

Don't Quit Before God Says It's the End

by Santosh Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting God's purpose above all else, even in the face of failure, sickness, or unanswered prayers. It encourages listeners to have a spirit of faith, believing that God will perfect His work in them until the day of Christ Jesus. The message highlights the need to hold earthly things loosely and focus on being conformed to the image of Jesus, regardless of circumstances.

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:11, Matthew 11:28, Psalm 139:23, Romans 8:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:24, 2 Corinthians 4:13, Philippians 1:6, Numbers 13:30, Romans 10:17

Topics: "Trusting God's Purpose", "Faith in Adversity"

Description

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Transcript

It's a good reminder, the verse we heard, the verse we're memorizing for this week, whoever speaks is to do so as the utterances of God. That is true especially for us who preach God's Word, but it's true about everything we say. Think about your interactions with your wife, your husband, this past week.

Can you honestly say that you obeyed that verse in 1 Peter 4, 11, when you spoke to your spouse, it was as if Christ was speaking to them? That's a convicting word. It's a command. Whoever speaks is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God.

So we take it seriously. There's a saying we have in the corporate world or in IT that goes like this, bottom line up front, B-L-U-F, or sometimes you'll see T-L, too long, didn't read, T-L-D-R. That means I didn't want to read the whole article, the whole document, just tell me what's the summary.

And I want to give you the bottom line up front for the word that the Lord's given on my heart this morning, and that's this, that God has one purpose for you. God has one purpose for you, and if He was to give you something else in answer to your prayer that would hinder that purpose, He would have to deny Himself. Let me say that again.

God has one purpose for you, and if He was to answer your prayer and give you something that you ask for that would hinder that purpose in any way, He would be denying Himself. God is good all the time. God

is love all the time.

And at any moment in that situation where you're asking for something, you're His child, you're crying out to Him, and you're in desperate need, and you feel like you're backed into a corner, and you want Him to just rapture you out of that, maybe even just take you to heaven. If He was to do so, if He doesn't do so, let me say it this way, if God doesn't answer the prayer that you're so desperately praying for in that moment, it's because if He was to answer that, He would have to deny Himself and go against that one purpose He has for you. So the world is watching us.

I've become more and more aware of that. Many of you may feel like, well, I'm sort of hidden in this corner. Who knows what I'm going through? But I realize people watch us.

Our neighbors watch us. Our co-workers watch us. And often at times in the past when I would maybe drive in a way, if somebody drove in a way that irritated me, and then I sped up and stared them down, or I would never do anything foul, like show a bad sign or anything like that.

I wouldn't use a foul language, but even the look can be intended to let them know you did something wrong to me. But I've often wondered, what if that person doesn't know me? They don't know who I am, but what if they did? And they find out, hey, that's a disciple of Jesus. That's somebody who goes to RLCF and claims to be a believer in Jesus and wants to draw other people to follow Jesus, and that's how He acts? That's convicting for me.

I think, Lord, people are watching. Now, the people on the streets maybe not so much. They only see us for a few seconds, but the people around us are watching.

I realize that even with some of my co-workers, many of whom are on the other side of the world. And I realize they're watching me, and they are observing how I respond in different circumstances. And sometimes they'll say, hey, I was watching to see how you would respond in that circumstance.

And there have been times in the past where I was embarrassed about the way I responded in circumstances. It's been the prayer of my heart, and by God's grace, recently, God is giving me grace that the testimony of my life is more the testimony of Christ. But the reason I say the world is watching us, because the world is observing us carefully to see if we really believe what we claim to believe, if all that we stand for is just talk.

But at the end of the day, when they see how we are living our lives, they see that we are just as self-centered, money-loving, pleasure-loving as they are, then they're going to say, why are you trying to draw me into your kingdom? I remember a statement from an atheist that I read a few years ago that really changed me significantly. A self-proclaimed atheist said this very deep statement. He said, if you Christians are really trying to draw us to your God, into your kingdom, why are you trying to look so much like us? Think about that for a moment.

If you Christians really are trying to draw us into your kingdom, why are you starting to look, trying to look more like us in the way you sing, the way you dress? Why are your meetings looking more like corporate parties with the flashing lights and the attachments of this world and the extras that the world has? Why are you seeking to be popular like everybody else in the world? Why are you looking for success and more money and a greater name for yourself? That's the kingdom of this world. And I've never forgotten that. I said, Lord, it must be true that when somebody looks at my life and they say, wow, that's somebody who's

living for the kingdom of heaven, they ought to say, I know he means what he says because I can't drag him into all the things that I'm interested in.

