

When God Allows You To Be Pushed Off The Rock

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the concept of trusting in God as an everlasting rock, exploring the challenges faced when hanging off the side of the rock in life's trials. It delves into the importance of faith and hope, highlighting God's promises as the rope that holds us to Him, even when it seems thin compared to the rock. The message encourages believers to focus on becoming more like Jesus, finding assurance in God's word and the hope of being purified. It concludes with a call to make the most of difficult times, strengthening faith and hope while understanding and embracing God's will.

Scripture: Isaiah 26:4, Psalms 138:2, Hebrews 6:18, 1 John 3:2, Ephesians 5:15

Topics: "Trusting God", "Strengthening Faith"

Description

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Transcript

Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord we have an everlasting rock. And I think you've seen this picture that is associated with this that we sent out. And what I was wanted to speak on is we have this idea of God that he's an everlasting rock and he is.

And it is easy for us to trust that God is an everlasting rock when we are standing on top of the rock. But sometimes as we know in our lives we're hanging off the side of the rock like it is in this picture. And it is in the times when we're standing on the top of the rock you can call it the mountaintop experiences, you can call them the times when things are at ease, where things are going okay in your life, you can see that you're standing on top of the rock.

And there's a different challenge there we can take the rock for granted. But I am more interested about speaking today just about what do you do when you're hanging off of the side of the rock. The question then is if I see God as an everlasting rock.

It's easy to see that God is an everlasting rock when I'm standing on top of it. But how is God an everlasting rock when I'm hanging off of this? Because then it's no longer the rock. These are the trials that come into our lives and that test us when our feet don't feel the ground underneath of us.

And it doesn't feel safe. We look down and we see a huge fall that we would slowly surely be killed if we were to be dropped. It doesn't feel good, it doesn't feel comfortable.

And what does that mean in such times to know that God is an everlasting rock? And I think it is in times like this that God is trying to strengthen at least two eternal virtues which is faith and hope. And that's what I wanted to underline here. If God is the rock then what is the rope that is holding me? Now I don't know if you know this, I don't think as far as I know this is not a photoshopped picture.

This is a very, even if what this particular picture is photoshopped, there are many people who've done this, right, who are attached to a very big rock, very strong rock, there's no doubt that rock is strong. But all that is holding them to the rock is the rope. And what is that rope that is holding us to God who is the rock? That rope are the promises of God.

Rope are the promises of God. And here's the challenge. The challenge is that the promises of God look like thin ropes compared to God himself.

So when we think about God Almighty, creator of the universe and picture him in the third heaven, we see this massively big rock. And we would love to have an experience like Paul where we're taken up to the third heaven, but we don't. All we have is we're hanging off the side of the rock, our legs dangling, our eyes look down and we see this huge abyss that we can fall into.

And all that is holding us up is what seems like a thin rope. And that may be the promises of God. It could be man shall not live by bread alone, but by words that proceed.

And these words that proceed from the mouth of God can feel like this thin rope. And here's what God is trying to strengthen in us. God is trying to strengthen in us that the rope is as strong as the rock.

And I don't know if you believe that. I don't know if it's true about this rock climbing situation, but it is definitely true about God's word and God's promises. I want to show you this verse in Psalm chapter 138.

It's a tremendous verse. Psalm chapter 138 verse 2. Psalm chapter 138 verse 2. I will bow down towards your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your loving kindness and your truth. And here's the phrase, for you have magnified, that means enlarged, made bigger your word according to all your name.

So what God is saying here, think about me, think about my name. That's that big rock. What God's done is he's made his word as big as the rock.

And that is what God is trying to do for us in the moments of trial. When we're standing on top of the rock, when things are going well, when our paychecks are coming in, when our children are healthy, when jobs are just secure, we can be in those situations like we're standing on top of the rock. And for different people, it's at different seasons.

All of a sudden, we find ourselves in a situation, we're off the rock and we're dangling in midair. Then what we really need is the rope. And the rope is God's word.

But what God is saying here in Psalm 138 verse 2, that my word is as strong as my name. My word is as strong as me. My promises are as strong as me myself.

The rope is as strong as the rock. And Jesus had that, right? Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the words that proceed from the mouth of God. For him, the word of God was enough.

And the rope was as strong as the rock. So even though he had the feeling of his feet dangling in midair, even though his eyes saw that huge drop, he had such great confidence in the rope, which is the promises of God. And that is how we have to treat God's promises.

And Hebrews chapter 6, we can turn there. Hebrews chapter 6 is a tremendous passage for us to meditate on. Because Hebrews chapter 6, it's worth meditating on.

