

An Altered Life

by Pancho Jaurez

Pancho Jaurez shares his journey of transformation from a traditional religious background to a personal relationship with Jesus, emphasizing the importance of faith in adversity.

Duration: 25:26

Scripture: Joshua 1:9, Matthew 6:7-8, Matthew 28:20, Romans 8:26-27, Philippians 4:6-7

Topics: "Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not being dismayed and instead being strong and courageous. He reminds the audience that God is always with them and will never leave or forsake them. The preacher acknowledges that there are situations in life that are difficult to understand or describe, but the Holy Spirit helps believers in their prayers and groanings. He cautions against underestimating the power of Satan and encourages believers to stand firm rather than fight against him. The preacher also shares a personal testimony of how he turned to God in a time of crisis and found comfort and strength in reading the Bible.

Transcript

What's happening? I was born, I was born into a religion. Biologically, socially, traditionally, family. I was born into a religion that I had no choice, you know what I'm talking about? And I grew up like that.

Thinking it's because I was attached to a traditional, biological, cultural, grandma religion. That I was okay. In 1974, I had a beautiful girlfriend.

And through a series of circumstances, she left me. She said she fell in love with another man. She said I wasn't good enough.

As you know, from East L.A., you don't talk to people like that. So I asked, what high school did he go to? She said he had gone to parochial school. And so, Salesian and Cathedral.

And so she says, oh no, Pancho, he's more than a man. Uh-huh, you got the hook up, huh? She goes, no. She said I fell in love with Jesus Christ.

And she left me. And she just gone. And so I said, alright, if you want to do that, if you leave me, you're going to lose a good thing.

But it wasn't to me. The next time I saw her three months later, she was so beautiful. Not in physical, but it was the irradiance about her.

There was an assurance. There was a face of innocence. And I know she wasn't innocent, you know what I'm talking about? But once again, she talked about Jesus Christ.

And about me repenting. And I kept telling her, listen, I'm a Christian, man. I was born a Christian.

She seen my scapulary. And she goes, Pancho, you need to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. I know him.

I talk to him on Christmas and Easter. I talk to him when I go to a funeral. Or a presentation or a wedding.

You know that. You need to know him personally. And we left it at that.

In 1974, right before Christmas, we met at Trinity Park in South L.A. And there we were to exchange gifts. She wasn't talking to me anymore. And so I was happy to see her.

And I gave her a present right there. And then we exchanged presents. And I gave her a scotch.

A scotch. A fifth. A fifth.

It's expensive stuff. And so I gave it. She goes, open it up, open it up.

Only because I want to take a shot right there and then. So I said, open it up, open it up. And she opened it up.

And she looked at it. And she was so nice, so polite. She goes, ah, vitamins, huh? Because that's what I used to call being an alcoholic.

Being a drunkard. That's what I needed. And so she didn't want to open it, of course.

And she said, open yours. So I'm thinking, maybe they're glasses. So I opened mine real fast.

I opened it up. And I'm excited. You know, and I'm taking a cigarette.

I'm smoking. I open it up. I'm smoking.

And then I open it up. And it was a Bible. And I began to profane her.

I said, what are you doing, man? I took this Bible, and I threw it across her face. And I hit her. To this day, every time I think about that, it makes me sick.

It makes me sick. And I said, you know, get in the car, man. I thought we were going to have a nice time.

You're trying to put religion on me. You know what? I told you I'm a Christian for crying out loud. I took her home.

And that was it. One day, I had this desire to go to church. I called her up.

She took me to a concert. It was a rock concert. You know what I'm talking about.

The real rock. And there I sat, mad-dogging during the service. You know what I'm talking about? Like some of you are right now, still, mad-dogging.

I want to go home, man. But someone gave me a ride, so I have to wait until everything's over, man. I sat there.

Like right where we were at, man. And I said, this fool ain't going to talk to me. You see, I'm 23 years old.

Just got out of the Marine Corps. Did some good timing. I fought for my country.

I paid taxes. I steal from the rich, not from the poor. I'm alright.

Did my communion. Didn't count because I faked it. But hey, I'm there.

But the word of God came out. So fluid. So powerful.

