

# Demonstrating God's Manifold Wisdom To Satan

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of enduring trials and suffering with faith, drawing inspiration from the story of Job and the apostle Paul. It highlights the eternal perspective needed to navigate through hardships, focusing on being a witness not only to the world but also to Satan, showcasing unwavering faith and trust in God's sovereignty and faithfulness.*

**Scripture:** John 14:15, Ephesians 3:10, Job 1:21, 2 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 5:11, Philippians 4:13

**Topics:** "Endurance in Trials", "Faithfulness in Suffering"

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## Description

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## Transcript

So I want to share with you something which many of you may not have thought of. When Jesus was on earth, he told his disciples on the last day, there are many things I want to say to you, but you cannot bear them yet. You read that last message of his in John 14, 15, and 16.

There were many things that Jesus wanted to tell his disciples, but he could not share it because they could not understand it. They were under the old covenant. They did not have the Holy Spirit within them.

And when you don't have the Holy Spirit within giving you light, there are many things in scripture you will not understand. But one day when the Holy Spirit came, their eyes were enlightened. And then when you read in the Epistles, they got more revelation than Jesus could ever give them during the time he was with them.

So it's amazing. I mean, how much the Holy Spirit could teach them. Jesus laid the groundwork and the foundation for it.

But the full revelation came after the day of Pentecost. And that's why I want to encourage all of you to really seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That's what changed the direction of my life.

I was born again 62 years ago when I was 20 years old. And then God filled me with the Spirit in a fresh way 46 years ago, which completely changed the direction of my life, lifted me up from discouragement and gloom and depression and all types of things, and showed me the path of victory and overcoming and to live the type of life that the New Testament describes. Not perfection, we're pressing on to perfection.

But one of the things that Jesus told his disciples before he left was when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, unto the ends of the earth. That is being a witness to human beings. He told his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation and to make disciples.

But when the Holy Spirit came and gave them further revelation in addition to being witnesses to the world and to people in the world, like all of you in your locality or each of us in our locality, we are to be a witness to our friends, neighbors, family members, to all who live in our locality. And that's why God's got different local churches in different parts of the world. But in addition to that, the Holy Spirit says something new to whom we are to be witnesses to.

And perhaps some of us have not given sufficient thought to that. I want you to look at Ephesians chapter three. Please turn with me to Ephesians chapter three and verse 10.

Here it says, Ephesians chapter three, verse 10. If you will turn with me in your Bibles. It says in verse nine that God wants to bring to light the mystery, verse nine, which for ages has been hidden in God.

A mystery is something which you cannot understand without divine revelation. There are earthly things you can understand with intelligence, but a mystery is a truth that can only be understood by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. And one part of that mystery is, verse 10, that the manifold wisdom of God, the manifold means the many-colored, many-sided wisdom of God, like a rainbow has seven colors to make white.

In the same way, the wisdom of God has got many sides to it. And this wisdom is to be proclaimed through the church. That's through you and me.

To whom? Not to the people in the world. I mean, that's also true. We read that in Acts 1.8, you shall be witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth.

But here it says we are to be witnesses to the evil rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. So do you know that we are supposed to be witnesses to Satan as well? When it speaks about in Ephesians, it speaks about the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. We know from Ephesians in chapter 6 and verse 12, that's referring to the evil forces of darkness in the heavenly places.

We are to be a witness to Satan and to the demons. What are we to be witnesses to? Have you ever thought of the fact that you are not only to be a witness to your neighbors and your family members by your life and your words, but your life has to be a witness to Satan. Your family members and your neighbors and relatives only see the outward part of your life.

Most of them don't see how you live at home. Most of them don't see many parts of your private life, but the devil and the demons, they watch every part of your life. They see how you speak to your wife at home, which others outside in the church may never know.

The demons are watching everything, and we are to be a witness to them of the manifold wisdom of God. And if you see that, it's a tremendous challenge that God will entrust to us a task that he first entrusted to

Christ. It was never entrusted to the Jewish people in the old covenant.

They were called to be a witness to all the nations of the earth about the goodness of God. But when Jesus came, he demonstrated not only to the world, but to the devil and all the demons of hell what it was to serve our heavenly father. And when he said, follow me, that's our calling too.

This is part of the new covenant. Nobody in the old covenant could do this, to be a witness to Satan. Do you know that Satan is hardly mentioned in the Old Testament after Genesis chapter three? Once it is mentioned that Satan tempted David, another time Satan is mentioned in Zechariah in a vision that Zechariah gets, but otherwise no person in the Old Testament ever confronted Satan.

Nobody, not even the great prophets, not even John the Baptist. The first person that we read in the Bible who confronted Satan face-to-face was Jesus Christ, our Lord. And there was a reason for it.

