

Grace Walk Experience - Part 2

by Steve McVey

Steve McVey discusses how embracing grace and understanding our identity in Christ can transform our struggles into opportunities for growth.

Duration: 45:37

Scripture: Job 23:1-10, Psalm 139:23-24, 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, Ephesians 2:10

Topics: "Trusting God", "Sovereignty"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting God in the midst of troubles, highlighting how our problems can lead us to a deeper reliance on God's sovereignty and purpose. It discusses how God allows burdens greater than we can bear to bring us to a place of surrender and trust in Him, ultimately transforming our lives through difficulties.

Transcript

We're back with Dr. Steve McVeigh today. He's with us. We're talking about an issue of grace.

Grace walking. He's got a book called The Grace Walk Experience. Steve, what are we going to talk about on our show today? We're going to talk about how our troubles can be the best thing that ever happened to us.

This is a program for people who have had or are having problems in their life because we're going to discuss how God can use those problems to accomplish a wonderful purpose. Good things can happen. Good things can happen in the midst of our troubles.

I believe it, but you know what? Often we need to see how that can take place. I pray that today you'll stay with us and find the grace of God in the middle of our troubles. We are back with Dr. Steve McVeigh today, talking about a book that he really believes, and I agree with him, is going to make a difference in some people's lives, a huge difference.

It's called The Grace Walk Experience. That's really what we're focusing on this week. You're with me for a week here, Steve.

I'm always glad to be here with you for a week. Well, thank you. I appreciate it.

What I forgot to do yesterday was tell people where you're from. You live somewhere in the Tampa Bay area, I understand now. I do.

We live down in the Tampa Bay area. Our ministry was located in Atlanta, Georgia, and we lived there for a lot of years. People ask me, well, why did you move to Florida? I said, well, because I could.

My kids are grown, and as long as there's an airport for me to get into and fly out, and a word processor nearby where I can keep writing, it doesn't matter where I live. So we moved to sunny Florida just because we enjoy that area. Because you could.

Because you could, because you enjoy the area. That's right. Well, that is so cool.

Well, good for you. And you have four children. I have four children, two sons and two daughters.

As I said, they're all grown. We have three grandchildren, and we're loving life. My wife, Melanie, travels with me most all of the time.

Ninety-five percent of the time she travels with me, and we do ministry just everywhere. In fact, I mentioned our website late yesterday. Let me mention our website again, gracewalk.org. Folks can visit our website and there learn about what we're doing in missions.

We're reaching out into China, Korea, Japan, all over Latin America. Grace Walk Mexico for Spanish-speaking people. We have a Spanish website, Comandobajosugracia.com, and they can visit that and just find out.

You know, people are hungry for this message, Willard. That's what it is. People are hungry.

My first book, Grace Walk, it will go into its tenth language this summer. Danish will be language number ten. That amazes me, and I don't say that to boast.

I say that to say, to evidence the fact, people want to know the truth of how to experience freedom and how to enjoy their faith. It's about enjoying their walk. It's about enjoying it.

Jesus said, I've come to give you life so that you'll have it abundantly, but man, if you look at folks in the average church, it doesn't exactly look like they're enjoying an abundant lifestyle, and I didn't for a lot of years. I was sincere, but I saw a great gap between the joy that Jesus said he wanted to leave us. He said, you know, my joy I give to you.

I pray that my joy will be fulfilled in them. Well, I didn't see that in my own life. I was sincere, but I was driving myself into the ground trying to do something that never would have succeeded.

So it also, like our walk in Jesus starts off when we just simply embrace him, invite him into our lives, and literally receive his life. It's an exchange life. I like what it says in Galatians.

I think it's chapter two, verse 20, where it says, it's no longer I that live, but Christ who lives in me, and the life I now live by faith in him who loved me and gave his life. I mean, that's one of the first verses that I learned as a five-year-old. Yeah, and what a wonderful verse, and that's right.

What I call the grace walk is what Hudson Taylor is the one that coined that phrase, the exchange life, and that's a good phrase, the exchange life. It's just, as you said in Galatians 2.20, it's the idea and

understanding that when we receive the life of Christ, he takes the old person that we were and he replaces that with his life, so it's an exchange life. And it isn't something we always recognize.

We get distracted from it so easily in our religious walk. Absolutely. In our wanting to serve God and wanting to do better and so on.

