



Trials – December 11, 2019
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Verses Covered This Week

Genesis 50:15 – 21

Ephesians 3:9 – 11

Job 1:20 – 22

Colossians 1:24

2 Corinthians 1

James 1:2 – 4

Revelation 2:9 – 10

Genesis 15:13

Romans 8:26 – 28

Hebrews 7:25

2 Corinthians 12:4, 7 – 9

1 John 4:16 – 19

Habakkuk 2:4

For example, David says in the Psalms, “I dissolved my couch with tears.” Now if you go to your doctor and say that, they’re going to drug you before you get halfway out. You’re going to be going to Walgreens way before you get home. David didn’t do that. He used it to deepen who he was in his Father. This is why, and again, you’re not going to like it, but we’re going to go there. The first place is Genesis 50. If you remember the story of Joseph, he was a brat, right. I mean he really was. I would have done exactly what his brother’s did. He’s a brat. Father loves him more than anybody else of the brothers. So his father’s part of the problem. He gets these dreams. He tells his brothers that they’re going to be bowing down to him. They’re already hacked at him. He makes that statement to them. So they’re out in the wilderness. He comes to see them and they think, “Let’s kill him.” But one brother says, “No, no, no.” He’s trying to save him, but it’s too late. He says, “No, there’s a caravan coming. Let’s sell him.” So they sell him to these Egyptians who haul him off. Now I want you to remember something about what he’s facing, OK. How many Jews are in Egypt? Zero. There are no Jews anywhere except Israel. So he’s alone. So how many people worshiped with him when he winds up in Egypt? Zero. How many people believe what he believes? Zero. So the guy’s completely and totally alone. He doesn’t know the customs. He doesn’t know the language. He doesn’t have anybody to back him up spiritually. And so the guy winds up there in utter devastation. And it’s a nightmare for him because in the middle of all this, God begins to bless him. He puts him in Potiphar’s house, the captain of the

guard, and he's done so well with God's blessing that he rises really high in the house. And then the wife, the cougar, it's the first cougar in the Bible, she hits on him and hits on him and hits on him. And it's interesting what he says. He says, "I can't sin against my master or my God." He is alone. So the kid's character is phenomenal. Of course, the cougar, gets his coat, tells her husband, "He tried to assault me." He goes to jail. So he's up and down. He gets in jail and meets a couple guys. He interprets a dream, they get out, he thinks everything's going to be OK. He's still in there. He finally gets out. He becomes the number two guy to the Pharaoh. And off he goes. And then in my favorite part of the story, which would have been, if I were, I'm just expressing my sin tonight, if I were Joseph and my brothers showed up and didn't know who I was and I'm the number two guy in the land, oh man, it's so bad for them. I'm just thinking about torturing seminary students so I can't even imagine where Joseph is with this opportunity. So we know he finally reveals himself to them. And they're terrified. And listen to what it says in 50:15.

¹⁵When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him!" ¹⁶So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died, saying, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil.'" And now, please forgive the transgression of the servant of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸His brothers came and fell down and said, "Behold, we are your servants." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today. ²¹So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Now all that he goes through, at no time does he know why. The whole time the One orchestrating all this does know why. Now the first place you have to come to with trials is to understand you probably are not going to know why. But the One you love does know and because you don't know, doesn't mean He doesn't know. I remember, and this is just one among many, but it was one of the toughest things I ever had. I had a young couple that came to me. I did their premarital and married them. And they came to me and they couldn't get pregnant. So we prayed and they became pregnant. About three months into the pregnancy, they called me and said, "The doctor told us that our child has a very rare disease and that we have to take him to term, but he's going to die within three minutes of birth." And that is exactly what happened. He came out, she held him for two, he held him for one, Kaden, and he died. So, of course, they're looking at me going, "Why?" Now, I don't know. They don't know. But based on this, He knows. Now I will say this. Because, and it's the only place I came to in dealing with some of this, is that there are times when things happen to you and it's not about you; it's about God's glory. Now I want to show you something. Go to the book of Ephesians. We've read this. We're going to cover a little bit of ground tonight, not a lot. But I want you to look at Ephesians 3:10 – 11. As a matter of fact, we're going to begin in verse 9.

