

Covid-19 ■ During This Time, Let Patience Do A Perfect Work In You

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of enduring trials with patience, love, and contentment, highlighting the need to desire and do God's will, avoid grumbling and complaining, and shine as lights in a dark world. It encourages believers to trust in God's faithfulness, remember His presence, and seek to be blameless in a crooked generation.

Scripture: Romans 8:28, James 1:2, Hebrews 13:5, Philippians 2:13

Topics: "Endurance in Trials", "Trusting God's Faithfulness"

Description

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Transcript

Well, we praise the Lord for everything he allows in our life. Many of us have been in NCCF or another CFC church for many years and we have professed to believe many wonderful things and we, many of us have also probably got an idea that we have become quite spiritual in all these months and years. And I praise the Lord that he saves us from deceiving ourselves by allowing circumstances, situations to save us from deceiving ourselves that we have become spiritual or that we have faith when we don't have faith or that we become spiritual when we're still complaining and grumbling about many things.

The purpose of our coming together as local churches is, the Bible says, to encourage one another daily as we be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. It's not only to sing praises to God. For many churches in the world, a praise time is the most important thing.

That's important, but we should be having a spirit of praise all the time, even in our homes. But what we need is to hear a word that challenges and encourages us to be faithful that in the presence of God and God's, the light of God's word, we get light. Because God's ultimate purpose, we must never, never forget this.

We have preached it for 45 years in CFC churches and it's very easy to lose sight of the goal. God's ultimate purpose with which he works every single event that happens to us. If you don't remember it, let me repeat it for any newcomer.

Romans 8, verse 28 and 29. Most Christians quote verse 28. I say we quote 28 and 29.

And that is, God causes, we know. We know that God causes all things. So let's stop there and ask ourselves about what's happening around the world today.

Not that God originated it, but God's allowed it. God causes all things to work together, not individually, but together for the good of those who love him and who are called according to his purpose. Not those who have their own plans and their own goals in mind, but those whose lives are aligned with God's purpose.

God makes everything work for their good. And that's a very small percentage of people in the world who are really born again Christians. And among the born again Christians, there are very, very few who have allowed themselves to be aligned with God's purpose.

So this does, this doesn't work for everybody. And if people claim it, it's not going to work unless you love God, which means other things on the earth don't interest you as much as God himself. Very few people love God with all their hearts.

I've met numerous believers who in the time of testing, they discovered that they love their parents or their loved ones or their relatives or their girlfriends or boyfriends or children or something more than God or money perhaps or their job or comfort or ease. But if a person loves God above everything else, you cannot love God and have someone equal to him. You love God means he's supreme in your life.

Called according to his purpose means your life is aligned with his purpose. Now let me explain that. That purpose is described in verse 29.

Then you know whether you're aligned with his purpose. He predestined those whom he chose to be his children way back. He predestined that we who trusted in Christ should finally become like him in our character conformed to the likeness of his son so that heaven will be populated with people who look like Jesus spiritually with he being the eldest brother.

That is God's purpose. And I want to say to every one of you, if that is your purpose too, and if you love God more than you love money, more than you love any human being on this earth, more than you love your wife or children or comfort or ease or anything, if you can say you love God more than anything else, you've got no goal in life, but to become like Christ and everything else is secondary. I can tell you something is going to be absolutely true.

Every single day of your life, everything will work for your good. I can't promise that to every member of your family because they may not have that same goal. Your wife may not have the same goal.

Your husband may not have the same goal. Then I can't promise it. It's an individual thing.

Your children will be protected if you're the parent by you having that goal. But if a person is a grown-up, your wife or husband doesn't have that goal, well, it may not work for them. It's an individual thing.

If you love God and you love him more than anything and everyone on earth to the best of your knowledge, I'm saying to the best of our knowledge because our knowledge is not complete, there may be

something unconsciously I love more than God. If so, my greatest longing is that God will show it to me so that I'll get rid of that idol in my life. It is an idol to love anything more than God.

