

A Time of Testing

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a Christ-centered life, trusting in God's purpose and power, and seeking divine enabling to overcome the challenges and troubles that come our way.

Duration: 55:37

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 4:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:28, Philippians 4:13, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 12:5-11, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 1:6-7

Topics: "Testing", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the significance of recognizing God's sovereignty during times of testing, urging believers to embrace their struggles as opportunities for spiritual growth. He highlights that the challenges we face are not punishments but rather divine training meant to reveal Christ's power within us. The sermon calls for a shift from a man-centered perspective to a Christ-centered one, encouraging the congregation to renounce dishonesty and self-sufficiency. Beach Jr. reassures that through God's discipline, believers can experience transformation and ultimately reflect the beauty of Christ in their lives. He concludes by inviting the congregation to submit to God's work in their hearts, trusting in His purpose and grace.

Transcript

He's gonna wake us up, beloved. Father, give us ears to hear your Holy Spirit speaking to us. Father, give us ears to hear even now, in quietness, as we wait upon you.

You are the Sovereign Spirit. You are the Head. You are the Life-Giver.

You are the fountain from which we draw all of our living water and all of our life. You are the Sovereign Pilot that governs our lives. We thank you, Lord, for being so gentle and so tender this day that we've gathered to hear your Word.

We thank you that you have spoken, that you have alerted us to your love and your embrace, but also to your imminent dealings in our life, that if we, as the Scripture says, submit to the Father, they will produce the pleasant fruit of righteousness that you are so longing to see. O God, have your way in our hearts, we pray. Therefore, 2nd Corinthians, chapter 4, just listen to the Word of God, and if you want to turn there, you may, but just listen to the Word of God.

Let God's Word speak to your heart. Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, the Holy Spirit here is referring of the ministry of life. The ministry of the New Covenant, the ministry that comes by the power of the Holy Spirit and takes the law of God that was written on the tablets of stone on Mount Sinai, which law, by the way, could only reveal our sin and result in our condemnation.

But now Paul's saying, therefore, seeing we have this ministry, the ministry of life, the ministry where we are now recipients of the Sovereign God, and he takes his Holy Spirit, and he writes his law upon our hearts. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. All things have passed away.

Behold, all things have become new. We have this ministry. We're partakers of the, of the, we're partakers of the thing that God longed for from eternity past.

The ministry, the service. We are recipients of the service of God, writing his law upon our heart. Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.

Beloved, the secret to being able to live and not faint is ever, ever, ever being enabled to see this ministry that we have. It's, listen, this ministry is not about us. It's about Him.

It's not about us. It's about Him. This ministry is the ministry of the Holy Spirit working in the ekklesia, those called out to reveal to the world the living Christ.

But with this ministry, and with this life, and with this beautiful call that we have received, there yet remains some difficulties, and those difficulties have to do with the earthen vessel. Though we are recipients of this ministry of life, and though God has taken his law and has written it upon the fleshly tablets of our heart, and though we have escaped condemnation that was brought from Mount Sinai, and have become partakers of life in Jesus Christ, yet the earthen vessel has to be broken. Listen carefully.

Listen carefully. Everyone, everyone here who has been a partaker of this ministry of life that Paul was talking about, everyone here ought to say, God, God, this earthen vessel must be broken. Now watch what, watch what the Holy Spirit tells us here.

Verse number two, we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty. Everything that's unworthy, everything that is unworthy of the calling, we should renounce. When we come to see this ministry of life that we have become a partaker of, when we see this ministry of life that God has given us in Christ, every act, deed, word of dishonesty must be renounced.

No dishonesty at all. The word means that which is unworthy. Whatever, whatever is not worthy of the Holy Name that we have been called by the name of Jesus Christ, God wants us to renounce.

Not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. When we come to see this great ministry of life that we have become partakers of, our whole frame of reference turns. It is no longer a man-centered thing, but it's a Christ-centered, God-centered.