Next thing I know, I am running to receive Jesus Christ. You see, that was 1975. And as you know, they take you to a little room.

The surfer dude, man. Long hair. Was the counselor.

He was giving us New Testament. And he said, dude, like your sins are forgiven, dude. Took my little Bible.

And I said, thanks, man. Put it in my pocket. Okay, now what? Okay, I didn't feel nothing.

I don't feel nothing. Nothing. What am I supposed to feel? Nothing.

I felt nothing. So my girlfriend was outside. Well, not my girlfriend.

She's only my friend. She's out there waiting outside with her girlfriend that I took. One of her girlfriends was driving the car.

That's why I had to stay behind. And so once I get out, they're waiting for me. And they're saying, oh, Brother Ponch.

Brother Ponch. And mocking, I said, hello, sister. Hello, sister.

Felt nothing. Within a week of my conversion. Within a week.

It took a week. A week, man. A week.

All of a sudden, this sensation that I cannot explain to you in words that I can articulate. Because I don't have that logic. I don't know how to express to you.

All I know, man, is that I did not want to smoke weed anymore. I did not want to drink anymore. I didn't want to do any of that stuff.

I can't explain it to you. I can't explain it to you. You see, people go to church and say, well, you know what? I gotta see it to believe it.

And I went there with, I believe it, now I'm seeing it. You gotta believe before you see. People in the world say, well, you know what? I won't believe it until I see it.

And then I'm telling you, before I came to Jesus, I had to pay for my drugs. But the moment I became a Christian, the following day, everything was free. Hey, Holmes, you want something? Where were you at last week? Hey, you want to hit a line? No, it's free, man.

Two lines. All of a sudden, I had this desire to read my Bible. Now, as a bicultural, bisocial individual, see, I cannot speak good Spanish or English.

I'm all messed up. People get mad at me. You don't speak Spanish very good.

No. You don't speak English very good. No.

I'm bicultural, bilingual, and bi-messed up. So I did know how to read. But I began to read, you see, the little booklet they gave me.

And I said, what's so different about this little booklet from the Bible that Millie gave to me, which I couldn't read for beans. No pun intended there. I couldn't read for beans.

When she gave me the Bible, she says, I want you to read the book of John. I read the book of John, and by the second chapter, like, what time am I on, man? So I closed it. But this little booklet, it was making sense to me.

But after I finished that booklet, I said, wait a minute, it's more to this, huh? Because they gave me a little cheap book. They only gave me the Gospel of John. She says, no, they got Mark, they got Luke, they got John, they got Paul, they got all, man, I won.

Where can I get one of those? Send the Bible. Hey, wait a minute. I have one under my bed, man.

Still wrapped up with a Christmas present from 1974. I opened it up, and all of a sudden, I began to read. And I began to read something that really fascinated me, being a cultural Christian.

I read something about Jesus, about praying, that really freaked me out, man. It freaked me out. You know what I mean by freak you out? I've never read this before.

In my religion, no one ever told me about the words of Jesus. So imagine, I finished the book of John. Now I'm saying, you know what? I want to begin from the beginning, the book of Matthew.

So I begin the book of Matthew, and I'm reading. And then I get to the Sermon on the Mount. I don't even know what that meant.

But I begin to read, and the prayer, this is what Jesus said. He says, but when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. You know what I'm talking about? It freaked me out.

Because when I was in trouble, when I was in trouble, I would always do what my cultural religion told me to do. Pray and pray in repetitions. Repetitions, that's all.

And then he says, Jesus, are you calling me a pagan and a heathen? He says, for the pagans think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore, do not be like them. For your father knows the things you have need of before you ask him.

And I said, oh my God. Because being a... I've got to be careful. Being a cultural, biological, traditional, grandma religion type, I begin to pray.

And when I got saved, the first six months were beautiful. I mean, we would go to concerts, and now my girlfriend, she's not my girlfriend yet, she's still my Christian sister now. She's not my girlfriend yet.

Well, I tell you already, she's my wife, she's been my wife for the last 26 years now. We've been through situations in life. My first six months as a Christian, oh brother, kumbaya experience.

Going to church, it was just beautiful. And I never thought I would hold hands with men. Never.