When I talk to him about making a little bit more money, he seems kind of disinterested because he's part of a different kingdom. When I talk to him about being a little bit more famous or being successful in this area or that area, he seems to lose interest because he's pursuing a different kingdom. But what the world is looking for, and I've often thought about this, I remember hearing a message by Brother David Wilkerson years ago where he talked about that, that what the world is looking for is not successful people.

They have plenty of that. They're not looking for successful pastors and successful churches and growth from this number to that number within a certain amount of time. They're not looking for that.

That's exactly what the world has. What they're looking for is that there's a group of people who, when they're in the midst of a difficult trial, when there's a difficult trial that they're in, they're in a dark time in their life. In the midst of that trial, they're singing.

They're rejoicing. They're singing of God's faithfulness, like we sang this morning already. They're singing of their trust in God today, and they're saying, it doesn't matter, though he slay me, yet will I trust him.

That's what the world wants to hear, and not just to sing it, but that they can watch your life Monday through Saturday and say, man, I see what he's going through. I see what she's going through, and they're still singing. Exactly like Nebuchadnezzar and the others around the three Israelite men in Babylon expected that anybody who was being thrown into the fire would go kicking and screaming and crying and pleading, and at the last minute, maybe they would just finally say, okay, fine, Nebuchadnezzar, we'll bow down to your idol.

I'm afraid of the fire. But instead, what the Babylonians saw was three men. They were, I think, 19 years old.

Around that age, I'm pretty sure. Three young men in the prime of their life being sent to a fire to certain death, singing as they went and saying, it doesn't matter. I've only lived 21 years on this earth, but I'm not living for anything on this earth.

If you burn me in that furnace, it just expedites, it speeds up my reunion with the one I love. The martyrs in the first, second, and third century that you read about, read Fox's book of martyrs, you'll see. Read Martyr's Mirror, you'll see.

These men and women sang their way into heaven, even though they were being burned and tortured and crucified and beaten and whipped. Now, we're not going through that today, but the devil is doing that to us through circumstances. Life around us is hard.

It's not just hard for Christians, right? Everybody in the world is suffering in some way, and what the world wants to see is this group of people. It's not that they are exempt from suffering. It's not that their God will say, oh, you become my child, and you won't suffer anymore.

You become my child, and I'll bless you with prosperity. That's what they want to hear, because they can go to Harvard Business School for that. They can go somewhere else and come up with a good business.

They don't need that. They don't need how to be successful and how God will heal you of all your diseases. Even Christendom has taken up so much with healing that somehow God's going to heal you, like that's considered the top ministry you can have, a healing gift.

You know, as a church, we're not interested in that. I'll tell you why, because if God wants to heal me, that's fine. If God doesn't want to heal me, that's fine.

He has one purpose in mind, and if he was to heal me in a way that prevented him from finishing his one purpose in my life, he would have had to deny himself. If God healed me, and as a result, I missed out on eternal life, do you think it will matter that he healed me? If God healed me because I cried and kicked and screamed and said, Lord, you have to heal me. I'm sick and tired of this sickness that I'm constantly plagued with, and he says, okay, fine, Santosh, I'll give you the healing you want, but you can't have eternal life.

I can't conform you into the image of my son Jesus, and I was using that sickness, I was using that trial to conform you into the image of my son Jesus. That's what the world wants to see, that we can go singing in every circumstance, into every trial, into every storm, because we know our God is love. Our God is good all the time, and if he chooses to take me through the storm, it's because he's going to finish that purpose.

I tell you, God is committed to fulfilling his purpose in your life. Never forget that. Oh, never forget that.

That's what he's committed to, and if you really believe that with all of your heart, what it will do is it'll change your prayer in the trial that you're going through right now. Yes, by all means, pray that God will heal. Yes, by all means, pray that God will take you out of that circumstance or change that circumstance and do whatever it is, but say, Lord, at the end of the day, I want only one thing, your purpose for my life.

In Psalm 116, you read a wonderful phrase that David says, Psalm 116, and you turn there with me. Psalm 116, he says in verse, you know, it's a wonderful Psalm. We sing it sometimes here in this church.

I love the Lord because he hears my voice. He has inclined his ear to me. Therefore, I shall call upon him as long as I live.