It's an idol to love your job or to love your comfort or to love money or anything more than God. That is the same as bowing down to an idol, which you read in the Old Testament, God punished the Israelites severely for. So to love God supremely and to say, Lord, I want this to be my one purpose in life, that in everything in life, I want to become like Christ.

I'm not looking for comfort. I'm not looking for ease. I'm not looking for money.

I want to become like Christ. And if you take me through hard parts to become like Christ, praise the Lord, I'll accept it. So that's very important that we never forget Romans 8, 28 and 29 all through our lives.

Don't claim verse 28, unless you have aligned yourself according to verse 29. And I believe that's easy because if you believe God is a good God, as we believe and teach, then we can be sure that such a command He gives us to love Him supremely must be for our good. I have tried my best in my life, to the best of my knowledge, to love Him supremely in my married life, to always seek to love God more than I love my wife, more than I love my children, more than I love money.

I've tried and tried my best. I don't know, unconsciously, if there's something there is, I ask God to show it to me. But this has made life so peaceful and restful for me, no matter what happens.

And the other amazing thing I find is that God plans. God's planned every day of my future as I move along, where I don't have to think about it so much. He plans ahead.

It's a wonderful life. I want to encourage everyone to live this life. And many of us have assumed that we are living it.

And the time of testing like this really tests us to see whether we have come to that place or not. So I want to turn to a verse also now in James, in chapter one. In James chapter one, it says here, and let's apply this to the situation we are in right now.

This is the word of God. And there are histories. So history tells us that James was the first book of the New Testament written, before all the Gospels and before all the other books.

The letter to James was probably the first book of the New Testament written. And if it was the first inspired book of the New Testament written, then here is the first word of God that comes in the New Testament. My brothers, verse two, consider it all joy or only joy when you encounter various trials.

Now it's quite likely that history is right, that James was the first book of the New Testament written. So after those more than 300 years of silence, after the book of Malachi was finished, when God decided again to write inspired scripture, isn't it interesting that about 15, 16 years after the Day of Pentecost, when James was written the first book of the New Testament, the very first sentence is, consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials. It begins with that.

The first book of the Old Testament was the book of Job, who lived 500 years before Moses, who wrote Genesis. And what's the theme of the book of Job? Be faithful in trial. God has a purpose in trial.

He'll bring you through triumphantly at the end. It says God restored Job and his fortunes and blessed him double at the end. And I believe the same thing will happen to us.

So to me, it's very interesting that what I see as the first book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New Testament, both begin with being faithful in trial and rejoicing in trial. Now, Job could not come there because he didn't have a Bible. He did not have any understanding of Christ, dying on the cross, any such thing.

He didn't have the Holy Spirit. And so we see Job, though he started out well, he couldn't last very long. He began to question God and complain and saying, why are you firing all your arrows at me? Every now and then Job would come into some light and say, well, I trust in my Redeemer.

My Redeemer lives. And even if he slays me, I'll trust him. But then he would sink back into depression and complaining.

But it is not to be like that with us, unless with all our profession of being New Covenant Christians, we are still living in the Old Covenant. I believe this particular time where we are being tested with this pandemic all over the world is a good test for me, certainly, and for every one of us to find out, are we really living in the New Covenant? Or is it only in our head that we've understood all these wonderful truths about the difference between New Covenant and the Old Covenant and Romans 6, 14 and all that? And God says, okay, now I'm giving you a test. You know, just like in a school, in a class, children are taught for, in India it's like this, children are taught for a whole year.

And at the end of that year, they have what's called a final examination. And that final examination determines whether they understood all that they studied. They all sat in the class, all the children sat in the class throughout the year.

But when it comes to the final examination, some pass, some get very good grades, which means they've really understood what they sat in the classroom and studied. So think of it like that. We also, many of us in NCCF have sat here in the church for a number of years.

We have nodded our heads, we have sung the songs with great zeal and done the memory verses of promises and commands and believed everything is so wonderful. We are so thankful that we are in a wonderful New Covenant church and we have good fellowship with one another and our children are doing well in Sunday school and all that. Wonderful.

And God says, okay, now I'm going to give you a little examination. It's not the final examination. That's going to come when Christ comes again.

