

Judges 18 vs 24

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in God and the protection of the hedge of God's sovereignty in the face of adversity.

Duration: 1:02:54

Scripture: Judges 18:24, John 14:27

Topics: "Judges"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares various stories and experiences to illustrate the idea of losing material possessions and facing trials. He mentions a girl who became blind after a rock was thrown through a window, emphasizing that sometimes afflictions can lead to the dissolution of material comfort. The speaker also discusses the importance of remembering and praying for those who are suffering in different parts of the world, such as captives in Russia, bleeding victims in Afghanistan, and the defenseless in China. He concludes by mentioning a pastor who preached with great anointing on Romans 8:28, bringing emotional impact to the congregation.

Transcript

I'm not happy that people are sick, but I was wondering why all the chairs are empty, I thought it was because they heard I was preaching, but apparently, another thing I think we should not allow people to sit downstairs before we fill up. People say, I came and the overflow room was full, I went home, well there's all these chairs empty and we'd like to fill them. Now you know next week David's preaching, I'd love to be here, but I have to go to another place.

As he said, you've been listening to heresy this morning on TV, so I'm glad you're here to get the truth. I've known dear Dave and Gwen for 20 years. I've admired him in many, many situations.

I remember once we went into a kind of ghetto in New York in the early days of Teen Challenge, and he left me outside, he said, oh you can't come in here, too dangerous. It wasn't too dangerous for him, it was too dangerous for me. We went to a meeting one evening, a summer evening, and immediately we got there, we were surrounded by cutthroats and prostitutes, and then the cops came.

What are you doing here, holding a gospel meeting? You wouldn't get me down here, I have to come here, I'm paid to come here. This is a very dangerous area. I think he was courageous when he walked into that court in New York to plead for those boys.

And then I remember, I don't know if it was this year or last year, David, you were speaking at Robinson's meeting, was it this year? Yes, last year. Earlier this year. There were 14,000 people there, and I think one of the most courageous things he did was both moral and spiritual.

He took his Bible, put it on one side and said, I'm not going to deliver my prepared message, I'm going to speak out of my heart. Well if the chief can do it, the second chief can do it, so I'm going to do that this morning. I'm not going to attempt an exposition.

This is not an exposition so much as maybe an explanation. But it's very practical. I guess it's right down where we live.

And this is really what matters. I guess you've never heard this text preached on. You know, one of the great preachers I have admired, and David has admired, was a man who was born illegitimately, lived in poverty, became the greatest preacher in Scotland in three St. Georges.

Dr. Alexander White. If you haven't read his Bible characters, read them, they're super. You can still get the book, it's about \$20, somebody will buy it you for Christmas.

Don't buy it from me, I have it, thank you. But Alexander White had an assistant called Dr. Black. People in Edinburgh used to say, oh I went to the Kirk yesterday, which is the church.

Oh, how was it, who was it? Oh it was great. Who preached? Oh, well, Dr. Black. Of course he painted us white.

And I went at night and Dr. White painted us black. So that was the difference in ministry. But they were great, marvellous preachers.

I heard Dr. Black only once, and he preached from this text. I can't remember it because it was almost 50 years back. It's in the book of Judges.

And it's in the 18th chapter. And verse 24. Verse 24.

And he, that is Micah, not the prophet Micah, another Micah. And he said, ye have taken away my gods which I made, and my priests, and ye are gone away. And what have I more? And what is this that ye say unto me, what aileth thee? This story begins in the 17th chapter.

I'm going to condense it because of time. Chapter 17 verse 1 says, there was a man of Mount Ephraim whose name was Micah. Now his mother, like all women, was mysterious with money.

She gathered together 1100 shekels of silver, a considerable fortune in that day, so it says in verse 2. The young man Micah said to his mother, the 1100 shekels of silver that were taken away which you have cursed, and which you spoke of in my ears. Now I consider here she was praying. She had lost what was a substantial fortune.

But she cursed the man who had stolen the money. Not knowing that behind the door her son was listening, he had stolen the money, and he confesses. And his wife says, his mother says, bless you my son.

Not for stealing the money, but confessing that he had stolen it. As you read the story, she took the silver down the street to a silversmith, and she had it melted and made into a god. So then, like many others, her

wealth was a worship, as well as the wealth, it was a worship.

She worshipped the god of her own hands. She was like the children of Israel who made an image out of gold. So here she has all the accoutrements that were needed.

Verse 5 says the man Micah had an house of gods, and he made an ephod and a teraphim and consecrated one of his sons. Now if you go a little further, verse 6, it's like our day. In those days there was no king in Israel.

Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. If you like it, do it. Never mind who gets hurt.

It satisfies you, your appetite, do it. Nothing new under the sun. They did exactly the same thing in these days.

But then you go on to read, the children of Dan, a type of the children of the devil, came and invaded this area where Micah lived, and they took his ephod. That's two things. In the Hebrew system, the ephod was an instrument that they played.

It was also a linen garment worn by the priest. Why they stole those, I don't know. But they stole the ephod, and they stole the teraphim.

That was a little, almost an idol, through which they believed they had the powers of divination. Now this man has already made a priest of one of his sons. But verse 7 says there was a young man out of the Bethlehem, Judah, of the family of Judah.

He was a Levite and sojourned. And as you read the story, he agreed to stay in the house as another priest. Now that's quite a church.

Only two in the congregation. Doesn't say they always agreed, but two members in the congregation and two priests, two gods, an ephod and a teraphim. And somebody came and swiped the whole lot away.

