

How Much Can You Lose Without Losing Your Faith

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon challenges listeners to evaluate their faith in the face of loss and adversity, emphasizing God's unwavering presence and the importance of surrendering to His will.

Duration: 52:36

Scripture: Romans 14:12, Hebrews 9:13

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the impending judgment of God upon the world. He believes that this judgment will encompass all of human history, from the first man Adam to the last person before the dissolution of the heavens and the earth. The preacher refers to biblical passages that describe the fear and despair of those who realize the severity of God's anger. He also highlights the rampant sin and disobedience in society, suggesting that God would be justified in bringing judgment upon it. The sermon concludes with a call for individuals to draw closer to God and seek His glory rather than pursuing worldly ambitions.

Transcript

We thank you tonight for the countless blessings that we've had even this day. As we look back, we bless you. Some of us may be more deeply in sin and in the mire.

I remember the word of the psalmist, he says, he hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquity. We thank you that as far as the east is from the west, so far as you put our record behind your back, we think of all that lays before us. But one day we shall see thee face to face, the face that overwhelmed John on the Isle of Tadmos, the face that Isaiah saw in all his majesty and in all his glory, and Daniel the same.

We thank you that we've not followed cunningly devised fables. We bless you again for this word, this lamp to our feet and this light unto our path. If we walk in darkness, it's by choice.

There's a deliberate stepping out of light, which always reveals and exposes us, to try and cover up in darkness where we can't be seen. But Lord, we know there's nothing hid from your eyes. We see through a glass darkly, you never see through a glass darkly.

We know in part, and what a small part it is. But Lord, I bless you for the vastness of your person as we've sung already tonight, immortal, invisible, God only wise. Before the earth was formed, or as you wrote so beautifully, before the trees of the field clap their hands, before the morning stars sang together, you were there.

And we know we have that awesome picture we should all gaze at more often. In the book of the Revelation, the heaven and the earth fled from that face. Earlier in the book, I think of the place where it says the wicked, the high and lofty, the kings of the earth, or the poor.

There was a moment when they realized their despair, their desperate situation, and they called on the rocks and hills to hide them from the face. The face now that's livid with anger. The face such as Moses said when he said, Will thou not turn from thy fierce wrath? Lord, I believe we've seen enough in America today that if you burned us like a sinner tonight, we wouldn't have an argument with you.

You've looked over a million transgressions of the Ten Commandments. You see people deliberately violating your laws, planning sin tonight, buying it, selling it, eating it, drinking it. And it looks, Lord, as though you just lean back and do nothing about it.

But you've warned us in your holy word that God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world. I believe, Lord, with all my heart that day is going to be a replay of history from the first man, Adam, in the world to the last one that died before you dissolved the heavens and the earth. All the ancient empires are going to rise, all the kings, and all the noble men, and all who in any way have shaped or haven't shaped the course of this world.

Every one of us must give an account in that day. As we sang earlier tonight about your righteousness, I remember the Wesley hymn that says, Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, my beauty are my glorious dress. And its flaming walls in these arrayed with joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in that great day, and who ought to my charge shall lay, fully absolved from this I am, from fear and death and sin and shame. What a blessed thing it is, Lord, to have a gift by your mercy of a conscience that's been purged with the blood of Christ. For the blood of goats, of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified only to the purifying of the flesh.

But how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot. I don't remember that the scripture called you, Lord Jesus, a great lamb, but surely you're the greatest lamb that ever was. Even the so-called perfect lamb in the Old Testament had its imperfections, but we thank you, you are so perfect, you satisfy the heart of God.

I wonder, Lord, if in that moment when you said it is finished, and you ended the Old Testament economy, I wonder if it was at that time that all the beings in heaven, whoever they are, sang the hallelujah chorus, sang blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sit upon the throne. I think of the kings of this earth. The queen of England wears a crown worth of maybe seven or eight million dollars.

Charlemagne, I believe, had a crown made out of a gun that he captured from his enemy. Other men have had crowns, and yet the most memorable crown ever was made by men in scorn. It was a crown of thorns.