This is a midterm examination to wake us up just in case we haven't studied properly, then at least we can be ready for the final examination. Thank God for midterm examinations that wake us up and show us our real state, lest we deceive ourselves until the final day. I thank God for midterm examinations, different ones that God sent into my life to show me where I stand so that I don't deceive myself.

Deceiving ourselves is one of the greatest dangers that Christians face. Not only being deceived by the devil, but deceiving ourselves. And God does not want us to deceive ourselves.

And that's why he gives us these midterm examinations to see whether we will consider it all joy, or as one translation says, consider it only joy. James 1 verse 2, my brethren, when you encounter various types of trials, many of us have gone through different types of trials, financial trials, trials of sickness, problems with relatives, different types of trials. And now we have a pandemic as a trial and having to sit at home and finances are limited.

Some places food is limited. Meeting with others is limited. We are limited to the people in our own home all the time.

We can't go out. There's no relief by going outside. For many people going away from their home was a relief, but to have to stay in the home all the time, it's a problem for many people.

Well, that's a trial. Okay. So various types of trials, God's word is the first book of the New Testament consider it only joy.

I want to do that. I want to do that in this situation. I've faced many trials and I'm sure you have also, but this particular trial, I want to consider it only joy every day.

I want to ask myself, am I joyful in the Lord today? You can consider it only joy if you have found your joy in the Lord. Turn with me to Philippians in chapter four. And there it says, in Philippians four and verse four, Philippians four and your verse and verse four rejoice in the Lord always.

And again, I say rejoice notice carefully. He doesn't say rejoice always. He does not say rejoice in your circumstances because sometimes the circumstances don't bring us much joy.

They bring us a lot of pain and difficulty and suffering. The command is rejoice in the Lord. He never changes.

He's always the same. So if he changes, then I guess my joy will fluctuate, but the Lord Jesus never changes. He never changed on earth.

And he's the same yesterday, today, and forever. And so rejoice in the Lord. I have to find my joy in the Lord, not in my circumstances, not in how much I'm earning, not in my job, not in my bank account.

And all these things that we may have put our joy in, God shatters it all. Thank God he does. I pray he'll shatter it all even more in the days to come.

Yes, so that I can find my joy in the Lord completely. I don't care if the stock market crashes down to zero, every share comes down in value to zero and everything is confusion around. My joy must be in the Lord alone.

That will test it. Is there a single circumstance that almighty God who runs this universe can allow in your life if you love God and want to fulfill his purpose, that will defeat that purpose? Impossible. Life may be difficult.

I may have to live more simply than I've been used to all these years. That's fine. I may face pain and difficulty and even with bringing up children and so many things, I mean physical difficulties, but he will never leave me, nor forsake me.

That is absolutely certain. So that's the message I want to share with you that you will really seek to love God with all your heart in these days and ask God to show you if there are things that you imagine that you have learned in all these years that you haven't really learned and this trial is showing it up, that we haven't really learned it. So further on in James, it says, first of all, consider it all joy when you encounter these various trials, because he says in James 1 verse 3, the testing of your faith, what is being tested in our life these days? First of all, our faith.

Do I really believe with all that's happening around the world that God is still on the throne, that he will never forsake his own. He will remember his own, that his promise is true. I will never leave you, nor forsake you, that we can sing, no, never alone.

No, he promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone. Can I sing that? And can we sing that at home with our children? Lord, never, never alone. He promised never to leave me, he'll never leave me alone.

You're with me in my house right now. It's not just my family in the house, but Lord Jesus, you're here too. Consider it joy when you've encountered these various trials, because the testing of your faith, trials test our faith.

It's a midterm examination before the final examination of the judgment seat of Christ. And what is it testing? It's testing my faith and it'll produce patience or endurance. God wants to work patience in me.

We are basically sinful, impatient people as children of Adam. You see that with children, how impatient they can be when they don't get what they want, or they want something urgently, and they grow up and grownups also can be so impatient. When the wife doesn't do things as soon as the husband expects it, or the husband doesn't come back as soon as the wife expects him to come back, impatience, impatience.