⁹to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now, right now, be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

So he says right now His wisdom through us says something to the people up there. Now that's a weird statement, but that is exactly what it says. So your reaction to those trials says something to

the people up there about who you are. Look at the book of Job. Now we know the story of Job. Loses his money, all his money, all his animals, his family, everybody but his wife which would have been better to have kept a daughter than the wife. In verse 20 it says:

²⁰Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. ²¹He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

²²In all this, Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

When you look at Job, what God does with him, He looks at everybody in heaven and He says, "There's My guy." So part of the purpose of the trials that you face is to honor God in a realm you don't live in yet. Now American Christianity focuses on America and the now. If you take the concept of the Bible and the idea of forever and the idea of, I used to say 70 years, but I'm real close to that now. So let's say 95. Actually I want to keel over about 82, in the deer stand, let Ed Wren pick me up, drop me off, we'll be golden. So let's say 80 years versus eternity. All of Christianity in America is focused on the 80 years. We don't think about the eternity. That statement is about the eternity. That for eternity we show off, even now there, who He is in our life. And we do it through how we face the trials.

Now, again, and they're a part of your existence and a part of your calling. Go to Colossians 1:24. Weird little verse. Difficult to understand, and I'm not sure I understand it in any kind of totality. So we'll just read it and go from there. But Colossians 1:24, here's what he says.

²⁴Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake,

So you've got to rejoice in suffering because sufferings do what? They take away your happiness. They don't take away your joy.

I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you to make the word of God fully known.

You can't make the word of God; the church cannot make the word of God fully known unless it's completing the afflictions of Christ. So what Jesus went through is not over. We're His body and now we live out His afflictions in this world so the fullness of the gospel can be known. Powerful statement. It's a very difficult thing, but I think the point he's making is when he says for you to make the word of God fully known. For the word of God to be fully known we have to face the same kind of afflictions Jesus did. Part of the reason that the Muslims don't listen to us is they'll die for their faith; we won't. Now this is an easy thing for me to say and I get that and I don't want anybody to misunderstand me. My calling has been to serve in America. But what we've done in the Southern Baptist Convention is generally when our missionaries are in grave danger, we pull them out. So what we say to the Muslim community is, "We're not going to die for what we believe." And the Muslims are. A part of this was in fact, Trajan's after this, but the persecution that hit the Christians, you read the book of Acts, all but two persecutions are Jewish. But there was an Emperor Trajan who came along and the Gentiles were tired of jacking with the Christians. Trajan made this rule. He says, "Look, don't go after the Christians. But if they're brought to

you, deal with it.” So if you’re living in the neighborhood, you tell your neighbor about Jesus and they’re hacked about you telling them about Jesus, and they carry you to the authorities, then they would kill you. Now if the neighbor wasn’t mad about that and they didn’t carry you to the authorities, you were golden. So you never knew what was going to happen. And so it is that suffering as a filling up of what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions in this world. What Jesus went through is not done. And it is our living that out in the world that allows His word to be fully known. It’s a powerful thing and a difficult thing. So when you look at trials, He knows what’s going on, you don’t. They fulfil the cause of Christ. They’re God’s demonstration up there of who He is. And then one last thing in this part. 2 Corinthians 1:3 – 7. He says,

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵As we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort as well.

And he goes on and on and on with this idea that the comfort you receive from Christ when other people go through that, you share with them and help them through that. Which is why I passionately believe that a church should never have two worship services; a contemporary and a traditional. Because what happens is all the old people go in the traditional; all the young people go in the contemporary. The young people that haven’t hit trials are now separated from the people that have gone through trials. So when they go through them, there’s nobody to turn to in the pew and go, “How’d you get through this?” So I think you have to worship together. If for no other reason, because of 2 Corinthians 1. And the other part of this is that a consequence of this is God will comfort us and we bring comfort to other people.

So there it is. There are some whys in the Bible that brings glory up there now. It does something here. It fulfils Christ’s sufferings. And it allows you to comfort people who are going through a similar trial. So there are some whys. But it’s interesting. All of those whys are about Him, not you. It wasn’t about Joseph. It was about the protection of Israel. It’s not about you; it’s about the word of God being fully known. It’s not about you, it’s the glory of God being shown up there. It’s not about you, it’s about your ability to comfort other people. So unless you die to self, now I’m going to say this carefully, and I don’t mean to be stinging or hard, but if you get mad at God when you go through a trial, it’s because you haven’t died to self. If you die to self, then these promises are, “This is great. God’s going to do something through me.” But if you don’t die to self, you become angry. Self always seeks happiness. Your spirit always seeks joy. So you have to keep that in mind.

So how do you handle it? Slide over to James.

²Count it all joy, my brothers,

In other words, is it joy? No. You count it joy. He’s arguing against happiness.

