

Tried & Proven

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon explores how God tests our faith to awaken a deeper desire for His presence in our lives.

Duration: 1:10:48

Scripture: Luke 24:13

Topics: "Testing", "Seeking God's Presence", "Faith Testing"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of recognizing our need for the Lord through the testing of our faith, as illustrated by the stories of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Philip's encounter with Jesus, and Elisha's commitment to Elijah. He highlights that God tests us not to lead us astray but to awaken a desire for Him within us, prompting us to cry out for His presence and guidance. The sermon encourages believers to endure trials with faith, knowing that true blessing comes from remaining steadfast in our commitment to God. Ultimately, the message calls for a heartfelt response to God's call, demonstrating love through obedience and trust in His ways.

Transcript

Sweet, sweet presence of the Lord. He's so wonderful, isn't he? He's lovely. He's the lover of our soul and just so precious, so precious that words fail oftentimes to express how lovely he is.

I want to look to the Lord this morning and I want to pray that God will take the word this morning and through the power of the Holy Spirit, impart to us what I believe to be something from the Lord's heart that he wants us to understand. All right, so let's just join our hearts together for a moment. Father, we stand before you in the presence of Jesus Christ, our righteousness, our life, our Savior, our elder brother, our King, our Lord, and our Shepherd.

We pray, Father, that you would grant to us the Holy Spirit, the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of you, Lord, and that in granting us this this morning, you would give to us an understanding of your heart and what you are seeking to do in our lives and then enable us, Lord, by your power to properly respond, thereby you can be glorified and be satisfied and rejoice over us with singing. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

I would like to read three different portions of Scripture, each of which contains a message from the Holy Spirit regarding a very special aspect of the Lord's heart toward his people. In understanding this particular aspect of the Lord's heart toward his people, as we can understand this, we will find increasing joy,

increasing delight in our lives moment by moment, day by day, because as we awaken to this aspect of the Lord's heart, we can see something that the Lord is doing in our lives, and it will affect the way we conduct ourselves, it will affect everything about us. It's the most exciting, most thrilling awakening and revelation, one of the most that can come to us as children of God.

The first portion of Scripture is found in Luke chapter 24. There were two disciples in this particular section of Scripture, Luke chapter 24, beginning in verse number 13, who were on their way to a village called Emmaus. Let's begin reading in verse number 14.

And they talked together of all these things which had happened, those things referring to the crucifixion, the death, and the burial of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

And he said to them, what manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk and are sad? Now, before we read on, I'd like to ask a few questions that I'd like for you to ponder on. Number one, did Jesus need to ask these questions that he, the Lord himself, might learn the answers? Do you really think the Lord wasn't sure about what these two fellows were talking about? But he came, listen closely, he came and gave the appearance to these two disciples that he had no clue what they were talking about. And he gave his appearance in order to accomplish something.

That's what we're going to see. And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, aren't thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, what things, what things? What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk and are sad? What things? And they said unto him, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet, mighty in deed, and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.

Beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher. And when they found not his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels which said that he was alive.

And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher and found it, even so as the woman had said, but him they saw not. And he said unto them, O foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter in to his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Now verse number 28 is the verse that we want to point out, because in verse number 28, I believe the Holy Spirit has gathered up into verse number 28 everything that the Lord was after when he originally, in verse number 14 and 15, suddenly came into their presence and was walking with them. Verse number 18, listen carefully as I read this verse. This captures something in the heart of the Lord that he wants us to learn.

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone further. He made as though he would have gone further. The picture we have here, beloved, is the two disciples were walking along the road.

The Lord Jesus had asked them a few questions. They had spilled out their heart to the Lord, revealed to him all of their consternations and all of their fears and all of their confusions, and revealed to him all of the way that they felt, and began to rehearse in their own minds and hearts the things that were inside of them, and they were even able to communicate them. And the Lord, prior to this event, verse number 28, the Lord actually chided them and rebuked them for their unbelief, and then proceeded to expound on the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

All of these events have already transpired. And now, assuming that I'm on the road right now that leads to Emmaus, and I have to go this way left to get there, I'm walking along and I'm turning left along with the other disciple, and I look and I see the Lord is going straight. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went, and he, that is the Lord Jesus, made as though he would have gone further.