We don't know what we have, and that's the big thing. We don't really understand sometimes what we have. I remember some time ago, I said we lived in Florida, and one day I was looking for my sunglasses, and I said I thought I left them in here on my desk at home, and I looked in there, and my sunglasses weren't there.

I went back in the living room and looked by my recliner. They weren't there. I looked where I keep my keys.

They weren't there. I went into the bedroom, and I'm becoming more and more frustrated. Where are my sunglasses? I'm looking everywhere.

I can't find them. Where did I put those things? And I think, well, could I have carried them into the bathroom? So I go into the bathroom and look in there, and I glance up into the mirror, and there they are right on top of my head where I've pulled them back off my eyes. I'm looking everywhere trying to find something that I'm carrying around with me, and I thought, well, you know, that's a pretty good example of what I did as a Christian for a lot of years.

A lot of us are trying to find something that we already have. We're trying to find a victory that's already ours in Jesus Christ. That's why I wrote *The Grace Walk Experience*, to present these eight truths in this book that will enable people to understand what we're looking for we already have in the person of Jesus.

All we need to know is how to appropriate by faith the reality of the indwelling Christ, and we'll experience what God wants us to know and enjoy. That's good. And yesterday on the program, as we were concluding the program, you promised you were going to tell us something today on the show about this experience, because I think the chapter we're going into today is the whole area of difficulties that come into our lives.

Some of the most difficult things that come into our lives can be actually a doorway, I think, of God working something of himself into us. That's right. Yesterday in chapter one, we talked about improving your behavior will not give you victory in the Christian life.

That's the first truth people need to know to be set free. So that all of the do's and don'ts, and keeping all the do's, and not doing all the don'ts, will not give you victory. You can still be miserable.

You can do all the do's and don't all the don'ts and you'll still be miserable, because improving your behavior is not the key to enjoying the Christian walk. Understanding who you are in Christ is the key. And today, chapter number two, is this.

Problems in your life could be the best thing that could happen to you. Problems in your life could be the best thing that could happen to you. And I promised yesterday that I would tell you a short story, and I've told it before.

Some that may have seen me here in years past might have heard this. I'm going to give the short version, but it was on October 6, 1990, that I was lying on my face in my office. I'd been a pastor at that time for 29 years, and I was lying there crying at 2 in the morning.

And I said, God, if this is ministry, I want out. I said, in fact, if this is the Christian life, it's overrated. It's great for getting you into heaven, but in the meantime, what's the big deal? I don't see the abundance.

I don't see the victory. I look at the lives of people in the New Testament. There's a far, far cry between my lifestyle and theirs, a big gap between the two.

And I was lying on my face crying and saying, God, what are you doing? Are you sadistic? And the reason I was doing that is because he had put me in a church that had been declining. Now, I was a local church pastor. It had been declining for five years, but everywhere I had ever served, churches had grown.

And after a year in that church, the next day on a Sunday was to be my first anniversary date. But instead of growing, the church had continued to decline. And I had become more and more discouraged until I finally became depressed.

On October 6, 1990, I reached a place of despair. And I was lying there, and I said, God, if this is it, if this is all there is to it, I don't understand what the big deal is. And I came to the end of myself that night, Willard, and I began to pray and just systematically in my prayer empty myself of everything that had given me a sense of value, everything that had given me a sense of purpose and meaning.

And it's like I... And things that you kind of relied on, things that you had put value in. That's exactly it. I said, I prayed like this.

I said things like, Lord, you know, from now on, you know, I'm not, I give up. I acknowledge that my background in ministry means nothing. My education, it has no value in terms of me depending on that.

My abilities or gifts that I might have, that means nothing. Everything I've been clinging to to try to make my life work, you know, I acknowledge that that's not where life is to be found. And I empty myself, and I come to the place, Father, where I say that I quit my ministry.

This is your ministry. It's called absolute surrender, taking your hands off your own life. I quit my ministry.

This is your ministry, and if you want to bless and cause it to succeed, fine. But if it continues to fail, then it's your responsibility. In fact, I said, Lord, in terms of me trying to live the Christian life, I've lived on this motivation, condemnation, rededication cycle for 29 years, and I'm tired of it.

I'm going to quit trying. I said, I'm not going to rededicate myself to try harder anymore because it doesn't work. And you know, Willard, I don't want to breeze right past that because that is a truth a lot of folks don't get.

Rededicating yourself to try harder to live for God won't work. So like the January 1st thing of making new commitments for the coming year, making my pledge for the new year, this is not the way. And we do that week by week often as Christians.