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.

In other words, they do come in various kinds. Sometimes satan really comes after you and sometimes he just is pesty. He's just a jerk. For you know, in other words, the ability to count it joy is based on your knowledge. You know that the testing of your faith; so if you have no faith, this doesn't work for you.

That the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴Let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

So his argument in James 1:2 – 4, that if you're going to reach maturity in Christ, you've got to go through trials. No trials; no maturity in Christ. But if you do go through a trial, you can be guaranteed that at some point out here, it's going to make you steadfast, it's going to make you strong, it's going to deepen your faith, and you're going to be more mature than you ever have been. So you look at that and go, "OK, I know that somehow this trial is going to benefit me in my life." You have to think that. If you focus on the trial and not the benefit that's going to come from it, you're going to become angry and you're going to pack. Now you don't have to worry. We're going to look at two passages here. You go to Revelation 2 and I'm going to go back to Genesis. Now I'm going to go back to Genesis 15:13. You go to Revelation 2. I want you to listen to what he says.

¹³God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be servants there and will be afflicted for 400 years.

Now hold that. Then if you go to Revelation 2:9 – 10. The church at Smyrna. He says:

⁹I know your tribulations and your poverty, and the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but the synagogue of satan. ¹⁰Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, for 10 days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Now what do both of those verses teach you about affliction? What do both those passages teach you? What's in both passages? Time. So what do both say? That He controls the amount of your trial. He decides how long it lasts. He decides how far it goes. Your trials come through His hands. And He controls that trial. Now obviously if you're a Jew you're looking at 400 years. You're thinking, "That's not very good." I mean that's longer than America has been here. And they're in there for 400 years. God says, "Here's the deal." And it wasn't 400 years of Cabo San Lucas. It was 400 years of Hearne. They were afflicted. He controls the time. But He will, in time as a result of that, do some beneficial things. How do we know that? We've looked at these before, but I want to make clear. Last thing I want to talk about. Go to Romans 8:26 – 28. I want us to look at very simply what he says. Romans 8:29 says:

²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

Right before that he says:

²⁸We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose.

That's the ultimate Baptist verse that every preacher has used to say to people, "Hey, everything's going to work better." How do you know that? You know it because of verses 26 and 27. Look at what he says:

²⁶Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We don't know what to pray for as we ought,

Which is exactly what happens when you go through a trial. It's difficult to know how to pray.

The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

You can't hear His intercession. But it is there.

²⁷He who searches hearts

Who would that be? It's the Father.

This is a trial for a pastor. You're pouring your heart out and everybody's staring at the stupid balloon. So when we were prepping for seminary graduation, the registrar who told me, by the way, that he went to Central in '88 to '92, when we were prepping for graduation, he said, "OK, you can't bring your guns in and you can't bring balloons. And he said, "Because the top of the chapel, the water sprinklers are governed by lasers. And if the laser sees the balloon, it will turn on the sprinkler system." Which, of course, in the back of my mind was, "Once I get mine....." But I was kind. So I don't know where we are, but at any rate, here's what he says.

The Spirit Himself intercedes with groanings too deep, we can't hear Him, He who searches hearts, that's the Father, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

So the reason you know in your trial something beneficial is coming out here, is because the Holy Spirit in you when you are struggling in that trial and don't know how to pray, He goes to work and prays for you on the will of God in your life. So He may not pray the way you want the trial to go. His prayer will be what God wants from you in the trial. And that prayer will bring benefit at the end of the day.

Secondly, go to Hebrews 7:25. You have the same principle here. It says, talking about Jesus as the High Priest. As a matter of fact, the only book in the Bible that mentions Jesus as High Priests is the book of Hebrews. And the argument is that He's just like us. It says:

²⁵Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

So when you step into this world and you become a believer, I don't care if you're 8 years old or 50 years old, when you go through a trial, it's going to bring Him glory. It may be used for something else. It's going to fill up Christ's afflictions. And no matter how bad it is, you've got a guarantee that out here somewhere your faith's going to be deepened. There's going to be some

benefit in your life because of two things: the Holy Spirit in you is praying and Jesus who is in heaven is interceding with the face of the Father while you're here. So if you have Christ interceding for you and the Holy Spirit praying for you and the promise is no matter what you go through something good's coming out here. Absolutely. It was interesting for me, this little guy Kaden, who died after three minutes, and that was one of those glamorous weeks in ministry where I had a 3-minute old child die, an 8-day old baby die, within 7 days of each other. But about a year later, the mother and father called me and said, "Hey, we want you to come back out. We went back to his gravesite in the field of honor." They said, "We want to go back and revisit and we want people to come in and tell us what Kaden's death impacted them." So it was kind of cool to walk by, if you can use that word for this kind of horror, you walked by and there were all sorts of little papers in there for people saying what Kaden's impact had been in their life. That's the result of the Holy Spirit praying and Jesus interceding. Now it doesn't mean the grief was gone. I don't know how many years ago this has been. Maybe 5. Maybe 6. There's not a day they don't remember that little guy. Not a day. But these promises have already begun to be enacted in their life. So He does come through.

