

God Uses Suffering for His Purpose

by Phil Beach Jr.

God's purpose for our lives is to make us into a holy dwelling place, use us to show forth his wisdom and majesty, and prepare us for eternity.

Duration: 56:18

Scripture: Romans 8:15

Topics: "Suffering", "God's Purpose"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes that God uses suffering to fulfill His divine purpose in our lives, illustrating that trials are not merely obstacles but opportunities for growth and transformation. He references Romans 8, highlighting that our sufferings are part of God's plan to conform us to the image of Christ, and that through trials, we can experience God's glory. Beach encourages believers to embrace their identity as children of God and to recognize that suffering can lead to spiritual maturity and a deeper relationship with God. He reminds us that God is sovereign over our circumstances, and nothing can separate us from His love, urging us to trust in His purpose even in difficult times.

Transcript

Testing one, two. Way too loud. Testing, testing.

You've got nothing on the... Testing one, two. Thank you, Lord. Pretty much everybody here knows, but probably maybe a couple don't, that Phil's in India today.

He's preaching and teaching at a pastor's conference there. Do you want to give, yeah, just take a moment and tell us a question. Amen.

Thank the Lord. I want to take a little while today and look at God's purpose. You know, we're so thankful that God saved us.

We're so thankful that He sent Jesus to deliver us from sin, to wash us, to give us forgiveness of sins. You know, the Lord didn't save us just so we could walk around being saved. He has a, you know, a purpose in His heart for us to fulfill.

And I just want to look at a few scriptures, looking at His purpose, looking at the effect it should have upon our lives, and looking at one of the aspects, because there's many aspects that God works in our lives to bring these things about. But I just want to look at one as I go on here this morning. I'm going to start off in

Romans chapter 8. I'm going to begin reading in verse 15.

For you have not received the spirit of slavery, leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which we cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption, into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body, for in hope we have been saved. But hope that is seen is not hope, for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance, excuse me, with perseverance we eagerly wait for it.

So Paul's telling us in here in Romans that the whole creation is groaning, eagerly awaiting something, the revealing of the sons of God. And not only that, we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, the Spirit within us is groaning for something that God wants to do in His people, for something that God wants to bring forth, something that He planned from eternity past. I've got a lot of scriptures I'm going to go through.

Ephesians chapter 2, verse 19. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. First Peter chapter 2, verse 4, and coming to Him as to a living stone rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God.

You also, as living stones. Are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, in whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord. In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

That was back in Ephesians again and then in Peter, as living stones, you are being built up as a spiritual house. God is building a house. He's building a dwelling place for His presence.

In the Old Testament, we had the types and the shadows of the tabernacle going through the desert where God's presence came and dwelt. And then we had the temple that Solomon built where God's presence dwelt among men. But we can see that, you know, those were just shadows of God's purpose.

These things, you know, the scripture says in Corinthians were examples unto us, unto whom the ends of the ages have come, you know, but the types and shadows are fulfilled in Christ. And in Christ, he's making a dwelling place. Christ is the one in whom the fullness of the deep deep well, excuse me, in bodily form.

And so likewise, we he was the chief cornerstone, the living stone, the patterned son, the one that God chose, his only begotten son. But he's redeemed us. And it's a mystery to be in a measure like him.

Not God, not deity like he is, but where God can come and dwell in us, in his presence, to dwell in us as a people, to be built up together with all the saints into a holy place where God can dwell by his spirit. The words were being built into a holy temple, a holy temple, a holy place, a place that set apart, that set aside for God. It's not something that we can produce in ourselves.

But where Jesus is, the place is holy, where he dwells by his spirit. We're made holy. First John, Chapter three.

See how great a love the father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God. And such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us because it did not know him.

Beloved, now we are the children of God. And it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when he appears.

We shall be like him. Because we shall see him just as he is. Excuse me.

We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. This is the hope that we have, you know, as we live our Christian life. It's.

I know it's easy for me to lose track, to lose sight. You know that there's a goal set before us. You know, ever since I was a kid, I guess, as a Christian, you know, if anyone says, well, you know what? What does God want us to be? Well, he wants us to be just like Jesus.