We are impatient on the road with the traffic. Our nature is impatient. And God says, I want to make you patient.

That's part of my nature. We have to pursue after love. The trial of our faith works patience.

And I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, we have very little patience and these trials really make that clear, but let patience have its perfect result, endurance, endurance in this trial. It says James 1.4, let it have its perfect result. You don't think, oh, when is it going to be over? When is it going to be over? I'll tell you, God has already determined when it's going to be over.

Are you happy with that? I'm not worried about what the news reports say. News reports say one thing today, and it's changed tomorrow. They say, oh, it's going down, it's getting better, better.

And then a week later, it's getting worse. But it'll go on like that. There's a verse in 1 Thessalonians 5, which says when they say peace and safety, there'll be sudden destruction.

No, let this endurance have its perfect result. I know one thing, God will not allow me at any time now, or if this virus problem continues for five years, he will not allow me to be tested beyond my ability. That I'm absolutely sure of.

And I hope you're absolutely sure of, because I believe the word of God is more reliable than the news reports. And the word of God is more powerful than this pandemic virus. 1 Corinthians 10, 13, God will not allow you to be tested beyond your ability.

That doesn't depend on you, it says in that verse, because God is faithful. He is faithful. And you have to believe that if his eye is on the sparrow, his eye is on you and me.

If he has numbered the hairs on my head, he can be pretty sure that he knows whether some virus is going to come into my system or not. He knows it very well because he knows he's even the number of the hairs on my head. He's numbered my days, the number of the hairs on my head, and yours too.

So let patience, James 1, 4, have its perfect result. Leave it to God to decide when that work is completed. Lord, if it's got to be one week, fine.

If it's got to be one month, fine. If it's got to be one year, I bow and I accept your will. Just give me grace to go through it, that's all.

I don't pretend that I have the strength. No, I don't. I don't.

I'll be grumbling and complaining pretty soon if this goes on beyond what the news reports say. But with the grace of God, I will not, even if it takes five years. Because God says my grace is sufficient for you.

And these are wonderful opportunities in these days to demonstrate to the world around us that the grace of God is sufficient. And when we come through it finally to testify every day of this trial, the grace of God was sufficient. Don't you want to have that testimony, my brother, sister? That you'll be able to say, no, I didn't grumble and complain through this trial like all the other people in the world.

No, I found God's grace was sufficient throughout every day of this trial. And if we have failed in the past few days, let's wake up and say, Lord, from today onwards, I want to make sure, I don't know how long this is going to go on, but I want to be patient. And at the end of it, it will make me, it says in James 1.4, it will be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Let me ask you a question, James 1.4. How many of you would like to be perfect, complete, lacking in nothing spiritually? I say, sure, I want that. James 1.4. I want to be perfect, complete, and lacking in nothing spiritually. I'm sure you do too.

Okay. Then it says, let patience have its perfect result, because God is in control of the whole universe. In the midst of the universe, the earth, the whole planet earth is like a grain of sand in God's eyes.

Never forget that. In God's eyes, the earth itself is smaller than this teeny-weeny coronavirus germ or virus or whatever it is. The earth itself is like a teeny-weeny germ, one's grain of sand in this universe.

And God has loved this grain of sand so much that he sent his son into this grain of sand called earth to show us that he loves us. And I never want to forget that. A thousand years with God is like one day.

And so God lives in eternity. So he knows exactly how long this thing should go on. And I know that he will not allow me or you to be tested beyond our ability.

And I thought also, you know, you know, the Bible says, Jesus said that the last days will be like the days of Noah, when people will be eating and drinking. And Matthew 24, just like the days of Lot and Noah, Matthew 24. And as it was in the days of, when they were in the days of Noah, just as Matthew 24 and verse 38, they were eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage.

What were they doing? Eating and drinking, Matthew 24, 38, eating and marrying and giving in marriage. And suddenly the flood came and they were not ready. And we don't want to be like that.

That's what happens suddenly in the days of Noah. Nobody believed Noah. Nobody, God's, Noah preached and preached for 120 years.

Judgment is going to come. Judgment is going to come. God hates your sinful ways.