And we discover in the story that Micah runs after these thieves and he says, you've taken away my god and my priest. What have I left? Now I'm going to reduce that to what I guess is the irreducible minimum. It settles down to this.

How much can you and I lose without losing our faith in God? Think of our precious brothers and sisters in Russia. Been there for years. A picture was shown in the Christian magazine of a man whose face was as bleached as these walls.

He had been 20 years in solitary confinement. No one to speak to. Hardly had any food, hardly had any rest except a concrete floor.

Not had a meal for years, a good meal, just enough to keep him breathing. He was a preacher. He was asked if he would renounce his faith and embrace Communism.

No. Will you go back for 10 years? The Lord will be with me. You know it only takes rain to keep some people away from church.

Some are sick. But let a little adversity come and we use every excuse we can, particularly prayer night. Some of my flock were missing Friday night from the prayer meeting.

I won't mention, I'll just look where they are, but anyhow. We shall be there next Friday night, next Tuesday night for our teaching. The question is what can I lose? Dr. Sangster, I talked to David yesterday about this giant of a man, a marvelous man, I believe Jewish background, brilliant Hebrew scholar, Greek scholar, earned his PhD by living in a basement during World War II, looking after the drunks and harlots that were running away from bombing.

He loved to tell the story about the pastor in the first Methodist church in Baltimore, Maryland. As he put it, this man preached usually with uncommon unction. One Sunday morning he crowned all his achievements by having a super anointing.

He preached on Romans 8, 28. They said there wasn't hardly a dry eye in the place. It was standing room only, as usual.

People going out couldn't even say thank you. They blurred verbal through their tears and just choked up and thanked him for this marvelous expertise that all things work together for good. By the way, David, Mr. Chadwick used to say that's one of the verses in the Bible you read backwards way.

To them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose, all things work together for good. You can't go to somebody whose body's been mangled or son or daughter's been mangled in a car crash if they're sinners and say all things work together for good. They're mad against God.

But to the Christian they work together for good. Nobody's inspired much. David said be thankful this morning.

I could have thanked God for a number of things. Every morning I wake I like to thank God for my eyesight. It's a common blessing.

We've always had it. I thank God hundreds of times for David. And dear Gwen, I've seen her go through enough tribulation and trial to kill a hundred people.

But her faith, her body's been weakened, but her faith is still strong. This young man preached on Romans 8, 20. Everybody was overboard with excitement and joy leaving the sanctuary.

Except one old lady. She looked as though she'd been raised on vinegar. She went to the pastor and hung on his lapels.

It's all right for you. You have a good education. You have a good father.

You come from a wealthy family. You have a beautiful home. You have two cars.

You have a boat. You go for foreign trips. And she poured out his history that he didn't know of course.

Told him all his blessings. Next Sunday when he came to church, the lineup was outside the church. The church was packed.

People sat around the pulpit. Every chair, extra chair. Again people standing.

They brought the pastor in. Somebody led him by the hand and he came and affectionately leaned on his pulpit. And he said last Sunday was maybe the greatest Sunday of my preaching.

I just felt out of me were flowing rivers of living water. I was so blessed and edified and I blessed it. Except one little lady.

It's all right for you. You've always had blessings. You were brought up in culture.

You've had wealth. You've traveled. You're educated.

And he went through the ring that old lady gave him. I don't know if that lady is here. As you know last Tuesday I was cleaning my gun and it went off and in a moment I lost my sight.

I've accumulated a very wonderful library I can never use. I cannot drive my automobile. I cannot drive my boat.

I love to fish in the quietness. My life was just dramatically changed in a matter of seconds. I don't know if you're here dear lady.

He said you told me I could of course be very, very strong in faith when life had run for me in every way. I had every creature comfort. I got my doctorate.

I got this. I got that. Fine.

But I want to tell you something. I didn't know what Romans 8.28 meant until after last Tuesday. Since I lost my sight Jesus Christ has been more real to me than ever he's been in all my years of ministry and travel and preaching.

I proved him in that situation. I was hoping somebody would jump up and cut me out this morning and say I thank God for my sight. After your sight what's the most precious thing outside of redemption? Our senses.

Maybe you don't have too much your wife says but anyhow thank the Lord for what you've got. Do you know how many insane people there are? Often through liquor that's the greatest contributor to people getting mentally deranged I believe. Hereditary with some people.

But our senses. You know if you were coming into New York five years from now on a ship say there's only one ship now I think passenger ship Queen Elizabeth that's left. They can tell you how deep the tide will be five, eight years from now they can tell you within an inch.

Why? Because to know where the moon is and the moon pulls the waters just like a magnet. I had a young man in the church I pastored. His mother was one of the saintliest women I've ever met.

She dreaded the new moon. She could sweep through a thunderstorm almost an earthquake but let that boy turn over in bed she was out and went to see him. I remember staying every night with him for a week and hoped he wouldn't have one of those seizures and thank the Lord he didn't.

I don't know I would have managed him but out of the goodness of my heart I stayed with him. He's a brilliant violinist. The doctor traced back to a day five years of age when he fell off a wall backwards hurt his head had no trouble no headaches no problem but the doctor said it came out seven years afterwards when he started having those terrible attacks.

You see we take things for common don't we? I expect to see. Every morning I get up I look around count my blessing. I know many of you are too busy counting calories but anyhow we should count our blessing.

My sight my senses. We're loaded more than any other nation in the world maybe with blessing with creature comforts. With things very often we don't need.

Somebody told me yesterday got a bargain I said well usually a bargain is something you don't need at a price you can't resist but oh how many creature comforts we have. You know the supreme experience I think in this area is in the life of a very wonderful man. Can you think who you are? Job.