Never. In my congregation that God has given us in East LA, I have men kissing me in the cheek, and I don't mind anymore. And you think, what kind of men are these? These are knuckleheads.

These guys with tattoos, they go, I love you man. See, I don't get nothing from them. I understand.

There's a sense of appreciation. There's kinship now. There's a brotherhood.

There's a fraternity that only God can make. And we're friends, and we're buddies. Five or four, six.

We go through the big D's in life. What are the big D's in life? Disease, debt, disability, disturbances, down and out, depravity, disillusionment, divorce, despair, degeneration, damnation, disaster, disorders, difficulties, disenchantment, desperation, disgusted, and disgruntled. And for us sometimes we become dogs on drugs, duties, and disintegration and disarray.

That happens to us. Sometimes it's not Satan's, all his doing. We live in life.

What does Satan have to do with me going bald? It's a genetical factor. I don't want to go bald, but this is the reality, man. No plugs, drugs, or drugs for me.

This is who I am. Now this is not Satan's fault. He's not one orchestrating it.

But he could take advantage of me. Look at you, you bald-headed. You're going through a mid-life crisis.

You're not the same anymore. What kind of former Marine are you? Look at you, size waist 38 for crying out loud. He can get to me.

He can get to me. You see, my wife and I as Christians, I've been a Christian now 27 years, my wife 28 years. In those 28 years and 27 years of Christianity, it has not been easy.

Do you understand that? Christianity is not easy. Dead fish go down the stream. Living fish go up the stream.

And it takes courage. It takes commitment. Solomon said this.

Solomon said in Proverbs 24 10, If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. Now what kind of strength is he speaking about? Obviously, he's not speaking the kind of muscular mass that Bob Koy has. That's not the kind of muscular mass.

He's not speaking about gross muscles. He's speaking about moral strength. You see, in chapter 6 of Ephesians, Paul says, Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

So we see in the context that this is a satanic attack. When Satan attacks you, it's a supernatural warfare. You don't see him.

At least when someone slaps you, and you go, hey, what's up? And after you give him your left cheek, and then you go at it. You know what I mean? But if you feel slapped by someone you don't see, Like, hey, who hit me? Who said that? She's fine. Where did that come from? See, it's a supernatural warfare.

So in order for us to fight Satan, First of all, we don't fight him. Sometimes I see Christian television, And I hear sometimes in the hoorah, in the emotionalism, without the word. They say, let's go back to the neighborhood, and let's go and kick Satan's butt.

You go. I don't want to go. I don't want to mess with him.

He's stronger than you and I. He's a schemer. He's a liar. He's a conniver.

He has centuries of experience behind you. How old are you? 40? 50? 60? Let's compare. That guy's been there from the book of Genesis.

He's a schemer. So we have to, we have to, God is not asking us to fight him. What is asking us to do? To stand.

Stand. He's not asking us to go fight him. I don't want to fight him.

You see, there's going to be a dark day of adversity on every soul man as a Christian. It may be today. It may be tomorrow.

But there's going to come a time, like it has for me and my family, as there was a year ago. You see, I go to the hospitals. I go to ICUs.

And I have actually allowed people, not allowed, but I've been at ICUs, where literally I close people's eyes when they graduate. Did I say graduate? I sure did. They didn't die.

They were Christians. They were saying, bring on the worship team. And we've gone to ICUs and we take the guitars to ICUs because they're dying.

And we usher them into heaven. What a beautiful sight it is. Beautiful.

I can do all that. But then, as Eliphaz told Job, you do all these things for God. And you speak on behalf of God.

He says, but now that which you fear is now upon you. And I'm in the ICU and I'm with my wife. And when they tell you, sir, you've got to go to the serenity room.

I know what that is. Sir, you need to go to the meditation room. I know what that means.

And there we were told that my wife had brain cancer. Our family got together. The first thing you feel when you're going through changes like that, such a horrible, despicable feeling.

The first thing you want to ask, where were you at God? Or where are you? You're lost and desolate. You feel like, why God? We're with you. And you hear this.

Well, I'm still with you. I've never left you. I've never gone from you.

And then what a comfort it is. When I begin to see that Paul says in Philippians, don't worry about anything, pray about everything. With supplication, thanksgiving, and the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your mind and your heart.