You know, it's almost a trite saying. But do we really believe what the scripture says here? We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. We shall be like him.

God wants us to be pure and holy, a place where he can dwell by his spirit. Let me continue on to the next verse, because it ties into where I'm going. How should we live? And everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself just as he is pure.

Everyone who has this hope fixed on him. Purifies himself just as he is pure. Do you have that hope fixed on you? That you're going to be like him, that you're going to be like him one day, the scripture says, if we have that hope fixed on us, it's going to bring about a purification.

I can hardly believe the words as I read it, but that's what the scripture says, just as he is pure. There's so many scriptures that, you know, when I read them, I hardly have faith to believe just what it says. Everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself just as he is pure.

God wants to do something beyond what we've asked or thought in each one of our lives. In each one of our lives, God wants to do a work, forming his son in us, of making an image of Jesus Christ in each one of our hearts. That was God's purpose from the beginning.

Remember back in Genesis, let us make man in our image, scripture says. God's intent was to have his image in the heart of man, to have a place where he could look at man and see something of himself. And through Jesus Christ, this very intent of God's heart is fulfilled and can be fulfilled in each one of us.

We go back to first Peter and you also as living stones are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in scripture. Behold, I lay in Zion, a choice stone, a precious cornerstone, and he who believes in him shall not be disappointed.

This precious value then is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very cornerstone and the stone of stumbling and a rock of offense for they stumbled because they are disobedient to the word. And to this doom, they were also appointed.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. For you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God. You had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so that in the things which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds as they observe them glorify God in the day of visitation. I don't like to separate that from the whole part that went before it because to me it just demonstrates, you know, God has a purpose for wanting us to live holy lives.

He has a purpose for wanting us to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against our soul. He has a purpose for wanting our behavior to be excellent among the Gentiles because we've been called to reflect what he is. We've been called to be part of that holy temple in the Lord, Christ Jesus being the cornerstone, but we all as living stones are called to be a part of that temple, part of that holy dwelling place for God in the Spirit.

Can you see that God is doing something in us? He's doing something. You know, the life that he's given us is for a purpose. It's for his purpose, something that will please his heart, something that will fulfill a desire of God's heart to dwell among men.

And we see in the book of Revelation at the end, behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. You know, that's where we're headed. That's where God is going with this thing.

And he wants to prepare us now. Our life on this earth is to prepare us for what he has ordained. Let me go on before I get myself caught with the time.

Ephesians chapter four, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called. We've been called with a high calling.

You know, referring back to Ephesians three, verse nine and 10, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery for which which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities and the heavenly places. So take me down to verse 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and that you being rooted in ground and love me may be able to comprehend with all the Saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or think according to the power that works within us to him be the glory in

the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever.

Amen. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of this calling with which you've been called. That calling that we've been called with is to be filled up to all the fullness of God that God might through the church make known his wisdom, his perfection, his beauty through the church.

It's something incomprehensible to think of that God could take us flesh people who would turn against him in a minute if it weren't for his grace and to make us into a holy dwelling place for his spirit, a holy dwelling place that he can use to show forth the wonders of his grace and the wonders of his wisdom and majesty. So God has a plan to make a holy dwelling place for his presence to dwell, a place that the whole world could look upon and see Christ Jesus glorified, a place where it says the, I don't want to misquote it here, where I just read wisdom of God may be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. God wants to use the church to show forth what he is to the angels, to principalities, authorities and heavenly places.

It's a high calling. It's something that we can't attain to. God has to do it.

God has to prepare a place for himself. God has to prepare our hearts to be broken before him to where he can dwell among us. God has manifold ways of, forgot the Bible has these ribbons, find my place easier.

Manifold ways that he uses to bring about his purpose in our lives. Ephesians chapter 4 tells us the way some as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature, which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness and deceitful scheming.

But speaking the truth in love, we were to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. So we can see here some of the things that God uses to bring this about us. The ministry gifts that he's put in the body for the equipping of saints.

So we all come to the unity of faith, to the knowledge of the son of God and and the fellowship that he's given us, the the interrelatedness of the the body that you know where it says there the whole body is being fit and held together by that which every joint supplies, every joint, each member of the body. God has given something that we all need. We're not all the same.