You know my mother used to say sometimes patience is a virtue possess it if you can. Always found in women and never found in men which is wrong. The scripture says you have heard of the patience of Mrs. Job.

Does it say that? No it shouldn't. Now don't look at me like that Gwendolyn. You've heard of the patience of Job.

Brother did he need patience? Let's look at this little process of stripping in his life. Job chapter 1 okay. Verse 6 says now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan came also with them.

Does he do that every day David do you think? The sons of God came maybe the archangels, holy beings came and Satan managed to get in line. Now listen if God says in verse 8 the Lord said unto Satan hath thou considered my servant Job. Isn't that great when God can put someone in exhibition.

Job says I've gone around in the whole earth. I can push everybody around except one man. He's steadfast and immovable in his love and fear of God.

Hath thou considered my servant Job? There's nobody like him in all the earth. That's wonderful. But verse 10 is tremendous.

Hath thou not made a hedge around him? That's something isn't it? The devil admits that God has put a hedge around his children. I'm not a football for the devil to kick around. I'm not a dead leaf for every wind of adversity to blow this way or blow that way.

I don't want to be amused or amazed when people say you know the other day the devil said to me he did. You're very favoured. I mean what were you going to do to him? One lady told me she was going to make Christmas cakes.

I said well I happen to know he's allergic to making Christmas cakes. That gets you off the hook. Have you noticed that there's only three times the voice of Satan is mentioned in the whole Bible.

The first time he accuses God before man. Has God said he said to Adam? Hath God said? The second time he accuses man before God. Here it says and Satan said hath thou not made a hedge about him? And all he hath on every side.

There's nothing missing. It's a perfect defense mechanism. I believe I have that mechanism every day if I'd recognize it before I start my daily walk.

I have as David's emphasize so much of the covering of the precious blood. I have the protection of the Holy Ghost. He'll give his angels charge concerning thee.

That's why some of these wrecks are not worse than they are. The Lord has to teach us lessons sometimes. I have the defense of the blood.

I have the defense of angels. I have the defense of the Holy Spirit. And I have the defense of all the exceeding great and precious promises of God.

He says you've blessed the work of his hands. His substance is increased. In other words he says do you know why he's pious? Because he's prosperous.

His piety and his prosperity are tied in together. Now you do something. And the Lord said no Satan you go do it.

Verse 12 the Lord said unto him all that he hath is in thy power. Only upon himself put not forth thy hand. Or in verse 6 of the next chapter he says the Lord said unto Satan behold he's in thine hand but save his life.

You have to do something Lord. You said a hedge about him. Well take the hedge away.

I don't want to illustrate. It doesn't matter. Thank you.

Let this my thing of a joke. Here's the hedge around him. Satan says take the hedge away.

You know I'm awfully glad God never takes advice from anybody. I've given him lots in my prayer life. But he never takes any notice so I've quit.

Lord would you do this? Would you do that? Wait a minute he's sovereign. If he's sovereign to rule the universe surely this petty little life of mine is sovereign to you. Would you do this? Oh how we quote, promise it.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Well if he orders you steps he orders you stops. When you're not stopping you're stepping.

When you're not stepping you're stopping. Wonderful. But anyhow.

Here's Job. There's a hedge. You take the hedge around him.

Let me get to him. The Lord says no I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll bring the hedge a bit closer and you can destroy everything outside the hedge.

So the devil comes on rampage. What does he do? What it says is the oxen were ploughing and the asses feeding beside them. Mr. Chadwick said it's always like that.

The oxen are ploughing. Godly people are busy working. The critics are all standing around the corner.

The oxen are ploughing and the asses are feeding beside them. And the Sabians fell and took them all away. So he loses everything.

The first stroke of the devil when he gets outside of that hedge and God protects him. The first stroke is bankruptcy. He loses everything he has.

Well what are you going to do Job? Well I mean the Lord knows his business. He didn't curse God. He didn't rail against God.

Well of course he's lost his millions but he's a sharp businessman. He'll make those millions before very long. You just let me, just take the hedge away and let me get to him a bit closer, more intimately.

The first stroke is bankruptcy, the second is bereavement. He killed all his children in one day. David was saying he's going to have his five grandchildren to dinner next Thursday.

Thanksgiving, that's a Thanksgiving. I thank God for mine, I don't have five but I thank God for all we have. But alright, the first stroke is bankruptcy.

He takes all his material possessions. The second stroke is bereavement. And there he is with a broken heart over seven funerals.

But he doesn't whine, he doesn't complain. Well of course he may get more children. He's not an old man, he'll have another family.

He's lost his business, he may get another business. But let me go a bit further. And the Lord says alright, I'll take, I'll take the defense away right now.

What are you going to do now? So the next thing he does is smite him with boils. Bankruptcy, bereavement, personal attack, boils. He can't walk, he can't stand up, he can't sit down.

Every bit of his body is aching with pus from those horrible boils. His wife comes in. Isn't that like the devil take everything he had and left him with a nagging wife? But there you are.

He took all his property, then he took all his children, and now he takes his body and he persecutes it so he can't sit or stand, he can't sleep, he's in terrible pain. And his wife comes in. What does she say? She says curse God and die.

Do you know what the Hebrew says? Blaspheme God and commit suicide. Do you mean there's some design in this? I mean we've lost our millions, we've lost our home, all the property, the roofs blew off in a tornado, the Sabeans are eating our cattle, we can't even ride on our camels, we don't have any, it's total desolation. Curse God and die.