I shall call upon him as long as I live. He goes on to talk about the trial that he went through, and then look at this in verse seven. Return to your rest, O my soul.

I believe that's a word of the Lord from the Lord for any one of us, for all of us who are willing to receive it. Return to your rest this week. Perhaps this last week, there's been unrest.

There's been turmoil. There's been confusion. There's been uncertainty.

There's been doubt, unbelief, worry. Take heart this morning, dear brother, dear sister, dear friend. Return to your rest.

Return to the rest that you had before you faced that trial. Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. He's been faithful, and the Lord will deal bountifully with you.

He cannot deny himself. He remains faithful. So he goes on to say in verse 10, look at this.

When I said I am greatly afflicted, David was saying I'm greatly afflicted, but when I said I am greatly afflicted, it wasn't, oh brother, you know I'm going through this hard time, and I say it in a way that people

want to feel sorry for me, and I have this look on my face like I'm carrying the weight of the world on my shoulders, and there's cloud over my head, and I'm just walking with my head down. Look at David's attitude. When I said I'm greatly afflicted, I believed.

When I said I'm greatly afflicted, it wasn't with a mournful sad face. I'm going through a hard time, bro. Please pray for me.

It was I'm going through a hard time, bro. Please pray for me. It's not easy.

It hurts, but God is on the throne, and I'm committed to him finishing his purpose in my life. See the difference? I believed when I said I'm greatly afflicted, and I was in my alarm. All men are liars.

Everybody's deceived me. Everybody's turned against me, and they took advantage of me here and took advantage of me there, but I did so with faith. Paul quotes this verse if you read 2 Corinthians chapter 4. 2 Corinthians chapter 4. He says verse 13.

2 Corinthians 4 verse 13. Having the same spirit of faith according to what is written. So he's having the same spirit that David had in the Old Testament where he said I was greatly afflicted, but I believed when I said I'm greatly afflicted.

When somebody asked me how I weak was, I've been greatly afflicted, but they went away saying, wow, this is different. When the world asked me, Santosh, what's going on in your life, and I share a little bit of it, it should cause them to step back and say, hold on. He's greatly afflicted, but he has faith.

He's greatly afflicted, but there's a spring in his step. He's got his eye on a purpose that's beyond this that he's facing right now. Having the same spirit of faith according to what is written, I believed, therefore I spoke.

Now Paul doesn't quote the full thing. He says, I believed when I said I was greatly afflicted, but I believed when I spoke. And you see that he's talking about death, bearing the dying of Jesus in the previous verses.

We also speak knowing why. Why can we sing going to the grave? Why can we sing going into the trial, going into the storm? Because we know that the Father who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. Verse 16, therefore we do not lose heart.

But though our outer man is decaying, though I'm going through this trial, though the sickness is still there, though things seem to be getting worse, what does it mean when it says the outer man is decaying? It means things are getting worse. After you prayed, God didn't solve the problem. Things got worse.

Have you ever experienced that? If you're a true child of God, you can testify to that. You prayed and things seem to get worse. That's 2 Corinthians 4 verse 16.

I prayed and my outer man was decaying, but I didn't lose heart. Why? Because my inner man was being renewed day by day. It's as if with every step that the outer circumstance, outer man means my body, my circumstance, my relatives, or anything around me, anything about the life, the temporal life on this outside, as that got worse, something on the inside got a little bit better.

My inner man was being renewed every day. What's it been like since the last week? Have circumstances gotten step by step worse in some area in your life outwardly? Can you then say, though, that inwardly it's

got incrementally, increasingly better? That if it's seven times worse over the last seven days since we last met here outwardly, it's seven times better inwardly because my inner man has been renewed every day. Because these afflictions that we're going through, brothers and sisters, are momentary and light.

And they're producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

So this, and you know, David doesn't go and describe this this way. If you read Psalm 116, I believe he's writing that after God answered his prayer on this earth. So he was saying, I believed when I was greatly afflicted.

All men are liars. Everybody's against me. But he wrote that Psalm after he cried out to the Lord and the Lord saved him.

The cords of death encompassed me. You can read that whole Psalm. And then God rescued him and then he writes the song.

That's all covenant. So what is the new covenant then? I says, I'm not waiting for the earthly circumstance to be changed before I sing the song. I'm not waiting to say, well, Lord, I'll write the Psalm after you heal me.