I wonder what those men will feel like when they see you, Lord, in all your majesty, in all your glory. Maybe two fall at your feet as dead. Lord Jesus, you're our only hope in this hopeless world.

You're our only light in this dark world. You're our only peace in a world that's bent on war, spending billions to kill others. But we thank you that even now you are our light and our life and our salvation.

And the psalmist says, the Lord is my light. Whom then shall I be afraid? We sang tonight about being fearless because of your majesty, your power, your promises to be with us. We pray for missionaries tonight.

We bless you for those who recklessly threw away their careers. They were destined maybe to be great research scientists in medicine, but they threw it away because of something you commanded them to do. I think again about Afghanistan was mentioned today, trying to bring conscience to this Gorbachev, whoever he is.

He shrugged it off, the misery, the torture, the agony. And whatsoever men saw they reap, hell will be a worse hell for them because they made people live through hell. We think of those confined in Russia that we don't know much about and maybe tragically don't think or pray too much for them.

Lord, I wish you'd provoke us to anger and give us, give them a revival in Russia to make us see how stupid we are. Time to work it up in a TV show. Lord, I maybe speak for others here tonight.

I'm so weary of seeing people try to do things in the energy of the flesh, which can only be done in the spirit. And remember that you came down, Lord Jesus, not in a flaming chariot as Elijah went up, but stealing through the back door as it were, through a woman's room. And then you didn't come down in the temple, you came down in an upper room with some very ordinary people who became most extraordinary.

You're still in that business, Lord. Teach us how to pray through with a buoyant faith, to lay hold of your precious promises. I think of Esau, when he had been treated, he begged at his father's feet.

I guess he screamed it out. I said, I've got one blessing. Bless me, even me or my father.

Well, Lord, we might ask, have you only ever one Finney? Only one Wesley out of the billions of earth? Lord, respectfully, in the light of the judgment seat, I believe you can do better than that. I believe you'll raise up greater men. Men are not itching for a place in the sun.

Men are not trying to build something with their name on it. Men were a hundred percent pure to see the glory of God. Men and women are sick of playing church.

Men and women who want to be good, but don't want to be holy. They want to sing, I am thine, O Lord, but all the time they keep a tight grip on themselves, on their hearts, on their affections, on their wills, on their time. Lord, I believe we're very near the end of time, and yet Joel says that you will pour out your spirit and all flesh.

Be merciful, do that a little here tonight, as much as we can bear. Wesley said, in one hymn I think, show me, Lord, as I can bear the depth of inbred sin. Show us what pollution hinders your perfect way in our lives.

Show us how to move, and when to move, and where to move. We pray again for this fellowship here, you'll give wisdom to the leaders, and for Gates of Life, the same, and for YWAM, as their special night comes up, a couple of nights next week, and ask for your blessing for Community Christian Church, and

for Brother Joel Foss, thank you for that precious man and that work. Now Lord, we ask you in the language of your own word, as we come to your book tonight, that you'll open our eyes, as we open the book, that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law, in Jesus name.

Thank you. Okay, let's look at the book, and look at the book. The Book of Judges, in chapter 18.

I think I mentioned this before, but let me say it again, because some of you aren't here anyhow. When the early Methodists started moving, and they moved in America, remember, they had circuit riders. Well, the circuit comes from the word circle, circus.

But they weren't comedians by any way. John Wesley rode 245,000 miles on horseback, not on the same horse. There's only one record greater than that, that was by the great American Bishop Hassebery.

And he rode about 40,000 miles more than Wesley. So they had the circuit rider who went round, here, there, and everywhere. He would come the first Sunday here, and the second Sunday there, and they knew when he was coming.

Then they had pastors who stayed to build up the people. And then they had some people who were called exhorters. One lady told me, you're not an exhorter, you're an exhaustor.

Very good. Now, this isn't a sermon tonight, it's not a Bible reading. It's an exhortation.