It's all about Him and the revealing of His Son through broken, earthen vessels. I want to ask everyone very quickly, listen carefully, what is it right now in your life that is bringing pain? Now listen, don't look for some high out thing. What's bringing pain in your life? What do you feel the pressure of that you can't escape? Now let me ask you a question.

When was the last time you thanked God for it? Oh now I didn't say when was the last time you grumbled about it, or complained about it, or got angry about it, and then in your anger you hurt someone, and then your life started spinning out of control, and the root of it was because you just don't like that pain, that pressure. You can't escape. You want to run.

You can't. God won't let you. Why? Because you're an object of His love.

That's why. Come on. There's something.

There's something here, brother. I can sense we're touching something in the spirit. Can't you touch it? Can't you feel it? Oh, yes.

There's some pain. There's some pressure that everyone's feeling, even the young people. Something that's making you uncomfortable.

You've said, why, God? You've gotten upset. You've said, Lord, what's wrong? You've tried to even make plans to change things, but you can't. Why? Here's why.

Listen closely. Verse number seven. For we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not us. Now, that's a great thought, isn't it? But did you know that only God can make that truth real in our life? Everyone here wants that truth to be real in your life. Right? But can you do that by your own strength? Can you just wake up one day and say, well, I think that I'm going to allow the excellency of the power in my life to be God and not myself.

Well, if you think that, guess what will happen very soon. You'll realize that it's a futile effort. You can't do it.

See, we're dependent upon his work in us. So what does God do in our weakness? He takes the initiative and he provides a perfect individual order for us. Listen, this is what he's doing right now.

You ever go to a restaurant and the waiter or waitress comes to you, a nice fancy restaurant. Hi, how may I help you? What would you like? And if you go to a really nice restaurant, you can be very specific and they'll accommodate what you want. You might say, I want a meal like this, but can you maybe put a little bit of extra this on and take a little bit of this off? And they'll say, sure, we'll make it just the way you want it.

And so the waiter comes and serves you and he gives you exactly what you want. But in the kingdom of God is the exact opposite. Christ comes to us as the servant, but he doesn't ask us what we want.

He comes and says, here's what Father has ordered for you. Here's what Father has ordered for you. And the problem is we oftentimes say, wait a minute, Lord, that wasn't what I ordered.

That wasn't what I wanted. That's not what I wanted, Lord. Why does he do that? Because he has invested a ministry of life in our lives.

And he has written his law in our heart. He has made us partakers of a new covenant. We are partakers of the mercy and grace of God.

But that earthen vessel, that earthen clay vessel, so oftentimes hides the excellency of the power, the beauty of the living Christ, the work of God. So God specially orders that in our life, which successfully breaks the outer earthen vessel. Now, guess what the outer man is made of? The earthen vessel.

That's that pride in our life. That's that self-sufficiency in our life. That's that gossiping tongue in our life.

That's that, listen, that's that complaining spirit in our life. That's that disposition in our life. When everything's going our way, we're smiling from ear to ear.

But when someone crosses our will and frustrates our purpose, steam starts to come out of our ears and we start to stew. And depending on our personality, some of us just let it out. Others just quietly stew and they try and look so spiritual, but inwardly they're raging like a storm.

That's what God has to break. Because all of that is hiding what God has done. He's put his Son in our life.

He wants to reveal his Son. That's what this means. Look, watch, watch.

New light will come to our hearts. Verse number eight. We are troubled on every side.

Why are we troubled on every side? What is the Holy Spirit trying to say here? He just said this treasure is in earthen vessels so the excellency of the power may be of God and not ourself. Listen, this is what God sends our way in order to bring about. Verse number seven.

We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power might be of God and not ourself. And now the Holy Spirit starts to show us what does God do in order to make it true in our life? Listen, we are troubled. He sends trouble.

Now remember, we've been talking about man-centered or Christ-centered. We've been talking about either man-centered or Christ-centered. Now listen carefully to this.