And then there are plenty of songs that people write after God heals them. But the new covenant song, the new song, as it were, is the one that Paul was singing, that Jesus sang in Gethsemane. You know what it says that when Jesus took them to Gethsemane, they sang a song.

It says they sang a hymn. The only time you see Jesus singing, you read it in the book of John, I think chapter 14, they sang a hymn. The only time you hear Jesus sing is the night of his greatest travail.

The blood, the sweat was about to come out of his pores like blood. And they were about to press a crown of thorns onto his head. They were about to whip him.

And all of that is nothing compared to the fact that his own father, with whom he experienced fellowship for all eternity, was going to forsake him because Santos sinned. And what does Jesus say? I want to sing right now. This is new covenant.

I'm not waiting for the answer. I'm not waiting to see everything fulfilled and say, Lord, you rescued me. And then now I can write the song.

That's fine for David. But our promise is so much greater. Our example is Jesus Christ.

So I would say it this way. You know, there's a saying in the world, call game. When you say, I call game, that means I'm going to win now on this shot.

I call game before the shot. I make the shot game over. And I would say it this way.

So the word of the Lord reminded me of don't call game before God blows the whistle. God will blow the whistle to end the game. Until then, don't say it's over.

The whistle blows when he is finished making you like Jesus. That's it. Until then, even though it might seem hopeless, it might seem like I'm never going to come to victory.

I'm never going to overcome. I'm just always going to be the same defeated, sinful, depressed person that I'm always going to be. No, don't call game before God blows the whistle.

God will decide when it's over. And it's over when he has made you like Jesus. It's like they say in the world, it's over when I say it's over.

God says it's over when I say it's over. And what does that mean? When is it over? He has conformed me into the image of Jesus fully. And everything else, every temporary disappointment, every temporary unanswered prayer, every temporary failure, every temporary this and temporary that is only temporary.

Because the eternal purpose is that he has conformed me into the image of Jesus. I was talking to somebody. You know who it is, but I'm not going to tell you who it is.

You know the person. But they were telling me about a trial that they were going through. And they said something which was profound.

They're going through this trial even now. And they said that as they've gone through this trial, they've learned to hold things loosely. They've learned not to invest too much joy or too much hope in anything that's off this earth.

And so they've learned to kind of hold things loosely a little bit because they've had things taken away from them a little bit. Things that they've been robbed of and by circumstances beyond their control. Things that have been taken away.

Things that they'd hoped for that never got fulfilled. And so they've learned things that they were looking forward to and like, oh, this is going to be wonderful. It's really going to be good.

And then it sort of fizzled out. And they've learned to hold things on this earth loosely. Oh, it touched my heart.

That was my daughter, Olivia. I've learned to hold things loosely, she told me a couple days ago. Oh, it lifted my heart.

My heart was crushed to some extent, but it lifted me with such joy. That's what I want to know, Lord, that I can hold things on this earth loosely because she's had circumstances in her life where in the last few months where things she was looking forward to came and went and she has no memory of it. And it's going to be like that in heaven.

Did you pray that God would heal you and you kind of went grumbling and complaining and wasted months of your life because God delayed his answering your prayer? In heaven, it'll be a lost memory. But what you'll remember is that for that whole year, 2023, you wasted it in grumbling and complaining against God for not answering your prayer. Did you expect some business prospect to succeed and you get a lot of promotion or you get a little bit more money? If God answered your prayer, you know you'll forget about it in heaven? Or in hell? There'll be no memory.

What will it matter in hell if God allowed that business prospect to succeed, but you weren't one with Christ? He wasn't the Lord of your life. What will it matter? What you'll remember is the only thing you will

feel in that moment is eternal torment. Or what if you're even in the Lord's presence, but you look back and say, Lord, I wasted so many of these, so many holes in my life that I spent grumbling and complaining.

Hold things loosely, dear friends. Hold things loosely because God could take them away. God could give it to you.

That's great. If He doesn't, that's great. Hold it loosely.

First Corinthians 4 verse 5, he says, don't go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motive of men's hearts, and then each man's praise will come to him from God. Don't go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes. Now, he's talking about people judging him or people judging other people, passing judgment on others, but I was convicted by that.

I was like, Lord, I don't want to judge you that you've been unfair to me or unkind to me or unfaithful to me, or why did you treat me like this, or why have you done that to me, or why haven't you allowed this in my life? I don't want to pass that judgment until the Lord comes. Hold on. Don't give up.