I guess you'd say this Book of Judges is exciting, or thrilling, or inspiring. It has majestic stories, like the life of Samson. It has, of course, the great story of Gideon.

And then a little over here you have Berak and Jephaniah. Quite a number of people, mentioned in Hebrews 11, are mentioned here in the wonderful Book of Judges. Judges 18, verse 24.

And he said, You've taken away my gods, which I made, and the priest, and you've gone away. And what have I more? And what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee? Go back to verse 18, it says, These went in, they were five men that had been sent out to spy. They went into Micah's house and fetched the carved image, the ephod, the teraphim, the molten image.

Then said the priest, What do ye hear? The story actually begins in the previous chapter, in the 17th chapter. In verse 1 it says, There was a man of Mount Ephraim whose name was Micah. Now, he's not Micah the prophet by a long way.

His mother, you know how mysterious women are with money. And she managed to collect eleven hundred shekels of silver. That was a vast fortune.

And she hid it, and her son found it. And while she's praying, while she's calling on God to curse the man, he bursts in at the door. Verse 2, And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, and which thou hast cursed, and you spake of also in mine ears.

Behold, the silver is with me, I took it. And his mother said, Bless thee, my son, not for stealing it, but for acknowledging he had stolen it. And go down the chapters when you go home, I won't tell you it all.

Verse 4, He restored the money to his mother, and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to the founder, and he made thereof a graven image and a molten image. So you see what she did. She took her wealth and put it into a molten image, not a golden cup, a silver cup.

So wealth became two things, a wealth and a worship. Now in the chapter that we read, these men had been sent out to spy, I'm not going to mention them all the time, because of time of course. It says that they sent five men, if you read the 18th chapter.

You come down to verse 7, the five men departed and came to Laish, and saw the people there, and how they dwelt. Then you go down to verse 14, Then answered the five men that went out to spy the country of Laish, Do you know what there is in these houses? An ephod and a terephim. Now this was a day, I'm trying to find the chapter here, chapter 18, the first verse again.

In those days there was no king in Israel. Now flip over if you can, I can on the page to verse 6 of the previous chapter. In those days there was no king in Israel.

Every man did that which is right in his own eyes. Is that where we're living now? A hedonistic, a hedonistic society. If you like it, do it.

Doesn't matter who gets hurt. If it satisfies you, go for it. I suddenly realized the other day, you know, we talk about man's free will.

I'll tell you where it stops. At the grave. From there it's God's will.

Our dear Paul was talking, some of you will hear, about the kingdom of God. You know millions of people in thousands of churches have said hundreds of times, thy kingdom come. And if you ask them going out, what do you mean they don't have a slightest idea? But there, Dr. Tulsa said, if you say thy kingdom come, it's my kingdom go.

The only way his kingdom can come and take possession of me, and I'm going to talk on this on Friday night, about the kingdom, is for me to make total surrender, have nothing. A place where self ceases, self-interest, self-seeking, self-glory. And as Dr. Tulsa used to say so often, if you saw a man going down Main Street in Jerusalem with a cross, you knew some things about him.

Number one, he wasn't coming back. Number two, as soon as he put that cross on his shoulder, he had no plans for the future. And Jesus says, you take up your cross.

Taking it up isn't so difficult, it's getting on it. And yet we're living in a lawless day, we're living in a lawless society, we're living in a lawless church. If you tell people you keep the Sabbath, they laugh at you.

You keep Sundays sanctified? Yes. Why? Because it's the only commandment out of ten we remember on it. Oh, I don't think too much about that, I think it's legalism.

Well, go down a bit further down in the same ten commandments, thou shalt not commit adultery, forget it, it's legalism, go do it. We break one Sabbath, and the word of God says, he that breaks one point is guilty of all. It shows that I'm in a state of rebellion.

You've taken away my gods and my priest, and what have I more? I want to ask you a simple question. It's simple, but it's involved. How much could you lose without losing your faith in God? When we lived in England, Dr. Edwin Sangster was the head of the Methodist church.

