

Studies in Job-03 Job-3

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald explores the profound themes of suffering, faith, and God's sovereignty through the story of Job.

Duration: 45:29

Scripture: Job 33:8, Job 38:2, Job 40:1-2, Job 40:4-5, James 5:11

Topics: "Studies"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Job and explores the theme of God's sovereignty and power. The sermon begins by highlighting God's role as the creator of the universe and questioning Job's understanding of it. The preacher then discusses God's control over the sea and uses the example of the crocodile to illustrate God's unmatched power. Job eventually acknowledges God's authority and sovereignty. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that God does not always provide explanations for human suffering.

Transcript

Just by way of review, in the opening chapter we had the scene in heaven where Satan and hosts of angels appeared before God, and God challenged Satan, have you considered my servant Job, the most righteous man in the earth, a man who loves me? It says in most of our versions, one that fears God, but that includes the idea of one who loves me. And Satan says, no wonder he loves you, the favors you have bestowed upon him. But you just take away some of those good things, and he'll curse you to your face.

You've set a hedge about him, you've protected him, you've given him all of these things, but you take them away and you'll see what happens. God said, all right, he's in your power, but don't touch his body. And then the calamities began to fall on Job.

Through foreign invaders, through natural catastrophes, he was stripped of his livestock. He was really a great farmer, and not only his livestock, but the servants who tended the livestock. And then he lost his sons and his daughters.

He was just wiped out as far as his family was concerned, except his wife. Did he curse God? No, he said, and this is pretty good, really, he said, everything I had, God had given me. If he could give it to me, he had the right to take it.

He said, the Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. Wonderful, really. So, then another day, Satan and his hosts came before the Lord, and once again the Lord challenged Satan.

He said, have you considered my servant Job? Not one like him in all the earth, a righteous man who eschews evil and fears God. And Satan said to God, skin for skin, all that a man has will he give for his life. What did he mean by that? Well, he meant man is basically selfish.

He can stand the loss of oxen and cattle and sheep and servants, and even his own children, he can bear up under that. You touch his body, and he'll curse you to your face. That's really what he meant.

Let's look at it in Job chapter 2, verse 4. He says, I'm reading from the New International Version. Skin for skin, Satan replied, a man will give all he has for his own life. See, Satan had really wiped him out in the previous chapter as far as possessions were concerned, and Job remained steadfast.

So, now Satan says, stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face. The Lord said to Satan, very well then, he's in your hands, but you must spare his life. And then poor Job was afflicted with a most loathsome disease.

I'm sure I've never seen anyone in life who had anything. There were some nurses in the audience. I don't know whether you've ever seen anybody that had anything like this.

He was in such a condition that when three men came to comfort him, they sat speechless for seven days. Terrible, really. There was a stench about him.

He was just one of the most pitiable men that I've ever read about in my life. And he went through quite an ordeal, and these friends came up on the scene, and after seven days they opened up Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, and most of the book, incidentally, is devoted to them, which is a strange thing. Have you ever thought about that? Why is so much of the book devoted to the philosophy, the philosophizing arguments of these three men? Really, I get very tired reading it, to tell you the honest truth.

Well, first of all, their argument was, Job, suffering comes as a result of sin. Your sinning brought this on. If you hadn't sinned greatly, you wouldn't be suffering so greatly.

Now, come on, fess up. That's what they were saying to him. As we mentioned before, they all approached it from different angles, but that's what they were saying.

Why were they so hot in pressing this? Why were they so anxious to get Job to confess that he had sinned? Well, I think one reason was, if Job was really a righteous man and suffering like this, it could happen to them, too. And really to vindicate themselves, they tried to extract a confession from Job, because they didn't like the thought that anything like this might ever happen to them. And so they went on and on and on with their arguments, and Job answered them, but Job never cursed God.

He never turned. He said some very strong things. He cursed his birthday, he cursed the day that he was born, wished that he had been a miscarriage, an abortion, but he never turned his back on God through it all.

