

God's Help in Times of Distress

by Steve Gallagher

God is our refuge and strength in times of trouble, and we must learn to trust Him and rely on Him for everything.

Duration: 49:34

Scripture: Psalm 46:1, Psalm 46:7, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Distress"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the signs of the end times as described by Jesus in Matthew 24. He emphasizes the importance of enduring until the end to be saved. The speaker also reflects on the lack of preparation and discipline among some individuals and draws a parallel to the challenges believers may face in the future. Additionally, the speaker highlights the power and covenant of God, urging listeners to consider the intricacies of creation and the unfolding of God's purposes throughout history. The sermon concludes with a reminder that living in the last days is a privilege and should be approached with humble pride.

Transcript

Praise the Lord. This is the 25th anniversary of Pure Life Ministries and I want to say to you this morning that it's my testimony, Kathy's testimony, that God has been faithful. All these many years and all the different things that we have faced with this organization and bringing it out here from California and all the opposition, enormous spiritual opposition, but God has been faithful.

He has been faithful all these many years. And God is faithful today, right now. He is a faithful God.

But what my word is going to be to open up the conference today is that God is going to be faithful in the days ahead. But we dare not approach these days with our head buried in the sand, so to speak. We can't just go on with life as usual.

We can't continue on with just this kind of fairy-tale American Christian thing where, you know, we expect everything to go just exactly as we want it to go. A nice smooth path, prosperity, health, wealth and all of that. It's not going to be that way.

I'll just tell you that right now and I'll get to that in a minute. But we have got to escape that delusional mentality. But, on the other side of it, I want to tell you that we have a God who is faithful.

And I have proven Him in my own life so many times in so many different circumstances over the years. If you'll open up your Bibles to Psalm 46. It's been a long night, okay? We don't believe in sleeping before we do these conferences.

So if I just start talking, you know, incoherently, you'll know that things didn't go so good last night. Dave always comes in just unflappable, sleeps for 10 hours, gets up with a word from the Lord, you know, just moves on, never quits. He'll be going on 50 years after the world has come to an end, you know.

Anyway, that's Dave Ravenhill, but he'll share with you tonight. This Psalm 46, I want to just share something about this as a backdrop. And I'm not going to get into this story, but it just kind of brings out a little bit of the whole point of it.

Most commentators, almost everybody agrees that this Psalm was penned, the Sons of Korah are the writers, that it was penned after the whole invasion of Israel by Sennacherib's army. And if you remember the story, Hezekiah, when he came into power, he brought about a revival. The Lord used him to bring revival to the land, and things were going well in the southern tribe of Judah.

And so things were going well in the nation, but they started getting reports from up north somewhere that there was a massive army being formed, and pretty soon these reports that were coming their way were increasingly more worrisome, because this massive Assyrian army started conquering one country after another after another, and before you knew it they had taken over the northern tribes of Israel and had carried away into exile, unbelievable as it could be, God's people carried them away up into Assyria. And then before we know it, they are coming down into Judah and taking over different cities and towns, and then one day there they were, encamped around the city of Jerusalem. And Hezekiah said, Lord I need a word today, you know? And he went to Isaiah and they talked and Isaiah got a word and said, don't worry, do not fear, I am going to take care of this, the Lord said.

And sure enough that night the angel of the Lord came in and decimated that army, 185,000, can I tell you this is not a fairy tale, this happened. 185,000 fierce warriors were destroyed that night. And then the only thing they had to deal with was what do you do with all those corpses, you know? But that wasn't such a bad thing, considering what they were facing.

But coming out of that, the sons of Korah penned Psalm 46. And, you know, they wrote it in such a way that they generalized the truth to be a teaching for people who would read it later, you know, so that's kind of the way it's written. But let's just take a look at this psalm.

Notice that I've got it broken down into three stanzas, it's really, actually this is true of many of the psalms, any time you see the word Selah, you see the word Selah sticking out there, a little bit bald, any time you see that word, what that word means in the Hebrew is pause, stop and consider what you have just read prayerfully, meditate on this powerful truth. Now how many of us really do that, you know, in our frenzied lifestyle? But that's what it means. And it's a natural breaking point and you'll see it in there.