Every Sunday we go to church and say, whoa, I really blew it last week, but I really don't want to. I'm going to do better. I'm going to try harder.

I'll try harder next week. We do it all the time, but the key to victory in the Christian walk is not trying harder. The key is entrusting Him.

Let me tell you what God wants to bring us to, and this is just right in this second chapter, and that is problems may be the best thing that could ever happen to us. The place we need to come to is where we say, you know what, Father, I'm going to quit trying. I'm not going to, listen, we're not called to rededicate ourselves to Him.

The Bible tells us we're to renounce the self-life. Jesus speaking said, if any man will follow me, let him take up his cross, dedicate himself, and follow me. Is that what He said? No.

No, He didn't say, did you catch it, those watching? I'll say the verse again. So you're sharp, you caught it. If any man will come after me, let him dedicate himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

That's not what He said. What did He say? He said lay down his life. That's right.

Let him deny himself. Deny himself, yeah, lay down his life. Just lay down your life.

You don't rededicate self, you renounce self, and the thing that God does with problems is He uses those problems to become our best friend. Second chapter, your problems may be the best thing that could ever happen to you, that have ever happened to you, because problems become a messenger that God uses to bring us to the end of ourselves and to cause us once and for all to realize that we don't have to try harder. Instead, we just need to give up.

I used to pray prayers like this, Lord, make me stronger, make me stronger. Oh, God, please make me stronger. When in reality, my problem was I was already too strong.

You see, we don't get strong enough for God to use, we have to get weak enough for God to use us. Okay, keep going, because this is a toughie for us. And see, what we do, and this is the lie of modern religion, in the Christian church, in the Christian church, there's a false bill of goods being sold to us, and we're believing the lie in it.

If truth sets you free, you know what lies will do to you? Lies will keep you in bondage. And the enemy of our souls is not stupid. He's not going to give us lies that are so blatantly obvious that we'll reject them.

He's going to make them sound religious and make them sound right, so we fall for them. And here is the lie. The lie is, the lie is, well, you just need to suck it up and, you know, try harder and promise God you'll do better.

Go out, all God, how many times have you heard this? God just expects your best. All He wants is that you do your best and try your hardest. Those are all lies, all lies, and they'll keep you in bondage.

And I want to say to those that are watching from, if you believe the things I've just said are not lies, then why don't they work for you? And I'm bold enough to say I tried for 29 years. Nobody could have been more sincere than I was, and I think it's accurate to say if trying and sincerity in our efforts to live the Christian life was the key, then we'd be living in the millennial reign right now, wouldn't we? Because God knows we've all tried, but we don't need to try, we need to trust. Steve, you're flying in the face of some pretty important people.

I mean, if I'm hearing it, so shoot me down if I'm wrong, if I'm saying something wrong here, but our excellence is all God's asking for. I mean, there is so much excellence we talk about in the church today. Okay, keep going.

No, no, I'm just saying, you know, as long as we become excellent. Oh, yeah, that's what we're told. I mean, I'm serious.

You know, we're striving towards excellence. That's right. Everywhere in the church today.

That's right. And let me give you a verse that counteracts this idea that we must strive toward excellence through our performance. It is Ephesians.

You are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God in advance has ordained that you should walk in them. You are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus. That's Ephesians 2.10. The word workmanship there, the Greek word *poema* means poem, a piece of poetry.

You are already excellent. I am already excellent. We don't strive to become excellent by our performance, but instead we are to understand that God has created us in his image and that in the person of Jesus and the finished work of the cross, we have been given the good housekeeping seal of approval by God himself saying, A1, excellent.

And what we need is to understand who we already are and live from out of that. And then our behavior, our activity will reflect the excellence that resides within us. That's very different from what we hear in the modern church, which is you become excellent by the things you do, by raising the bar and improving your standard of excellence.

Do you hear the difference between the two? I hear what you're saying. It's not that, I mean, I love what you said when he made us and he put a stamp of approval on us. We are made accepted in the beloved.

Listen, I love this in Jack and Genesis when God made something. Every time God made something, it says, he looked at it and he said, it's good. It's good.

And when he looked at Jesus at his baptism, the father watching, watching, couldn't contain himself. And he says, I'm not just going to say it. I want them to hear it.

And so he pulled back, separated the curtain and he leaned over and said, this is my son and I'm well pleased. And everybody heard it. And that's what he does with you and me.