I know you feel like that on the inside. Why don't you do it? Wait a minute he says. So what? Let's add it all up.

I've lost my property, I've lost my children, I've lost my health. I want to tell you something. I want to tell you something.

Listen sister, wife, I'll tell you where my faith is that even if worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. I know that my Redeemer lives. If that isn't being said fast and unmovable and always abounding in the love and mercy of God, what is? Shattered.

Completely destroyed in one sense, materially and so forth. And yet he is absolutely exultant when it comes down to the final issue. So here we are.

This is life. Totally unpredictable. I remember a girl in England, one of the most gifted girls in the whole country.

Her father was editor of one of our outstanding national newspapers. He sent her to the conservatory at Milan and she studied music and became a super violinist. She went to a modern painter in Belgium and he, and she painted pictures all around the house.

When they had her 21st birthday people were all talking about her. Have you heard her play the piano? Have you heard her on the violin? See all these pictures she painted them. She's brilliant, super brilliant.

For her 21st birthday he took her on a trip around the world. That took some time those days, there were no planes. Two years afterwards, one morning her maid knocked at her door and heard a feeble cry come in and when she went that gorgeous girl, that was gorgeous in looks and abilities, was lying paralyzed from her shoulders down to her feet.

They tried to trace the problem and the doctor eventually said that somewhere on the trip she took a germ into her body that lay dormant for three or four years and then suddenly asserted itself. It got to the controls of her body. And for the rest of her life she'd be lying in that state of paralysis and total limitation.

She doesn't paint anymore, doesn't play anymore, doesn't play the violin anymore. But you see I've got things which are mine and yet they're not mine. In a sense I own them but I don't possess them.

My health it can be destroyed again by a germ. My freedom it can be taken from me. A hurricane or something can come and blow the roof off my house, destroy my property.

Everything up to the edge of my skin is subject to change and decay. Or as the Bible says, moth and rust can corrupt and thieves break through and steal it. Why only two years ago people were buying gold like mad.

It had gone up to eight hundred dollars, predicted it would go to twelve and maybe two thousand dollars an ounce but now it's way down in the two hundreds or something. Their investment, they invested, now they're divested. Pardon the proud word.

But that's true. It looks so good, so real. The markets are so uncertain.

I think we're living on the edge of that experience I was reading about in the 12th of Hebrews this morning when everything that can be shaken will be shaken that the kingdom that cannot be shaken may remain. God is going to honor his son if he pulls the pillar of the universe down. He doesn't care about IBM.

He doesn't care about our multi-billion dollar company. Not a bit of interest. He's interested only the spiritual life of you as an individual and as me.

But you know it's when you get into the tight situation where we prove our faith. Again these things do not belong to me really. I may write my name on, I may have a title deed to my property.

Somebody can demolish my car overnight. I can lose my sight. A girl in our church was looking through a window and there were some boys angry, fighting.

And one picked up a rock and threw it but held it a minute too long. And the storm came through the window of the rock and immediately she plunged into blindness. Her mother was at my door the next day.

Did you hear about my daughter? My lovely daughter. I said, she certainly is wonderful. Why, is she singing somewhere? No, she had an accident.

And there she is in a terrible state. I know you're the best driver on the road. It's the other guy that's a fool.

But you don't know what he's going to do. So anyhow the world around me is all subject to change and decay. Or again there's a good book says moths can rust and corrupt and thieves can break through and steal.

But there are some things that are mine. I can shake my fist in the face of calamity, tragedy and adversity. In the face of the world, the flesh and the devil and say these things are mine.

You can't take them. It's wonderful when Jesus said in John 14, peace I give to you. But then he qualifies it.

He says my peace. It's not peace, it's his peace. When they were going to push him over the precipice you remember, that peace dominated him.

When he could have breathed on a man and shrunk him up just like he turned water into wine, he lets the man go by. He could have done miracles in the presence in the judgment hall and he doesn't do anything except stand there in his moral majesty and face that wild crowd of people. He doesn't say peace, he says my peace.

Then in John 16 he says you can have joy. No, he says you can have my joy and no man takes it from you. People don't steal, we give them up.

The most misquoted scripture may be. One of them is in the revelation. Oh you say that's not so.

He's like the Bible says he's lost his first love. Well you find that for me, I give you a thousand dollars. Oh I know what it is in Revelation.

No it doesn't. Doesn't it say he's lost, no it says he left his first love. He put that love that he had for God on something else or someone else.

Now I've got a love, it's possible for you, it's possible for me to have a joy unspeakable. A faith that's unshakable. A peace that's indestructible.

And the joy that the apostle Peter I think he talks about. Joy unspeakable and full of glory. Unspeakable joy, unshakable faith, indestructible peace.

They're only mine when the Prince of Peace lives in me. As I said to David Jetson, you can't love a theological precept. You can't love theology, you can only love a living Christ.

I believe he was born of the Virgin, I believe he died, I believe he rose again. But I want him living in my heart today. And when he lives I have peace that passeth all understanding.

That hymn my faith looks up to thee was written in the big church at the corner of Boston Common. I preached there once and asked them to sing that before I preached. Because the tune was written by the

organist and the words were written by a member of the church.

My faith looks up to thee thou Lamb of Calvary. It's my faith, it's my peace, it's my joy, it's my love. You know I am the most precious thing God has on earth.

Not just me, even David. I mean all of us who love the Lord, we're precious in his sight. We're not just going to maintain a roster up there in the eternal kingdom in the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, that's never going to pass away.