Listen carefully. If you are caught with a man-centered mindset of Christianity following Jesus, guess what will happen to you when trouble comes your way? Man-centered mindset looks at trouble as an enemy. A man-centered form of Christianity looks at trouble and says, I don't want this because it is, listen, it is hindering me from what makes me feel comfortable, what gives me security.

It's hindering me from my happy feelings. It's hindering me. It's, it's, it's, it's not letting me do what I thought I should do.

Paul said, we have this treasure in earthen vessels so that the excellency of the power may be of God and not ourself. Therefore, God in his wisdom says, I love you so much that I will not let this treasure that I've deposited in you, I will not let that treasure be hidden all your life because of your outer vessel, your outer clay, which if I don't smite will have the preeminence in your life all your life. Your outer man will have the preeminence.

Though Christ is dwelling in you, though the Holy Spirit has made you partakers of the new covenant, your outer man, your outer life, you'll be governed by the impulses and wisdom and thinking and disposition of that clay. God says, that's not my thought. That's not my purpose of redemption.

My purpose in saving you is to reveal my Son Therefore, therefore, we are troubled on every side but not distressed. Troubled. Troubled.

But not distressed. Troubled. Are you troubled on every side? Maybe you fall into distress.

Now listen, listen carefully. Watch the progression here. Troubled on every side.

Not distressed. Perplexed. But not in despair.

So far we've got trouble. We've got perplexity. Number, number nine, persecuted.

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. This doesn't sound right.

This doesn't sound right. Wait a minute. We're the victorious overcoming church of Jesus Christ.

God's not gonna let any of this happen to us. Isn't that so often what we're hearing, what we're being taught? Write it down. Trouble.

Perplexity. Persecution. Cast down.

Wow. Now one quick way that you can find out whether or not you are living a man-centered or a Christ-centered Christian life. Here's how.

When trouble, perplexity, persecution, and being cast down comes your way and you fall into, as a result, a season, a long season, a short season, however long or short it may be, you fall into a mindset and a heart set. Bitterness, anger, unforgiveness. Because they are the normal natural responses that would come to us if it was simply about us.

But if through the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of God's Word the power of His grace, we are emancipated, set free from the man-centered, self-centered, self-serving disposition and we see that it's bigger. The whole thing that's happening in our life. It's bigger than us.

It's not about us. It's about God fulfilling His purpose, which is to reveal Christ in His church. It's seeing that by the grace of God that enables us to come to Hebrews chapter 12.

Listen carefully. Seeing that by the grace of God enables us to be brought to Hebrews chapter 12 and we're able to walk with Jesus down along these scriptures and it ministers great grace to us. Listen to this.

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassionate about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us. One thing that we can become very aware of and that is when God sends trouble, persecution, perplexity and that which casts us down, that which brings us low. All manner of things begin to surface in our life, don't they? All manner of things.

It's very possible that the very things like Carrie said begin to surface. The things that Paul said weren't happening or shouldn't be happening can happen. But that's when by the grace of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit we walk over a few more books and we go into the book of Hebrews and we find God saying to us, lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Your Father has ordered these things Our Father has ordered these difficulties. It's very frustrating living in this age, in this world, when everything we see, everything we do, everything we read, everything that comes on the TV, just about everything feeds us the message that it's about us. It feeds us the message where we get up in the morning and we walk around and what we do is we say, how is this affecting me?

How can I benefit from this? How can I personally be enlarged? How can I personally gain an advantage? How can I get, how can I become something greater? Then we come into the kingdom of God and we find out though God loves us and though God embraces us and though God has been rich in mercy, that mindset is at enmity to the purpose of God because God never created the church to live in this world with that mindset.

The church's mindset, the church's motto is God, what are you getting out of this? How is your kingdom being enlarged? How is your son being enlarged in my life? How is your son being enlarged? Isn't that so contrary to us? The knee-jerk reaction to trouble, the knee-jerk reaction to perplexity, the knee-jerk reaction to persecution, the knee-jerk reaction to being cast down is what? Knee-jerk, that is by nature. What's our reaction? Why is this happening to me? Number two, ah, it's affecting me this way. Ah, number three, it's making me feel, and whatever, fill in the blank.