Then, after his tormentors, they're called comforters, but I think they were more tormentors than comforters, after they finished their arguments, then a young man came upon the scene. His name was

Elihu, some pronounced it Elihu, and I think he really does better than they did, although he still doesn't solve the problem. First of all, he gets after them.

He says to those three comforters, you have failed. You have failed to convince Job. You've failed to extract from him the confession that you wanted, and then he turned to Job and he said, Job, you haven't said concerning God the thing that's right, either.

And it seems to me that in this young man's speeches, he's really vindicating God. He's standing on God's side and defending God. I don't say that he has the last word, because he doesn't, but anyway, he brings more light than the other three had.

Now, I thought it would be good just to turn to chapter 33, and let me read to you some of Elihu's arguments, or Elihu. I'm going to begin reading in verse 8 in the New International Version, not because it's a better version, but somehow it's a little bit more understandable to us in modern-day English. He's speaking to Job.

He says, verse 8 of chapter 33, But you have said in my hearing, I heard the very words, I heard you say it. I am pure, and without sin I am clean and free from guilt. Yet God has found fault with me, he considers me his enemy, he fastens my feet and shackles, he keeps close watch on all my paths.

Now, what is the truth about that? Well, first of all, Job didn't really claim to be absolutely sinless. He didn't claim to be without blemish. When Job says, I am pure and without fault, he means as far as this sickness was concerned.

Job knew he was a sinner like every other son of Adam. He was, and it comes out in the book that he really did have a great deal of self-righteousness about him, but that isn't why the sickness came upon him. It seems to me that's made very clear in this book.

The sickness came upon him as a test between God and Satan. So, when he says, I am pure and without sin, he doesn't mean absolutely. He means that isn't the reason this trouble has come upon me, and he was right in saying that.

But I tell you, verse 12, in this you are not right, for God is greater than men. He wasn't right in speaking that way about the Lord's providence in his life. God puts my feet in shackles, he keeps close watch on all my paths.

He's saying to him, Job, you need bigger views of God, and that's true, and we all do. Why do you complain to him that he answers none of man's words? For God does speak, now one way, now another, though man may not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn man from wrongdoing, to keep him from pride, to preserve his soul from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword.

Or a man may be chastened on a bed of pain. In other words, God speaks to men sometimes in dreams, verses 15, 16, and 17. Sometimes he speaks to them through sickness and pain.

Verse 19, with constant distress in his bones, so that his very being finds food repulsive, his appetite is gone, and his soul loathes the choicest meal. His flesh wastes away to nothing, and his bones once hidden now stick out. His soul draws near to the pit, and his life to the messengers of death.

Yet if there is an angel on his side as a mediator, one out of a thousand, to tell a man what's right for him, to be gracious to him and say, spare him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom for him. Then his flesh is renewed like a child that's restored as in the days of his youth, prays to God and finds favor with him, sees God's face and shouts for joy, restored by God to his righteous state. Then he comes to bed and says, I sinned and perverted what was right, but I did not get what I deserved.

He redeemed my soul from going down to the pit, and I will live to enjoy the light. So, what Elihu is saying here is that man sins, but God speaks to him. God speaks to him in a dream and tries to draw him back.

God speaks to him through chastening on a bed of pain, and maybe some messenger will come and speak the message to him and say, look man, you ought to get right with God. And he says, that's right, God is speaking to me, and he repents and comes back to the Lord, and his health is regained, and he goes out to testify to others what the Lord has done for him. That's what Elihu is saying in this passage.

Verse 29, God dug all these things to a man twice, even three times, to turn back his soul from the pit, that the light of life may shine upon him. Pay attention, Job, and listen to me. Be silent and I will speak.

If you have anything to say, answer me. Speak up, for I want you to be cleared. If not, then listen to me, be silent, and I will teach you with it.