But I'm precious in his sight now. When we lived in Ireland we lived in parts of an old castle. I enjoyed that very much.

I felt like I was the Duke of Nowhere. But I enjoyed it. It had a long driveway, it had great big gates at the entrance, it had a lodge there.

We had a gatekeeper. He looked after the cows as well, but anyhow. We enjoyed it.

But Saturday we used to put the boys into a car and pick up some other Christians and go to a crossroad in a little town called Lismalaw, or as they say Lismalaw. All the found boys would come in their old clothes, left their tractors, left their plows, they'd stand by the wall and we preached there for an hour. We sang and we preached.

There was an old boy with a clerical collar, you know they put their collars on backwards way in England to preach it, because most of them were going backwards way. But anyhow, he used to stand there. He came across one night, he said, would you come to my house on Friday? My wife can make Irish scones better than anyone else.

I want to talk with you. So I went, got to this big old house away in a field, beautiful, what we call a manor house. Lovely old house, couple of hundred years old.

His wife came to the door. I blinked. I've seen some funny looking women in my life, I tell you, but she was the oddest freak I'd ever seen.

Her hair was going ten different ways. Looked as though she hadn't had a bath. Fingernails were in mourning.

And she said, you come to see my husband? I said yes. She said, he's a bit strange. Well I thought of the statement that says birds of a feather, you know, flock together.

So I went in the old house and she made some tea as black as my shoes, which I didn't like, and some scones that had too much soda in them anyhow. Then he says, come Mr. Rick, come. So we went in the room and here was a telescope, I'm sure four or five feet high.

Here was a table with microscopes. Are you interested in these? I said, well, why should I be? Now I've had stupid questions asked of me in many countries. He asked me this, Brother David, you'll never get this.

Have you ever seen through the eye of a fly? I said, what? Have you ever seen through the eye of a fly? I said, no. The chief reason being I've never been a fly. Well he said, let me show you something.

So here he shows me a little thing like this. It's on a piece of glass, you know, and he adjusts it. And then he says, what do you see? I said, well I see bubbles, bubbles, bubbles, bubbles, bubbles.

Right. He said, do you know on the eye of that fly there are 350 bubbles or lenses all set at a different angle? Doesn't that help you? I said, considerably. He said, how does it help you? It helps me to see how stupid I am because it has two eyes and every time I try and get the thing it can see me coming 700 different ways.

But then he said, have you ever seen a wing of a butterfly? No. A butterfly has 3,000 triangles. We build in triangles for strength.

On the wing of a butterfly there are 3,000 triangles revealed through the microscope. You've learned something. I've learned a lot.

What have you learned? I said, are you telling me that almighty God designs the eye of a fly which a schoolboy can kill? That God makes a little butterfly with 3,000 triangles and it can live through a storm? He designed the wing of a butterfly? He designs the eye of a fly? And my life is haphazard? There's no design in it? My whole life is designed by God. There's nothing haphazard about life. But dear David said, you can't always explain.

God cannot be explained but he can be experienced. But you see, he's bringing me to maturity in his own way. I remember a Sunday morning, 3 o'clock, I was lying in hospital in Chicago in 1951.

Jumped out of a burning hotel, brought my back in three pieces, my left leg was in three pieces, both my feet were crushed to powder. I looked and there was Dr. Tozer. Big scarf, it was winter, it was snowing outside.

Glenn, I don't understand this. Two days after, Dr. Brown, at that time was the head of the tabernacle, Christian missionary tabernacle there in Omaha, Nebraska. He came up, he stood at the end of my bed.

Never forget it, he said, Brother Raven, God could never trust me with something like this. I would rebel. I said, well I didn't ask for it, but I'll tell you what.

As I jumped through that window before I hit the ground, I got a promise from God, I shall not die but live. They took me in hospital. I was all covered with smoke and blood and messed up and in agony.

The doctor said, well throw a sheet over him, he won't live long. So I went to my own funeral. I had my hands like this, they threw the sheet over me and I knocked them down and I said, I'm not, oh, oh, he said, I didn't know you were listening.

I said, I'm not only listening, I'm much alive. And I said, Doctor, you won't understand this, but when I jumped out of that window, God gave me a promise, I shall not die but live. Three hours after, Doctor Tobin came and said, Doctor, I've got a pair of crutches.

He said, where? I said, I've got one under this arm, I shall not die but live. And I've got one under this arm. Ask for God, his ways are perfect.

And I said, those are going to last with me and they did. I had no insurance, the bills were horrendous. I was amazed how many doctors, how many preachers came as well as doctors from different parts of the country just to me.

I hadn't written any books then, I was hardly known, I'd been on radio once or twice, TV once or twice, but how they came with their compassion and love, showing me that I was part of a body. The present doctor, not present now, at that time, the doctor, I've forgotten his name now, at Moody, he came Monday morning and he said, I'm sorry to hear about this. Could I share the message I preached yesterday? Do you know he preached that whole sermon to me daily for 40 minutes? And he's a busy man.

I thought, well what a wonderful thing that this man would take time out to come to me in bed. He came next week, he was better still, he brought \$100. From the church funds.

But again he went right through his message. And it was awesome. I just felt as though God himself had opened a shaft into eternity.

And here I am in a hospital with maybe 1,200 other people, thousands of people across the country, and here I'm broken up, my wife's 3,000 miles away in England, my children are over there. Here I am lonely, going through agony day by day, night by night. And yet God comes in his amazing way, bringing his servants.

Not only that, my world was shattered. I was just going on a world tour to preach and I didn't make it. And you know the result, the world's been in a mess ever since.