We don't have to jump through the hoops to try to gain his approval. We must understand that in Jesus Christ, it's all been done. And we are as acceptable to God right now as Christ is.

And what our father wants to do is take us off of this insanity, out of this insanity of trying and trying and trying to do something for ourselves that in reality he's already done on our behalf. As though we're trying to go and improve on something he's done better than we'll ever be able to do. And to use his problems to cause us to realize it's not going to work no matter how hard you try.

But you know, when you talk about the approval that God has for Jesus, you know, that, that saying that Betty came to me one day about a year and a half ago or so, maybe it's even two years ago. And she said, Willard, I was looking at the book of John, reading it, reading it and reading it because God wanted to talk to me. And she says, I wasn't, I'm trying to absorb it.

You know, sometimes, you know, that God's saying you just, you're just, and she was just at one of those times in her life where she just, and out of it, out of the blue, she said, she was reading that again in the book of John. She realized that, that the father spoke that of Jesus before he did one lick of work. And we, you know, you know, it wasn't after he had done all these things and died on the cross.

That's great. That was very powerful. That's a great observation.

Yeah, it blew me away because I'd never observed that. And I thought, Betty, you know what? You just got a revelation there from the father. That's awesome.

Therefore, then the work in the ministry of Jesus flowed out of the acceptance that he already had from his father, didn't it? It did. And that's right. And that's the way we were to be.

Yeah. But we get it so backwards in the church. And we're and listen, I'm not being critical of the modern church because I want to make sure those watching know I was a local church pastor for 21 years and I still speak 98 percent of the time in local churches.

I'm not trying to to be critical of the church. I love the church of Jesus Christ. And I speak as a fellow traveler in this journey within the church to say, let's let's embrace and realize the truth.

And here's an important question I think we all need to ask ourselves and honestly answer. Am I willing to change the way I see things? Am I willing to come to a place? Am I still teachable? And am I willing to say, you know what, what I've always believed is wrong and what my church teaches me is wrong and what I preached or taught as a pastor is wrong. I'm willing to be changed.

My struggle, Steve, is that I fall back into that myself. I mean, I know what you're saying is true. I know that that's what the Bible speaks about, that I'm seated in Christ in heavenly places today.

Colossians three chapter or chapter three verses one or one, two, three, four. And it's I'm looking down from that place of sitting on the throne in Jesus. And I don't see my world that way when I know it's true, OK, because I get caught again in seeing myself from a different point of view and I've got to get my refocusing done.

It's a matter of renewing our minds. And that mind renewal is an ongoing, everyday thing with us, because most of us, especially those of us who've grown up in the church, we've been so programmed by the teaching that we receive to think that it's all about us and what we do. Yeah, that to reverse that and say, no, it's about him or what he's already done.

That that takes them. Can I throw something else out, Steve, just in view of what you said? I don't know that it's always that you have to have been in a church background. That's a good point.

It really comes from the garden because it comes out of the our human nature is used by the enemy of our souls to reach it, because we there's something in us that feels we can improve ourselves. There's something in our very nature. So, you know, the way we heard it and if we grew up in a church, we heard that because it came out of human nature.

That's a good point. It comes. I've seen people that have never had no church background get born again, get saved, receive Jesus by faith.

And, you know, shortly thereafter, they get caught in this themselves because we're all prone to it. I think it's we're prone. Well, that's right.

It's something that's built into us all the way back in the Garden of Eden. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned and they saw their what they perceived to be a deficiency, what did they do? They went out and by their own efforts, they took leaves and made cover for themselves and trying to make themselves presentable by what they did. And you're right.

You're right. We're born hardwired with that when we're born into Adam. I think so.

But when we come into Christ, it's a whole it turns everything out of Christ. That won't be there. Anyway, I need to take a little break.

I'll come back after this. We're trying to Steve McVeigh. The book is The Grace Walk Experience.

You can get it from him on his website and we get a number, an address on the screen. You can go there as well. We'll take a break and be right back with Steve right after this.

We're back with Dr. Steve McVeigh, and we're talking about some of the subject matter in this book, which is The Grace Walk Experience is how do you live out? This is really what it's all about. How do you live out and enjoy your life the way God intends it is for you to do it? Truths that I'll be so bold as to say eight truths that may well transform your life. And I say that from my own experience.

And not only my because my life has been transformed by understanding these eight truths, but I get email from people all over the world who have said, wow, I went through this and my life was transformed. By the way, can I say this something we didn't mention? I also have video and audio teachings to go along with this. OK, OK.