We're all different. God has given each one of us something that if we're not contributing to the body, we're not fellowshiping together, if we're not giving forth that which God has given in our hearts, the body is lacking. Nevertheless, I'm not going to dwell there because there's another aspect of God's dealings which is precious and it's one that God chooses to use frequently and it's one that in our natural flesh that we have the most tendency to despise.

Beginning in verse Peter chapter 4, Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the

rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time already passed is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. And in all this they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you.

But they shall give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. Let me read verse 1 again. Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

Sometimes God chooses to bring suffering into our life. I know we like to say the devil did it. The devil gets blamed for a lot of things, and God uses the devil, I think, to bring things into our lives.

But as Christians, we can't look to second causes. The first cause of everything for us is God himself. He's the one who reigns in the heavens.

He's the one who says to the seas, thou shalt go thus far and no farther. He's the one that said to the devil in Job's life, you can come thus far, you can touch his body, but you can't take his life. God's the one who sets the limits and the parameters of what we're going to endure.

So we have to take everything from God and trust him and trust our souls into a faithful creator in doing what is right, it says later on here. Back up to 1 Peter 1. Verse 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And though you have not seen him, you love him. And though you do not see him now, but believe in him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls, that the proof of your faith being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Once again, Peter's telling us here, God sends trials.

God sends sufferings. Our faith is going to go through periods where we're tested by fire. But it's not for our destruction.

It's going to be purified. Our faith is to God more precious than gold, the faith that he's put in our hearts. James chapter one, verse two, consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials. Consider it all joy. Remember when Job was afflicted, his wife said to him, curse God and die.

Remember Job's response? Shall we accept good from God's hand and not evil? What is our attitude towards the Lord when he brings stuff to our lives that we wouldn't choose for ourselves? Can we see it as

coming from his hand? Can we see it as God's mercy setting us free from possibly sins that we've been bound by our whole life? God wants to bring things in our life that will set us free and purify us. But it's not for our destruction. It's for his good.

It's for the outworking of the precious gold that he's put in us. I want to briefly just go through an example from the Old Testament. It's a familiar story, I'm sure, to all of us.

But I just want to read through it and point out a couple things that the Lord was just showing me through it. Exodus chapter 14, reading about the Israelites crossing the Red Sea. Now the Lord spoke to Moses saying, tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Piharioth, no I can't pronounce that properly, between Migdal and the sea.

You shall camp in front of Balzephon opposite by the sea. For Pharaoh will save the sons of Israel. They are wandering aimlessly in the land.

The Pharaoh will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them. And I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army. And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, and they did so.

So when we read this first couple verses here, who chose where the Israelites were going to camp? Who told them where to go? It was God. God told them exactly where to go, and he tells us his purpose was that he was going to harden Pharaoh's heart so that Pharaoh would chase after them. Okay, I'm going to skip down a little.

It just tells about, you know, the Egyptians started following him. Came out to follow him with all his horses and chariots. And the Egyptians chased after them with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army.

And they overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi-Haiaroth in front of Balzephon. Once again, they were exactly where God told them to be. And as Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked.

And behold, the Egyptians were marching after them. And they became very frightened so that the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord. Then they said to Moses, Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, Leave us alone that we might serve the Egyptians? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.

God told them where to camp. They camped there. God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would send his chariots and his armies after them.

And when the Israelites saw this happening, they became very frightened. And they thought they were going to die. When we see ourselves in a situation in trouble, it doesn't necessarily mean that we're not where God wants us to be.

The Israelites were right where God wanted them to be. And an impossible situation came about by God's hand, where if God didn't intervene, they were all going to die. I mean, it's easy to read it with 20-20 hindsight and say, Oh, well, God was doing it.

They shouldn't have been afraid. But when it happens to us, are we going to have that same 20-20 foresight and not be afraid and not grumble against God as they were doing? They're not saying, Why

didn't you just leave me to serve the Egyptians? You know, the Egyptians symbolized sin. They were in slavery to sin.

Jesus said, Whoever commits sin is the slave of sin. You know, they'd be enslaved in Egypt for 430 years. That's all they had known was slavery for 430 years.

And here God was bringing them out. But they had become so comfortable in that place of slavery. That's all they knew.