God is coming, and the Bible, the theme of the Bible, I would think of it like this, is essentially that God has never failed anybody who trusted in Him. That's the theme of the Bible. God has never failed anybody who trusted in Him.

It didn't matter how hopeless the situation was. It didn't matter how, Lord, I can't imagine that you're ever going to fix that, but I trust it in you. That's the theme of the Bible.

God has never failed anybody who trusted in Him. Trust Him, and keep trusting in Him, and if it's been one year, trust Him. If it's been five years, trust Him.

If it's been 10 years, trust Him. If it's been 20 years, trust Him. If it's been 100 years, trust Him.

Don't pass judgment. Don't call game until God blows the whistle. When He blows the whistle, it's over, and then you'll see that He was good, He was loving, and He was faithful.

See, in the Old Testament, you read about the Israelites. You read in Numbers 14, I think it says that they, 10 times, they tried God. They didn't believe Him.

They disobeyed Him. 10 times. 10 times.

10 times they faced a problem. 10 times they complained. Like, you know, they even said, oh, you brought us this far to leave us here.

You brought us into the wilderness to leave us here to die. Was that true? No, absolutely not. Joshua and Caleb proved that when God said, I will take you out of Egypt, and I will take you into the promised land, He did it.

And all the other 600,000 men and women, was that 1.2 million or so, all of them who didn't believe it are probably in hell today saying, yep, God was right. He was going to do it. Why didn't I trust Him? Why did I call game before He blew the whistle? Why did I complain? Why did I grumble? Why didn't I say, Lord, I'm going to trust You until You blow the whistle, until You say it's over? Joshua and Caleb did.

It says, we just haven't seen the answer yet. That's all. Let's go there real quick to Numbers chapter 13.

You know, God even gave them indications that what He said was true. Numbers 13, you read in verse 27, these 12 spies went into the land to spy out the land. And when they came back, they said, we, verse 27, Numbers 13, verse 7, we went into the land where you sent us, and it certainly does flow with milk and honey.

And this is its fruit. They even brought back some of the grapes, and whatever that milk and honey looked like, they brought it back here. Here it is.

But then you read verse 28, but nevertheless, yes, there's milk and honey, and there's fruit, but there's also giants. So yeah, God must not have, His promise must not be true. You see the lie there? God said there will be milk and honey.

They saw that it was milk and honey. God said, this is your land. I'll give it to you.

They looked at the giants, and they turned away. And you look at that, the result of that, look at Caleb's response, however, verse 30, Numbers 13, verse 30, Caleb, quiet to the people. Think of that.

It says, return to your rest, O my soul. This is Caleb saying, return to your rest, people. I know you've seen the giant, but take it easy.

Calm down. It's okay. Let's fix our eyes on the milk and honey that God has promised, and say the giants are just an afterthought.

God will deal with that. God didn't tell us about the giants. That's fine.

But He doesn't need to have told us about the giants, because the promised land is ours. He'll take care of the giants. Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, we should by all means go up and take possession of it, because we will surely overcome.

But the men who had gone up with him said, we are not able to go up against the people, because they're too strong for us. And so the result was they spread that unbelief into the entire multitude. And it says that everybody above a certain age, everybody who was old enough to have that age of reasoning, old enough to fight, all those men and women died in the wilderness.

There are many Christians, I think, I think, sadly, there will be many Christians, whether they're in the Lord's presence or not, will say, will look back when God says, listen, I was going to take you from here to here, and because it sort of went like this a little bit, you stopped here. You gave up here. You lost faith here.

You grumbled and complained here, and that was it. I was going to take you there. Oh, I was going to take you there.

And look at Joshua's example. Look at Caleb's example. Look at David's example.

Look at Jesus's example, who is the author and finisher of our faith. Have a faith that trusts Jesus to begin and end it. So for us, what shall we do? We don't lose heart like we read in 2 Corinthians chapter 4. There are a couple of areas before I close that I'll say.

One is sickness. As I said, the world is taken up with healing. Christendom is taken up with healing.

Even the world is. They're trying to do it by their own ways, like eating healthier and exercising and all that stuff, and they want to live longer, take care of your body. That's all good, but remember, that's only taking care of this earthly body.

This is just an earthly body. It's an earthly tent. It's like saying, okay, if you're going to sleep in a house, if that's your house and there's a hole in the wall, patch it.