And you know, while I lay in bed I kept thinking, I could have been an Indian. No, no, God is here. Everybody and his brother came to see me as we say.

One day Dr. Totes brought a little man, he said, by the way this missionary was on the last boat where missionaries escaped from China during the present persecution, the invasion of communism. He was all marked with smallpox marks, his face was yellow. He put his little hand up at the side of me.

Everybody else quoted Romans 8.28. I didn't know it was in the Bible so many times. Well, Brother Ray knew. I remember particularly one guy said, well I have a busy afternoon, I'm playing golf.

I said fine, that's great. But Romans 8.28 is true, yes, on the golf course as well, but anyhow. This little man put his hand up and he just said this, thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

God does some of his refining, he does it in our souls through the blood. But he does it in our minds and our understanding through chastisement and correction and difficulty and adversity that we would never of ourselves choose. Just this week I picked up a book and it just gave a one sentence statement about one of America's most amazing women, Helen Keller.

She was born blind, dumb, deaf, had every conceivable adversity. A young woman called Miss Sullivan took care of her and taught her how to express herself, how to communicate, though she couldn't say a word. She couldn't hear a word, she couldn't see.

And this precious woman, what a reward she'll have David, had labored with her. Then one day Miss Sullivan said, there's something you need to know that I cannot tell you. So she went to the great man, I think he was in Boston, Bishop Phillips Brooks.

I think he wrote the hymn, Oh Little Town of Bethlehem. A wonderful man of God. And he came and sat by this blind, dumb, deaf girl and talked with her, communicated through this other lady.

And she said suddenly, when he revealed the majesty and glory of God, her face lit up like a lamp. She'd never read a Bible, never heard of it. She said, oh I know him, I've known him a long while.

Phillips Brooks said, what? You know God? Oh yes, he speaks in here. I cannot hear. Inwardly he speaks.

I cannot see, but he shows me his glory, his majesty, his beauty. Brother, you talk about handicaps. She got them all.

She became one of the most gorgeous women that this country has ever known. You know, some of the greatest hymns that we have were born in adversity, in calamity, in tragedy. Yes, I do not believe that I'm just kicked around by every circumstance.

Again, I'm not a dead leaf blown around by every changing wind of life. I'm precious in his sight. You say, well, do you know what came to me? You know, we'd all be staggered if we knew how many attacks the devil made he never got through.

How many times he got within touching distance and suddenly the blood intervened, or the Holy Spirit intervened, or angels intervened? I don't have to throw up my hands in despair. Somebody has said, I don't know how you come to this definition, that the most abject picture of desolation is found at the end of the prophecy of Habakkuk. Here it is.

Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be found in the vine. The labour of the olive shall fail, the field shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold. There shall be no herd in the stall, yet I will rejoice and will join the Lord.

The Hebrew will start this interpretation, that I will dance in the presence of God and shout aloud his praises. That good hymn that David chose this morning, Bear is a Fountain, was written by John Newton. No, it wasn't, it was written by William Cowper.

Can you imagine John Wesley, Charles Wesley, William Cowper, John Newton, and what was the other great guy you were talking about yesterday, David? The man that wrote those three volumes. Thank you. Can you imagine those majestic saints, all counsellors.

David and I get an hour or more sometimes each week together. It's my joy. He goes from me depressed, I go from him lifted up.

Thank you. But you know when he's done I think, oh, think of when Wesley would be saying goodbye John to John Newton, goodbye John to another John, goodbye William to William Cowper, goodbye to all these super intelligent men today. We're all together.

There's a paraphrase, that's what I'm wanting to say, on this, that no vine nor fig tree, neither their wanted fruit should bear. Newton wrote this song, sometimes a light surprises a Christian while he sings. It is the Lord who rises with healing in his wings.

Set free from press, no. When comforts are declining, he grants the soul again a season of clear shining to cheer it after rain. Now here's a paraphrase of it.

Though vine nor fig tree, neither their wanted fruit should bear. Though every leaf should wither, nor flocks nor herds be there, yet God the same abiding. His praise shall tune my voice, and while in him confiding, I cannot but rejoice.

Circumstances change, my emotions change. One of the most treacherous things in our lives, you can be filled with the Holy Ghost as much as you like and do miracles. You still got emotions, we still go up and down in our emotions, in our circumstances.

Yet God the same abiding. I'm glad God is not capricious. He doesn't experiment with me.

If something comes in my life, it's not to show God how good or strong I am, it's to show me how weak I am, or again what strength I have. He's doing it for my sake, not for his sake. Though by the grace of God we're living for his glory.

SIDE 2 I have a book somewhere. I love poetry, I guess you know, and hymns. One of the greatest hymn writers, well, one was Annie Johnson Flint.

And Annie Johnson Flint has a poem, or is it a ditty, call it what you like, she says, Said the robin to the sparrow, I would really like to know, Why these anxious human beings rush about and worry so. Said the sparrow to the robin, I think that it must be, They have no heavenly father such as cares for you and me. Isn't that an argument from robins and sparrows? But it's true, isn't it? I'm trying to think of the name of her.

Maybe I made a note for her here somewhere, I don't know. Oh, Annie Johnson Flint, do you remember her? I think the outstanding poetess. She wrote 3,000 hymns and poems.

Only one person exceeded her size, I know, in American poetry, And that was the lovely lady that wrote Blessed Assurance. What was her name? You don't know that? Terrible. Somebody whisper it? Thank you, Fanny Crosby.

Years ago I argued that somebody should do something about her grave. Her gravestone was about as big as this. And when the grass was up, you had to kick it away to find it.