It's too long for me to go into. I've spent a fair amount of time in over the years reading Hebrews chapter 6. Because Hebrews chapter 6 verses 1 through 8 is a very confusing passage for some people. Because it talks about people who fall away after having partaken of the Holy Spirit.

And there's this huge debate. If you're saved once, can you lose your salvation? And there's all kinds of things that are happening. And that's the beginning.

And Hebrews chapter 6 verse 1 talks about pressing on to perfection. Not just being caught up with the elementary things. Being caught up with perfection.

That's Hebrews chapter 6 verse 1 through 8. But then verses 9 onwards is really such a beautiful passage. Where the writer says, look, let me not talk about all those things about whether you lose your salvation or not. Because I really want to talk about the better things that I expect out of all of you.

And he says, I'm convinced that there's going to be a much better life for all of you. Not talking about whether you're going to lose your salvation. And so we focus so much about can you lose your salvation, this and that.

But the writer was just using it almost like an aside to say, but what I really want to tell you is that you're going to get all of these things. You're going to be growing from one level of degree of glory to another. That's what I want you to focus on.

And you know, he says that in verse 11, I desire that you show the same diligence as the others of having the full assurance of hope so that you may not be sluggish, verse 12, but be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. And he talks in the next few verses, 13 through 18, about how God was trying to tell Abraham, I'm going to bless you. And he didn't know how to tell Abraham that he was going to bless him.

Like what guarantee can God give? Because God is God. And it says that in verse 13, God couldn't give a guarantee greater than himself. So it says that he swore by himself.

He swore by his own name because he didn't have anything as big as it's to swear by. That's the kind of way you see God saying, how can I convince you that I'm telling you what it is? And he's like, let me tell you my word and my name. Those are the two huge things I can tell you to guarantee is going to happen.

My word and my name. That's what we see in Psalm 138 also is my word and my name. You don't separate the two.

If you think God is great, then we must think God's word is great. And that's what God is trying to do with these trials. Because we see the rock and we see the rope.

And yes, the rope is a lot smaller looking than the rock. But we have to have as much confidence in the rope as we have in the rock. Confident that if God said it, he's going to make it happen.

Now, the question is so critically important. What is it that he wants to make happen to us? What must we have faith in? What can we have confidence in where we have confidence in the rope just as much as we have in the rock? That God will make you healthy. That God will make you wealthy.

That God will make you prosperous. These are all what the health and wealthy gospel people are saying. Believe God.

Believe God's promises that he make you healthy, wealthy or prosperous. The prosperity gospel. But this is where we differ from the prosperity gospel preachers.

It's not that we don't have faith in God and God's name and God's word. But what do we have unshakable faith and hope for? For that which God has given us a hope for, which is that God wants to make us pure like Jesus is pure. That is the hope.

That's one John chapter three, verse two and three. We have not known what God looks like, but one thing we know that we will be like him because we should see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope fixed on him will purify himself as he is pure.

That's one John three, two and three. What John is saying is you don't know a lot of things about the future, but one thing you know that you will be like Jesus and that's your hope. If you have that hope, you'll purify yourself.

And that's the hope to which we must know that God has promised that in our future. And God is saying that promise. You must hold on fast to that.

That promise of mine is for you because you're a child of God. Dear brothers and sisters, please meditate on a few passages. One John chapter three, verses one through three.

God says you're a child of God. That's how much I showed you. That's how I show you that I love you is that I called you a child of God.

I spoke a message earlier today on that subject to a group of Romanians. You'll find it on our website. You can listen to that.

But that's our hope that we will be like Jesus. And dear brothers and sisters, the devil is trying to tell you that won't happen. And God has said, I'm swearing to you by my name and by my word that I'm going to do that in your life.

So yes, you don't feel the ground under you. Yes, you look and you see a big fall if you were to fall. But my word said that I will make you like my son Jesus.

And that rope is our faith in him. Faith is so critical. So let's know that that's what God is trying to do when he pushes us over the edge.

He's not trying to scare us. He's trying to strengthen our faith. And the other thing he's trying to do is he strengthen our hope.

Dear brothers, as I said, our hope is and sisters, our hope is that we will be like Jesus. And it says in Hebrews chapter six, that passage, it says, this hope that we will be like Jesus is like an anchor. Think about that.

An anchor is a small little thing that goes over the ship to the ground and it holds this mighty ship in place. The anchor is heavy, but it is nothing compared to the ship's weight. Nothing, but it holds this heavy ship in place.