God hates your sinful ways. Christians have been preaching that around the world for a number of years. And the world, as you see it, particularly you see what's happening in the last few years, sinking more and more into all types of sin, sexual perversion, and all other types of sin, murders, terrorism, wars, slaughtering people, all types of things, persecution of Christians.

And one day suddenly judgment will come. Let me tell you that verse I quoted earlier in 1 Thessalonians 5, 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 3, while they are saying peace and safety, the day of the Lord, verse 2, 1 Thessalonians 5, 2 will come like a thief in the night. While they're all saying peace and safety, destruction will come upon them suddenly, like upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

But brethren, and that's a word to you and me, you're not in darkness. You know, people say that Lord will come like a thief in the night, not for me. No, no, no.

It says very clearly here. He's going to come like a thief in the night for the world. But for me, he says, I'm not in darkness, and that they should overtake me like a thief, 1 Thessalonians 5, 4. No, I'm in the light.

I'm a son of light, 1 Thessalonians 5, 5. And so I'm not spiritually asleep. It says in verse 6, let us not be spiritually asleep as others do, but be sober. We are of the day we're saved.

So let's put on the breastplate of faith. So I thought of the days of Noah, how Noah stood faithful right to the end. And then I thought of Noah inside the ark, and he did not know, by the way, he did not know how long he was going to be in the ark.

It rained for 40 days and 40 nights, and he thought, oh, that's it. But no, it went on and on and on and on. After the 40 days were over, then another month went by, and Noah was wondering, when is this going to be over? When is it going to be over? When do we get out of the ark? Another two months are over, the rain stopped, and it's still inside the ark.

You know, he finally ended up one year inside the ark, but he didn't know that. Can you imagine how it was living inside the ark, not knowing when it was going to be over? What's going to happen? There was a lot more uncertainty inside the ark than there is inside your home right now, or my home. And God loved Noah.

And there's a beautiful verse, I want you to see that in Genesis, the what, Genesis 6, verse 23, it was a much worse pandemic than what you see today. First of all, Genesis 7, verse 22, anything that had breath on dry land died. And God blotted out, Genesis 7, verse 23, everything on the face of the earth, men, animals, creeping things, birds, were all blotted out.

And then nothing survived, but God took care of Noah. And it says here, but, chapter 8, verse 1, God remembered Noah. And all the beasts and cattle and his family that was inside the ark.

To me, the church is an ark, is the ark today, is the thing that Noah spent his life building. And if I were in Noah's time, I'd join in 100% in building that ark. And that's why I want to be 100% with Jesus today in building the church.

That's the only thing that's going to remain, the people who are wholehearted disciples of Jesus, that's the church that's going to remain when Christ comes. And all those who play the fool with Christianity, even people who come and join CFC churches for some material benefit, or this is a good place for my children to grow up because these children are so nice. And you don't have any personal devotion to Jesus Christ.

They're not devoted to Christ. They like to want to be in a nice club where my children can grow up well. And these are good people.

My teenage boys and girls can be in this church. And that's not Christianity. That's a club.

Noah, it says here, was inside the ark. And can you imagine how much patience he needed? I thought of that today. How patient he had to be waiting, waiting.

And okay, the rain is over. When are we going to get out of the ark? Don't know. It's a lockdown here, much bigger lockdown than what people are facing today.

Can't open the door. Can't go out. Had to be satisfied with whatever food you brought in into the ark.

And not only that, I tell you, the ark was a pretty smelly place. Can you imagine with all those animals and everything else going on there? And Noah and his sons having to clear all the muck there and the smells. It was not at all a convenient place to be in, but it was the safest place on earth because everything else was destroyed outside of it.

It was terrible. Sometimes people can come to the church and complain about this and complain about that and this thing wrong with the elder or that thing wrong with that brother. And you don't realize the church is the safest place on earth.

It's much worse outside, brothers and sisters. We must finish with complaining completely and certainly about complaining about anything in the church. Have you done that? Are you determined to do it from now on? The ark was the safest place on earth.

It was smelly, all right. Inconvenient. Tight spot, locked down inside, not knowing when the rain is going to stop, but believing inside that God is in control.