So the picture we have here, we've got the two disciples turning left because that's the way to Emmaus, and we've got the Lord Jesus going straight, making as though he was going further, that he was not going to go to the road to Emmaus. Verse number 29, And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us. Lord, don't go on.

Don't move on, Lord. Don't go your separate way, and let me go my separate way. Lord, I bid you, I constrain you, I beg you, come, abide with us.

Lord, I need you, I want you, I desire you. Verse 29, For it is toward evening, and the day is far spent, and he went in to tarry with them. Why did he go in to tarry with them, beloved? Because they, what? Constrained him, encouraged him, begged him to come.

And it came to pass, verse 30, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and break, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures.

John chapter 6. Remember, as you turn to John chapter 6, Luke chapter 24, verse number 28, And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone further. John chapter 6, beginning in verse 1, And after these things, Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? Again I ask a question, Do you really think that the Lord Jesus wasn't too sure what to do? So he asked Peter, so that he, Jesus, might know what to do.

Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? Verse number 6, And this he said to prove him, to test him, to listen, to discover what was in him, for he himself knew what he would do. Verse 28 of Luke 24, don't have to turn there, And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone further. Luke 6, verse number 6, And this he said to prove, to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.

The last section of Scripture that we want to look at is found in the Old Testament, 2 Kings chapter 2. This is a portion of Scripture referring to two prophets, Elijah and Elisha. Elijah was just about ready to be taken up into heaven, and Elisha was a young prophet who, having responded to the call of Elijah, began to follow Elijah and desire to be his pupil and his student, even desired to become a prophet or God's spokesperson for the nation after Elijah was taken up. So Elisha had been following Elijah for some time, and now these events occur.

Verse number 1, chapter 2, 2 Kings, And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Now the two of them were together. Listen very carefully.

And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel.

Verse 3, And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today? And he said, Yea, I know it. Hold your peace. So we have here the prophet Elijah was already in the progress of going somewhere, and he actually told his young Elisha to stay there at Gilgal, because he was going on to Bethel.

And Elisha said, No way, I've got to go with you. Then when they get to Bethel, they've got these sons of the prophets saying to him, Do you know the Lord's going to take away your master from your head today? Do you know Elijah's going to be taken from you today? And Elisha said, I know. Hold your peace.

I know he's going. I know he's going. With that, verse number 4 kicks in.

And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here. Wait here, I pray thee, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho. And again Elisha said, And he said, As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.

So they came to Jericho. Verse number 5, And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today? And he answered, Yea, I know it. Hold ye your peace.

So again, the sons of the prophets came to Elisha and told him the same thing. Elijah's going to be leaving you. What are you going to do? Verse number 6, And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here, for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan.

And he said, As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they, too, went on. Now the rest of the story, verse number 7, And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood to view afar off.

And they, too, stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters. And they were divided hither and thither, so that they, too, went over on dry ground.

And finally, verse 9, very profound, And it came to pass when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee. So here the prophet Elijah is asking Elisha, his young disciple, Ask of me what you want me to do for you before I'm taken away, and I'll give it to you. So Elisha says, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so unto you. But if not, it shall not be so.

And it came to pass as they went on and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder. And Elijah went up, but a whirlwind into heaven, and Elisha saw it. And he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

And he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. We've just read three portions of Scripture this morning.

Each one of these portions of Scripture in Luke chapter 24, verse number 28, in John chapter 6, verse number 6, and in 1st Kings chapter 2, verses 1 through 10. We have three separate stories all teaching us a lesson about a particular aspect of the Lord's heart that I believe he is wanting us to understand this morning. In each one of these stories, we see the Lord operating in such a way in Luke chapter 24, in John chapter 6, and in 2nd Kings chapter 2, so as to test his people.