That's what it says in Hebrews chapter six, verse 19, this hope, what hope that we will be like Jesus, this hope that he has set before us, that we will be like Jesus is like an anchor. So dear brothers and sisters, and this is the hope that we have that we will be like Jesus. And guess what? Jesus went before us and dear brothers and sisters, look at this rope.

You know who that person is who's on that rope? Not you. It was Jesus. He was in the same situation you're in.

God kept pushing him off the rock day after day, tempted in all points as we are. That's Jesus too, just like us. And that's our hope and confidence.

It's not just that God's got a, our, the rope is as strong as a rock. No, we also have a forerunner. That's Jesus.

Feet dangling in midair, seeing a huge chasm, but trusting in God. God is my everlasting rock. And God is saying, he's your example.

He's your hope that God will do for you what he did for Jesus. If you, by faith and patience, hold on. If you don't give up, if you have endurance in that hope, not that God will make the circumstance better.

Not that your situations will go from bad to good. Not that you will become healthy out of that sickness. Not that you will become rich after this trial.

No, we may go from poor to even poorer. We can go from sick to even sicker, but God guarantees that we can become more and more like Jesus. Jesus went from worse to worse to when he died, a criminal's death.

But Jesus became our forerunner in being pure. Let me end by Ephesians chapter five, verse 15 and 17. Ephesians chapter five, verse 15 through 17.

As we heard earlier today, let's not confuse restfulness and think we shouldn't be watchful. We can be restful and end up becoming drowsy and sleepy. Let us remain watchful.

Ephesians five, 15 through 17. Ephesians chapter five, 15 through 17. Therefore be careful how you walk.

That's that word, careful, watchful, circumspect, carefully. You know how you walk on ice? That's the picture here. How do you walk? Carefully.

Not as unwise men, but as wise. Making the most of your time because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Dear brothers and sisters, is your life difficult? Is your situations around you evil? What should you do when the circumstances around you are difficult? When you're hanging in midair, when you feel like you look down and you see a huge drop, what should you do? Make the most of your time. That's what God is saying. When you're dangling in midair, stop complaining about the situation.

Stop saying, God save me from this rock where I'm dangling. No, make the most of your time to strengthen your faith and your hope. He knows exactly when he's going to pull you back onto the top of the rock.

He's thrown you off the rock and he said, you've got a strong rope and you've got a strong forerunner. Jesus had the same thing happen to him and he succeeded and he had the word of God as a rope and it's a strong. So Sandeep, stop complaining.

Make the most of this opportunity. Dangling off the rock. I've got you.

I know exactly where you are. Make the most of your time. I know exactly where you are.

Stop asking me to get you back onto safe ground. Maybe that this dangling of the rope is going to be for nine months or for nine years. Make the most of your time.

Yeah, I know the time is evil. I know the times are difficult. You don't need to tell me.

I know exactly where you are, but I gave you a rope and I gave you an example. Faith and hope. Dear brothers and sisters, make the most of your time and here's the other thing we do.

Understand what the will of God is. Get a deeper appreciation for the will of God. Get a deeper, deep understanding of the will of God, which is what? Whenever I think about the will of God, I know it's at least three things and that's in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, 16 through 18.

If you ever want to know what God's will in your life is and you're asking God, what is my, what is your will for me? Guarantee it's at least these three things. 1 Thessalonians 5, 16 through 18. Rejoice always.

Pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks. That's always, always, always rejoicing, always praying, always giving thanks. So understand the richer meaning of the will of God.

Understand the richness of rejoicing when you're dangling off the cliff. Understand the richer meaning of giving thanks when it's a huge drop and certain death if you were to fall because you've got the word of God and that's your only, only hope and this is what God, that's why God pushed you off the cliff, dear brothers and sisters, not to kill you, not to torture you, to strengthen your faith and your hope. Make the most of your time, dear brothers and sisters.

A day is coming when you'll be put back on the rock and then that test will be over and then you won't be able to strengthen your faith and your hope anymore because you'll be standing on sturdy ground and it'll be a bed of roses and you'll be like, oh how I wish I had made the most of the time when I was dangling. You've said that, I've said that from trials that have gone by and so some of you may be in a trial right now, dear brothers and sisters, make the most of the time. The days are evil.

Let's not even debate about it. Let's not debate whether your situations are difficult. Make the most of your time and understand the richness of the will of God, how we can rejoice and pray and give thanks.

May God help us. Let faith and hope be an anchor and a rope as strong as the rock, the everlasting rock who is God himself.

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