Satan had to be defeated first before God allowed human beings to encounter him. And he was not defeated until Jesus died and defeated him on Calvary. And that's why God, who does not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability, did not allow anyone in the Old Testament to encounter Satan.

That privilege and honor was given to us who are filled with the Holy Spirit. First it was given to Jesus. In fact, he began his ministry with an encounter with Satan, overcoming him.

And he wants us to be overcomers too. They overcame him, we read in Revelation 12, they overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, Revelation 12, verse 11. Have you ever thought of that verse? Revelation 12 and verse 11 says, they overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death.

Overcoming Satan by the blood of the Lamb, we can understand, because Satan is the accuser. He's always accusing us. He's accusing us to God, and he accuses us to ourselves.

And we can't overcome him by saying, well, I'm going to be better in future. What about the past? There's only one way we can deal with the past. And that is to say, the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed me from all my sin.

I have repented. I've confessed my sins, and the blood of Jesus has cleansed me. I heard of a great man of God once who was being used greatly by God, who was oppressed by the devil once, when the devil reminded him of all the sins he had committed.

You remember you did this, you did this, you did this, you did this. And the man of God had to acknowledge it was all true. And when he went on like that in his mind, he told the devil, that's not all, Satan.

I've committed many more sins than that. Make the list complete. And when you have made the list complete, right across it, the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed me from all sin.

He overcame Satan by the blood of the lamb. We can't overcome him by saying I'll do better next time. We overcome him by saying the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed me completely.

I stand before God justified. Justified means just as if I had never sinned in my whole life. Just as if I've been righteous all my life.

But that's not all. It says here by the word of their testimony, Revelation 12, 11, they tell Satan to his face and we must confess to Satan. We ought to be witnesses to Satan as we just read, not just to the world.

And what are we to tell him? Just what that man of God said, the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed me from all sin. You cannot condemn me anymore. You cannot make me discouraged anymore.

The most important thing in my life is already settled. My relationship with God. That's the word of our testimony.

But not just the fact that we've been cleansed. We ought to be witnesses. It says we read in Ephesians 5 of the many-sided wisdom of God.

God's wisdom has got many sides and he uses each one of us in different ways to manifest that many-sided wisdom. That's wonderful. It's a tremendous honor.

I mean, it's a great honor to be a representative of God to witness to people. I mean, it's been a tremendous honor, I feel, to be able to present God and all that God has revealed in Christ to thousands of people around the world. But a far greater thing, it is to be able to witness to Satan by my life and my attitudes and the confession of my mouth, the wisdom of God.

And God does that by taking us through trials. You see, in the Old Testament, trial and problems are not a blessing. If you read Deuteronomy chapter 28, you don't want to turn that now, but sometime when you get time, read Deuteronomy 28.

I'll tell you what it is. It's a health and wealth message. It was not given to the church.

It was given to Israel. The promise in Deuteronomy 28 to Israel was health and wealth. It's sad that there are preachers preaching that today as if it was the new covenant gospel.

It's like going back to the old days. It's like living in the Stone Age. How many of you want to live in the Stone Age? There was, I know human beings went through that Stone Age, but we're not in the Stone Age now.

We've got electricity, we've got cars, we've got so many things that made life more comfortable for us. We don't want to go back to the Stone Age. Why do people want to go back to the health and wealth gospel, which was what God proclaimed 4,000 years ago to Israel, to 3,500 years ago to Israel? That's not the message for us today.

Our message is different. We proclaim a message where we overcome sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil. So when you think of being a witness to Satan, I want to turn you to the first of the 66 books that God wrote.

And by the way, that is not the book of Genesis. Just for your information, it's the book of Job. Please turn with me to the book of Job.

The book of Genesis was written by Moses 1,500 years before Christ. 500 years before that, there was a man called Job. And what he wrote here, or whoever wrote this book, it must have been at that same time for it to be written in such detail about all the conversations that went on between different people.

Nobody could write that years later. It was written when Job was alive or pretty soon after his death. That's 500 years before Genesis.

That's the first book of the Bible that God wrote. And isn't it interesting, if you read particularly the first two chapters of Job, it's all about Satan and God talking to each other about Job. And God boasting about Job saying, there's a perfect man on the earth, one who fears me and turns away from all evil.

And the devil says, no, it's because you have blessed him, you have prospered him. You have given him health and wealth. That's why he serves you.

And God says, no, he doesn't serve me because I gave him health and wealth. Take away his health, take away his wealth, take away his children. He will still serve me.

And the devil says, no, he won't. And you see how Job came through triumphant in that. And there we see how Job was a witness to Satan.