That's where they lived. And here God was bringing them out. And he was, you know, as we all know the story, he was preparing a great deliverance beyond what they knew.

What they could have imagined was going to happen. But while God was setting it up, while God was planning this great deliverance to free them from their slavery, free them from the hands of their enemies, it looked like they were all going to die. And they all became afraid and grumbled.

Let's ask God to give us eyes to see and accept whatever he sends us by his hand, knowing that he's not sending it for our destruction. It's not God's plan to destroy us, to take away the life that he's given us. God's intent is to bring about the glories of Christ in our life, just purify us, to set us free from the hands of our enemies, to set us free from our slavery.

In the same way, let me just continue reading. But Moses said to the people, do not fear. Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will accomplish for you today.

For the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. I just love that one little phrase there. The Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will see them never again forever.

The Egyptians you've seen today, you'll see them never again forever. God had a plan that was so much greater than the Israelites could have imagined. But sometimes when God wants to do a never again forever in our life, to set us free from something that we couldn't imagine being set free from because we've been so accustomed to it for 430 years, he's got to take drastic measures and put us into a situation where we just can't imagine how we're going to get through this.

And that's where we need to stand still and see the salvation of God. And know that the Egyptians whom we've seen today, you will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.

I'm going to skip down through the part where the waters... actually, I'm not going to skip the whole part here. And the angel of the Lord, skipping down to verse 19, who had gone before the camp of Israel moved and went behind them. And the pillar of cloud moved from behind them and stood still behind them.

And so it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel. And there was a cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night.

God sovereignly put his presence between the Egyptians and Israel. To me, that's just another confirmation, if you will, of where... You know, God will say to our circumstance, to our trial, to what he allows the enemy to do, Thou shalt come thus far and no farther. Or putting it in New Testament terms in 2 Corinthians 10.13, For God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted above what you're able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you might endure it.

God knows our frame. He knows what we can endure. And even as he's setting up these situations in our lives and the struggles that we have to go through, that he knows we need to go through if he's going to have his purpose fulfilled in our life.

He knows what we can endure and won't allow it to be more than we can endure. So don't ever say, God, I can't take this. This is more than I can endure because it's not true.

He said he will never allow us to be tempted beyond what we're able. He will with the temptation make a way of escape. He'll give us the grace that we'll need.

He'll give us the strength that we need to endure as long as his purpose is for us to endure the trial. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land. So the waters were divided.

And the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land. And the waters were like a wall to them on their right and on their left. And we all know the story, how they went through the Red Sea and the Egyptians followed them.

And after they had reached the other side, it says God looked out from the waters and the chariots wheels started falling off and swerving and all that kind of stuff. And they started turning back and the Lord told Moses to stretch out his rod and close the waters and they were all drowned. And when all was said and done, it says, thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians.

And this is another one of my phrases I love from the story. And Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Once again, God was just showing them what he had done.

You know, after the trial was over, after the great deliverance from the impossible situation, then they could look back and see that God had used this to kill all those Egyptians. God had used this to set them free from the hand of their enemies, from the slavery that they've been so accustomed to for so many years. They could look and see what God had done.

And when Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses. Once again, when we see with our 20-20 hindsight what God has wrought through the trials, through the difficulties that inevitably we're all going to face. You know, Jesus said, in the world you will have tribulation.

In the world you will have tribulation. It's John 16-33. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

It's inevitable, we're all going to go through it. But remember, it's for a purpose. God's bringing us into his presence.

He's molding us, he's making us into a holy temple in the Lord that he can fill with his presence. That he can fill with his spirit, that he can use to show forth the glories and excellencies of himself. We have a high calling.

I just want to go back again in Romans 8 and read a little more. It's just in conclusion here. God's ways.

Romans 8, chapter 8, starting in verse 26. It's just following on where I had read earlier. And in the same way, the spirit also helps our weakness.

For we do not know how to pray as we should. But the spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the spirit is.

Because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God. To those who are called according to his purpose.

Let me just stop for a moment. We always hear that verse quoted in relation to bad things happening to us. But I think what it's saying in context there.

Is those things that are happening to us are the very things that the spirit himself is groaning. Intervailing to happen to us. Because those are the things that are going to bring forth God's purpose as we continue in verse 29.