I do know that. But you know the best kind of worship I've had? The best kind of worship I've had is when I basically don't say a word. I just go before my God.

You see, human behavioral science says that when something comes against us, we do three things. We either fight, we fight, or we flight. Jesus is not asking us for us to flight or fight or flight.

He says, I want you to stand. Stand in the truth. Stand.

Joshua, be courageous. Be not afraid. Be not dismayed.

The word dismay means to falter. It means to teeter. It means to basically faint.

We are told in Proverbs 25-26 that a righteous man who falters before the wicked is like a murky spring in a polluted well. I've told you, I don't know what falters means. Falters.

So I look it up. I stumble to give away, to totter, to stammer, to hesitate. I'm thinking, well, I understand that.

But not that much. Falters. And then I went to Home Depot to get me a water sprinkler.

And he goes, do you want an oscillator or a vacillator? I said, no, it's for the water, man. I don't want no medication. He says, no, you see, you can either have a oscillator or you can have a vacillator.

I said, wait a minute. That's what falters means. Someone who vacillates.

And I got it. It's someone, a righteous man who vacillates before the wicked is like a murky spring in a polluted well. I'm a Christian.

You got problems? Oh, I'm not. Praise the Lord. No, no, no, no, no.

Things are going good. Praise God. Oh, I'm sick.

Oh, God doesn't love me. Someone who falters compromising. I call that the granola bar syndrome.

And what does that mean? When you go through situations before they heathen, you either become a nut, a flake, or a fruit. God did not call you to falter. Joshua, and here's the secret.

Joshua, do not be afraid. Do not be dismayed. Be strong and be courageous.

And then he says this. For I am with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you.

And that's what you hear when you go through situations that gives you the peace that passes all understanding. You cannot explain it. You cannot describe it.

But you feel the sensation when you read this chapter. Read it for yourself. The Bible says that when we do not know how to express, how to pray for, the Bible says that we've grown in a spirit and the Holy Spirit

comes upon us and it begins to search within our hearts the things we can articulate.

Because I couldn't. What do you mean my wife has cancer? What do you mean of the brain? No, no, no, wait, wait. We're serving Jesus.

What do you mean, here we go. Are you going to vacillate? What are you going to do? And all I can do is go into my room, go in my car and I would just cry. I'm not ashamed to tell you that.

I am not ashamed. I cry. And I'm not ashamed.

And yes, I'm from East L.A. And yes, I cry. But I cried to God. I said, Lord, I said, God, you can.

The doctors cannot help you. Credentials cannot help you. The best doctors cannot help you.

When he told us, listen, just do what's ethical. Prepare a funeral. Prepare for your wife.

What do you do? What happens to many people, they feel sorry for themselves. And then the feeling sorry changes and morphs into cynicism. And they become cynical and they walk away from God.

One guy was so angry at God that he called his daughter to die. And I'm thinking, geez, how old was your grandma? She was 94. I said, dude, let her go, man.

She needs a new body, man. Why would you be angry with God? Don't be angry with God. God promised in this world.

He's straight up. He's on the level, man. He says, in this world, you will suffer what? Tribulation.

But be of what? Let me tell you, man. When my girlfriend left me, she wanted to see, she wants to go on the religious thing. So I went with a hookup.

Some other girl. This girl was always talking about her ex-boyfriend. Jimmy this, Jimmy that.

Oh, Jimmy used to do that. Oh, Jimmy used to do like that. You know what, you go back to Jimmy.

In the same way, when you worship God in your adoration, when you keep adoring God, you know when Satan, he hears you adoring and praising God, he doesn't like it. He doesn't like it. He goes, look at you.

You got into an accident. You see, it was God who did that. He doesn't love you.

God doesn't like you. And you in response. See, I talk back in my car.

It's okay in California because they think you're on a cell phone now. It's okay now. And I talk in my car and I say, listen.

He says, look at you. You're nothing but a sinner. Yes, I am, but say by grace.

Look at you. You don't deserve heaven. No, I know.

Jesus died for me. And pretty soon, I'm having a dialogue. And most of the time, he wins.

I hope you win. God bless you.

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