He's testing them in Luke chapter 24. He's testing them in John chapter 6, and he's testing them in 2nd Kings chapter 2. In Luke chapter 24, the test is intended to draw out of those two disciples an awakening for their need of him, to the point where that awakening and that realization of their need for him results in a crying out after him, in a constraining after him, in a pleading after him, Lord, come here! Don't leave! Abide with us! Now in Luke chapter 24, you don't see the Lord coming to these two disciples and throwing himself upon them, coming up to them and saying, don't you know who it is that's talking to you? What is wrong with you? Don't you understand that I am the one? Don't you understand your need for me? Don't you understand who I am? I'm going to come and follow you around. I'm going to Emmaus with you.

I'm going to come and sit down with you and break bread with you. No, you don't see the Lord asserting himself in Luke chapter 24. You don't see the Lord coming and grabbing hold of them and shaking them, but you see a heavenly, divine wisdom operating in the midst whereby the Lord is actually giving the appearance like he's going to go on.

There are times in our life and the Lord's dealings in our life when the Lord is testing us, the Lord is trying us, the Lord is proving us, and he is doing it by seemingly letting us go our own way, and it seems like he might go another way, and he's seeing, he's stepping aside, and he's waiting to see what we are going to do. What are we going to do? What are we going to do when the Lord is not so much jumping into our situation and asserting himself and his lordship and saying, this is what you must do, but rather he is communing with us, because he communed with the disciples, he is allowing us, he is enabling us to express to him what we feel about it, where the disciples came and told him all about what was going on, and he's even giving them light in the Scriptures concerning himself, but yet when the crisis moment came as to whether or not he would go with them or not, he left the decision to who? He left the decision to them as to whether or not he would go to Emmaus with them. He whet their interest, he enabled them.

He's a great counselor, isn't he? Instead of coming and asserting himself into the situation, he asked strategic questions so as to enable them to pour out their hearts to him. He didn't talk much, he just knew the right questions to ask in order to help these disciples to get this stuff off their chest. And then after getting this stuff off their chest, he brings them to the Scriptures and starts giving them understanding and starts enlightening them, and according to the testimony of the two disciples, while this was occurring, their hearts were burning within them.

They were feeling a sense of, this is awesome, this is heavenly, this is supernatural, but yet during all of these events, the deciding factor had not yet been determined, because as the disciples were making their way into Emmaus, Jesus went another way. And the Scripture records that after they saw the Lord going as

if he would move on, there awakened in themselves a desire that resulted in a crying out after the Lord. It resulted in, Lord, come! Lord, abide with us! Lord, don't go your own way! Please, come with us into Emmaus! And it was after this awakening which resulted into a cry after the Lord, it was after this that the Scripture says that the Lord then broke bread with them, and their eyes were opened, and he revealed himself to them.

Now in John chapter 6, we have different circumstances, but we have the same truth captured. Jesus had been with his disciples. Jesus had performed miracles prior to this event, John chapter 6. The disciples had been seeing the majestic power of Christ.

In John chapter 3, they, I'm sure, found out about the profound visitation that Nicodemus had with Jesus at night, and discovered the incredible truth that a man must be born from above. In John chapter 2, I'm sure the disciples were amazed at the miracle at the wedding of Cana. In John chapter 4, they had become incredibly amazed at the Lord's power regarding the ministry to the Samaritan woman.

So they were acquainted with Christ and his power, and in John chapter 6, a great multitude was there following, and Jesus begins to operate in this particular way that we see him operating in, in Luke chapter 24. It's a very incredible way that the Lord operates. He's operating in this way in our lives today, and he begins by asking the question, when shall we buy bread that these may eat? Now Jesus was well aware of the situation.

He was well aware of what he was going to do. He was in tune with his Father, but here it's so incredible amidst the multitude of people, amidst the burden that the Lord must have had for these people, amidst the pressures and the awareness of the needs of this people, yet we see something in the Lord's heart here. He had a great desire for something to happen in the heart of Philip, so he zeroed in from all of these multitudes of people to one person, Philip, and he asks him a question, when shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to prove him.