And I thought it was interesting that Elihu speaks, he speaks, he speaks, and speaks, and Job never once answers him. But then the Lord comes upon the scene, and you never really come to the climax of the book until you start with verse, chapter 38, the Lord answered Job out of the storm. And I think just to get a little flavor of this, and it really is majestic, really is marvelous to read the words of God and how he deals with his servants, Job.

Verse 2 of chapter 38, who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man. I will question you, and you will answer me. I want to ask you a few questions, Job, and the first question is, where were you when I created the world? Did I ask your advice? And what kind of a job could you do running the universe as I've been running it? Verse 4, where were you when I laid the foundations, the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand.

Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know. Irony. Verse 5, who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? God goes back to that original creation when there was nothing and no one but himself.

Verse 6, who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb when I made the clouds its garments and wrapped it in thick darkness? Well, I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place when I said, This far you may come, and no farther. Here is where your proud ways halt. Beautiful, isn't it? Here God has created the earth, and all of a sudden the waters start rushing out, you know, and they cover a vast portion of the earth.

Because you have that seashore. And so, when they came up to a certain distance, God said, Okay, stop there. This far shall your proud ways come, and no farther.

Have you ever given orders to the morning? That is, have you ever stood out there at 6:45 in the morning and said, Okay, son, come over the horizon? That's what he's saying, really, here. Have you ever really arranged the order of the day and the night? Well, I feel very small if you ask me a question like that. I

have all I can do to get up in the morning.

Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it? The earth takes shape like clay under a seal. Its features stand out like those of a garment. The wicked are denied their light, and their upraised arm is broken.

Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? What is down there under that tremendous ocean? Have the gates of death been shown to you? Oh, the mystery of death. Have you seen the gates of the shadow of death? Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me, if you know all. Here was Job questioning God, finding fault.

I wish I could have my day in court with God. I'd come off and hear that verdict, not guilty. That's what he's pleading here.

Then God takes him to creation. He asks him in verse 31 about the planets. Can he set the planets in their courses and keep them going with mathematical precision? Oh, yes.

Then he takes the animal creation and the birds. Verse 39 of chapter 38, the lions and the lionesses. The raven, verse 41.

The mountain goats, chapter 39, verse 1. The wild donkey, chapter 39, verse 5. The wild ox, the ostrich, the horse. God's providential care for the horse. Quite a nice description, I think.

I'll read it to you. Verse 19. Do you give the horse his strength, or clothe his neck with a flowing mane? Do you make him leap like a locust, striking terror with his proud snorting? He paused.

Incidentally, I think it's the warhorse here particularly, as we'll see from the last verses. You know, you almost think those creatures know how majestic they are. You almost think they're proud.

Listen to this. He paused fiercely, rejoicing in his strength, and charges into the fray. Charges into the battle, almost as if he enjoys it.

He laughs at fear, afraid of nothing. He does not shy away from the sword. The quiver rattles against his side, along with a flashing spear and lance.

In frenzied excitement, he eats up the ground. He cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds. This is a war trumpet, the call to arms.

At the blast of the trumpet, he snorts. Aha! He catches the sense of battle from afar, the shout of commanders and the battle cry. Really beautiful, isn't it? And what God is saying is, Job, I was running the universe a long time before you ever came upon the scene, and I'll be running it a long time after you leave.

And do you really have any right to question my providential dealing with mankind? Really a tremendous passage on the sovereignty of God. Chapter 40, verse 2. Verse 1. The Lord said to Job, Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? But him who accuses God, answer him. Then Job answered the Lord, I am unworthy.

How can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I hath no answer twice. But I will say no more.

Eliphaz didn't satisfy Job. He really compounded the agony. Bildad didn't help.

Zophar was a washout. Elihu brought things a little more to the light, but Job had to meet God before he could say, I will say no more. Then God says, well, I'm not really through with you yet.

And God, in the next two chapters, takes up two creatures. Verse 15 of chapter 40, look at the behemoth, and maybe the margin of your Bible says possibly the hippopotamus. Well, it could very well be a description of the hippopotamus, but just reserve in your mind the fact that it could be another mighty animal that might be extinct today.