Patch it. It's okay. But what's more serious, the hole in the wall or the cancer in your body? What do you think? Let's say you knew that somebody's house is a big gaping hole, or the roof is leaking and water is dripping down, or they have cancer in the body.

Any sane human being would say, the cancer is more important, not the leaking roof. And our earthly bodies are like the leaking roof. If you've got a leaking roof in your body, whether it's a sickness or some other difficulty you deal with, that's just a problem in this house that you live in.

Inside is a soul that Jesus died to redeem. Inside is the real you. And if there's a cancer in that, that's the most important thing.

You see the analogy I'm trying to draw, that on this earth, our personal body's health is more important than the house that we live in. Yeah, take care of the house if you can fix it, but go see the doctor first about that cancer. That's more important.

And the same is true spiritually. Go see your savior about that cancer in your soul. That's far more important than the physical healing that you're crying for and crying out for.

Yes, by all means, be healthy. Take care of that as well, but never at the expense of what's inside. The spiritual man, that inner man, make sure that inner person is being renewed day by day.

That's why I believe in healing. I pray for healing, but my eye's not fixed on it. That's not the greatest thing on this earth.

The greatest thing on this earth that Jesus will finish his purpose for my life, that's to make me like Jesus. And so I often pray, Lord, if it is your will, heal me. But if in order for you to finish your purpose in my life, you must keep me in this circumstance, whether it's sickness or a difficult trial, then please do it by all means.

I actually pray that prayer, and I hope you will too, dear brothers and sisters, because I say, Lord, there's only one thing that's important to me. There's only one thing that will matter in all eternity is that you conform me into the image of your son, Jesus. That's the purpose you have.

And if along the way you're taking me here and taking me there, that's okay. I'll pray, Lord, please heal this circumstance. Please change that.

Please remove this difficulty. Please provide for us here. But at the end of the day, Lord, you do what you believe is best so that you can finish your purpose in my life.

The other is failure. The first is sickness. The other is failure.

Can you believe that God will even allow failure in your life, in circumstances, allow you to be defeated? Personal failure, first of all. Maybe you're battling against sin. You find that you keep failing.

You keep failing. Can you trust that God is still going to take you to the final destination? Maybe you've heard enough preaching in this church that you're not taken up with physical healing. You're like, okay, I get it, I care about the spiritual man.

But my spiritual man is sick. I find that I'm still lusting with my eyes. I find that I'm still mean with my tongue.

I find that I'm still lying. I find that I'm still taken up with things of this earth. I still love money, or I still have bad moods all the time.

I still lack patience. How about that? I keep failing in those areas. Sin is serious.

Sin will send you to hell. But if you're trusting God today, fresh, even in the failure, that failure doesn't have to be the final destination. Oh, it shouldn't be.

Failure is not the destination. It doesn't stop because you failed. God's purpose continues.

Keep going. Get up again, dear brother. Get up again, dear sister.

Don't call time before He blows the whistle just because you failed again for the 100th or 1,000th or 1,000,000th time. God hasn't called time yet. He hasn't blown the whistle yet.

He is going to finish it. Failure. He wouldn't bring you out of the guilt of sin.

He wouldn't have died to forgive your sin just to leave you defeated by it all the time. Even though it might seem like it now, even though it might seem like, Lord, it's been 10 years since you forgave my sins, but why is it I'm still defeated by that? Oh, that's not the end of the story. God's will wasn't that your story would end after 10 years.

He'll call time when He says it is. But until then, if you're still defeated, He wouldn't have died to save you from the shame and guilt to leave you defeated by it. He didn't bring you this far to forsake you.

He didn't bring you this far to leave you in the middle of the wilderness. He will if you're unbelieving. Who were the ones who remained in the wilderness? Was it the ones who were thirsty? Was it the ones who were hungry, who thought they were going to die? No.

Joshua and Caleb were just as hungry and thirsty as everybody else. How is it that they made it into the promised land even though they, too, didn't have food, even though they, too, had only bitter water when everybody else did? They believed. And so today, it doesn't matter if it's been 38 years like they wandered in the wilderness, 40 years, 38 years more than God intended.

If you've been battling and wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, don't give up. There's something you're praying for and you haven't seen the answer yet. Don't give up.

He's going to fulfill it. He's going to fulfill it. Yeah.

So let's follow Christ. This is our one purpose. Let me close with this verse, Romans 8, verse 29.

I want to show you a few of the promises as we close. Romans 8, 29. Why does God cause all things to work together for good to those who know Him and love Him and are called according to His purpose? That's verse 28.