God is proving and testing us today. He has laid before each and every one of us certain things, and now he's saying, what are you gonna do? I'm thinking about the time of prayer Norman and I had last night. We had bought Norman for his anniversary or birthday? Birthday.

We had bought for Norman, for his birthday, the complete works of E.M. Bounds. Tremendous book, and I had made a comment. I can't remember exactly what it was, something along the line of, you know, the book has truth in it that has the potential to really transform anybody who reads it.

And we were continuing to talk, and Norman had made a few comments how every time he reads it, he gets something from the Lord that stays with him for days. Something's imparted to him. The Lord has brought the book to Norman, and now the Lord is saying, what are you going to do with it? What are you going to do with it? The Lord proved and tested the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, seeking to cause to rise up within them, listen, a response to the test that would reflect that which is right, that which is godly, that which would be pleasing in his eyes.

Here Jesus tests Philip because he himself knew what he would do. You see, Jesus knows what to do. He wants to see whether we know what to do.

For in testing us and proving us, we come to know and understand, as Cary said earlier, to what extent, to what measure are we breathing in harmony with the Lord? To what extent, to what measure are our steps

in harmony with the Lord? You see, this whole issue of the Lord testing the two disciples, testing Philip and testing Elisha, is the issue of Christ's incredible passion to have a people that will follow him wholly. But listen, they will not follow him wholly because they are being forced to, because they are being controlled against their will, but they will do it because they are awakened to what the Lord wants. They see what God is saying, and out of a heart of a love slave they say, Lord, this is what I want.

Today while praying as a company of people, the Holy Spirit wonderfully confirmed this message that he placed on my heart through the time and season we had when we all gathered together here up front and we offered ourselves to the Lord. You see, the Lord is working in our lives right now in a very similar way that he did in the lives of the disciples, in Philip's life, and in the life of Elisha, in that he is setting before us the way that he is going. He's setting before us the thing that pleases his heart.

He's showing us his incredible desire for us to join together in prayer, to join together in unison, and pray that the Father's house would be filled with glory, that the harvest would come, that men and women would be delivered from the power of darkness, and be translated into the kingdom of his Son, and be saved and filled with the Spirit that we might see the glory of God come. He's showing us what he wants, but he's proving us, he's testing us, in that he is setting before us what he wants, and he's saying, now what are you going to do? Philip, when shall we buy bread that these things may eat, these people may eat? Christians gathered in this auditorium here, Hackettstown High School. What shall we do now that we see the fields are right under harvest? The Lord knows exactly what he's going to do.

The Lord knows exactly what he wants to do, but he's asking us, he's proving us, he's testing us, he's saying, what will we do? What is your response today? What is your heart cry? Is it as the disciples on the road to Emmaus? Lord, we need you abide with us. 2nd Kings chapter 2. This is our third Bible example which has within it this identical truth. Elisha and Elijah were together.

Elijah had called Elisha to follow him, but before Elijah could look at Elisha and say, ask of me what you will and I'll give it to you, Elijah had to test Elisha, and he tested him three times. In each test, Elijah knew, listen, Elijah knew that God had called Elisha to follow him all the way to where the whirlwind would take him up and Elijah would drop his mantle upon Elisha and Elisha would receive a double portion. He knew that God had called him to stick close to him, not to leave his sight, but yet in three specific instances, Elijah looked at Elisha and said, stay here, son, I'm moving on, and the reason why Elijah did this was so that Elisha's commitment, Elisha's love, Elisha's desire for the thing that God wanted was tested to the max.

Three times Elisha had the opportunity to say, stay here, stay here, I'm moving on, but each time the words of Elijah came to Elisha, the prophet, the prophet's heart, the young prophet, Elisha's heart was smitten, and each time he had the opportunity, even it seemed like God was giving it to him because if the prophet says stay, it must mean God wants me to stay. No, it didn't mean that at all. Didn't mean that at all.