We don't know. The Hebrew language is a very expressive language, and it allows for quite a variety. So, the word here is quite wide, and although we think it's the hippopotamus or the elephant, we can't be quite sure.

Why do we think it's the hippopotamus? Well, first of all, the description of it and the fact that he loves to be by the edge of the river or the lake. Verse 21, under the lotus plant he lies, hidden among the reeds in the marsh. The lotuses conceal him in their shadow, the poplars by the streams around him.

When the river rages, he's not alarmed, he's secure, though the Jordan should surge against his mouth. Can anyone capture him by the eyes or trap him and pierce his nose? And then in the next chapter, he speaks about Leviathan, another creature, and this is generally taken to be the crocodile. This kind of interests me, to think of how God pleads with Job on the basis of his natural creation.

So, these marvelous creatures. We go to the zoo, and we see them, and we don't really realize how very wonderful they are, what masterpieces of creation they are. Notice verse 30 of chapter 41.

This is what makes us think it's the crocodile. His undersides are jagged potsherds leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge. A threshing sledge was a flat platform of wood like this with spikes driven through it, and they dragged it over the grain, and it separated the calf from the fleet, and of course, as it went along, it just left a trail on the ground, and that's what the crocodile does as it moves along in the mud.

His undersides are jagged potsherds leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge. He makes the depths turn like a boiling cauldron, and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment. Behind him, he leaves a glistening wake.

One would think the deep-head white here, that's the froth on the water from his movement in the water. Nothing on earth is his equal, a creature without fear. He looks down on all that are haughty.

He's king over all that are proud, and so God gives Job a little course in what we might call natural theology. That's what it is, natural theology, and Job said, you win. Chapter 42, verse 1, Job replied to the Lord, I know that you can do all things.

No plan of yours can be thwarted. God, you're sovereign. You're over all, and you can do anything you want, and nobody can ever stand in your way.

You asked, who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge? I did. Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. You said, listen now, and I will speak.

I will question you, and you shall answer me. He said, my ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.

When he says his eyes had seen him, he doesn't mean that he had seen a visible form of God. It doesn't require that at all. It's simply he's seen God in his marvelous creation, and in this marvelous display that God has given him.

So, I'm going to read the rest of the chapter, and then make some comments. After the Lord had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, I'm angry with you and your two friends, because you've not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. So now take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourself.

My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer, and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. So, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did what the Lord told them, and the Lord accepted Job's prayer.

After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord made him prosperous again, and gave him twice as much as he had before. All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the Lord had brought upon him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring.

They almost came paying tribute to him, didn't they? Tribute, money, silver, and gold. The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 donkeys.

Twice as much as he had before. He also had seven sons and three daughters. The first daughter he named Jemima, the second Keziah, and the third Kerenhapa.

Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers, which was very unusual, because usually it was the sons that inherited, not the daughters. After this, Job lived 140 years. He saw his children and their children to the fourth generation, and so he died old and full of tears.

Now, let's just draw together some other lessons. We've gone through the book, and we've drawn some lessons. One of the things we want to remember from the book is that God doesn't always explain the reason for our suffering.

The Lord Jesus said that when he was washing Peter's feet in the feet of the disciples, he said, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. There are a lot of things in life that we don't understand at the time. He doesn't always explain the reason for our suffering, but we do know that suffering develops endurance.

It speaks in James, you have heard of the endurance of Job. He never would have developed it if he hadn't gone through these trials. Never.

Tribulation worketh patience. We learn also in this book that God is full of mercy and pity, and God is, too. It doesn't seem that way.

One of our hymns says, Behind a frowning countenance he hides a smiling face. I often think of that. If you look at life in the raw, you think it's a frowning, God has a frowning countenance, but when you get to know him and love him, the smiling face.