That's the knee-jerk reaction. And I'm not sure we'll ever be free totally from that. However, I am sure that God's Word teaches that we can be rescued from the power of such a knee-jerk reaction through the indwelling presence of Christ so that when that knee-jerk reaction comes, we're enabled by the power, the energy of God's Spirit to lay aside such thinking as the Scripture says, cast aside, lay aside every weight, and seek God to fill our hearts and our mouth with the right testimony, namely, Heavenly, O Father, I am in pain and I feel the pressure of this.

Nevertheless, nevertheless, have Your way. Enlarge Your Son through this in me and through others. Let this result in a greater measure of glory going to You and Your Kingdom.

Let this result in the expansion of Your Kingdom. Lord, empower me to run this race that is set before me. Deliver me from the knee-jerk reaction, the wrong response.

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, of faith. Looking unto Jesus. Remember Stephen when he was stoned, where were his eyes? Were they taking note of the size of the stones that were coming? No.

Was he taking note of those who were stoning him? No. The Bible says that right in the midst of being stoned, he looked up, the heavens were opened, and he saw Jesus. And right before that, it says, and Stephen being full of the Holy Ghost.

So do you know what happens when we're full of the Holy Ghost? When God enables us to be filled and that when God keeps us filled, when we have a sense of desperation and God continuously fills us? Being filled with the Holy Ghost rescues us from the man-centered trap, the man-centered knee reaction. Wouldn't you say that Stephen, being stoned, could possibly identify with all four of these messengers, trouble, persecution, being cast down, perplexity? It very easily could have turned into a terrible thing for Stephen if he was a man-centered man filled with the spirit of his age, being stoned, having visions of his family, having visions of his future being destroyed, feeling the pain of the stones, hearing probably the horrible lies and profane words against him as the stones are hitting his face. But the man was full of the Holy Ghost.

We need a divine enabling in the day that we live in. We need a divine empowerment to rescue us from ourself, to rescue the days are coming when great troubles coming upon the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, if they love me, they'll love you, but if they hated me, they'll hate you.

Those who are fashioned by God's hand and made to walk with the Lamb and to reveal the Lamb will not be embraced by the world. They'll not be loved by the world. They'll be hated just like the Scripture says.

And in that hour, we're going to need the divine enablement of God to rescue us from the trap of when trouble begins to come and persecution begins to come. As Stephen was being stoned, he could have began to cry out and say, Oh God, why is this happening to me? I'm part of the church in Jerusalem. He most likely sold his property or part of his property as the Holy Spirit was moving.

He was sold out. Oh God, why is this happening to me? Lord, I just got done preaching a message, going through the whole history of Israel. Don't I have a fruitful ministry ahead, Lord? Don't you want to use me? I can't understand, Lord.

You see, man-centered, man-centered. But see, Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, knew it wasn't about him. It was about God.

It was about what God did with his vessels. One of the greatest perversities of the 21st century is how Satan has seduced the holy call of God. And now, you talk to most young men who want to get into the ministry, and they are so enamored about the call of the ministry as it relates to them.

Them. They think God's calling them so they can become something. They think God's calling them so that they can be seen.

They can be heard. They can be known. That is burped right out of Hades, that mindset.

You go through your Bible, starting Genesis, and go to Revelation, and every single place, without exception, you find God calling a man. It had nothing to do with the man. It was God coming into time, fulfilling His eternal purpose through a clay vessel.

Take, for example, the call of Moses. It wasn't about Moses. It was about, I have come to fulfill my oath that I spoke to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses.

You happen to be the lump of clay that I'm gonna use. But it's not about you. It's not to make you something.