Now go to 2 Corinthians 12. This is the other great benefit that happens. Paul's gone to heaven. He came back. Now I do want, this is an aside. In verse 4 of 2 Corinthians 12, Paul talks about going to heaven. He says he heard things that cannot be told which man may not utter. I was on a resolution committee on the convention a few years ago and the resolution assigned to me, everybody got a subject and you had to write a resolution on it. The resolution handed to me was on the books of children that have said they've died and gone to heaven and come back and said what they've seen. Because we just had a book come out of Lifeway that had been there for years and the guy recanted. He was 32 now and said, "Yeah, I lied about all the stuff." Did Baptists really have to have him say that? Are we really that stupid? And the answer is, yes. Because we'll buy anything that looks like it proves what we believe. Paul says right there, he doesn't say, "Which I may not utter." He says, "Which man may not utter." In other words, no one born that could do what Paul does is allowed to come back and say anything about what he'd seen. So when you buy those goofy books, this little 5-year-old kid say, "I saw Granddad up there. It was just so rich. They had the same golf clubs he had." He's lying. OK. Here's the Greek word: *pseudos* - false, lie. That's what he's doing. And if you believe that, if you read that and believe that, I'm gone so here it is. Here are two Greek words for you. I'm just going to read them. I'm not going to translate them. Here are the two Greek words if you believe this: *idiotés* and *moros*. You take those home and look them up in a Greek dictionary. It should not be a problem. Which man may not utter.

So no one can ever enter heaven and return. So any account is false?

Any account is false. If Paul had said, "Which I may not utter." And that was the argument in the committee. Everybody was saying, "Maybe somebody can say it." And I kept saying, "No." We had to go into the Greek because these preachers are so.... They wanted the book. The problem is, some of the guys have used the book in their church. I've never done that because of that passage. It doesn't say, "Which I may not utter." It says, "Which man may not utter." So anybody that's gone to heaven and said they've come back, they're lying.

Yeah, but that's John in the Scripture from the Holy Spirit. The canon's closed. Closed in 100 A.D. with that book. So the canon's closed and John's writing, as a matter of fact, he even says,

“He doesn’t know if he went there or if it’s a revelation.” I don’t think there’s any problem with God giving you a revelation. Paul wasn’t given a revelation. He was taken to heaven and shown around the golf courses and the hunting leases.

There’s a difference between seeing an angel in your room and going to heaven. Those are distinct things. Did people see angels? Yes. 2 Corinthians 12:7

⁷to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of satan

Now look at what he says. It’s interesting how he says this.

To harass me from keeping me too elated.

Now I want you to listen to what he just said. He put three things together. He said, “God gave me a trial from satan.” Now he puts a unique spin on this which is exactly what we see. Trials can be satanic as it was with Job. God allowed satan to nail Job in a trial. That is exactly, this is Job-esque. This is exactly what Paul’s saying. He puts all three things together. Why? To keep me from being too elated. We don’t know exactly what it is. It was something physical. There are probably three possibilities. We have several books where Paul says, at the end of the book he’ll say, as a matter of fact, he generally used an amanuensis. He had somebody that wrote the book for him. He rarely wrote his own book. His hands, for some reason he couldn’t do it. You find him at the end saying, “See my mark. See my name.” So there are a couple possibilities. That the arthritis from all the years of struggle; he couldn’t write. There’s a possibility his eye sight was bad. I think I’ve shared with you, I can’t remember, I’ve been here 33 years, I can’t remember if I’ve shared this. But there’s a weird, there’s Greek word in the book of Galatians, this is it. The Greek word here is *ptuó*. What do you say when you were a kid? Ptooeey. This is the Greek word for spit. It’s used in the book of Galatians. Paul says, “I appreciate the fact when I was there you did not spit at me.” Interesting reference. Because in the territory of Galatia, and that book was written to a territory, not a church, in the territory of Galatia, they believe that if someone began to have seizures, that if they spit at them, whatever was causing the seizures in the person would not affect them. And so it may well have been, based on this Greek word, that Paul had epilepsy and the seizures would hit him and people were terrified. So whatever thorn in the flesh is, and for Paul that would have been a terribly embarrassing thing, that you’re somewhere and all of a sudden you’re foaming at the mouth, you’re rolling on the ground. So he begs God, whatever it was, it was horrible, he begs God three times. A guy who’s seen people healed, God says,