And that is the first book that God decided to write for man. Have you ever thought of that? When God wanted to write a book for man, the first book he wrote was not about the creation of the heaven and earth. And God said, that can wait 500 years.

Let Moses come along 500 years from now. I'll write about the creation of the heaven and the earth then. But that's not as important for me.

I want to write about a man of God who was a witness for me before Satan. That's the first book I want to write about. Please remember that, dear brothers and sisters, that when God wanted to write a book for man, he wrote not about the creation of heaven and earth or about the six days or the seventh day being the Sabbath and all that could wait.

It's about a man who was a man of God. It was about a man, Job 1 verse 1, who feared God, who was blameless and upright. That's what brought delight to the God, not the creation of the universe.

God wanted to write about a man who was blameless, upright, who feared God and turned away from evil. That's the very first sentence that God wrote in the Bible. Never forget that in all your life.

The very first sentence that almighty God wrote in the Bible for us is about a man who was blameless, upright, feared God, and turned away from evil. And there you see what brings delight to the heart of God, not the stars and the planets and the universe he created, nothing that he has created, but a man, one single man in the midst of an evil world. In those days, there were not many people who were witnesses for him like that.

In fact, he had to point Job out to Satan saying, okay, you've traveled around the whole world. Satan says, I have roamed around Job chapter 1, verse 7. The Lord says to Satan, where do you come from? And God knows what he's making Satan confess it. And Satan says, I have been wandering around the earth and walking around on it.

And the Lord says, well, you walked around the earth and you've seen so many people, right? You've seen hundreds and thousands of people around the earth. And I know you've seen a lot of people who are deceivers, who talk about religion, who talk about God and who are hypocrites. But have you seen my servant Job? He's different from all the other people you've seen on the earth.

He's a blameless and an upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil. In eight verses, in the first eight verses of scripture that God wrote, those things are mentioned twice. Think how important it is that when God writes a book for man in the first eight verses, he repeats something twice.

A man who's blameless, upright, fears God and turns away from evil. If you want to know how important those qualities are, remember those are the first words that God spoke and he repeats it twice in eight verses of scripture, the very first eight verses of scripture ever written. I remember when I read that as a young Christian, when I was first born again, and I said, Lord, will you be able to boast about me like that? Or will you only be able to boast about something else, which is earthly? What are you glory in my dear brothers and sisters? Let me ask you plainly, as I ask myself, is it how you're prospered in your business? Oh, God has blessed my business and it has gone so well.

I was struggling once upon a time, but God has blessed me now. Maybe you're a millionaire. Well, God have mercy on you.

I hope you will use your wealth for the glory of God and not go astray with it. Or do you glory that you have health and strength? These are not the things you glory in. I'm personally deeply thankful that God's preserved me in health.

I've never been in a hospital with sickness in 82 years, and I really got to thank God for it. But that's not what I glory in because I know there are ungodly people who live longer than me without getting sick. So how am I different from them? Let's not glory in things which other people in the world have.

Do you have millions? There are people in the world who are billionaires. So let's never glory in these earthly things which other people have. Whenever you think of something you say God has blessed us with, think if other people have it too.

If you go to people of other religions, the Muslims, they will say their God has blessed their people with wealth, and it's true. Not that their God has blessed them, but there are Muslims who are far wealthier than Christians. There are Hindus in India who are far wealthier than Christians, and they can say their God has blessed them.

These are not the things we glory in, not health, not wealth. That is not the thing we glory in. That's what Israel would glory in.

But if you're a person who's blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil, even if you're poor, and even if you're not in good health, you can be a witness for a safe one. You can have sickness in your body. Maybe you die early, but if you've been blameless, upright, fearing God, turning away from evil, and if you've taught your children to be blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil, you have lived a worthwhile life on earth as a witness to Satan, and one who can manifest part of the manifold wisdom of God to the devil.

Now, I find that in this chapter, the devil said that Job served God because you have blessed him. You've made a hedge around Job chapter 1, verse 10. It says in verse 90, does Job fear God for nothing? There's a reason why Job fears you, the devil says.

It's because you've blessed him. You stopped blessing him financially and blessing him with all these lovely children, then let's see whether he will praise you. That's a challenge.

Do you believe that the devil who made that challenge 4,000 years ago to God would not make that challenge today concerning some of us? Don't you think that he would go to God today and say, that guy over there who claims to be your child, that woman, that man, yeah, they're serving you because their life is so comfortable and pleasant. They're not sick, and they have enough money, and they have enough of resources of the earthly things of this world, and that's why they're serving you. Take that away, and then let's see whether they will serve you.