The other thing I want to draw your attention to is you see verse 7 and verse 11 is the same words, the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold. And many people believe, in fact, some Bible translations actually have that as after verse 3. I stuck it in there because, you know, it just makes things kind of tidy and symmetrical and I like stuff like that, so I stuck it in there. But it doesn't change anything, you know, but you can see that there are three messages there and let's just go ahead and take a minute to read the word of the Lord.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. So then we will not be afraid though the earth itself is transformed and the mountains collapse into the deep oceans. Though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride, the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Selah. Stop and consider this awesome truth. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God.

There is the holy dwelling places of the Most High. God Himself is living in that city, therefore it stands unmoved despite the turmoil everywhere. He will not delay His help.

The nations rant and rave in anger, but when God speaks the earth melts in submission and kingdoms totter into ruin. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Stop and meditate upon this profound truth.

Come, think of Yahweh's marvels, the astounding things He has done in the world. He puts an end to war throughout the world. He smashes the bow and snaps the spear, burning vehicles of war with fire.

Be still and know that I am God. I am the God of Israel. I will be exalted among the heathen.

I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Stop and consider this powerful truth. All right. We have here basically two contrasting scenes.

We have a world coming apart at the seams. Chaos, confusion, upheaval, turmoil. It's like everything is helter-skelter everywhere the psalmist looks.

It looks bad. It looks bleak. It looks fearful, terrifying even.

You know, what do the righteous do when the foundations are shaken? But we also have a contrasting scene in heaven of the Almighty sitting on His throne. And there He is, unshakable, immovable, unchanging, heavily involved in the lives of His people. Now there have been many periods down through the years that fearful saints have turned to this psalm for comfort and assurance.

It's been 2,500 years since this was written, at least. And there have been many periods of time where God's people have faced terrifying world events. In fact, Martin Luther, by the way, this was his favorite psalm, Psalm 46.

And all Europe was in an uproar with Reformation. There were riots and just all kinds of stuff. And that was the psalm that served as the basis of a mighty fortress is our God.

It's his commentary on Psalm 46. So, you know, God's people have turned to this psalm many different times down through the ages. But I believe that we are coming to the very end of the age.

Man's day is coming to an end. Now, we've been hearing that preached for 40 years at least. And it was true 40 years ago that we were coming to the end of the age.

But we are down to minutes now on the world's clock. We really are. I believe that with all my heart.

And this message that is presented in this psalm is very important to us now. We're coming into a time when it's going to be increasingly more important. I want you to just consider the last decade, you know, because we forget in our busy life and all that we forget the stuff that happens.

But I just want you to consider a few things. I've got a few snapshots here I'm going to share with you. I just want to want you to think about some of the things that you have witnessed over the last 10 years.

Now, these are only a few, okay? I could put dozens up here. But in 2004, Indonesian tsunami that killed 226,000 people. And 2008, the Myanmar cyclone that killed 138,000 people.

And the Sichuan earthquake the same year, 87,000 people. The Haiti earthquake, a quarter of a million people killed. The Japanese tsunami and radiation disaster, we don't know what the fallout is going to be on that.

But it hasn't just been these kind of calamities. There's also been increasing social unrest. You know, for instance, the Greece riots in 2009 and then the following year, Toronto and London riots.

As economies begin collapsing and money becomes tight and people become angry because they don't get all the things that they wanted in life. You're going to see an increase in this kind of thing. And in the Middle East, we're seeing riots in Egypt and Bahrain and some of the other countries over there.

You're going to see this stuff happening more and more in our day and age. Now the U.S. has been fairly inoculated, but those days are coming to an end. Those days are coming to an end.

Now, we have had some things in our last decade, haven't we? 9-11, who could have imagined? And I've got a couple of friends here who were very close to that whole situation. Then Katrina in 2005, and now what we're facing is our economy is continually diminishing and collapsing before our very eyes. And our national leaders are lying to us.

