than hearing an audible voice. Literally hearing the audible voice of God. He never would have written that.

But you know what? When you get down into the valley, you begin to understand things and see them. It's a remarkable thing that we're dealing with. That the valley is a fruitful place of growth.

The brook Eskil or the valley of Eskil, when the 12 spies are sent into the land, say go spot out, come back, give us a report. They come back with just one bunch of grapes held between two men. They were luscious.

Where did you get those grapes? In the valley. Oh, let's go in and possess the land. Oh no, we saw giants.

We saw walled cities. We saw enemies. I don't think we can go in.

What? You're bringing back all the fruit that if we go in there and possess that, we're going to have fruit the likes of which we've never seen in our entire world. And you 10 spies are saying, ah, there's giants in there. Do you realise how dangerous it is when you see the enemy and you predict your own defeat and yet there's such fruit there and you're going to talk your way out that you'll never enjoy it for the next 40 years and you'll die in a wilderness walking in circles.

Do you notice that out in the wilderness for 40 years, there's no enemies, there's no battles, there's no giants, there's no walled cities. Not for 40 years they didn't see one enemy apart from their own stinking

flesh. But as soon as you move into the land of promise, you see giants, you see opposition, there's going to be real warfare.

But do you know what? If you go in there, you're going to have bountiful fruit. Let's stand, let's pray here. Thank you, Lord Jesus.

We give you glory, we give you praise, oh God. Lord God, we confess that you are the God of the valleys. We don't want to believe the devil's lies, oh God.

We know the enemy says that our God cannot bring us into victory in the valleys. But oh God, you're not only the God of the hilltops, you're not only the God of the mountains. My God, you're not only the God who speaks audibly and reveals himself and does miracles and sends fire.

But oh God, you are the God of the valley. When we don't hear anything or feel anything or see anything, you're the God that stands in the midst of us. You're the God that gives us a victory over the greatest enemies.

You're the God that sends us into the valley. You're the God that leads us through the valley of the shadow of death. My God, I do pray this morning, this day, oh God, give us courage, oh God, to realize that you are the God of the valley.

Lord God, teach us, oh God, show us. My God, give us testimonies that we might possess these valleys, that we might possess the valley, not the shadow of death, that we might possess the valley of chance, that we might possess the valley of our enemies, the valley of dry booms. Lord God, I pray as a church, as individuals, lead us forward, that we might triumph and gain a testimony in these valleys.

In Jesus' mighty name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/-m9npLOd4OY.mp4>

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