And it says that God remembered Noah. And I want to tell you this, dear brothers and sisters, God remembers you at this time. Take that word.

If God remembered Noah, say to yourself, God remembers Akhund and God remembers. Put your name there. God remembers you.

He hasn't forgotten about you. And the day when God's already planned when that flood should survive and plan the day when the door could be open and Noah could come outside and be a witness for God and what a testimony he is to today. And I believe if we come through this in victoriously, not grumpy and sour and bitter and complaining and somehow surviving, no.

But if we come through as more than conquerors triumphantly, we can be witnesses for Christ. Yeah, I believe that those reasons why God has allowed this to come. And the other thing I thought of in Noah's time was not just how patient he had to be day after day after day.

I'm sure he had to encourage his wife and his three sons, their wives, they were less mature than him. They did not know God like him. And we have people in the church who are not as mature as some of us older brothers are.

Well, we have a responsibility not to complain about that, but to encourage them. Maybe your wife is not as spiritual as you are. Well, don't look down on her.

God have mercy on you if you look down on others. Encourage her. If you see someone, particularly your spouse, your husband or your wife, are not so spiritual, encourage them.

Encourage them. We're in this together. We're waiting for Christ to come.

And be patient. Be patient. What a lot of patience they needed over there with each other.

Can you imagine those eight people, Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, living together, all constantly bumping into each other? And it's so easy to get irritated with each other. And they didn't even have the Holy Spirit in those days. And can you imagine the amount of grumbling, complaining, why aren't you doing this? Why? I told you to do this and you didn't do it.

All those things that Shem and Ham and Japheth would have been saying to each other and Noah trying to bring peace among his children. It wasn't an easy thing. We read about that they were in the ark for one year, but meditate on that.

What is it like to be inside the ark for one year with all those animals? They had to learn to be patient. And today we live in the day the Holy Spirit was given us grace. Noah didn't have grace.

We have grace. And we want to demonstrate in this time that that grace is sufficient for every need that we can ever face in life, including this particular time. That's our testimony to the world around us.

Very, very important testimony. And I also thought of the fact that, well, before I get there, let me just show you one verse in 1 Corinthians 13. When we speak about love, in the world, most people think of love as help the poor and give them some money, give food to the hungry, which is all excellent.

These are all marks of love, I agree. But 1 Corinthians 13 says in verse 3, that you can give all your money to feed the poor and not have love. Have you read that? 1 Corinthians 13, verse 3, you can give all your possessions to feed the poor and you may not have love.

You see, how can that be? Because you could be doing it with other motives, not because of the love of God prompts you. And it says you can even give your body to be burned for the Lord's sake. Oh, what a brave person I am.

I'm going to be a martyr. And you may not have love for Jesus Christ. Is it possible to be a martyr and not have love for Christ? It says there, I surrender my body to be burned, but I don't have love.

I feed the poor. I don't have love. It looks as if I love God with all my heart.

It looks as if I love my neighbor as myself, but I don't. It's a very subtle thing. So much of the good we do can have motives other than love for God.

Even what we do for the Lord, which looks like, oh, this man's sacrificing for the sake of the Lord. It may not be. And we thank God for circumstances and situations and trials that show us our need.

Lord, I don't love as I should. And then it goes on to say the number one characteristic of love when Corinthians 13 verse four is patience. Love is patient, infinitely patient.

There was a word in the Old Testament called long suffering. God is long suffering. And in God's long suffering, there are many, many O's in the word long.

L-O-O-N-G, long suffering. And that's the long suffering that he tries to give to us. We have to learn, first of all, to be long suffering with our spouses, with your wife, with your husband, with your children, patient, long suffering.

And we get an opportunity for that when we are in these tight situations like this. Where you don't have the relief of going out to a place of work. Now you're always in the house.

Now many of you husbands are experiencing what your wife has been experiencing for many years, sitting cooped up in the house the whole day. You had the relief of going to work and getting some relief being outside and coming back when your wife was inside the home the whole day. And you never realized what she was going through.

Now you realize it. Inside the home the whole day. No opportunity to go out.