⁹No, My grace is sufficient for you. For My power is made perfect in weakness.” So I will boast all the more gladly in my weakness, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

So the other benefit of trials is they release the power of Christ because it’s only in a trial when you’re dependent on Him. We don’t have time to go there, 1 John 4:16 – 19, is a statement about the fact that God loves us. You have to keep that in mind. He wouldn’t have His Spirit interceding nor His Son interceding for you if He did not love you. First thing the enemy will say to you is that He doesn’t love you. As a matter of fact, the enemy will give you, your difficulty from a trial, you’ll struggle with two things. If God’s all-powerful and He loves you, why has this been allowed

in your life? And we have a lady that's generally here who spent two years in the hospital, lost both legs for the rest of her life. And she has developed an incredible humor about it. Brittney was, she came up with some others to my graduation. And so Brittney was shoving her under the table and trying to be careful and Cathy goes, "Hey, I don't have any legs." So even with all that, the fact that God's big enough to heal her and He didn't, and it doesn't mean He doesn't love her. She has trusted in a way that has overcome. You ask her if God loves her. Yes. Is He big enough to handle it? Yes. Did He? No. Does she wish she had her legs? I guarantee you. But is she OK? Yes.

Now, one last thing. Slide over to the book of Habakkuk 2:4. Now Habakkuk has a problem. Israel is vile. They are New Orleans, Louisiana. They are vile. And he doesn't know why God has not judged the nation. And so he asks God a question. He looks at Him and he says, "God, why is this not happening?" And in chapter 2 he says,

¹I will take my stand at my watchpost, station myself on the tower, I will look out to see what He will say to me and what I will answer concerning my complaint. ²The Lord answered me, "Write the vision, put it plain on tablets, so he who may run reads it.

And then he goes on and says,

³The vision awaits its appointed time and hastens to the end it will not lie.

He goes on to talk about the fact that, yes, they're bad, but I am going to deal with it. And then later in the book when God answers that and says, "I'm going to deal with it." He struggles with it because these people that God's bringing in are worse than Israel. And he struggles with it and he asks God about that and God basically says, "Sorry, there is no answer there." But he does say in 2:4

⁴The righteous shall live by His faith.

So there are two things here. There's nothing wrong with you asking God why something's happening in your life. And when somebody says to you, "We shouldn't ask God." He obviously has no problem. And if you're mad and you're afraid to ask, don't worry about it because He already knows you're mad. He knows that you're hacked. So just go to Him. He has no problem with you saying, "Why?" You may, one day, know why. Obviously Joseph, at the end of his life, said, "I know why." Habakkuk will die not knowing why. Most of the people that I know don't know why. Now let me give you one thing and then I'll open it up for questions. The hardest funeral I ever did, and I'll try to get through this without tearing up. The hardest funeral I ever did was a man in Midland that was my best friend, Bill Hight. Peg and I went there, I was 29 when we went there and Bill was in his 50's. He and Faye, and we became extremely close to the family and Bill and I developed a deep, deep friendship. As a matter of fact, every Friday we would meet at Green Tree Country Club and eat the seafood buffet together and just yack together. So we became very close to the family. So Bill went into the hospital and to make a long story short, developed some embolisms and finally the family said, "Dad's dying. Will you come up and see him?" So I went up in the room. All the family's there, two daughters and a son. And he's over on the bed. He's cognizant, but he can't speak. He knows who's in the room, but he can't say anything. He lost it. He's tried to write some things, and he can't get anything out. So I say,