He was a prince of a man, kind of a man I'd like to be built like. He was about six foot one, had black, beautiful wavy hair, marvelous teeth, physically strong, a brilliant scholar in Hebrew and Greek, and I don't know any, I know a little Hebrew, he used to repair my slacks in New York, and I know a little Greek, I

used to park my car in his place, literally. But Sangster was a prince of many, had a marvelous personality.

He filled the pulpit in more ways than one, he was big, strong, but he had a colossal concept of God. Tell you what kind of a man he was, when war broke out, the Second World War, I remember First World War too, Second World War they started bombing London, and when the sirens went you had to go into a deep shelter, underground shelter. Well most preachers went and lived in the country and came in Sunday morning on the train to preach.

Dr. Sangster went down in the basement with the prostitutes and drunks and pimps and all the other junk, and he stayed there for three years, do you know what he did? He wrote a marvelous book, I have a copy of it. One time I think he had all his books. He wrote his thesis for his Ph.D. amidst all the smoking and swearing and dancing and yelling, for three years he stuck at it and got his Ph.D. degree in a hellhole like that.

He was typical of the grace of the man. He was the salt, he was the light, he was the authority. There was never any serious, serious fighting in the area that he ruled over.

Well he had a friend, a counterpart in Baltimore, Maryland, and he used to love to tell a story about this man in Baltimore. He had a very large church, he filled it morning and night, no preachers can preach twice on Sundays now, it's too much. He preached one Sunday morning on Romans 8, 28, and they said the stillness of eternity came down on the meeting.

Going out he stood at the door and people were choking and shedding tears and trying to mumble through their gratitude, their gratitude to him. Oh that's the most amazing sermon you or anyone else ever preached. God came so near to us, there was a hush of eternity.

We want to thank you. Dr. Sanchez says they all went except one little old lady. She looked about 90 and looked as though she drank vinegar every day of her life.

And as the others turned, she leapt at him, literally leapt and got hold of his lapel and hung herself on him. All right for you saying that. You're the rich father, life has been good to you.

You have a home, you have a boat, you have a car, you tour in summer, you go away for a month. Well I don't say it like you say it, Romans 8, 28, all things work together. Not for me.

After I'd been married two years, we had a little boy and he'd been chronically sick for men until now. Six months after that my wife, my husband died. I guess that was a relief.

Life hasn't been good to me, everything's been wrong. It's been hardship, I can't make ends meet. I've had bad health, I've had little help.

And she went through a list of calamities that she had. Knew it's all right for you. You were born in a very comfortable home, you've had a marvellous education, you're a wonderful man, you're a great sportsman, you're this and the other.

She rattled it all off to him. He said the Lord has been good unto me, the lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places and I have a godly heritage. Yes, she barked and off she went.

Next Sunday morning the church which was usually packed was over-packed. They didn't have enough seats, people stood all over the place. That brilliant pastor came and they had to lead him to the pulpit and he fell for the pulpit.

And he said we had a very blessed Sabbath, I like to call it that name, Sabbath last Sabbath. One of the most more overwhelming meetings we have ever had. People were never so gracious and thankful except for one woman.

I don't know if you were here this morning. As you know last Tuesday I was cleaning my sporting gun and it went off and put out both my eyes. I've collected a wonderful library for years, I can't read a thing.

I love to get on the lake in my boat, I can't use it. I like to drive through the mountains, I can't do that. I used to stand on certain positions and watch the day dying in the west, I can't do that.

Life has suddenly gone from light to darkness, from the fingers that were beckoning me to more spiritual heights, more revelations, more understanding of this profound world, and suddenly I'm pitched into a world of darkness. I don't know if that little lady is here, but lady please listen. I want to tell you something.

I've preached many years in many places, had so-called success, and what have you got? I've talked about God, I've talked about loving kindness, I've talked about tender mercies. But I want to tell you something lady, with all my years of traveling, collecting precious books, and all the accolades I've had, I want to tell you something. Since last Tuesday Jesus Christ has been more real to me than ever he was when I died at sea.