That whole idea about me, a ministry for me, is the product of this man-centered idea that's in the church. God has a purpose. He uses people, but it has to do with the fulfilling of His purpose, not people, not ministries, not names for men.

And there's coming a day when God is gonna purge this mindset out of those who are following the Lamb, because among the ranks of those who follow the Lamb, wherever He goes, there will not be those who have an eye on ministry in order that they might get something out of it. There won't be that. God will not have it.

Now, it'll remain in the corrupt system. It'll continue probably right to the end. But among the ekklesia, the ekklesia will not be defined by an organization.

They won't have marks and identifying codes that the religious system can use to interpret. It'll be a group of people knit together by the love of God under the headship of Christ, walking by the power of the Holy Ghost in obedience to the Word of God. Within those ranks, there will be divine order.

God will establish His Word and His truth. And ministry will no longer be seen and perceived as it relates to a man or men, but it'll be the service, the holy calling and service of being able to share Christ. With whoever God would put in front of our path.

So it's not about man. It's about Christ. And every calling of God, every time God appeared to a man, every time, it had to do with God moving in earth to fulfill His heavenly counsel in heaven.

And that's why God has to break people and smash them. So that when He does choose to find a lump of clay whose feet smell, they don't get an inflated head and think that per chance God's using me because I really have something to give. I really have something.

I'm important. God, keep us from such poison. Loved, yes.

Important, no. God's gift to the church, no. You wanna talk about God's gift to the church? Let's all come to the throne and take the crowns that we don't deserve and throw them at His feet and start crying out, thou alone art worthy to receive glory and honor for thou has redeemed us.

And all that I am and all that I have become is because of you and because in your sovereign grace while I walked on earth, you allowed me to stumble. You allowed me to fail. I see what I would do without you.

Brothers and sisters, that is not only a qualification for a preacher. That is the qualification for every child of God because we're all called to minister. God has to work that deep in us so that it's not just cute theology but it's part of our very being.

We know that, we know that, we know that Christ alone is the worthy one. This is what God is longing for. Away with the man-centered mentality.

Man-centered, everything is man-centered. Our lifestyles are man-centered. Just a few days ago, we're gonna go back to Hebrews.

We've got just a few more, but we have to stop early today because there's things that some folks have to do. But listen, listen to the Spirit of God as He speaks through the Word of God. We're talking about this man-centered, verse Christ-centered.

We're in Hebrews. Our eyes need to stay upon Christ. We're seeing by the Holy Spirit that when God brings these troubles into our life, a lot of things are gonna surface.

And that's okay, that's okay. But don't stay there, don't become shipwreck in the things that surface in your life. Go on with God.

There's a deliverance from the corruption of flesh. There's a deliverance from the bitterness. There's a deliverance that's for you when God humbles you and shows you you're not as important as you think.

Don't sit on a self-pity spirit the rest of your life. God is calling a lot of His men and women who have been humbled and brought down, don't stay there. There's a deliverance.

There's a deliverance for you. There's an emancipation. It's right in the Word.

You don't have to find it mystically. It's in Hebrews 12. The same grace of God that humbled you is the same grace that'll enable you to lay aside the sin that's been revealed and the same grace that'll empower

you to rise up in Jesus and have a proper mindset and a sober idea.

There's healing, there's healing waters that flow. Jacob, yes, he was wounded at the thigh, but he walked, he had a limp, but he walked. I'm moving on.

I've got a limp. I'm nothing, but I'm moving on because God's grace not only devastates me, but enables me to arise and reveal His grace to others. Don't sit on your pity pot.

Let God speak to you. Arise and let the fragrance of Christ that has been developed in you as a result of your humbling, as a result of your breaking, let it begin to come forth and bless others. Listen to this word.

Ephesians. I just wanna bring this to your attention. The Holy Spirit walked me through this.

Ephesians chapter four, verse number 28, just to show you our tendency as the church in America and how everything is man-centered. Why do you think God delivered you from being a thief so that you can have an honest living? Why do you think? Watch your answer. Watch your answer.