hello, to the kids and I look at Bill. And as I'm in the room he's becoming more and more agitated. And so finally, I look at the family and I said, "Look, it's bothering him. I'm going to leave." And one of them said, "No, I think Dad wants you to sit on the bed with him." So I went over and sat on the bed. He put his arm around me and settled down. I still have his picture in the office. I go home after he died, pulled over, crushed. It's about two days later, his wife and one of his daughters called me, Judy, and said, Faye and Judy called me and said, "Can we see you?" So they came in and sat down and said, "Look, there were a lot of people praying for Dad." And there were. We all knew he was facing a struggle in the hospital. We had deep, deep praying church. So everybody prayed for him. And I left out part of the deal. Bill, Faye and grown up in a home where she was adopted and the parents verbally tortured her. She'd go to the mailbox and they'd say, "No, no, no, no, no. That's our mail. You're adopted. It's not your mail." She'd answer the phone and they'd go, "No, no, no. That's our phone. You're adopted. It's not your phone." I mean they just tortured her. Bill, one of the sweetest men, his sweetness when they married, pulled her out of the darkness she had come out of. So they come in and sit down and look at me and go, "So why would God not answer all these prayers and keep the man that literally through Jesus saved my life?" When you get those questions as a pastor, and at that time I had no answer, so it really stung me. But later that day, I did have an answer. It's the answer I use with children who die early. It's the answer I use with anybody that dies early. I went back to see them and I said, "Look, I don't have all the answers, but I do believe this. That we're focused on 70 or 80 years here. The Father's focused on eternity. We're not going to sit up in heaven and play music and that kind of stuff. We're going to work. He took him home at a time we don't like because He had something for him to do there that's worth our hurt here. And when we see him, we'll know why. But not now." And I think that's the ultimate way with trials. I think they're about Him. I don't think they're about you. And even in the middle of your hurt, He's walking you through it. And there's a reason for it, either over other people's lives as with Joseph or there's a reason for it in your life, but it's never about you and me. It's always about Him and something else. You're going to face them. They'll come through His hand. He's always there.

Questions

- Q.** Back to the heaven thing. That really got my attention. So will God allow you to enter heaven and then send you back or was that....
- A.** If you look at it from a Biblical construct will God allow you to enter into heaven and come back. He did that with Paul so you could argue that would happen. If you do come back, you can't say anything.
- Q.** So I have this woman, she's from the Middle East and she said she became a Christian after her brother almost died. They saved him and they were all Muslim. And he came back saying, "There is fire, it is not good." But not just that there was fire. He knew he was against God. So they had another way. It wasn't Islam. And she searched and they found Christianity to be the way. How does that match up with not supposed to be talking about anything.
- A.** I can't answer all those things. I'm just saying the Bible construct. I don't deal with experiences. Because everybody's got some experience that may or may not be true. So my construct is inside the Scripture. All I can tell you is what Paul said. I don't explain someone else's experience. Can't go there.

Q. Can you slow down and tell us those main points one more time?

A. Trials are always about Him; His glory. Sometimes we will know the purpose. Most of the times we won't. He always does something good in our life through them. He does something good in someone else's life through them. He creates a basis for what He wants to do in the world through them. Sometimes through them none of that occurs, but it's simply to reflect His glory up there through us here. If we live it out, we fill up what is lacking in Christ's affliction so the word can be fully known. So there are reasons. It always comes through God's hands and a lot of times what you're facing is satanic. But He always walks us through it. Spirit prays for us. Jesus intercedes for us. So if you're not a Christian, none of this is yours. These are Christian benefits. By the way now, that's why the word's fully known through us and not through a lost person. We show them how to handle the same trials they do in a way they can't, which is why the church experiences what the world experiences. You will suffer what they suffer. So these knuckleheads on TV that tell you God always wants to heal you, it's just not true.

Q. Can I clarify what I mean by satanic trials?

A. No. It is the question because you do have Job. Satan, with God's authority, bringing trials. It's exactly what Paul says in 2 Corinthians. God's authority allowing satan to bring a trial. There are other times when it's not satan. Obviously Job knew it was and Paul knew it was. So I think maybe there are times when you may know this is satanic. God's allowed it. How's it going to work out in my life. But explaining beyond that, I don't think the Bible explains beyond that. So I don't have anything beyond that. That's the hard thing.

Q. I want to add something to Habakkuk. I was going through a bad trial and I was mad at God. So I was being selfish and I was blaming God. I thought, "I'm going to go back through Chris' sermons." So you had talked about Habakkuk. So I'm going through your notes. One thing you added when we were going through Habakkuk, because I felt like I was in the same place. Why? And none of this make sense. And you said, "OK, this is when you are not going to feel good about it. But you said, "You put the feelings aside, put your faith there. God knows what He's doing, and walk on." And you know, I did that and finally all that bitterness that I was feeling towards God, it all went away. It was just those words.

Q. What verse is it that people say God's not going to give you...

A. Yeah, there's a passage, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

¹³No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.