They are lying to us about it. And we have a president who seems absolutely bent on, at the very least, diminishing the United States as the world power. In fact, he's already pretty much accomplished that single-handedly.

He reminds me of a teenager with a credit card. He can't spend that money fast enough. And I don't know if he's just in something like that and he's just so out of it that he doesn't know what he's doing and God is just orchestrating events for his own eternal purposes.

Or if he is just a very evil man and he is bent on an agenda to bring us into line with the other world powers that are emerging in this earth. Because we know by scriptures telling us that we're headed somewhere. Listen folks, let me tell you something.

We're not talking about a left-behind movie. We are talking about the reality that we are moving into right now. It's happening right before our eyes.

Jesus said that the last days would be like birth pangs and it's almost as if earth is experiencing the convulsions, the increasing convulsions of a world that's coming apart at the seams. That's the way it seems. And he made a couple of statements when he was talking about what things would be like in the end times.

And I think they're, I'm just going to show them and mention them because they're interesting to me. The first one was in Matthew 24, he said, the one who endures to the end, the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. And then at a different time he said, I don't think he knew the answer to this really.

When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? And what I want to say is that I believe he will find faith on the earth. He's going to find faith on the earth. And let me just share with you, I've talked a lot, I've wrote about faith down through the years and basically faith is having a sight of God, of God in the invisible realm, the spiritual realm.

That's what faith is. You know, you can operate in the physical and in the natural in life, right? You don't need God to do that. We haven't needed God in American Christianity for the most part.

We can do it on our own. We have great programs and we know how to make money and we know how to market things and we know how to do church. We know how to do all that.

We don't really need God to keep the church going. We're doing pretty good. But that day is coming to an end.

I'm telling you it is. And what we need, dear ones, is a much greater sight of God, individually, personally. We don't need great preachers.

We don't need new books or, you know, that's going to somehow say the right thing or say things in the right way or something and that's going to all change it. No. You know, in Ezekiel, there was a time when God's people were really struggling and the Lord spoke to Ezekiel and basically this is what he said.

He said, even if I sent Noah and Job to these people, they're not going to listen. They are beyond the point where words are going to bring them into the kind of faith that they need. So therefore, I will answer them, he says.

And that is a frightening thought. I will answer them. Well, I want you to know that we can make it through this thing and there are going to be many of God's people who will.

And this psalm is kind of like a blueprint of how to do it. If I could kind of make it such a simplistic little message like that. Let me just put it this way.

We need fresh and a deeper revelation of God as our refuge and as our strength and as our helper. We really do. We need that.

I need that. This word refuge, actually it comes from the verb form to flee and really what it means is in those times, if you were being chased down by enemies or something, that there was a place where you could flee to a refuge. And that's what that word means.

And basically what it's saying here by tying the Lord into it is that we need to learn to make him the first place we turn to in our fear. We need to see the Lord as our bulwark and as our high tower, as our mighty fortress. And the greater the sight of God as the place we turn, the easier it will be to turn there in our time of need.

And he's called our strength. Here it is, this psalmist begins this psalm right off the bat with this strong statement. God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in times of trouble.

His strength is for people who see their weakness. You know if you're strong in yourself, you're not going to need God. You don't need God.

You've been strong in yourself your whole life. You live in a prosperous culture. You haven't needed God, maybe.

Maybe that's the way it's been for you. Or maybe you've experienced enough in life that you have been put into a position where everything has unraveled around you and you've found out how very, very, very weak you really are. You're blessed if you've come into that revelation and have seen God, his omnipotent power there for you.

You're blessed if you have made that your own and it's real to you. And a very present help. Some of the other translations, I like the way they say it.

An exceedingly ready help in the time of distress. A helper who is always found in times of trouble. An ever-present help in distress.

One said, sovereign aid he has brought us in the hour of need. And hour of peril. Now here's the picture that forms in my mind in regards to this concept is God is enthroned in heaven.

But he's not just sitting back, you know, kind of lethargically or casually. No, he is on the edge of his seat with his eyes on his beloved ones. The righteous on this earth.