He's drawn me to his bosom, he's whispered to me. I can't yet read braille. It's all coming from my memory.

The Lord said whatsoever the Spirit has taught you, he'll bring to your remembrance. And he's been doing that all the week. And the future is as bright as God.

All things work together for God, though everything's adversity and calamity it seems. You know what? In every trial and affliction of life, when you come out of it, you come out in that school or that. Wait, what? You come out of it bitter, or you come out of it better.

You're either drawn nearer to God, or you feel somehow God's giving you a raw deal. We compare ourselves with ourselves. You've taken away my God.

These men came down and they plundered the house, they took his teraphim and his ephod. Ephod is a kind of a rod of divination that some of the priests use. In other words, they took everything that was sacred and handed it to him.

You've taken away my God. What have I left? I say, how much could you lose without losing your faith in God? Very simple. Nothing profound about this message for sure.

You've got your sight. How many of us thank God for our eyesight today, I wonder? Specifically. I asked that, I think it was in Charles Stanley's church.

A lady waited for me afterwards. She said, Mr. Ravenhill, I was in a car accident, and my mind went blank, and my eyes, I couldn't see a thing for over two years. And every morning when I wake up, I have a praise offering to God that I have eyes to see the day.

Your sight is precious, but it isn't yours. One of the most charming girls in our church, in the largest church I've ever had in England. A blonde girl, gracious, sweet.

She looked out of the window and two boys were fighting. One picked up a rock to throw at the other, and he held a second too long. He came through the window and put her eye out like that.

She came always with one of those buccaneers patches on her eye. She didn't go sour. Her sight is hers.

You own it, in one sense, you don't really possess it. Your sight is precious, be sure you thank God for it. Your senses, you may not be the smartest person in the world, but you're not the dumbest anyhow.

But supposing for some reason, you lost your senses. I'm remembering Dr. Charles Stanley's church again when I mention this. A lady came forward and she said, Mr. Ravenhill, every morning when I wake up I thank God for sanity.

She had been in a car wreck, and for five years she couldn't tell anybody's face, or tell anybody's place, or tell anything at all. And then she said, prayer was made unmiraculously. My sanity came back.

It's just as though I'd never lost it. But she said, Mr. Ravenhill, you've no idea what it means, when there's something in there that kind of can't make sense, but it's trying to, it's trying to speak, it's trying to coordinate things, and you can't do it. Your sight's precious, you can't buy it if it came out.

Our senses are precious. These are the precious things that we can lose. I have no power over them.

My sight, my senses, my savings. You know, some people's faith goes up and down with the Dow Jones averages. And other people are tossed this way, that way, and the other.

They have not really taken root, is the word we sang tonight. You know, there's not a thing that you need that God hasn't anticipated. That's a marvelous hymn.

What more can he say than to you he has said? God has no afterthoughts. If the world lasts another thousand years, God isn't going to say, oh, I was going to tell, I was going to tell John this on the Isle of Palmas. I forget all about it.

We'd better put a new edition. No sir, everything that's required for faith, for holy living, for overcoming the world of flesh, and the devil is all found in this book. That's why the devil tries to keep us free, away from it.

Jump over to Job, would you, if you can leap so far. The book of Job and chapter one. This is a thing I'm sure we don't grasp hold of very often.

Job chapter one and verse eight. Is God the almighty, invisible, God only wise, in life inaccessible, here is God, what did he do? And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job? It's not Job talking to God, it's God talking to Satan. Have you seen Job, my servant Job? There's none like him in all the earth, perfect, upright, feareth God, and despite his evil.

Then Satan answered and said, does Job fear God for naught? That's a marvellous text. Of course he doesn't. Nobody serves God for naught.

It's not payday this week, it's payday at the end of the line. But God keeps perfect accounts. They were saying on, in the news the other day, there are some big, what do you call these modern things,

computers have gone wrong and paid two million dollars, I think, into some lady's account.