Yeah. Patience, patience. Love is kind.

We've been tested in these things. Very easy when we are cooped up like this, like Noah and his family inside the ark to become unkind because we are upset and irritated. And then we realize all our talk about new government is not just his words.

Good. I thank God for every revelation that we get that shows us that we didn't really understand it. Thank God that I know it before the final examination.

This is only a midterm examination. Thank God I can wake up and study the subject properly and get 100% when the final examination comes. Love is patient, kind.

The other thing I thought of was contentment. I don't know how content Noah was inside the ark because he didn't have the Holy Spirit. I can't blame him.

But today we have the Holy Spirit and the Lord coops us up in something like an ark locked inside. We'd be patient with one another inside the house. We have to love one another.

We have to be kind to one another, kind in our words, kind in our actions, merciful, recognizing we are all imperfect people, being merciful with one another inside our home and content with our circumstances. Because it says here in Hebrews in chapter 13, you know, particularly when we don't get enough of what we need, for some it can be financial difficulty or shortage of food or our favorite foods, it finished with all that. It says here, Hebrews 13, five in the middle of that verse, be content with what you have.

Can you take that word? Be content with what you have, even if it's limited. God will not let you starve to death. If you sought the kingdom of God first and his righteousness, he will add all that is needed for you.

He taught us to pray, our Father who art in heaven, give us, that means me and my family at home, our daily bread. We're not asking for enough for the whole year, but Lord, what would I need for today? What I need every day, I want to pray. You give us enough every day.

That's enough. I believe you'll give it to us. It's like you forgive our sins.

Give us this day, our daily bread. And it says here, be content with what you have. Why? Because the lockdown is over? No.

It doesn't matter how long the lockdown continues. How long this stay at home order continues? Because God has said, I will never desert you. I will never forsake you.

I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. And I want to say to you, brothers and sisters, let's take the opportunity to practice the presence of God, the presence of Jesus Christ in our home.

Just remind each other. And if the parents forget children, you please remind your parents. Little children, remind your parents, Jesus is in this home.

Whenever you find anybody being irritated or upset in the home, lovingly, don't judge them. Don't think you're superior to them. In humility, say, Dad, Jesus is here.

My little boy, Jesus is here. Let's remember he's here. He's listening to us.

He's watching us. He cares for us. And he has said, I'll never leave you nor forsake you.

So we can boldly say, Hebrews 13, 6, in this time of trial, the Lord is my helper. I don't have many human beings to help me. Some of us are more helpless than others, perhaps.

It doesn't make a difference. The Lord is the helper of everyone. The Lord is my helper.

I will not be afraid. I will not be afraid. The Lord is my helper.

I will not be afraid. A good confession that we can teach our children to make in a time of testing. These are days when we can instill faith into our children.

They grow up, it will help them one day in some future situation. This thing will not go on forever. God, not because I believe in what the news says, but because I know we have a father in heaven who cares for this earth.

He sent his son to die for this earth. And Romans 8, 32 says, he who spared not his own son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? So be content with whatever God allows. And if there's a delay, well, we say, well, God is in control of that.

We don't have any complaints. One more verse, Philippians in chapter two. See, we can be overwhelmed with all that we heard today, but here's the comforting word.

Philippians 2, 13. God doesn't ask you to do it all alone. Job sort of had to do it all alone without the Holy Spirit.

But Philippians 2, 13 today, it says God is at work inside you. And whenever the New Testament says God is at work inside you, he's referring to the Holy Spirit. That's the Holy Spirit.

What is God working inside me? Listen to this. Apply to yourself. I believe this for myself.

God is always at work inside me. We already saw how he's at work outside of me. That's Romans 8, 28.

God is at work outside of me all the time, making sure that everything works for my good. And 1 Corinthians 10, 13, making sure that no trial is too much for me. I praise God for that.

He's at work, let me repeat, outside of me, making sure that everything is going to work for my good. That applies to you as well. And making sure that any trial that comes my life is not too much for me to bear.

He'll stop it if it's too much. Now it says he's working inside me too. Praise God.