He is on the edge of his seat ready at a moment's notice to instantly throw himself into their need. That's our God. That's our God.

Now if you don't need him, that's another matter. But for those who need him, they will find that he will be there in their hour of need. The truth is, dear ones, is we all face times of distress.

But the point I'm making is I believe we're going to face them in an increasing way in the days ahead in many different forms. We're seeing the economy just really wither up in America and we're seeing all this wild, erratic weather. We're going to see that increasingly.

I believe that. But you know what? We need times of distress. We don't want them.

I don't want them. I want to just live a cush life, to be honest with you. That's what I want.

I want things smooth. But you know what? When things are smooth like that, I know for myself, I tend to become increasingly complacent. I tend to become increasingly independent of the Lord.

I tend to become increasingly more prideful. I need something to shake my world, to keep me on the edge of my seat. Three of you agree.

The rest of you are in total rebellions. You know, but I do, I am very comforted to know that my God is a very present help in times of trouble. In fact, you know, when Jesus was talking about the end times, he said when you start seeing all this stuff happening, the stuff that you are witnessing, do you know what a privilege it is to live right now? As frightening as it is, it is a great privilege.

And once we cross over the line and get up into glory and we meet saints from, you know, back in the dark ages or back in Noah's time or whatever, you know, just all these different periods of life. And they're going to say, you lived in the last time, you lived through all the stuff that came on this earth. And you'll just have this kind of very humble pride.

Yeah, it really was nothing, you know. Jesus said when you see all these things happening, recognize that he is near, right at the door. Right there, right at the door.

Now here's the bottom line with this point. If you have learned to depend on the Lord, not just in talk. You know, can I just say that in the days ahead, we're going to find out if we really believe what we say we believe.

It's easy to talk the talk, you know, when there's nothing pressing you. But when everything unravels around you, you're going to find out what you really believe. And many people are going to find out they don't believe.

But anyway, if you truly have learned to live your life trusting the Lord, isn't that what faith means? Or does it mean just call yourself an evangelical and just go to a good evangelical church? No, faith is tied into trust, isn't it? Dependence. If you have learned in your life to rely upon the Lord for everything, when everything starts unraveling around you, you are going to automatically rush to that great almighty refuge. But if you have been accustomed to running to Egypt every time you face some kind of problem in life, if you've become accustomed to relying upon yourself to get you through, then I feel like, I think this is true, that you are going to discover that you have a faith that is non-existent.

All right, number two. The most high God in our midst. Look at verse four.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling places of the most high. God himself is living in that city. Therefore, it stands unmoved despite the turmoil everywhere and so on.

Dear ones, we are part of the city of God. Now, you know, from a natural standpoint, a city refers to a condensed area of population, you know, where a whole mass of people live kind of one on top of the other. You have a hundred thousand people living within a few acres or something or other.

That's what we consider a city from a natural standpoint and even from a biblical standpoint, Old Testament standpoint. But the New Testament changed all that. The city of God became the heavenly Jerusalem.

And you and I, those of you who are truly converted, I want to throw that disclaimer in there, but those of us who truly walk with God, we are citizens of that heavenly Jerusalem right now. God looks down upon earth and the city of God isn't just one location, it's God's people spread throughout the world's populations. But to the Lord, it's one city.

God is dwelling in that city of God and you and I are dwelling in him, the most high. Now, there's many fabulous promises made to those who abide in Christ, to those who dwell in the most high and, you know, the most famous one that we all know of is Psalm 91. And I'm just going to blow through a few verses there real quick, just to kind of get this in us.

Verse 1, he who dwells in the shelter of the most high will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. You can say to Yahweh, my refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I trust. Verse 5, you will not need to be afraid of any nocturnal terror nor of any danger that is abroad in daylight.

Neither the plague that stalks the dead of night nor the epidemic which devastates at midday. Though a thousand fall at your side, 10,000 at your right hand, you yourself will remain unscathed. You have only to look on and see how evil men are punished.

You who can say, Yahweh, my refuge, even the most high, your dwelling place, no evil will befall you nor will any plague come near your tent. For he who puts you under his angel's charge to guard you wherever you go. Praise the Lord.