So some of you will find them on the website. Absolutely. A lot of this is being used in small groups.

I've got eight 30 minute teachings, video teachings that go along with each of these sessions. Gracewalk.org, how's that for a shameless plug? That's a that's a great one. I'm OK with that.

But yesterday we talked about the reality that, you know, your behavior doing right and wrong things doesn't make you get any more victorious. I mean, that was we dealt with that yesterday. Today, we're talking about the fact that difficult things may come and God will use tough things in your life.

I mean, I forget how you actually put that in a statement. Problems may be the best thing, the best thing that could ever happen to you. The very thing that could ever happen to you is a problem.

That's right. That's right. Problems may be the best thing that could ever happen to you.

Right. That's how you put it down. Let me give you a verse.

Let's go there. Second Corinthians, I mean, first Corinthians, chapter one, verse eight. Well, let me preface reading the verse.

Let me tease this a little bit before I read it in the verse. I love to say things that people say. That's wrong.

I don't agree with that. And then show it to them in the Bible. OK, because here's the here's a point I want to make kind of parenthetically, Willard.

Some of the things we have we believe we have heard them said so many times that we believe they're true. We think they're true just because we've heard it so many times. We think it's true because we grew up hearing it.

Some things people think are in the Bible. You know, you find out later, Benjamin Franklin said, you know, things like God help those who help themselves. You have things that are people that are in the Bible.

I was going to say, you mean that's not in the Bible, as I've heard that so many times. Yeah, exactly. Things that we think are biblical that are so not biblical.

But we've heard it so many times we think it's from the Bible. Now, one of the things that we've all heard many times in our lives, we're talking about how problems can become your best friend, be the best thing that ever happened to you. One of the things we've all heard is God will never put a burden on you greater than you can bear.

We've all heard it. I've said it before I knew better. I used to teach it.

I used to say it. I believed it. But I'm going to tell you now, don't don't don't get mad at me because I'm going to show you this in the Bible.

I don't let me make the statement again. God will not put any burdens on you greater than you can bear. I'm here to tell you that's a lie.

God will put burdens on you greater than you can bear. Yeah. Now, I know every Sunday school teacher in Canada is looking at this say, wait, wait a minute.

I don't agree with that. What about first Corinthians 10, 13? Exactly. God will not allow you to be tempted by that which you're able.

I am not talking about temptation to sin. That verse does say that God will not allow you to be tempted to sin to an extent beyond that which you can resist. But he will, with the temptation, make a way of escape, the verse says.

So in other words, there is a way out when you're tempted. There's always a way to always say no. And the way out is always the same as Jesus, by the way.

Oh, it's Jesus. The way is always he said he is the way I am the way. So he says God will not allow you to be tempted, tested, tempted to sin.

Tested in the area of sin more than you can bear. But he'll always make a way of escape. And the way is Jesus.

Jesus is the way of his. He's the way. OK, but we're not talking about that.

But we're not saying we're talking about burdens, trials, troubles, weight, pressure. Now, I said and let me recap and then we'll come to the Bible. I said God will allow you to have burdens greater than you can bear.

Now, let's prove it from scripture before folks change the channel. First Corinthians chapter one. Second Corinthians chapter one.

I'm sorry. Second Corinthians chapter one. Second Corinthians chapter one.

Paul was writing to the church at Corinth about his experience. And here's what he said. Verse eight.

Now I'm reading straight from scripture. Second Corinthians one eight. We do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction, which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively beyond our strength so that we despaired even of life.

Verse nine. Indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead. Now, let me say two things.

Number one, I just told folks watching on TV that God will allow you to have burdens that are greater than you can bear. Number two. Listen to number two.

Look at your own Bible. Don't you dare sit there and say, I just disagree with him about that. Get it.

Look in your Bible. Second Corinthians one eight and nine. I go back to what I said.

Are we willing to have our mind changed if we see something in scripture? Now let's look at these verses. Paul said when I was in Asia, he said I had a burden. This is verse eight.

That's right. It wasn't just a burden. It was an excessive burden.

But then here's the next phrase. Beyond our strength. This I'm reading this from the new American standard.

But the new international version, which is not my favorite version, but in this verse, it does a good job. The new international version in second Corinthians one eight says we were burdened. Here's the quote beyond our ability to endure.