And I think that we learn from this last chapter, too, that sometimes wrongs are made right in this life, aren't they? Not always, but sometimes wrongs are made right in this life. Very important to notice here that Job's endurance vindicated God. Job's patience in suffering vindicated God.

This has spoken to me very loudly, studying at this time. There was a contest going on in the spiritual realm. Is God going to come off victorious, or is Satan going to come off victorious? Job was exhibit A. How is Job going to react toward God when he loses all his possessions, and when he himself is smitten with black cancer, or whatever it was? And God was vindicated.

Job went through the trial, and he never cursed God. He did a lot of fluttering, but don't we all? And one of the great lessons in the book of Job, for me, is that God can be loved quite apart from all the favors that he bestows. Job proved that.

All the favors were taken away, but he still loves God. I asked myself the question tonight, supposing God stripped me of all the favors of life, would I still love him? It's a good question for us all to ask, isn't it? Some of us here lived through the Great Depression. You'd have welcomed a peanut butter sandwich sometimes.

Is God still God, then? Is he still a loving, heavenly Father? In that connection, my mind goes to the last chapter of the prophet Habakkuk, and I'd just like to read those verses to you. It's really beautiful. Habakkuk, chapter 3, verse 17.

Some of you are turning, so I'll wait. Habakkuk, chapter 3, verse 17. It says, "...though the fig tree does not bud, and there are no grapes on the vine, though the olive crop fails, and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen, and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk is saying he can take away everything.

He can bring on depression, recession, I have nothing to eat, but I'll still love him. But that's really quite a lesson for all of us. God, the book of Job, shows that God can be loved for himself alone, just for who he is, and quite a part for the favors he bestows.

And having said that, there are other places in the word of God where we learn some of the lessons that God has for us in suffering. Let's go over some of them. Some lessons we learn in connection with suffering in the Bible, and one of them is, sometimes suffering is a result of sin.

It wasn't in Job's case. It has been in MacDonald's case. The argument of Job's comfort is where you're suffering because of your sin, they should have made a statement, sometimes Job's people suffer because of their sin, but they shouldn't have made a blanket statement applying to him because it wasn't true.

We learn that in 1 Corinthians Chapter 11, verse 32, it says, "...for this cause many are weak and sickly among you in some states." And I don't think I have to labor the point we all know in our own lives that sometimes what we suffer is the result of our sin. Secondly, suffering is a means by which God develops spiritual graces in our lives, such as patience, long-suffering humility. A gardener doesn't prune thistles, but he prunes grapevines, doesn't he? Why doesn't he prune the thistles? He's not trying to develop

anything with them, but he's trying to develop fruitfulness with the grapevine, and so he prunes them.

I'm sure a grapevine had feelings that they wouldn't particularly enjoy the pruning knife, but God knows what he's doing. There's no other way in which God can develop these graces in our lives except through suffering. Suffering purges dross from our lives so that the heavenly refiner can see his image reflected more clearly.

Get this in Isaiah chapter 1 and verse 25. Isaiah chapter 1 and verse 25. I will turn my hand against you, I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove your impurity.

This was in judgment he was doing this on Judah and Jerusalem. Then, fourthly, suffering enables the child of God to comfort others. 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 4 says that God comforts us in all our afflictions so that we can comfort those who are in any affliction with a comfort wherewith we ourselves also are comforted of God.

If you've ever had this experience, you're going through some particular testing, somebody comes to you who's never been through it, they hardly know what to say. But, if somebody comes to you who's been through a similar or worse time of affliction, their words really have power. And, I really think this explains a lot of things in life.

People who've gone through terrible nervous breakdowns and emotional upsets and that. A person who's never gone through it really can't enter into at all what it means to feel forsaken of God. Have all the props knocked out from under you to be desolate and disconsolate and crying out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? But, if somebody else has gone through it, they say, I know that, I went through that.

I know just how you feel. That's a comfort to people. Okay, suffering saints are an object lesson to beings in heaven and on earth.

Just think of that. A great drama is going on in this universe. God has his suffering people, and angels are looking on to see how they're going to react.