We are going to witness things like we have just witnessed over the last couple of days. This is pretty astounding. I have a USA Today here that says damage is catastrophic.

We don't get headlines like that in America very often, but I think we will. And I think that you and I are going to witness unbelievable things in the days ahead. I believe that.

I believe you are watching the entire world coming together into a one world global mindset where all the kings of the earth are united in harmony together under the anti-Christ spirit against God. And I believe you are going to witness that. You are witnessing right now it happened.

And you know, it's probably, we're only probably a few years away before we have a one world currency or one catastrophe away because the people who are behind this whole push are looking for opportunities to capitalize on to push forth their agenda. And that's what you're going to see happening. Every time some new catastrophe happens, they're going to seize the opportunity to push their agenda further into place.

And you're going to see an increase in the pride of man to unbelievable proportions. In fact, you know, the anti-Christ, that is, his whole mentality is he is full of the devil who said, I will be like the most high. That was what the devil said.

I will be like the most high. And that's what this man is going to be in. That's the spirit he's going to be in.

But at the same time, if you're dwelling in the presence of the most high, you're going to be coming into something much richer and much fuller that's going to take you through. The key here, the key, this is so important, the key to this part of what I'm kind of sharing with you this morning is to continually and keep humbling yourself before God. Your revelation of the most high God is going to be in direct proportion to your revelation of your great need to come down.

And you know, it's it's only as we come down that God becomes bigger in our minds. I, if we're full of ourself and everything in life is all about me and who I am and what people say and think about me, then God is just going to be very tiny. But if you get over yourself, if I could put it that way, if you can get to where you're humbling yourself and allowing God to get the glory, allowing God to be God.

The most high, you're going to find yourself in the right place when things really start happening. Isaiah said, the proud look of man will be abased and the loftiness of man will be humbled and Yahweh alone will be exalted in that day. That's referring to the day of the Lord.

That's where we're headed. And we have to decide, is that where we want to be? Do we want to be there down? You got to decide that. All right.

Number three, Yahweh and his marvelous works. We need a greater sight of this God called Yahweh. This name comes from the same root as the name that the Lord used when he revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush.

I am. It's the same root Yahweh. I am.

I am that I am. The word Yahweh was so holy to the Israelites that they would not pronounce it Yahweh Jehovah. It's the same.

It just depends on how you pronounce it. But it was so holy to them that they would not pronounce it. And that's why many Bibles, when it has the word Yahweh, they translate it as the Lord in small caps.

And it's used 6,000 times, something like that in the Old Testament. And it's almost, you know, most translations, it's the Lord. Some translations have translated it as Yahweh or Jehovah.

But anyway, Yahweh means the self-existent, independent, immutable, ever-present, all-filling I am. Let me put it this way. Yahweh means this way is all the different names that God has been known by, pull them all together and place them under the name Yahweh.

You know, because this is God's name. All the others are revealed attributes of his character or his being. But Yahweh is his name.

And we need a greater revelation of him as the great I am. Now it says here, the psalmist gives us a hint. What's he tell us to do? Come and think about Yahweh's marvels, the astounding things he has done in the world.

Now let me just ask you a few questions. Have you ever sat and really considered creation? You know, and just the way millions of different life forms, centipedes and antelope and elephants and all the different millions of plant forms, they still haven't identified them all at this point. And you know, the amazing thing about creation is how it all works in perfect harmony.

In fact, God, Yahweh, as the creator, he was so amazing that he worked it out to where there was this big bang in space one day and it all just fell into place this way. Talking about an amazing creator. But anyway, have you ever considered just that aspect of who he is? You should.

Just go out and look at animals and how their bodies are put together. Just your body. Your hands are amazing things, you know? And you have two eyes and two ears and just the whole, the ear mechanism is amazing.

The eye mechanism is amazing. The blood, just all of it, what we are. Do you ever consider that? If you did, you would probably get a bigger sight of Yahweh.