I have a father who works outside me and inside me. And inside me, he's working in me, first of all, to will and to work his good pleasure means to desire his will and to do his will. In a paraphrase, legitimate paraphrase, that's what it means.

First of all, he's working in me to desire his will for my life. That's the best. I can tell you from 60 years of being a born again Christian, God's will is the best.

You mess up your life if you choose your own will. He works in me to desire his will. Oh Lord, I want your will at any cost.

I don't want to do my own will. And not only desire it, he gives me the strength, the grace in my heart to do it. If he only gave me the desire, that's no use.

David said in Psalm 40, I delight to do thy will, O God. He had the desire, but he couldn't do it. As soon as he saw Bathsheba, he lost all his desire.

But Jesus came, the same verse in Psalm 40 is quoted in Hebrews 10, where Jesus says, not I delight to do thy will, I come to do thy will, O God. Psalm 40, I delight to do thy will. In Hebrews 10, it became, I do thy will.

That's what's the old covenant and new covenant. Even people in the old covenant had the desire to do God's will, they couldn't do it. But here now God works in me to desire it and to do it.

As it says in Hebrews 10, Lo, I come to do your will, O God. Hebrews 10, you read those verses five to eight. And so what do I need to do? That's also here in Philippians chapter two, verse 12.

I've got to work out what God is working in. What is God working in? A desire to do His will and to do His will. I've got to work that out every day now.

And as I do that, you know what will happen? What is one of the first areas I've got to work with Him? Here's a little homework for you in the next few days, like teachers give homework. Here's the homework. Verse 14, what should I work out? Do everything without grumbling, without complaining, without disputing.

One day at a time. Don't think of the next one year. Lord, for the rest of this day, Sunday, April the 5th, for the rest of this day, I want to do everything without grumbling, without complaining.

And tomorrow morning when I get up, I want to work out what you're working in me to live the whole day without grumbling, without complaining, without murmuring about anything. And then the next day, another day comes up, I'm going to work, begin the day, I'm going to work out what God works in to do the live the whole day without grumbling and complaining. What will happen if we live day by day like this? Thus we will prove, verse 15, that we are new covenant Christians, not just that our church is called New Covenant Christian Fellowship, but that we are new covenant Christians, that we are blameless and innocent children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Why is the generation crooked and perverse? Because the world is full of people who murmur and complain. I mean, if God were to look down from heaven to this earth, as He does, everywhere He hears murmuring, complaining, murmuring, complaining, all over, every part of this world, every corner of the world, people are murmuring, complaining, every house, even Christians' home, murmuring, grumbling, something is wrong, this, that, and the other, and husband and wife saying, yuck, yuck, because of you, blaming each other, murmuring, complaining. And in the midst of all that, He sees one person here, one person there, one home here, one home there, rare, like a light in the darkness.

Because it says here, among whom you shine as a light, Philippians 2:15, in the world, grumbling and complaining is the darkness of the world. In the midst of that, here is one person or one family, one home, which is like a light, which is like a light means you go to that home, there's no murmuring, no complaining, come, murmuring or grumbling or complaining there. Think of Noah in the ark, we won't have to wait as long as we have to.

God remembered Noah and He remembers you and me. It was inconvenient in the ark, but they survived, and they came out triumphant. And the world is populated with Noah's family.

And we are called to be a witness in our generation, as a light in our generation. Dear brothers and sisters, let's ask God for the power of the Holy Spirit. It's impossible without that.

Grace every day, and you've got to ask for it every day. Let's pray. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, you will never leave us nor forsake us. We have that confidence. We thank you.

We know that you're with us in this trial. I don't have a clue how long this is going to last. But I thank God it's all in your mind, Father.

You know it all, and I can be happy as I look at your face because my dad knows it all. I don't know. But I thank you, Father, that you know it all.

We can rest in you day by day. Day by day, we live this life determined to be overcomers this time, to prove what we have studied and understood for so long, to prove in our life. And if there is anyone who is failing, help them to learn the subjects so that they will be ready for the final examination.

Thank you, Father. You're preparing us for the coming of Christ, and we want to be more and more like Jesus every day. We thank you.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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