Making it very clear. I mean, does it get any plainer than that? Paul said I had a burden when I was in Asia that was so excessive. It was beyond my ability to endure it.

It was greater than I could bear. There it is right in the Bible. Now, lest you think, well, he might have meant something else by that.

Listen to he goes on and says so that we despaired even of life. Now let's put that in modern English. What's he really saying? I mean, I give I give up living.

I mean, I wish I could die. And who hasn't said that? And that's all bit. I'll bet there's a lot of people watching the show today that have been in circumstances somewhere in their life and said, you know what? I just like to die.

I'd like to be out of here. We've all been there. And those watching this show, if you've ever got to a place where you say, you know, I just don't know how I can bear this.

It seems like it's more than I can bear. And I just wish I could die. Well, you're on good.

You're in good company because the Apostle Paul said that. But wait, wait. He didn't stop there.

He goes on and says, indeed, we had the sentence of death in ourselves. In other words, it's like my whole life. It's like it's got the kiss of death on it.

So now look at the progression. He's he wants to make it very clear. So he's redundant.

He repeats himself again and again. I had a burden. It was an excessive burden.

It was greater than I could bear. It made me wish I could die. I had the kiss of death on myself.

Why would God do that? Here it is. Verse nine, second Corinthians one nine. In order that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.

Now, here's the complete thought. I said God will put more on you than you can bear. Yeah, the complete thought is God will put more on you than you can bear so that we come to the place where we realize that he will bear it for us so that we will come to the place where we give up confidence in our own self-sufficiency.

That is why problems can be the best thing that ever happens to us. See, I mentioned earlier in the show how that on October six, 1990, I was lying on my face and saying, God, you know, I know this is this is the Christian life is overrated. I'm quitting ministry if this is all there is to it.

I even said, Lord, why don't you just let me die and take me to heaven? But that was a good thing. I look back now and say that dark night of my soul was one of the mountain peaks of my Christian walk, because it remember I said earlier that I prayed and I emptied myself. It brought me to the end of myself.

It is for that reason that our problems can become the best thing that ever happens to us. Instead of looking for God to bring us through and out of our troubles, we need to be asking, Lord, what is it that you're seeking to accomplish in my life in the midst of these troubles? And the answer may well be what Paul said in Second Corinthians one, eight and nine. God may answer.

I'm working in you to bring you to the place so that you would not trust in yourself, but in God, in me, the one who raises from the dead. So can you see then how troubles can be our best friend? But how many how many circles in the modern church tell you that if you're having troubles and if you're hurting, then you must not have enough faith? Oh, I hate that. The ministering death to people don't get me started.

Oh, man, don't get me started. Ministries and teachers and preachers of the Bible that tell you that if you acknowledge that you're hurting, that you're having problems, that you're struggling, that you're in pain, don't make those negative confessions. Tell it to the Apostle Paul.

Yeah, tell try that on with the Apostle Paul. I had burdens. They were excessive.

They were more than I could bear. I despaired of life. I had the sentence of death.

You know, and I know there are ministries right now that would have said to Paul himself, stop with those negative confessions. No, Paul wasn't making a negative confession. He was being honest about how he felt at the time and what his experience was.

He did. And he wrapped it all up by saying that God was allowing it. God was behind the scenes using it to bring me to the end of myself so that I would not trust in myself, but in the one who raises from the dead.

The the area's trust is it's it's it's where your alliance comes. It's when you when you're relying on you. You're in trouble.

Absolutely. When you're relying on God to work out the next step, whatever that looks like. And and often it gets us to the place.

We don't know what the next step is. Let me tell you, the thing that God is wanting to do is bring us to the place where we give up and say, I yield everything into your hands. I remember October 6, 1990, when I was on my face.

Yeah, I said before that night was over. I said, Lord, from now on, everything is you. It's all you.

And I said, father, for every positive thing that feels good and that I like in my life from this day forward, I'm going to tell everybody it's him, it's all him. And I said, but Lord, for every painful, negative thing that happens in my life from now on, I'm going to say it's him, it's him. Because I said it's not my life anymore.

I said, Lord, if I'm going to give you credit, I'm going to give you the blame. OK, I see. Somehow we think that's unspiritual.

You know, that's exactly the point. We want to take the blame for all the bad stuff and say it's us. Who put God on the Isle of Patmos? Who put John on the Isle of Patmos? God did.

Who let Daniel go to that lion's den? God allowed Daniel to go to the lion's den. You know, that's a that's a struggle for some of us. We can't.