And what about the way God has worked in mankind? Consider how the Lord way back in eternity past made decrees and set into motion his purposes that have unfolded down through 6,000 years and how everything has come about exactly how God spoke it into being before time began. And it's amazing. You see it all work out in scripture, in the different stories, all the thousands of stories in the Bible and stuff.

You see it all just unfolding person by person, events, countries, and it's all keeping in perfect line with Yahweh's mindset, his purposes. How about just in church history? One of the things that shaped this ministry into what it is, and this was big, trust me, is way back at the beginning, God put it in my heart to read the biographies of great men and women of God. And I mean at least for 20 years, I mean almost nonstop, there was always a book next to my bed.

And I read it. And every night I was reading those books. Some of them I've read probably a dozen times.

God Smuggler and the lives of Hudson Taylor and Jonathan Goforth and some of those guys. I'd read them over and over and over. How do you think I had the faith to believe God to create a Pure Life Ministries when everything was against Kathy and me out in California? When we showed up in Kentucky and had nothing to our name and everyone around us looked at us like we were weirdos from California, which we were.

But in spite of that, I could believe God to create an awesome ministry. And He did it. But you know how that got into me was by reading those stories.

I always felt like if God can do it through them, He can do it through us. Why not? I'm willing to believe Him for it. And He's done it.

And what about your own life? How much time do you really sit and consider? Just think about your life before you came to the Lord. Think about your life before you came to the Lord. Just lost.

Out of it. Oblivious. How was God going to save you? Was there something in you that drove you into God? No.

There was nothing in you and there was nothing in me. We were wicked through and through. There was nothing in us that was going to compel us to God.

No, it was the work of the Holy Spirit. Do you ever stop and consider that and thank the Lord for that? And that was just to get you saved. I don't need to remind this bunch what God got when He got you saved, right? Think of all the work that the Lord has done, how He's had to constantly balance His discipline, His encouragement.

If He disciplined you too much, you'd start whining like a baby. If He gave you too much encouragement, you'd puff right up with pride. Only God could handle you, right? I'm not even going to get into Dave Ravenhill's story.

Wow, talk about frightening. And there's another part to this and it's also very important. Be still and know that I am God.

You know, dear ones, the devil has been very successful at one thing in his assault on the American church. It has been to get us in a frantic, frenzied lifestyle, get us addicted to the culture, the pleasures, all the stuff that he offers us, to get us so addicted to all those things that we would feel like we have to have more. But you don't find God in that frantic lifestyle.

You find God by having a solid time regularly where you quiet your soul, where God knows He's going to find you on your knees faithfully every morning and He's going to be able to come in and move into your space and bring His presence into your inside world and make Himself real to you and increase your faith, increase your sight of Him. If you don't have a time with God, dear ones, you are not going to make it. I'm not trying to reduce it to a formula.

I'm talking about the branch and the vine. I'm talking about the great need we have to be attached to God, to have His nourishment, His spiritual nourishment flowing through us daily, coming through and helping us, invigorating us, lifing us, giving us the wisdom we need to go forth. You're not going to make it.

And you're in a delusion and a fantasy world if you think you are. Some of you really need to hear this word and start taking it seriously. I'm not mad at you, okay? Well, a few of you I'm pretty ticked at, but, you know, we're spiritual beings.

You're not going to make it through by storing food and ammunition. And those of you that are holding out hope on the rapture, why don't you hold out hope on the rapture but make sure your life is right with God. You can believe in the rapture.

I hope it happens. I really do hope it happens. Lord, it'd be okay, you know? But I ain't putting all my marbles in that bag.

No way. Too much is at stake. I'm going to have the kind of faith and life in God that's going to take me through whatever hell comes upon this earth.

You're spiritual beings. You serve a spiritual God and we're in a spiritual war that's going to be unbelievable. We've got to know how to quiet ourselves and let God build us up spiritually.

All right, I'm going to wrap it up. We do need a greater revelation of God as our refuge, as our strength, as our helper when we need Him. We need a greater revelation of the Most High God.