Because, verse 29, those whom He foreknew, He predestined. Here's the destination, Romans 8, 29. This is the purpose that all other prayers are subject to, that all other purposes are subject to, this purpose.

Santos, make it personal. Write your name there. As you read it with me, put your name there, verse 29.

Santos, whom God foreknew, God also predestined that Santos would become conformed to the image of His son, Jesus, so that Jesus would be the firstborn of the older brother of Santos and other brothers and sisters. You read that verse again. It's in your Bible.

I hope you see it. Santos, verse 29, you're putting your name there, right? Whom God foreknew, God also put a destination the final purpose, that Santos would become conformed to the image of Jesus, His son, so that Jesus would be the older brother of Santos and other brothers and sisters. Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful promises.

Philippians chapter 1, let's go there. Philippians chapter 1, verse 6. I am confident, this is one of the last letters that Paul wrote to Philippians. I am confident of this very thing, that God who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

So in the meantime, what was Paul's testimony like? He says, Paul, are you sure about that? I mean, look at your life. You're getting beaten. You're locked up in prison.

They're about to kill you. You're going to die in a few weeks, Paul. He says, yep, it doesn't matter.

God who called me is faithful. God who began a good work in me will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. When will he perfect it? Not today, not tomorrow, not next month, until the day of Christ Jesus.

That's when he blows the whistle. So here you are today, December 3rd, 2023, about to call time, say, Lord, no, I give up. I've tried for five years and it hasn't worked.

No, no, no, no. Call time when God decides it's over. First Thessalonians chapter 5. I want you to see these promises.

Write them down so you can go back and read them at a time when you need them. First Thessalonians chapter 5. Maybe this message is for somebody that you're hoping for, somebody else you know that's losing heart or losing hope, one of your children or parents or loved ones, somebody else like that. First Thessalonians chapter 5. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely.

Your spirit and soul and body will be preserved complete without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He, faithful is he who calls you and he will surely do it. First Thessalonians 5.24. Oh, memorize this verse.

There's one memory verse you should have. It's First Thessalonians 5.24. Faithful is he who calls you and he will surely do it. He will surely do it.

The devil will tell you, no, look at this. It's been 10 years. He hasn't done it yet.

Faithful is he who calls me. He will surely do it. I want to close with one final thought.

That's Second Corinthians 4 verse 13. The verse we already looked at is this. It says that we have a spirit of faith.

He doesn't say having the same faith. It's true. We're having the same faith but he calls it a spirit of faith.

What does it mean to have a spirit of faith? I believe that that means that we can only have this as we receive more and more of the fullness of God's spirit in our lives. The only way you can have this, you could leave this and say, okay, great pep talk. I'm going to do a little bit better.

I'm going to trust God. Thanks, Santos. That's great.

It will die. I can tell you it'll die later today, if not a few days or weeks or months from now. What we all need is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

For the Holy Spirit to come within us where we open up the gates of our heart, the doors of our heart, say, Lord, come fill me afresh with your Holy Spirit. And what I get as a result is a faith that I've been given, not a faith that I'm trying to manufacture. The faith that you're trying to manufacture for the life I've been discovering will die at some point.

Give up trying that. Give up all that self-help stuff. Cry out to God for the outpouring of the spirit of faith where within you is the Holy Spirit, reminding you of these things, speaking that faith into your heart, where the song comes out from within, a song of praise, having the same spirit of faith.

So how do we get that? Faith comes from hearing the word of Christ, Romans 10 verse 17. So listen to God's word. Listen to God's voice.

Meditate on his word as often as you can. Listen to his voice and have years to hear what he is saying. And as you listen to his voice, he will pour out the spirit of faith within you.

He will pour out the spirit of faith and you too can say, I am afflicted, but I believe. I'm afflicted, but I believe. Let's pray.

Dear Father, I thank you for your word that brings us such comfort. Your Holy Spirit, who is the comforter, I thank you, Lord. I pray that this word that you spoke to my heart and spoken to all of us will bear fruit.

It won't just be something we heard and went away, tickled our ears. Lord Jesus, may it never be that. But it'll be a seed that goes into our hearts, that you find honest and good hearts here in us, that the seed goes in and will bear fruit for all eternity.

I thank you. You will do this. You called us.

You're faithful. You will surely do it. In Jesus name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/nd35b3emBcg.mp4>

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