But you know what that would do if we would understand the sovereignty of God over our lives, even in our pain and problems? What it would do is it would give us a sense of peace in those problems. Rest. A rest and say, I don't know what the Lord's doing, but I know the Lord is sovereign and he's over my life and he's behind everything.

I'm not saying God causes people to sin against us, but I'm saying that even that God stands behind and uses. When Joseph's brother sold him, I know, I know God make him do that. No.

But later, what did Joseph say when his brothers came? He said, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. Well, you know, I've looked at that Joseph story is. Yeah.

And these are there are principles of God that you find throughout the Bible in the stories, because I mean, how do you find the ways of God except through the stories we've got? That's right. But in Joseph's case, I mean, when Joseph had those dreams. The destiny of those dreams meant he had to be sold into slavery.

That's right. Because how is he going to get to Pharaoh's court? That's right. How is he going to get that? How is he going to be the one that they would bow down to? That's right.

Unless he was sold it. Unless one of his brothers says, we're going to kill the kid. And somebody says, no, we're not going to kill the kid.

I mean, you know what? I mean, that's right. You got to let go of that. You got to say, you know what? God's bigger than this.

That's right. Well, you know, when I was on my face on October 6th, 1990, praying and thinking of getting out of the ministry and trying to figure out how and saying, God, this Christian life is overrated. It was the darkest moment of my life.

But I wouldn't. I would go on to write about it in my book, Grace Walk. And even in this book, the Grace Walk experience.

And now through that first book, Grace Walk, ten languages all over the world. Exactly. Exactly.

That never would have happened if God had not allowed me to lie on my face, saying, if this is it, I want out. And for you to pastor a church that's going downhill every step of the way. A whole year of going downhill.

And I'm saying, God, what are you doing? What are you doing? And God says, I'm doing what I'm doing. And I understand. And you don't.

I think it was D.L. Moody. I believe that's the one that said, when you can't trace his hand, trust his heart. Trust his heart.

Yeah, I think Moody does. Yeah. Well, look at Job.

I mean, isn't Job a situation where where where Job is in a place like like nobody understands what Job's going through, but Job's going through despair. I mean, absolutely. He's going through what Paul writes about in Second Corinthians, chapter one, verse eight.

Actually, in in in the second chapter here, I forget which day we talk about Job. Listen to the way Job described it. Now, we know Job was an upright man.

The Bible says so. And people say he was you know, it was because what he feared came upon him. And I'm just saying, don't don't hang everything on the fact that it says what he feared came upon.

I just God had a plan. I have feared things that did not come upon me. I have feared more things that didn't come upon me.

That's right. Okay. And I have had things come upon me that I never feared.

Yeah. So so don't make that a rule that gives people the excuse to hang out and say, well, I'm not going to fear any. I mean, you know what people want to do in the story of Job? They want to blame Job.

Yes, they do. And let me tell you, let me tell you where the blame rests. And this this is going to rock some folks.

I'm not crazy. Some people don't like what I'm saying now. I know that.

But let me tell you, don't blame Job, blame God. Because when Job, when Job blamed God, blamed God for his circumstances, God said, where were you when I drew the line in the sand and said to the ocean, you could come so far and no further. Where were you when I hung the stars in the sky? Where were you when? Where were you when? And what God was saying to Job is, I know what I'm doing.

So your role is to trust. But now Job did listen to this. Yeah.

Job 23. Can I read this passage? Go ahead. Here's Job's declaration of what he was feeling.

He said, my complaint is bitter. God's hand is heavy, despite all my growing. This is Job 23.

Oh, that I knew where I might find God. I'd come to a seat, present my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would want to know the words he'd answer and understand what he'd say to me.

And then he goes down and says, verse eight, I go forward. This is Job 23. But he's not there backward.

But I can't perceive him when he acts on the left hand. I can't see him when he turns on the right. I can't see him.

But listen to verse 10. But God knows the way that I take. And when he's tried me, I'll come forth as gold.

That's Job 23 verses one through 10. Job was in a horrible circumstance. But in verse 10, he said, but God knows the way that I take.

And here's the hope for those of you that are going through troubles that are listening to us right now. Now, you may not know what in the world is going on in your life. That's it.

But don't quit rebuking the devil in it. And quit, quit doubting God in the midst and quit blaming yourself in it and say, God, I'm yours and you're mine and you're sovereign and you can stop this in the world. And I don't have the answer.