There's only one mistake it made, it wasn't mine. Does Job serve God for naught? Isn't it wonderful when God can put a Christian on exhibition and say to the devil, you see that man there? He's as corrupt as anyone else, or he was, but redemption has reached him, and he's sold out to God, he's completely mine. There's nobody like him in all the earth.

Verse 9 says, then Satan answered the Lord. You know, I could get amused sometimes. People say, I say, how are you today? Oh, I haven't had a very good day.

Why? Oh, I guess after I'd had my coffee this morning, the devil talked with me about two hours. Well, you're nuts. Why do you listen to him? You're not only nuts, you're conceited.

How many times did Satan speak? He misrepresented God to man. Half God said. The second time he's here, when he misrepresents man before God.

As we come to it now, Satan answered the Lord and said, does Job serve God for naught? Hast thou not made a hedge about it? That's the devil speaking. You put a hedge around him. No wonder he's perfect, no wonder he's upright.

He's the wealthiest man in the world, he's got everything going for him. Why should he rebel? Why should he be negligent in his prayers and devotion? Hast thou not made a hedge around? Oh, I think that's super. You don't, by the way, you look anyhow, just now.

I use this before looking for a pencil. I don't have a pencil or anything. Money would do, thank you.

You can get it. Here's Job. Not sure he had all those clothes, but there you are.

Maybe that's his sweater. Satan says, you set a hedge around about him. Take it away and let me get at him and see what he does.

He'll curse you to your face. But he admits that God has put a hedge around about his child. And he's put a hedge around about you.

And as long as you're obedient, Satan can't get through it. Would you please take the hedge away? Well, I'm glad God never does what the devil asks anyhow. The Lord says, no, I won't take it away.

I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll put it a bit nearer to him. But before I do, you can have one shot at him.

What does it say? Verse 12 says, The Lord said unto him, to Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not false eye and hand. Take all he hath, strip him, do it as you like to do it. I give you permission.

I'm moving that hedge so that you can go out a whale of a time with him. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord. He can do nothing in the presence of the Lord.

As long as you stay in the presence of God, the devil won't get at you if you live to be a thousand. It's when you move out of the presence of the Lord. When you move out of known revelation.

When you've made vows and you step out, you don't keep them. But as long as God is round about, he can't break through. Again, didn't God say to Abraham, I am thy shield.

Not that I put a shield between me and you. Not that I put Gabriel between me. I am your shield.

Are you suggesting that the omnipotent holy God has put a shield around me and the devil can stick his finger in me if he wants? Very obviously not. Only upon himself do no evil. Verse 13, There was a day when his sons and his daughters, Job's sons and daughters, were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.

There came a messenger to Job and said, The oxen were ploughing and the asses feeding beside them. You usually see that, don't you? Oxen ploughing and asses standing still. And the Sabians fell and took them away.

And they've slain your servants with the edge of their sword. Now you lie on them left. Oh, that's when the Lord moves ahead, wasn't it? He moved it away a bit.

Let's say another birthday party, what would you call it, around it. Yes, but you see, I can't get to him because that shield is still there, the Lord. Take it away, the Lord says.

I won't do that. I'll bring it a bit nearer to him. The devil comes and what happens? He goes bankrupt overnight.

He's the richest man in the world and they take everything that he has. The Lord pulls the hedging a bit closer and while he does, it says there in verse 16, while he was yet speaking there came another and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven and it's burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them and I on the left escaped. The Lord pulls the hedging a bit closer and the judgment falls again.

Verse 17, while he was yet speaking there came another and said the Chaldeans came out. Verse 18, while he was yet speaking. Wouldn't this be some marvelous party? The first stroke of the devil was bankruptcy.

He took everything he had and left him as poor as when he came out of his mother's womb. While he was yet speaking there came another and said, Thy sons and my daughters were eating and drinking in the house and there came a great wind and the house fell and I only am escaped. You see, it was total devastation.

The first stroke of the devil against Job is bankruptcy. The second stroke against Job is bereavement. He took all his family, took all his children.