Remember months ago or weeks ago, for a while we were teaching that when God asks you a question, don't give Him what you think, go to His word? This is why. Listen, Ephesians four, 28. Let him that stole steal no more.

How many here used to steal, but now you don't steal anymore? It's true with me. I used to be a thief, but God's grace has worked in my life I'm not a thief anymore. I thank God.

But rather let him labor, working with his hands, the thing which is good. So why? So that he may have to give. Wait a minute.

Wait a minute. I don't like that. That's not why God's prospering me.

That's not why I'm a thief anymore. That's not why I'm laboring. That's not why I'm working with my hands.

I'm doing that so I can hold and I can be enlarged. We live in America, brother. The sky's the limit.

There's unlimited prosperity. God's opened this door for me, brother. Don't crit my... It's God who's given me this power.

Brother, beware of the serpent that has spread his venom in most all the church in America. God has not prospered the church in America so she can get fat and increased with goods and then begin to say, I have need of nothing. But if God has given you anything, it's so that you, by the sovereign grace that works in you and by the sovereign word of God and by being broken before him under his directions, not some preacher telling you, give your money to the ministry or God will curse you.

There's a curse upon them. It's not why God's given you money to make some charlatan preacher wealthy and rich. He's done it so you can look at your brother next to you, your sister next to you, your neighbor next to you and say, oh God, where's the need? Where's the need? I can't hold on to this.

Thank you, Lord, for providing our needs. But Lord, you've given me the ability to labor that I might be able to live. Have to give to him that is in need.

Centered or Christ-centered? Do you see? You see how this spirit of man-centered Christianity's seducing? That means you've got a responsibility. You. See, church doesn't like to take responsibility.

They like a preacher to get up and tell them everything to do. Come to four meetings a week. Give 10% if you're cheap.

But give over the tithe if you're spiritual. We'll take care of your Christianity for you. Don't worry.

Got it all taken care of. We'll take care of it. You don't have to just work hard and make sure you give.

We'll take care of the rest. Don't be in condemnation. You don't have to stress over hearing God for yourself.

That's what I'm for. That whole lie is gonna be destroyed among those who follow Jesus and hear him. See, responsibility.

It's not easy. It's not just, well, I'll just do this and I'll just do what the preacher tells me to do and everything will be all right. You've got a responsibility before God as one of his sheep, one of his children, to hear his voice, to follow him, to listen to him.

And the worth of any preacher is measured by how much you realize that after the ministry. That's why God gave the ministry to the church as a constant, continuous reminder. Church, Christ is your head.

Christ is your shepherd. And he wants to reveal himself through all of us. So that's just one example there.

As I read this a few days ago, the word of the Lord came and said, Son, look at the atrocity that's going on in this country. Many of my people have taken that which I have given them and have hoarded it. And the preachers are hoarding it.

God wants to break this whole idea and set us free. As we begin to close, let's hear the words of Jesus. Verse 5, chapter 12, Hebrews, and you have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children.

The proper word is sons. God's dealing with us as sons. Sons.

Those who reflect the character of their father. Listen to what he says. My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, the child training of the Lord.

I can hear Paul saying and echoing the words that he wrote in 2 Corinthians. Oh, church of God, despise not the trouble, despise not the persecution, despise not the casting down, despise not the perplexity, despise not when you find yourself in a situation where you despair even life, despise it not. But God is dealing with you as sons.

He has something in mind. My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither fate when you are being rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loves, he chastens and scourges every son whom he receives.

Hallelujah. What a good message. What a good word.

God has received us. He's scourging us. He's child training us.

Why? Because the earth and vessel's in the way. The earth and vessel are in the scene of men. He's dealing with our knee-jerk reaction when God calls us to serve our wives and our husbands.

We don't want to or we do it at our terms when we're ready. And if we're not ready, we're not interested. That's not the way of Christ.

Be instant in season and out of season. Do you know what that Scripture means? Obey God even when you don't feel like it. That's what it means.