What will God? Will God have the boldness and confidence to allow Satan to test you, my brother, sister, in that way, and know that you will come out triumphant at the end of it, glorifying God and not complaining? Well, when you look at the book of Job and you read from chapter 3 onwards almost all the way up to chapter 32, you find that Job is really complaining. He's not always triumphant. Sometimes he's up saying, my Redeemer lives, and sometimes he says, I know that whatever may happen, God will test me and bring me forth as but other times he says, Lord, why are you firing your arrows at me? You've set me up to, I've been so faithful and justifies himself.

He had ups and downs. Why? Because he did not have the Holy Spirit. Don't ever try to comfort yourself when you complain by saying Job also complained.

He did not have our resources. I find Job was a great example for me in the way he was in chapter 1 and 2. Beyond that, I say, well, he didn't have the Holy Spirit. I have the Holy Spirit.

I never have to complain. I live in Romans 8, 28, which says every single thing that happens to me will work for my good. And you live in that too.

If you're a child of God, all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose. You're one of those, my brother, sister. You're called according to the purpose of God.

If any way, I hope all of you are familiar with Romans 8, 28. If you're not, you young people, especially, you must know Romans 8, 28. It's a great verse.

Please turn with me there in your Bible and note it. If you have the habit of marking your Bible, that's a good verse to mark. Romans 8, 28.

We know. That's the first words. Remember that.

We know. You must be able to say, I know. I know with absolute certainty that my Heavenly Father, God Almighty, causes everything to work, not individually.

No, they don't work individually. No. They work together.

In other words, it's not just one circumstance that works for my good. One out of all the hundreds of thousands of circumstances that happen in my life work, they all ultimately work together for good. Because I love him.

Because I'm called according to his purpose. And that applies to you too. Don't you love Jesus? Aren't you called according to his purpose? That's why he chose you.

He says you did not choose me, but I chose you. Have you read that verse in John 15? I want to say to all of you, you did not choose Christ. He chose you.

It said very clearly in John 15, you did not choose me, but I chose you, that you should go and bring forth fruit. And why did he choose you? Here it says very clearly in the next verse. You must never read Romans 8, 28 without verse 29.

Verse 29 tells us the purpose with which he chose us. And I want to say to you, this is not Deuteronomy 28. We are not in the old covenant.

It doesn't say he chose us that we should have health and wealth. No. Then you've got to be an Israelite.

You've got to be a follower of Moses. I'm not a follower of Moses. I thank God for a godly man like Moses, but I'm not following him.

I'm following my Lord Jesus Christ. Then Moses brought the law. Grace came through Jesus Christ.

And my calling is not to be healthy and wealthy on this earth. No. My calling is Jesus, God my father, predestined me, Romans 8, 29, and you also to become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

There's a purpose with which God chose us, and it is not to go to heaven when we die. Please remember this. We're not called to go to heaven when we die.

We will go to heaven. That's another thing. We're called to become like Christ more and more on this earth until one day when he comes again, we'll be completely like him.

That's our calling, and I hope that none of you will ever lose that vision. And he predestined us. Predestined us means long before you were born, when he chose you before the worlds were created.

As it says in Ephesians 1, 4, we were called before the worlds were created to be his. He predestined you not only to be his children, but so that you might become like Christ and increasingly more and more day by day until the day he comes again. And so when it says in Romans 8, 28, all things put together work for your good.

What is that good? Not health, not wealth. We are not in Deuteronomy 28. No.

We are in the new covenant. Please remember this. I'm not saying God ignores our need for money or ignores our need for health to serve him.

I'm not saying that, but that's not his primary goal. He will allow us to go through suffering if that'll make us a little more like Christ, because that's his goal. He doesn't call us to have an easy life on earth.

Israelites could have an easy life on earth, comfortable life with plenty of money and plenty of health, but they were not called to become like Christ. We've got a much higher calling. And if you understand that, then you see that all things work together for good, not to make me more healthy, not to make me more wealthy, but to make me a little more Christ-like.

And that's demonstrated in the life of the apostle Paul so clearly. If there was a man on earth in the first century who really sought to live for God once he was converted, it was the apostle Paul. But see how the Lord took him.

This man who was perhaps the most godly man of his generation, a man who tried to please God more than perhaps anyone else in the first century. How did God treat him? How does God treat a man who's

seeking to please him in every possible way? Let's see. Here's what he took him through.

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians in chapter 11. Remember, this is the greatest apostle and perhaps the most godly man on earth at that time, the apostle Paul. Far more wholehearted than you and me, more dedicated, more committed.

The man who gave up getting married, gave up his profession and job and money, worked hard, would not even take money from those he served. He was not a paid pastor. He was not a paid preacher.

He worked with his own hands and supported himself so that he could be a good testimony. And when he was three years in Ephesus, he says, I did not take a single cent from any of you. I didn't expect you to give me clothes.