Each time he was given the opportunity, within him arose the same kind of desire that was in the two disciples who were heading to the road of Emmaus. This incredible desire, no, I must abide with you. I must stay with you.

I can't stay here. Where should I go? I've been joined to you. No, I'm gonna go on with you one time, another time.

No, as sure as the Lord lives, as sure as your soul lives, I will go with you right on to the third time, the same thing. And then finally, after three times, the prophet then separates the river, they go over, and there that holy moment occurs where the young prophet's commitment was tested. The young prophet demonstrated his faith by his works.

He demonstrated that though no one go with me, yet I will follow. He demonstrated a singleness of heart. He demonstrated a faith wrought by God that enabled him to follow Elijah even though he was being ridiculed by the sons of the prophets.

He was feeling pressure. He could have just said, oh, I don't think I'm gonna follow him anymore. I'm gonna stay here.

I'm gonna stay here. No, he went on, and it was after that that God said, ask of me what you will. The heavens were opened, and Elisha received a double portion of the spirit of the prophet upon him.

Three examples of God testing, proving people. In each of these examples, the Lord knew what he was going to do. In each of these examples, the Lord wanted those who were being tested to make the right decision, and likewise today.

The Lord Jesus is testing us. Each one of us is being tested. Turn your Bibles, if you would, to James, verse 2, chapter 1. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying, the testing, the proving of your faith works patience.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. Matthew, chapter 4, verse 1. Actually, it's best that we read Matthew, chapter 3, verse 13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him.

But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him.

Listen to this. And lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Then, chapter 4, verse 1, was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted, to be proven, to be on trial by the devil.

We are being tried. We are being proven. Jesus was tried.

Jesus was proven. What is God after when he proves us and tries us and tests us? In the manner that we read about in Luke, in John, and in 2nd Kings, chapter 2, what is the Lord after? What is the Lord looking for? Several things. The first thing the Lord is looking for when he's testing us in this way is, number one, he's looking for an awakening in us of our need for him.

Number two, he's looking for an appropriate cry after him. Remember what the disciples did? They constrained him. Remember what Elisha did? He cried out, As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will follow you.

I will stay with you. An awakening of our need, number two, an appropriate crying out after him. And lastly, in John, or James, back to James, chapter 1, verse number 12, blessed is the man that endureth

temptation.

For when he is tried, that word tried means to be proven true, to be proven true, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Number one, the Lord wants us to be awakened to our need for him. Number two, an appropriate response, a response of prayer, a response of, Lord, I need you, a response inwardly of desperation for him, utter desperation for him.

And thirdly, blessed is the man that endures temptation. Let me tell you, beloved, it's not enough just to know that you're being tested. The blessing is not pronounced upon those who are being tested.

Read carefully. The blessing is not pronounced upon those who are in difficulties. The blessing is pronounced upon the man that endures.

For when he is proven true, he shall receive the crown of life. The blessing comes, beloved, when we stay under. That's what the word endure means, to stay under.

When we let the Lord work in us the full scope of what he's after through the tests that we're going through. Because, you know, sometimes in tests we can jump out of the test. We could jump out of it.

But the Lord says blessed is the man that endures. Blessed is the man that's in it for the long haul. Blessed is that man, because when he is proven genuine, that is, when the faith that that man has is proven to be genuine, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that what? Love him.

Jesus said if you love me, you're what? Keep my commandments. This whole issue of testing, beloved, is God is wanting a people who will do what is right because they love Jesus. They love him.

And they even had been given an opportunity not to do what is right. And they chose to do what is right anyway, because they love him. And they want to choose his way.

So the Lord is asking us the same question this morning. He might be asking you in your own heart something unique for what you're going through. But the bottom line is this.

He's testing you. He's proving you. You know, sometimes the Lord will tell you something.

Then he'll let somebody else come and tell you something different. Then he'll stand back and he'll see what you do. Test you.

I know a lot of Christians who have heard from the Lord about certain things, and then they let other Christians persuade them differently. Let's just use, for example, money. For just an example, money.