But where did he go from there? No wonder the scripture says, you've heard of the patience of Job. My mother used to tease my dad and say, Walter, you know what it is? Women are more patient than men. There's a little rhyme about that.

You don't know I'll have to make it up. No, no. Oh, I've done it.

Patience is a virtue. Possess it if you can. Seldom found in woman and never found in man.

Then dad used to turn it the other way. Well, I go everywhere to scriptures to get my answers. Maybe it's in the NIV where it says, you've heard of the patience of Mrs. Job.

Does it say that, Dale? He doesn't know from the NIV. But the authorizer says, you've heard of the patience of Job. One stroke and he's gone from being a billionaire to being a pauper.

Everything's gone. He hasn't a sheep except what's been burned with fire. He's no property.

The houses have gone down. He's lost his camels, he's lost his goats, he's lost everything. While he was yet speaking, there came another in verse 18.

And thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking in their eldest brother's house. There came a great wind from the wilderness and it fell on the house. Now what do you do? You have a bunch of friends come.

You remember them? Elisaz the Temanite. Bildad, he's one of the smallest men in the world. He's only a shoe height.

All right. That's what it says. He's only a shoe height.

That was a tribe or a breed, if you like. And they come and sit in the corner and begin to point the finger. Have you ever noticed how quickly people can get the will of God for you and they couldn't find it themselves in the last five years? They find it in five minutes for you.

I believe the Lord wants this. Forget them. Well Job, what kind of a God do you serve? No doubt he prospered you.

You're the most wealthy man, the most envied man in the whole world, and all you have is ashes and corpses. Your children are dead, your cattle are dead, everything's dead. I'll tell you what.

Isn't it just like the devil to take all a man has and leave him with a nagging wife? Why didn't he let her go? You see there are some things that are mine, they're not mine. My sight isn't mine, I can lose it like that. My senses I may lose like that.

My big fat bankroll I could lose overnight. But there's some things that are mine. Neither tragedy nor calamity nor adversity can take them.

I can shake my fist in the face of the world and the flesh and the devil and say these things are mine. Job, what are you doing? What are you doing? Look at the ashes, smouldering buildings there. All your thousands of cattle and your priceless camel.

And his wife says, curse God and die. Do you know what the Hebrew says? Blaspheme God and commit suicide. That's the only way out.

People say they commit suicide because they want to get a way out, but all they do is get a way in. Into worse trouble than they've left behind. Into judgment.

What did Job do? They were trying to get him angry you know. Trying to get him to rebel against God. And what does it say then in verse 20? Then Job arose and went his mantle and shaved his head and fell down upon the ground and worshipped.

Oh boy, this must have hurt the devil pretty bad. He must have taken a tailspin after he watched him. It doesn't say now what's your servant doing now.

It says here it's obvious what he's doing. And he said, naked I came out of my mother's womb. Naked I shall return thither.

The Lord gave and the Lord shall take, has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Notice he doesn't say the Lord gave it and the devil took it.

He says the Lord gave it and the Lord has taken it away. He won't give the devil any credit. Yes.

Like Paul never said I'm the prisoner of sin. From whence comest thou and Satan answered from going forth in the earth. Hast thou considered my servant Job? There's nobody like him in the whole earth.

It's a little bit of a retread this. Verse 6. The Lord said unto Satan behold he is in thine hand but save his life. You can't touch his life, that's mine.

The end of verse 10 says in all this he sinned not. Now what does he go to do finally? He's getting advice, bad advice from these so-called friends of his. You've got nothing, you're starting off, you're worse now.

Man you flock of wonderful animals, thousands of them, there's marvellous family, they're all dead. Fourteen funerals in one day, what are you going to do? His wife says well there's one thing you can do, curse God and die. Blaspheme his name, he's unfaithful.

He's not doing for us what he did for Abraham. Curse God and die. What does he do? He does the very opposite.

The first stroke on him was what? Bankruptcy. The second stroke was bereavement. It didn't work.

So Satan came a bit closer and he's sweating with boils from his head to his feet. Bankruptcy, bereavement, boils. It can't get much worse than that.