I worked with my own hands and I preached to you day and night. This is the greatest man of God of his generation. How delighted God must have been in him.

Did he get health and wealth? Look what he says in 2 Corinthians 11, 23. These other people who says, who boasted, they are servants of Christ. 2 Corinthians 11, verse 23.

These other people who speak, they are servants of Christ. Let me speak like an insane madman. I am more a servant of Christ than them.

He's not boasting, but he's saying, listen, I'll tell you how I'm more of a servant of God than these other people. I have been laboring more than them. I have been in prison far more than them.

How many people want to be greater servants of God in that way? Be more times in prison than others. And therefore I'm a greater servant of God than them. I've been beaten much more than them for the sake of Christ on my back.

That's why I'm a greater servant of Christ than them. I've been in danger of death in preaching the gospel more than them. And that's why I'm a greater servant of God than them.

And then he goes on to describe some of his sufferings. Five times I received 39 lashes. Couldn't God protect his faithful servant from being persecuted like that? That's like saying, okay, Jesus had to die for our sins on the cross.

Understood. But why did he have to get whipped with lashes on his back before that? Was that necessary for the forgiveness of our sins? The punishment for our sins is eternal hell. And Jesus suffered eternal hell during the three hours on the cross when he cried, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? That's when he took the punishment for our sin.

He didn't take the punishment for our sin when he was hanging with the nails on the cross in the first three hours. The punishment for our sin is not physical death. If physical death were the punishment for our sin, then nobody has to die for me.

I die myself and pay the punishment. But the punishment for our sin is eternal separation from God. You know that.

Hell. And Jesus suffered that during the last three hours. Hell is a place which is completely forsaken by God.

The truly God forsaken place in the universe is hell. And Jesus experienced that in the three hours on the cross, the last three hours. And that's when he took the punishment for our sin.

Because being God, he could compress into three hours eternity. So in the three hours, he could suffer eternal separation from his father. Yeah, we'll never know the agony of that until one day we see him face to face.

That's why we're singing that song. By and by, when I look on his face, I wish I had given him more. By and by, when he stretches out his hands, I wish I'd given him more.

Because in that day, we'd see how much he loved us, to what an extent he was willing to pay the price that we might never go to hell. I remember many years ago, soon after God filled me with the Holy Spirit, about 45 years ago, I was seeking God in prayer one day and saying, Lord, will you please explain to me, what is the cup that you prayed in Gethsemane that you should not drink? I know it was not physical death, because I've seen martyrs who have gone singing to their death. You would, I know you would have died a thousand times for me.

You love me so much. It was not physical death you were scared of. But there was something else.

I want you to tell me, what is that cup, which you said, Father, if possible, take it away. All your life you did the Father's will, Lord Jesus. Yet at the last moment, there was one cup you did not want to drink.

And the Lord showed me that it was being forsaken by the Father on the cross. As he came near it, all eternity, he had lived in blessed fellowship with the Father. And in that moment, as he approached the cross, he knew now, I'm going to experience something I've never experienced in all eternity.

I've been in such close, intimate fellowship with my Father, and I'm now going to experience something that I've never experienced. And he knew it was coming. And I used to imagine a conversation there between Jesus and his heavenly Father in Gethsemane, and the Father saying to Jesus, you can come straight up to heaven.

You don't have to go to the cross. You've lived a perfect life. Come straight up here from Gethsemane.

But Zach will go to hell. And Jesus thought, I'm just imagining putting myself there. Zach will go to hell? Okay, Father, I'll go to the cross.

I remember that day when I wept and I wept and said, Lord, I never knew how much you love me. I'll never live for myself again. I'll never live to make money or for health or wealth or anything.

My life is yours till the very end. By and by, when we look upon him, we wish we had given him more. I sing that song often to myself.

I say, Lord, I don't want it to be like that. I want it to be that I would have given you everything right now and never hold anything back. Dear brothers and sisters, one day you will see how much Jesus loves you.

And I tell you, you'll be surprised. I thank God that day, 45 years ago, he opened my eyes to see a little bit, only a fraction of how much he loved me. And I decided I'd never live for myself again.

I knew it was worthless living for myself. I said, Lord, I want to live upright by the principles like Job, a God-fearing man, turning away from evil, turning away my eyes, turning away from my thoughts. I was

defeated in my eyes and my tongue and my thoughts like all human beings are.

And I said, I'm sinning with my eyes and my thoughts and my tongue as a young 35-year-old Christian. I don't want to be like that. You said sin will not have dominion over you if you're under grace.

Give me that grace that I can overcome sin. I don't want to have dirty thoughts. I don't want to have bad thoughts about other people.