We need to really, in a very real way, know what it means to dwell in the presence of God. And those who want that, He is going to make that happen for you increasingly. And we need a greater revelation of this Great I Am, the Great I Am and all His marvels because then we'll have sight in our mind's eye.

We'll have the sight of seeing ourselves go through just like the children of Israel in Egypt. Who could have imagined what God was going to do to set them free? And you'll see thousands falling on either side of you and it won't come near you in a certain sense spiritually because you're going to go through. We need that.

But there's another part of it that I've got to mention just wrapping it up. There's the aspect of preparing our hearts. I hope that the Lord won't have to say of us like He had to say of the people of Israel in the wilderness, that they were a people who did not prepare their hearts.

I want my heart to be prepared for whatever may come. When I went in the Los Angeles Sheriff's Academy back in 1981, I knew sort of what I was getting myself into. Sort of.

There was nothing I could do to prepare myself for the emotional abuse I would take it from those DIs and all that. But I knew what the physical training was going to be. And you know what I did? I started getting ready.

I started getting prepared physically. I was out running. I was exercising.

I was lifting weights. I was doing whatever I could do to prepare myself because I knew the academy. I had my date and I'm getting closer and closer and it's like the anticipation and the fear is building in me.

I wanted to be ready so I could handle what they were going to throw at me. And so I show up at the academy and it was far worse than I thought it was going to be. But there were guys there, I was absolutely astounded.

They showed up there out of shape, sloppy, flabby. They were clearly undisciplined and I'm looking at them and I'm thinking, what were you thinking? Some of them came from across the country. We were from all over the country.

Believe me, L.A. If you live in L.A. you know you don't want to be a cop so they have to go outside L.A. to get people stupid enough. But some of these guys really went through a lot to get there but didn't do nothing to prepare themselves. And they washed out right away.

They didn't make it. What's it going to be like for us in the days ahead? Well, I've got one more thing here that we should look at. But that phrase that keeps surfacing in this song, the Lord of hosts, the God of Jacob.

Let me put it this way, the commander of heaven's armies who with one word created the universe. With one word can move all the physical forces at work in our planet. This almighty God has covenanted himself to us as his people.

He is the God of Jacob. He has covenanted himself to you. He has inextricably tied his honor to your life if you're one of his.

And you know in the L.A. academy the D.I.'s, their whole deal was to try to get as many people to quit as they could because they only wanted those who were most determined. But it's not going to be that way for you and me. It's going to be more like marine boot camp, you know, where you're going to go through.

There's no getting out of it in the marine boot camp. You know in the sheriff's academy you always knew and that was the hardest part of it, believe me. The hardest part was knowing that I can walk away right now.

I don't have to subject myself to this. But in the marine boot camp it's not that way, man. You're at Camp Lejeune or whatever.

You are there for 12 weeks or whatever it is of hell and you will go through. I mean you could sneak out of the barracks and somehow get off the base in the middle of the night and go AWOL, you know, which is like breaking your covenant with God. You can do that.

You can commit apostasy if you wish. But outside of that, God is going to take you through. But what is it going to be like for you? Do you know what it's like for guys to show up in the marine boot camp out of shape? They can't just, like the L.A. academy, they just quit.

But you don't quit in the marine boot camp. You go through. But it's not easy.

Dear ones, we have to prepare our hearts. We have to prepare our hearts. The times of all the fun and games in the evangelical church are coming to an end.

That time is over. We've had our fun, you know, we've had all our church things and all that stuff. That time is coming to an end.

Before long they are going to be hating us more than they already do. You're going to discover what's inside you. Because God wants to know, Jesus wants to know, will I find faith on this earth when I come back? Am I going to find that you really do believe what you say you believe about me? Or has it just been a bunch of lip service? You know, so the mission I want to leave with you is that this is very sobering.

It's terrifying really in the natural. And if your whole life is wed to this world, I hope that what I've given you will depress you today. Because Babylon is falling.

But just as true is if your life is wed with the Most High God. He's going to take you through. And you will find that you have what you need when you need it.

He will be there powerfully for you. He will give you what you need. You just got to prepare your heart.

You know, and He's going to see you through.

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