So he told him to take a pot, a piece of broken pot and scratch where it was hurting him worse I guess, and instead of giving an anthem to the devil or satisfaction to those enemies of his, he stands there, if he could stand, I don't know if he could stand with his sickness, his bankruptcy, his bereavement, his boils, and he says listen I'll tell you what I'm going to do, just hold in a minute. I'm going to sing a doxology. Supposing it gets worse.

What if he does he says? I don't care what comes out. What I do know is I know that my Redeemer lives and he shall stand on the earth one day and I shall be with him there. I won't be looking back to see my poverty and all those roasted animals.

I'm going to be in the presence of my Redeemer. What do you do with a man like that? He's got a joy unspeakable. He's got a love unbreakable.

If he had a fierce loyalty to God, before all this happened, he certainly had a more fierce loyalty afterwards. Go back to Kings a minute here. Oh no, we weren't in Kings, we were in Judges, weren't we? I've forgotten that.

Go back to Judges please, where is it? Judges 18, we were in that 24th verse. You've taken away my God and my priest and you've gone away and what have I more? What is this that you've sent to me? What aileth me? Let me go back a minute. What does the Lord say? Go and do as you like with my servant.

Send him bankrupt, give him bereavement, give him boils. But you're not going to touch his soul. It's all external that he's losing.

He loses nothing internal. In fact he gains strength all the time, every adversity and he goes up instead of down. He gets stronger instead of weaker.

He gets more assurance instead of more discouragement. Because he has God indwelling him. Come on now, maybe you're going to be Job this coming week.

I kept thinking again and again, I'm not sure because I've not known American history too well. I think it was Thomas and Jefferson who said, material abundance without character is the greatest way to a nation's destruction. Material abundance without character, there's no character around.

Fidelity is almost gone amongst Christians. Honesty is almost gone. See all God is doing is putting this man to the extreme test so that he can put him on as an exhibition.

He not only says to the devil, he says to us, have you considered my servant Job? Have you considered the fact he didn't go to church? Have you considered the fact he never had a bible? Are you consider the fact he's surrounded by paganism and Atheism and yet you can't quench the fire that's in him. You can't threaten it out of him. You can't wash it out of him.

You can't terrify him. We sang about being anchored in God. We're going to be anchored in God or we're going to drift if we're not in the next five years.

Is it the end of the 12th or 13th chapter in Hebrew where it talks about everything that can be shaken, will be shaken, that the kingdom will come? God's going to prove his son and prove the glory of his son to this generation. He doesn't care what happens. I'm not exactly like Brother Dave Wilkinson who thinks God's given up on America.

I don't think God had given up on Israel when he come to Malachi. All the kings, all the mercies, all the revelations, all the prophets and they go and do the stupid things they've done before and go into captivity for 400 years. Then God raises up a man by the name of John Baptist and the history is rewritten.

Tell me this, don't shout, but just answer the question. Do you believe you're precious in the sight of God or do you think you're a football for everybody to kick or a dead leaf blown around by the wind? It swirls and swirls and twists and blows you over the head and somebody stands on you, a cow put his pretty foot on you. Is my life without a plan? Is my life without purpose? And we lived in Ireland.

One of our delights was to, we had a farm and the boys and a couple of men worked for us. But Saturday night we piled into a car and went to a crossroads in the country. All the plough boys came.

Came in the rough old boots with mud on and other stuff on and didn't smell too good. But we preached for about an hour and a half there. We sang old hymns and those Catholic boys listened and couldn't believe it.

One night there's an old preacher there. When the meeting was over he came to thank me for the message. I said well I'm not sure it was a message.

It's a word to these young farmer fellows, they're all Catholics. He said would you come to my house next week and have some tea and scones? Well if there's anything free I'm there. So I said sure.

And he told me where he lived and I went and when I got there there was this big manor house, a square house, called a manor house usually. I pulled a switch at the door then. I heard a bell ring down the

corridor.

I opened the door.

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