Of course, going down the cemetery path, You have a marvelous oversized statue of a very wonderful man. Mr. Barnum. He invented Barnum and, Barnum and what? Bailey's Circus.

Which of course has blessed us all, but anyhow. Then across the aisle, there's a statue of a little man called Tom Sun. He was 27 inches high.

Travelled in that circus, became a millionaire. But nobody knew where the grave of Fanny Crosby was. I remember 20 years ago, Saying somebody should do something.

Put a monument, now there's a monument as big as this piano here. Standing up. There she was, that precious little woman who at 6 years of age became blind.

And later was attacked with chronic arthritis, I believe. But wrote over 3,000 hymns, Blessed Assurance amongst the others. Now the monument, that little stone that stood there covered with grass, Just had on it, Auntie Fanny.

She has done what she could. What did she do? Bless millions of lives. Annie Johnson Flint was stricken at 7 years of age.

Her body began to shrink and her fingers turned up until, For the rest of her life, she had to be lifted in and out of bed. She had chronic arthritis with all its tremendous pain. What did she do? Turn the water into wine.

She wrote, He give us more grace when the burdens grow greater. He give us more strength when the labors increase. To I did affliction, the others His mercy.

To multiplied trials is multiplied peace. I didn't memorize the last. When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed, Ere the day is half done, When we reach the end of our pitiful resources, Our Father's, Our Father's forgiving has only begun.

His love knows no limit. His grace has no measure. His power has no boundary known unto man.

But out of the fullness of blessing in Jesus, He give us and give us and give us again. The only way for me to know real liberty, Is to know how bound I am. Either inwardly or by circumstances.

And God will never ever look to my, to my timetable. And whatever He comes, if the furnace is heated seven times hotter again, As a little man said at my bedside, It's by gloss to consume, And by gold to revive. God never plays games in our language.

Sometimes He does afflict us, And trial with the dissolving of our material comforts. Again those precious people, Dear Martha and I try to remember them, Every morning that we pray together. We remember the captives in Russia, Or in China.

The people who are bleeding to death in Afghanistan, That nobody mentions anything about it. That we just watched that country raped, And haven't lifted a finger. I think if we had some oil wells up there, We'd have done something about it.

If we'd billions of dollars invested in the country, We'd have done something about it. But we've nothing to defend. We go to defend other countries, Our interests are there, our money is there, Our wealth is there.

If we're cut off from oil, Oil is the bloodline for our tanks, Our war machines, our industry. So we rush to protect. Isn't it wonderful that God will let me go near to His throne, As much as David or Billy Graham or somebody, Somebody who's well known.

All He wants us to do is to give us His love. Our faith, our obedience. God does not will the poverty of one believer.

Not material poverty, I mean spiritual poverty. We were discussing last night, We're heirs of God and joint heirs. I'm cheated.

Nobody's exposed that to me. They told me about a Jesus that came 2000 years ago. They tell me about a Jesus that's coming in the next few years.

So they say. But what about the resources now in God? According to His riches in glory. That's not your pocketbook.

Why should you be spiritually bankrupt in faith, When He has all the supplies? Why should our love just be dripping, When it can be a river of living water flowing out of us, Because He's indwelling us. I like that hymn again of Charles Wesley, Jesus, you lover of my soul. There's a phrase in it.

It says, Thou of life the fountain art, Freely let me take of thee, Bring thou up within my heart, And rise to all eternity. Sure my emotions may be dry, My circumstance is difficult, But I can have that indestructible joy, Unspeakable. A faith that's unshakable, And a peace that's indestructible, As the normal course of my

Christian life, While I stay out of God's way, And let him work his purpose out in my life.

He's not going to work it out like he works it in someone else, Who are individuals. God only deals with individuals. There's only one piece of silver lost, Only one sheep lost, only one son lost.

There's joy in the presence of the angels, Over mass crusade when, The rest of the other 350 at the altar, The angels don't get happy. That's not what the scripture says. There's joy in the presence of the angels, Of God over one sinner that repents us.

C.P. Stubbs said, If there was only one wicked sin on earth, Jesus would have left the glory and died for that one man. I believe he's right. We get saved individually.

We walk individually. We die individually usually. We're going to be judged individually.

But all the resources of God, Are available to me. As long as I keep familiar with the word of God. As long as I keep obedience.

Again, this is no massive exposition, But it's practically, It comes down to where we live I think. I need that joy. I need that peace.

I need that faith. The world is breaking up. Even before, For once the politicians were honest, Just before the final voting, When they said, When one, What was he called now? Industrialist or sociologist said, Everything will dip in 1985.

There'll be crisis in 1986. He was a prophet of doom. Things are getting worse.

I believe they'll get worse, Till the Prince of Peace comes. The distinction should be, Not what kind of a car we drive, Not what kind of a home we live in, But every time you meet that person, Have they got a stability? Well, how are you today? You know. But what about that instant joy, That instant peace, That instant confidence I have, Because of the abiding of the Spirit of God.

I remember in school, When our teacher told us about America. All she ever knew about America, I think, was Indians and cowboys. I couldn't wait to get here.

You mean they still laugh to them, And the guy, you know, You pull an arrow out of your back And say, don't do that now in New York, Or Chicago, just put a bullet through you And walk away. But she told about Indians and cowboys. Then she moved up a bit.

She told us about, uh, Heerwater and Minnehaha, And Minnesota, and the Minnehaha Falls. I went to see them, And I went to live there. Wonderful.