Do it when it doesn't feel right. Do it when it's not in your schedule. You can't do that and I can't do it.

That's why we need chastening and scourging and spanking because only God can make that happen. Watch what he says now. Watch what he says.

Verse seven, if you endure chastening. That is so powerful. Listen to this.

Listen to this. If you endure chastening. I like this.

I want to read that verse in this version called The Message. So don't feel sorry for yourselves or have you forgotten how good parents treat children and that God regards you as His children. My dear child, don't shrug off God's discipline, but don't be crushed by it either.

It's the child He loves that He disciplines and the child He embraces He also corrects. God is educating you. Boy, I like that.

What school did you go to? I went to Dallas. I went to this one. I went to that.

What school did you go to? I went to the school where God educates. God is educating you. That's why you must never drop out.

He's treating you as dear children. This trouble you're in isn't punishment, it's training. The normal experience of every child.

Only irresponsible parents leave children to fend for themselves. Oh, isn't that good? Irresponsible parents leave children to fend for themselves, but God is not an irresponsible parent and therefore He doesn't leave you to fend for yourself. Would you prefer an irresponsible God? We respect our own parents for training and not spoiling us, so why not embrace God's training so we can truly live? While we were children, our parents did what seemed best to them, but God is doing what is best for us, training us to live God's holy best.

At the time, discipline isn't much fun though. It always feels like it's going against the grain. Later, of course, it pays off handsomely, for it's the well-trained who find themselves mature in their relationship and understanding with God.

Oh, is that vintage or what? Boy, is that good. And this is what God is saying to each one of us this morning. He has once again condescended.

He's come down. He's walked in our midst. He's taken our shoes off.

He's washing our feet. He's saying, I love you. I'm serving you, but I'm warning you.

If you are to be those that follow me, you must be subject to Father's discipline. And Father's discipline comes through trouble and perplexity and persecution and trials and difficulties and situations where you despair life. But if you remember that Father loves you and it's a sign that He's accepted you, not rejected

you, and if you embrace Father, and I'll give you the power, Jesus says, I'm with you, lo, I'm with you always to the end of the earth.

Embrace Father's discipline. Embrace it. Say, Daddy, God, help me.

I will help you. I'm your comforter. I stick closer than a brother.

I'll weep with you when you weep. I'll laugh with you when you laugh. I'll rejoice with you when you rejoice.

Just don't drop out. Don't drop out. Embrace, and what will happen? Your earthen vessel will be crushed.

And wounded. And rendered inoperative, Norman. And at that glorious day, guess who will be revealed? Christ.

His beauty. His love. And then you'll be able to love your brother the way you should.

You'll be able to love your family the way you should. You can't even do it now and you know it. Right? Right? Right? You can't do it and you know it.

Stop pretending. Stop pretending that you're a holy spiritual person. You're not.

Why don't you admit defeat? Oh, that's a negative confession. You bet it is. And I love it.

You've got to admit defeat before you lay hold of His victory. Come on, God's crushing you. Stop trying to be strong.

Take that Superman suit off. Come on. God bless his heart.

But you know what happened to Superman? Christopher Reeves. He's not Superman. And you're not either.

And the quicker we learn this, the better off we are. You're not Superman. You're weak.

God said to Jacob, oh, you worm. Oh, you worm. You little one.

Okay? Let's bow our hearts. We do have to close now. Give time to clean up.

There's a wedding today. Lucian is getting married. You who know him.

And there's a few here that are going to his wedding. But now let's just concentrate for a moment. Father, we thank you and praise you for the moving of your Holy Spirit, for your word.

And all we can say, Father, is this. Here we are. Perform your word.

Help us to embrace what you're doing. Help us, Lord, we pray. We are weak.

We are feeble. But you are strong and mighty. Do it, Lord.

In your name and by your power. We pray. In the mighty name of our deliverer, Yeshua, our shelter and amen.

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