I don't have the answers and don't have to have the answers. But the key is for us to say, Lord, you're the one in control. And I just yield to you.

I think, you know, that is really the secret, isn't it? God, you're in control. Do we really believe that? That's the challenge. Don't you agree that we tend to want to blame the devil? We tend to want to blame ourselves.

We tend to want to blame other people. Let me tell you, when it comes to God, we can say the buck stops here. I don't want to be misunderstood, Willard.

I'm not saying that God will call somebody to do something evil against you. But I'm saying God is bigger than the evil that somebody does against you. He's bigger than the bad things that happen to you in this life.

And he can turn that thing around and use it for his glory and you're good. And he will. So no matter what's going on, if we're going through torment and trials that we brought upon ourselves and a lot of people watching would say that, oh, that's my own stupid mistakes that put me here.

I love what the psalmist said. He said, even if I make my bed in hell, what's the rest? Wow. So, yeah, you know, that's interesting.

I made the bed. I made the bed. So I got to sleep in it.

He made his bed, let him sleep in it. But the psalmist said, even if I make my bed in hell, you are with me. You won't forsake me even there.

You see, it's just trust in God. Like you see, bad things happen. But is your trust in God in the middle of bad things? Bad things happen sometime because of my own foolishness.

Bad things happen sometime because other people do something else. It's stupid things. Bad things happen sometime for no reason that I can make any sense out of or even understand the cause.

But it doesn't matter when bad things happen. Our problems may be the best thing that could ever happen to us. That's what chapter two is about.

And five days we study that in this chapter as to how God will use it to accomplish his purpose in our lives and how we're to respond to it when we're going through it. So there is our response is really trust, is always trust, always trust. People say, what's my part? What God's what's God's part? Here it is.

God's part is to be in charge. My part is to trust him. The Lord spoke to me one day.

I was agonizing over something in prayer. And the Lord, you ever have Lord just kind of the Lord speaks in a lot of ways and certainly in Scripture and never in a way that will contradict Scripture. But sometimes the Lord just gives you an understanding and he speaks to you that way.

It's true. I remember one day I was agonizing over something and I was praying and I was waiting for the Lord. And it's like the Lord spoke in my mind that this realization come to me.

And he said, Steve, I am. He said, you are not suited for being in control. While I, on the other hand, am perfectly suited for it.

And the Lord said to me, you create needless problems for yourself when you get our two roles confused. Wow. And oh, and that just washed over me.

I said, Lord, Lord, did you nail me on that? Because when I'm in trouble and I think we, again, we all are flesh. We tend to be this way when I'm in trouble. I want to solve that problem.

I'm the kind of guy that says, people say, well, you might be jumping out of the pan into the fire. You know, my, the way I'm wired, my personality, then let me jump in the fire. I'd rather jump in the fire.

I can't stay. I don't want to do something. And that's why people say, well, I'm just going to file for divorce.

I'm just going to leave this job. I'm just going to leave this church. I'm just going to do.

They want to bring quick closure to something. They want to bring quick closure. And I want to say to those that are listening, and I really feel led to say this.

Don't try to bring quick closure to your problem. Don't think, well, I'll just do this and it'll shorten the process and bring quick closure because God's got another problem waiting out there for you. He'll just let another one go where that one disappears.

Yeah. You don't get along with this wife, divorce, God will bring you another one. I'll tell you, if God is working through our trials, and he does, he does.

If God is working through our trials to accomplish his purpose, and we short circuit it by finding the nearest escape hatch and jump out of this, well, he'll just put us in the next job. You're going to find the boss tough again or a different kind of thing or a different. Yeah, it may not be the same.

Maybe it's something you not prefer. I mean, God put me in church in a church that was declining, and he used that to bring me to the place of brokenness and absolute surrender. Well, I'm thankful it wasn't one of my children dying that he used or you know what I mean? You know, you don't yet.

You have no idea. And that's, you know, so just trust him. Just trust your circumstances.

So it's about trust, isn't it? It's all about trust. Well, we need to take a little break here. We'll come back and talk to Steve further right after this break.

Our failure to overcome sin is directly related to our identity or rather our lack of identity. Join us for the next program and hear about how we can block out the enemy's report of who we are and tune into the truth. Too many of us have let other people define us.

We've let the world define us. We've let our circumstances define us. But the reality is it must be our father who defines us.

And he has very clearly in his word told us who we are.

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