And then she told us a marvelous point. Little orphan amnies come to our house to stay, To watch the cups and saucers up, And breakfast comes away. Chicken's cool.

A classic like that we had in England. Little orphan amnies come to our house to stay, To watch the cups and saucers up, And breakfast comes away. And sure the chicken's off the board, From the door and so forth.

OK. But you know, he wrote a better point than that. He wrote a poem called The Robber.

And he says, The night was dark, And the night was late When the robbers came to rob him. They picked the lock of his palace gate They stole his jewels, His gems of state, His coffers of gold, And his priceless plate, When the robbers came to rob him. But loud laughed he in the morning red When the robbers came to rob him.

When he was hidden safe in his bed, Asleep, The robbers came to rob him. He said, They robbed me not of a single shred Of the childish dreams in my white old head, And they're welcome to all things else, He said. You see, I've got something in my mind, Something in my heart, No moth nor rust can, Not demons can take it, Or devils can take it.

Circumstances of time grab, I say, wait a minute, None of these things move me. You know, some people say, If you get filled with the Holy Ghost, Nothing will ever hurt you. It's the very opposite.

The more filled you are with God, The more tender you become. Paul didn't say, None of these things hurt me. He said, None of these things move me.

If anybody went through hell, he did. If I got tied to a whipping post, And just skinned my back 195 times, Which is what he had. And then I was in the Mediterranean On a log of wood for 36 hours, Tossed around, no food, No anything but despair.

If I was in weariness and fastings, In past perils of mine own countrymen, In perils of the deep, All the things he lifts up. Brother, I think the whole world Had fallen on me. But he said, None of these things move me.

Isn't that gorgeous? You get to the end of Romans 8 again. He says, What shall separate me from the love of Christ? Tribulation, distress, famine, Perils, nakedness, swords? Oh no, he says, That's a pretty big calendar, isn't it? Famine, perilous, nakedness, swords, Perils of the deep, All the things he lifts up. But he says, Nothing shall separate me From the love of Christ.

You can separate me From the church of Christ. You can separate me From the book of Christ. You can separate me From the fellowship of Jobston, But you cannot separate me From Christ.

The only thing that ever Separates me is sin, And that's my fault. He has a little shred of the childish dreams In his wise old head. It's like a little photograph Section of your mind.

These collegiate folk would tell you That's the repressed complex of your subconscious. But apart from that, They're all stored up here somewhere. And sometimes you get vivid memories Of your childhood.

I remember going to that house Where your dear grandma lived in Pittsburgh. Just outside Pittsburgh. Beautiful little house On the side of a steep hill it was, In my childhood.

Where my dad spanked me. But anyhow, far from that. Other things that come up, They're in my mind, they're mine.

I've experienced these When I had confrontations with God. When I had to lay hours broken before him Along with a team of precious Pentecostal brothers, The most precious men I ever met in my life. Memories of being dragged Round the street one day By a drunk man.

Memories of confronting A drunk man there. Because I'd been blocking the street With street meetings. And the big sober man in the middle Said, no, Reverend Rayfield.

I said, sir, could I speak one minute? Well, that's not according to protocol. I said, well, could we forget the protocol And let me speak a minute? He said, yes. I said, gentlemen, you're going to try me? Pass a sentence? But gentlemen, this is a rehearsal.

I said, you know, one day, sir, You'll understand that the judgment You're going to stand there And receive judgment for this judgment You'll give her anywhere else. We must all start. I remember those impressions vividly.

They're in my being. Nothing will erase them except death. But oh, what about the mercies of God? As David said, How do you count your blessings? There's no way you can do it.

By a computer. You won't work them out anyhow. We cannot count them.

I can't think of verses of hymn here now. Oh, it's one of Charles Wesley's. That doesn't help you at all.

But anyhow, it's a summary Of the very, very, very things I've been saying this morning. Isaac Watt says, God is the refuge of his saints When storms of sharp distress invade Ere we can offer our complaint Behold him present with his aid Let mountains from their seats be hurled Down to the deeps and buried there Convulse and shake the solid earth Our faith shall never yield to fear. Now I thought that would spark me off With the other verse I want to finish with But I can't remember.

I think it's saying here. Somebody sighed for me. That helped me.

Thank you. But it's still there. It's the same.

He's the unchanging God. You know, let's say this. Outside you have a thermometer.

Inside you have a thermostat. David said a bit earlier, Move the thermostat, If you set it at 70 And open the door and the wind's blowing And it's 50 sub zero, it will fight. And you can't kick it around.

It's in control. The thermometer outside Hops up and down according to the weather. If it freezes, down it goes.

If it's hot, up it goes. We're all either thermostats or thermometers. Either we're in control under God Or we're kicked around By every changing thing that comes.

No, I don't have to despair and say You've taken away my God and my priest And what have I left. I have an unchanging priesthood. I have the abiding quality of the blood That shall never lose its power Till all the ransomed church of God Be saved to sin no more.

I got the end of that verse. I can't get the beginning of it. The end of it is On this my steadfast soul relies Father thy mercy never dies.

Wouldn't it be terrible If God changed in his attitude Of mercy tomorrow to me? His attitude of love It may be my roughest day on earth I need him But there's no bearableness with God It doesn't run out of stock of mercy It doesn't run out of patience It doesn't run out of love It doesn't run out of consideration Some things are not mine I may wave goodbye to them through my tears But I can stand firm to the onslaught To the world of flesh and devil And say listen this is my faith This is my joy And I refuse to surrender them Because they're mine in Jesus Christ Well there I've done it Dave For better or worse

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