Some Christians have heard the Lord tell them, listen, I want you to take your money and to give it to me every time you get it. And I want you to seek me and seek my counsel and I'll put on your heart what to do with your money. I don't want you to use your money to fulfill all the pleasures in your heart.

I want you to be content with what you have need of. Just be content with what you have need of. And during a time of prayer, during a time of communion, the Christian awakens to this and rejoices.

Hallelujah to God. God has spoken to me. I feel such a peace.

I've got life in my spirit. God has shown me what to do with my money. Then all of a sudden, time goes on and this young Christian gets on and starts watching other Christians and how other Christians spend their money.

And the tremendous liberty that they seem to have. They have no problem spending money for themselves and for things. And they even ascribe what they're getting as God is giving it to me.

They look, they put their head down and they say, yeah, yeah, that's true. God wants me to be content with what I have. And all of a sudden, they're being tested.

They're being tested by God. They're right in the situation that the Scriptures we read this morning are teaching. Now, many times the Lord is not going to come in a thundering voice, my son, my daughter, have not I spoken to you and told you not to do that? Haven't I instructed you the way I want you to handle your money? Doesn't always do that.

Sometimes he'll just stand back and watch and see what are you going to do? And he might let you go your own way and end up forsaking what God had originally told you. What has God? I have met Christians over the years who've had wonderful, wonderful encounters with the Lord about numerous things. But the time of freshness wears off.

The emotion of it wears off. And they begin to reconsider what God said. And then they're offered, they're I know the Lord has tested me in this area of my life so much.

So much. I have to be very careful to stay on my knees before God because it's very easy for me while being tested, while being proven to consider another way. One that may be in my own eyes seems to be right.

But I know the Lord has already spoken to me. What has the Lord done in your life? Let me tell you something. This whole issue of testing is going to be over that whole thing right there.

I'm looking at my daughter now and I'm thinking the Lord has been teaching Christina a whole lot about gossiping. Gossiping. Teaching her how it's so important not to be a gossip.

Now when she's in school, she might meet some students who have a real problem gossiping. And you know what? She's going to suddenly be tested. What are you going to do? You're going to gossip? Or are you going to do the right thing? Say, I can't do that because the Lord has shown me not to gossip.

I feel like this morning God has helped us to see what He's after. He's after a people who will follow Him and make the right choice about Him because they love Him. Do you love Him this morning? Do you love Him this morning? His way is the only way that will be blessed.

Let's have a word of prayer and then Tom wants to say something. Let's just commit the Word of God into the hands of the Lord this morning. Father, I thank You for challenging my own heart.

I thank You, Lord, for teaching us through Your Word, Lord, that we're all being tested. We're all being proven. We pray, Lord, that You will help us to make the right decisions and the right choices, Lord, in our life, Lord, regarding the particular test that we're going through now.

You help us, Lord, to depend upon You and Your Word and Your Holy Spirit. We pray You'll deliver us, Lord, from rebellious hearts. We pray You'll deliver us, Lord, from wanting to do our own thing.

God, deliver me from a desire to do my own thing. Deliver me, Lord, from choosing that way that seems right in my own eyes. Help me, Lord, to depend upon Your Word and upon the Word that You have spoken to my heart, Lord, that You have quickened to my spirit from Your Word, Lord.

I pray for everyone here today, Lord. Each one of us is going through our own unique trial, our own unique test. We pray, Lord, that in it, Lord, we might cry after You, long for You, and be enabled to choose You and Your way.

Tom, he has something to say. Come on up, Tom. I want to, listen, I want to close the service.

It's 1247. I just want to close our gathering today by asking everybody if you would simply stand together with your brother, your sister, that we together might be able, when we're tested, to be enabled to depend upon God's power, God's Spirit, God's Word, and do what is pleasing in His eyes. Because every one of us are going to be tested.

Blessed is the man. Let's pray that we're that blessed man together. We might endure temptation and be blessed.

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