I don't want to have grudges against a single human being on the earth. I'm willing to ask forgiveness from anybody on the face of this earth. Lord, you died for me.

You died to deliver me from these sins. I want to hate them. I want to be like one who turns away from evil.

And I want to be a witness to Satan. And you can take me through anything you like. And Paul goes on to say here in 2 Corinthians 11 verse 25, I was beaten with rods three times.

Couldn't God have stopped that? I was stoned three times. Once he was left for dead, they stoned him so badly that they left him for dead. I don't know.

Perhaps he did die and God raised him from the dead then. Quite likely. He was shipwrecked.

A night and a day means 24 hours after being shipwrecked. Verse 25, he was out on the open ocean. Why did God Almighty allow his ship to be wrecked? He was going to preach the gospel.

He wasn't doing business going on that ship. He was going to preach the gospel and the ship got wrecked. And he was out in the ocean for 24 hours swimming, maybe holding on to pieces of wood, trying to survive there in the day and night.

And I say, Lord, is that the way you treat your servants? Yes. So that they can be a witness to Satan who says, yeah, your servants will serve you only when you make life comfortable for them. And God says, no, you can do anything.

You can wreck that ship. You can allow them to be beaten. They will still serve me.

Whatever trial they go through, they will love me and serve me. God cannot entrust every person like that. He cannot trust every person like that, but he could trust Paul.

He could trust Paul to go through such tremendous suffering and be a witness to Satan of a man who would be faithful to God no matter what happens. Shipwrecked on frequent journeys, for what? To preach the gospel. Never once did he go to make money.

We journeyed for many other things. He journeyed only to preach the gospel and he was shipwrecked. He was in danger from rivers.

He was in danger from robbers, danger in the country, dangers in the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among all false brethren, all for preaching the gospel. In labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, couldn't God have taken care of him? Often without food, in cold and exposure. Once he was shivering in the cold Roman dungeon that he writes to Timothy, please get somebody to send my cloak, my warm cloak.

I'm shivering here in the cold. He didn't have money to buy a blanket. This is God's servant.

He completed his course. He said, I fought a good fight. I finished my course.

I kept the faith. And he was a witness to Satan, not just to people. He preached the gospel to people.

He was a witness of Christ to people, but he was a witness to Satan. And we are a witness to Satan not when we are preaching, my brothers and sisters, but in the other times of our life when nobody's watching us. And there you have the reason why God allows some of his servants, some of his finest servants to go through deep suffering.

I read of a lady in the United States, a sister in Christ who is 72 years old now. Her name is, many of you may have heard of her, Joni Eareckson. Joni Eareckson Tada, after a marriage.

When she was 18 years old, she jumped into a lake to swim. She was a very good swimmer and didn't realize it was a very shallow lake. And she hit her head and was paralyzed from below her neck.

And the first two or three years she was depressed and complained, why, oh God, why did you allow this to happen to me? But gradually she came to give thanks to God. And for over 50 years now, she's been on a wheelchair, been on a wheelchair for 50 years, paralyzed, but able to speak and has been a tremendous witness for Christ. I heard her testimony about a year or so ago, a fantastic testimony.

I played that testimony in our church in Bangalore for everyone to hear. Here's a woman who's paralyzed from the age of 18, 54 years on a wheelchair and still glorifying Christ. She's had her trials, times of doubt, but she's come through it all triumphantly.

And the thing that amazed me in that testimony was her deep humility. She wasn't boasting, oh, see what a great witness I am, despite my fact that I'm being on a wheelchair. She was very honest about her struggles, her struggles with being discouraged and all, and how she overcame.

It's a great testimony. It's available on the internet. I would encourage you to listen to it.

Why does God allow some of his greatest servants to go through things like that, like Job? Because of this other person to whom we have to be witness, a witness to Satan, where when Satan says to God, yeah, take away his children, take away his property, then let's see whether he serves you. And what happened when God said, okay, take away his servants, sorry, take away his children, take away his property. And we read when Job heard that, within a few seconds, the servants came and told Job, all your properties burnt up, all your children have died.

And spontaneously, we read in the book of Job chapter one and verse 20, he fell down to the ground and worshiped God. He didn't say, Lord, I've been so faithful. I've turned away from evil.

I'm upright. Is this the way you treat me? Even though he lived even before the law, before the old covenant was established, before Moses, a man, he did not have any Bible. He did not have any church fellowship.

He did not have many of the things we have. He did not have the internet to listen to messages. He did not have Sunday meetings that he could go to.

He had no brothers and sisters with whom he could fellowship, but he knew God. It's wonderful when a man knows God, he can stand all alone. And he fell to the ground and worshiped.