It's an object lesson. 2 Thessalonians 1, 4 through 6. Something for you and me to remember the next time we're called to go through a patch of suffering. Brothers, loved by God, we know that he has chosen you.

Oh, this is 1 Thessalonians, just a minute. 2 Thessalonians 1, verses 4 through 6. Therefore, among God's churches, we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecution and trials you are enduring. All this is evidence that God's judgment is right.

As a result, you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which you are suffering. God is just. He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you, and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well.

This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels, etc. Those Thessalonian saints were suffering, the world was looking on, God was teaching lessons to the universe. Then in Hebrews 12, verses 7 through 11, we read that when we suffer, it's an indication.

The suffering of the Christian is an assurance that they are sons of God. Hebrews 12, verses 7 through 11. Endure hardship as discipline.

God is treating you as sons, for what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined, and everyone undergoes discipline, that means every Christian, then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we've all had human fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the father of our spirit and live? Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, but God disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness.

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Someone says, suffering passes.

To have suffered endures forever. That is, the benefit of suffering endures forever. And here, suffering is seen as a sign of God's disciplinary care for those whom he loves.

And I like to remember, too, that suffering here, especially suffering for the namesake of the Lord Jesus, enables us to share the non-atoning sufferings of Christ. There is a sense in which you and I can share the sufferings of Christ. Philippians chapter 3, verse 10, I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, so somehow to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

As far as the sufferings of the Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary are concerned, we can't share in that. But there are other sufferings we can share. The Christians in the days of Saul of Tarsus were being persecuted, and Jesus said to Saul, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It was the Christians who were being persecuted, who were felt by the head in heaven.

There was a hymn in our hymnbook years ago that used to say, We know him as we could not know through heaven's golden years, for we shall there his face behold, here understand his tears. There's a way in which by suffering down here, we can understand the tears of the Lord Jesus in a way we won't be able to do in heaven. It's rather moving, isn't it? Suffering causes the child of God to trust in God alone, and not in his own strength.

2 Corinthians 1, verse 9. And incidentally, I believe that every true servant of the Lord comes to this place sooner or later. 2 Corinthians 1, verse 9. God allows us to come to a place where we despair of life, and we turn our whole case over to him. From now on, Lord, it's you or nobody.

That's what Paul had here. 2 Corinthians 1, verse 9. He says, Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. This is the hardship that he suffered in Asia.

I should go back to verse 8. We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardship we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death.

But this happened, that we might not rely on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead. God brings you down, down, down. No hope! And then he lifts you up, up, up.

And I've been interested in reading the biographies of men of God to see how this has happened to so many. Jim Elliott, when he was a younger man one day, riding on a truck, I think it was a garbage truck, and he had a kind of a felt hat on, and somebody in the neighborhood was firing random shots, and a couple of them went right through the felt hat. He missed his head.

He was pretty close. And Nate Sinks, I remember reading about him in his biography, he was on that trail at Yosemite that goes from Camp Curry, deeply up to Glacier Point, nearly lost his life. He was brought to the end.

And God does that. God allows his servants to be brought to that place so that henceforth they'll trust in him, and not in their own cleverness, and not in their own strength. Suffering for the child of God is a pledge of future glory.

We suffer with him shall also reign with him. Suffering for an unsafe person has no such benefit. All suffering for the unsaved is a foretaste of the pains of hell.

Suffering for unsafe people has no redemptive value, but for the child of God they're a pledge of future glory. And then finally, God never allows us to be tested above that which we're able. First Corinthians 10.13, with the temptation gives the way of escape that we might be able to bear it.

Many of God's people are going through deep sufferings. In this country, in this country we're not suffering persecution in the usual sense of the word, but I'm mixed with God's people enough to know a lot of people are going through deep suffering. It's wonderful to know it isn't random, isn't it? Wonderful to know it isn't profitless.

Wonderful to know that we're exhibits to angelic beings. They're waiting to see.

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