We don't know how to pray as we ought. We don't pray, Lord send me a trial. Lord send me a difficulty.

Lord I know that's the only thing that's going to set me free. But the spirit himself intercedes with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the spirit is.

Because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good. To those who love God.

To those who are called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son. That he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

And whom he predestined, these he also called. And whom he called, these he also justified. And whom he justified, these he also glorified.

These are the things that God is working for good. This is the good that God is working. To be conformed into the image of his son.

Everything that God brings into our life. Every trial that he allows into our life. Every struggle that he knows we need to face.

And we need to go through. It's for the purpose that we might be conformed to the image of his son. That he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Let me continue on in verse 31. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own son. But delivered him up for us all.

How will he not also with him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is he who died. Yes rather who is raised.

Who is at the right hand of God? Who also intercedes for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress? Or persecution? Or famine or nakedness? Or peril or sword? Just as it is written. For thy sake we are being put to death all day long. We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

But in all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

I just want to point out here that all these things that he's listed, tribulation or distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, or peril or sword, there's no promise here that we're not going to see these things. That's not what the scripture is saying. It's saying none of these things can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.

In all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us. The world is an unsure place today. There's a lot going on.

A lot of people have fears. With anthrax and terrorist things in this world that can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. There is nothing that Osama Bin Laden or terrorists or whatever can do to us without God's permission, without God allowing to come to us what he knows we can endure, that which will bring about his purpose in our lives.

We don't have to live in fear as Christians. If we've given our life to Christ, we're in his hands, and he's got a purpose for us. And whether by life or by death, we can entrust ourselves to a faithful creator in doing what is right.

And we can rejoice in knowing that we're safe. We're safe. Our souls can't be touched.

The treasure that he's put within us can't be touched. There is nothing any of the nations of the world can do to take away what God's given us. And nothing can hinder God fulfilling his plan for us.

Nothing anyone can do. So we can take refuge and rejoice that if God is before us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? Just as it is written, for thy sake we are being put to death all day long. We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

But in all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. God has an eternal purpose.

And that purpose includes each and every one that's redeemed. Each and every one who said, Jesus, come into my life and forgive my sins. That's the first step.

And he's got us in his hand. We don't have to be afraid. We can trust him to bring into our life whatever we need in order for his purpose to be fulfilled.

Lord, I just want to thank you for that love that's in Christ Jesus. That love which is beyond comprehension. That love that you had for us, Lord, while we were yet sinners, while we denied you, while we went our own way, you loved us.

Lord, we don't know love like that apart from you. Lord, I pray that you would quicken your word to each one of our hearts. Lord, you know your plan for us is for good and not for evil.

Lord, we don't know whether persecution is a way, famine or sword, but you know. And we take refuge, Lord. We take rest and comfort in knowing that you won't allow anything, any trial, any temptation to

overcome us.

It's beyond what we can endure. Lord, we just ask that you would work in our lives your perfect will, that you would work in us, Lord, the purity of Jesus Christ. Lord, you've said that he has this hope fixed on him, purifies himself, even as he is pure.

Lord, that's beyond our comprehension. That you want to make us that pure, Lord. God, we ask you to do it.

Lord, we don't know how to pray as we ought. Lord, we'd be praying against the very things that you want to bring into our life. We'd be praying, Lord, against the uncomfortable situations.

We'd be praying against whatever suffering that you would choose for us, Lord. But God, you know, Lord, our desire is to please you. Our desire is to serve you.

Our desire is to have Jesus in our hearts. Jesus so filling us that he could be seen in us, Lord, and that you can have a testimony on this earth. Lord, we just offer ourselves to you today and ask that you just give us faith.

Give us faith, Lord, not just here today, but when the inevitable trials and tribulations come, give us faith, Lord, to receive them from your hand, to receive them from you, from the hand of a loving father, from the hand of one who cares for us, from the hand of one who knows what's best for us, Lord. Let us not grumble against you and fight against you, Lord, but let us receive, as James said, let us count it all joy. And thank you, Lord, for your dealings with us.

We ask in Jesus' name that you would do this in your name's sake. Amen. Amen.

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