And what does he say? He says, well, when I came from my mother's womb, I was absolutely naked. I had nothing. I had no children.

I had no property. I had nothing. And one day the Lord will call me home and I'll go without my property, without my children, without anything.

I came naked and I will go naked. It's the Lord who gave me everything. And the Lord has every right to take it all away.

Did you hear that testimony from a man who didn't have a Bible, who didn't have fellowship and who knew nothing about the new covenant, who did not even know about Jesus Christ going to die on the cross? I came naked from my mother's womb. And one day I'll leave this world naked. Everything I had on this earth was given by God.

My health, my wealth was given by God. And he's got every right to take it away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

And through all this Job did not sin. If he had complained, he would have sinned. And then the devil doesn't give up.

The devil says, okay, God, skin for skin, Job 2 verse 4, a man will give everything for his own life. He'll even allow his children to be lost and his property be lost, but touch his body. And boy, then you'll see him complain.

Touch his bone, break his bone, put your hand, Job 2 verse 5, touch his bone and his flesh and he will curse you to your face. And the Lord said to Satan, okay, I don't allow you to kill him, but you can do anything else. And he went out, Job, Satan went out and Job chapter 2 verse 7, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

And there he was sitting outside the city, like a leper, scraping himself. Can you imagine the thoughts that came to his mind? He was a human being like you and me, the thoughts that would have come to his mind, the same thoughts would have come to you and me. I've served God so faithfully.

Is this how he treats me? Takes away my children, takes away my property, and now on top of that gives me this terrible sickness that people are repelled and the pus coming out of my sores and people don't want to come near me. And that wasn't enough. His wife comes to him and says, go and commit suicide.

Chapter 2 verse 9, curse God and die. How do you die? The only way to die is commit suicide. Imagine to all the troubles he's already having, he's got a wife who tells him to commit suicide.

You know that God had given Satan permission in the first chapter to kill his family. Why did Satan kill only his children but not his wife? Interesting. God had permitted him to kill his family because Satan said, that wife is more useful to me alive than dead.

I can use her to nag her husband and nag her husband and nag her husband. I'll keep her alive. May God protect all of your wives from ever being like that.

You have to be a strength to your husband when he's suffering. But Job was faithful to God. He said, you're speaking like a foolish woman.

If God gives us good, we accept it. When he gives us adversity, verse 10, shouldn't we accept it? In this again, Job did not sing with his lips. And then he had three people who called themselves his friends who come along and accuse him and accuse him and accuse him all the way to almost to the end of the book.

Finally, God has mercy on him and delivers him. It's a tremendous testimony to us in the book of James. We turn to James in chapter 5. We read in James chapter 5. James chapter 5 verse 11.

Some people think the story of Job is a fiction. It's not. It's not fiction.

The Holy Spirit says through James in chapter 5 verse 11 about Job. It's not an imaginary story. It's a real story of a real man who suffered in a real way.

And he says in James 5 verse 11, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job. Even in those days in the first century when no Bibles were available freely, James writes to Christians saying, you guys should have heard of Job.

It's the first book written in the Bible. It was only available in parchments those days, the Bible, the Old Testament. But the book of Job was there.

And James expected those first century Christians to have heard of him, to have read about him. I hope you've read about him 40 centuries later. You've heard about Job and saw the final result of the Lord's dealings.

That's what James is saying. When you go through something, think of the final result that's going to come out of it. That the Lord is always full of compassion and merciful.

Paul understood that. How does Paul describe all the sufferings he went through that we read some of it in 2 Corinthians 4, in 2 Corinthians 11, sorry. Paul sums it all up in one sentence.

I'd like you to see this wonderful sentence. It's amazing. We read some of the sufferings Paul went through, and there's more there in 2 Corinthians 11.

You can look through it, how he was betrayed by false brethren and all that. But he puts it all in one sentence in 2 Corinthians 4. He calls it, let's say, Paul, how do you call all your sufferings? 2 Corinthians 4, 17. First of all, it's momentary.

A moment? You mean all those suffering that you had for about 30 years, you call it a moment? Yes, a moment. And it was light. You mean all that being beaten and imprisoned and through being shipwrecked, all is a light affliction? Light.

How does he describe his entire 30 years of affliction as a servant of God? Momentary and light. And he says, it is momentary and light because I know it is producing for me an eternal weight of glory. Think of all the hard work that a lot of people on earth put in to make money.

They work day and night without even thinking about God to make their millions. And here he says, I'm going to get an eternal weight of glory. All that I've happened produces for me an eternal weight of glory.

And I want to say to you this, I want to say this to you, that when we go through suffering and trial and affliction, for example, what Phil is going through right now and what happened to him a few days ago, we wonder, why does God allow such a faithful servant of his to go through it? I tell you, I wept when I heard

it, when Dan told me about it. This brother who led the singing and such a dear brother in the church, I couldn't understand. I felt so bad and I've been praying for him ever since.

But it's a momentary light affliction. It's going to produce an eternal weight of glory, far beyond all comparison, provided there is a condition. It will produce an eternal weight of glory if, capital I F, if we don't look, verse 18, 2 Corinthians 4, 18, at the things that are seen, but we keep looking at the invisible things of eternity and of heaven, recognizing that everything we see on earth is temporary for a moment, but the things that are in the future are eternal.

Even if you live a hundred years on earth, and many of those years are full of suffering, because you're a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, like Paul, a hundred years compared to eternity is less than one second. A hundred years when compared to eternity is less than one second. God's asking you, are you willing to suffer for me for one second so that I can make you a witness to Satan, that you will serve me no matter what happens, no matter what price you have to pay, no matter what suffering I allow you to go through, you will not complain, you will give thanks and say, Lord, your ways are perfect, you're making everything work for my good, only for one second.

It's only for one second, and then you'll have all eternity to rejoice that you were faithful to God during that one second that you lived on earth. Don't be foolish, brothers and sisters, like the people of the world who think that this world is everything, and who think, or even like many Christians, who think that health and wealth are everything. They're not.

May the Lord help us, like it says here, to see the things that are eternal. One thing that the Holy Spirit does is to change our vision from the temporal things to the eternal, and the spiritual man is one who keeps on looking at the things that are eternal all the time, and especially when he's suffering. Believing is not like a stoic man who's just trying to believe.

No, he's absolutely convinced. My Father cares for me, and let me conclude with this one verse in 1 Corinthians 10 13. If you don't know this verse, this is another verse that you must always remember.

God is faithful, middle of verse 13, 1 Corinthians 10 13. God is faithful, who will never, never, never, never, never allow you to be tested beyond your ability. So when you go through a hard test, remember, ah, God has more confidence in you.

When you go through a tough test, don't say, this is too much for me. No, God is faithful. If you say it's too much for me, you're saying God is unfaithful.

He is not unfaithful. People in the world, I don't know, they may face many things too much for them, but if you're a child of God, you're one of God's own children, born again, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, then I say to you in Jesus' name, God will never leave you nor forsake you. He will never allow you to be tested beyond your ability.

And when you go through a hard trial, it shows the tremendous confidence God has in you. It's like God saying to you, my child, you've been promoted. You're in a higher class now.

That's why the examination is tougher. That's why the test is tougher. You thought you were in the kindergarten.

No, you're not in the kindergarten now. You're in a much higher grade. And that's why you're going through this testing.

And I'm going to stand by you and help you to come through triumph and through it. Very often when you go through a trial, it's your family members who suffer like Phil's family right now. But God will give them grace too.

It's a trial for them too. But they too need to say, Lord, you will not allow me to be tested beyond my ability. Not as wife, not as children.

You will not allow me to be tested beyond my ability. You will give me grace to overcome this. You'll enable me to endure it as it says in 1 Corinthians 10:13.

May the Lord help us to be witnesses to Satan, that our God is a loving father. He'll never allow us to be tested beyond our ability. He will always make everything work together for good.

And we will confess that even with our dying breath, our father loves us until the very end. May God bless you all. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

And while our heads are bowed in prayer, my dear brothers and sisters, the first thing we need to do, the first thing we need to do is to confess where we have failed to trust God. Forgive me, Lord, for the ant bites I've got, which I've complained about. When people like Paul faced the lions, I've complained about ant bites.

Forgive me. I face nothing. Some of your servants have gone through tremendous trials and being faithful to you.

Please forgive me. Forgive me this sin of complaining, of questioning your love, doubting you, even though you gave your son to die for me on the cross, to face eternal hell for me on the cross. Help me, Lord.

Give me the power of your Holy Spirit, not to do miracles, but to be faithful to you and to be a witness to Satan. Give me the power of your Holy Spirit. Fill me, Lord.

I really long to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not to testify about it, not to boast about it, far from it, but so that I can be a strong witness of the wisdom of God to the evil powers of hell and the devil. I want to be that, Lord. I wasted many years complaining, but it won't be like that anymore.

Please help me. For the remaining years of my life, there'll be a real change, beginning from today. You've spoken to me, and you're going to change me with your word.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for these dear brothers and sisters, sincere, really sincere brothers and sisters bowed before you. I pray that you will fill them with your Holy Spirit and make this church a living, powerful witness for you of men and women who can be witnesses not only to the world, but to the devil. Thank you.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/d8Adn4MfwEw.mp4>

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