

# The Easy Way is Usually Not the Right Way!

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 14 February 2016

Preacher: Jim Masters

[ 0 : 00 ] If you would take your Bibles, please, and turn to the book of Acts. Acts chapter 21. Acts 21, if you're visiting with us, you can pull out that black Bible in the chair in front of you.

Go towards the back and find page 110. You'll find Acts 21. We're going to study the first 16 verses of Acts 21.

Acts 21, 1 through 16. Again, page 110 in that black Bible. Acts 21.

I'm going to read, and then we'll do our study. Acts 21. And when it came about that we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Kos.

And the next day to Rhodes, and from there, Patara. Having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre.

[ 1 : 16 ] There the ship was to unload its cargo. And after looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days. And they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem. And when it came about that our days there were ended, we departed and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city.

And after kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another. And we went on board the ship, and they returned home again. Verse 7. And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais.

And after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day. And the next day we departed and came to Caesarea. And entering the house of Philip the Evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.

Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses. As we were staying there for some days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, This is what the Holy Spirit says.

In this way, the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we had heard this, we, as well as the local residents, begged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

[ 2 : 35 ] And Paul answered, What are you doing? Weeping and breaking my heart. For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, The will of the Lord be done. And after these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem.

And some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, Taking us to Manassas of Cyprus, a disciple of longstanding with whom we were to lodge. Let's see if you can name this person.

Who was born into poverty, faced defeat throughout his life, Lost eight different elections, Failed in two different businesses, And suffered from severe depression.

Let me give you a list of, Most of it is the negatives, the failures, Difficulties, that this person faced.

[ 3 : 40 ] Let's see if you can figure who it is. His family was forced out of their home at age seven. He had to go to work. His mother died when he was nine years old.

Later on in life, he failed in his first business. He actually ran for state legislature, lost. He lost his job, he wanted to go to law school, but couldn't get in.

He borrowed money from a friend to begin a business. By the end of the year, it was bankrupt. He spent the next 17 years of his life paying off this debt. Actually what happened was, His friend that he went into business with died, And left him the debt.

He ran for state legislature again. This time he won. He was engaged to be married, But then his sweetheart died of a fever. He suffered a severe episode of depression.

He was in bed for six months. He proposed marriage to another maiden, But she turned him down. He sought to become speaker of the state legislature. He defeated.

[ 4 : 40 ] He was defeated. Oh, thank you. He sought to become an elector. Defeated. Ran for Congress. Lost. Ran for Congress again. This time he won.

He ran for re-election for Congress. Lost. In that time period he got married. He had kids. This time his three-year-old son dies. He ran for Senate of the United States.

Lost. He sought the vice presidential nomination at his party's national convention. He got 110 votes. Wow. Great. Great. He ran for U.S. Senate again.

Again, he lost. But eventually, He was elected president of the United States. Who is it? Abraham Lincoln. One of the greatest presidents of our time.

Are you facing suffering, difficulty, trials, or afflictions of some kind? Today, are you facing suffering or difficulty?

[ 5 : 46 ] In pain. It doesn't mean you shouldn't be facing those things. Because, friends, the easy way is usually not the right way.

As we come to this portion in Acts, Just do it. Be who you are. Let God use us to fulfill His mission. Our passage today is, The title for our passage is, The easy way is usually not the right way.

The easy path is usually not the right path. The easy way is usually not the right path. The easy path is usually not the right path. I'll put in a statement for you.

The easy way is usually not the right path. Or a longer statement, I should say. When God says something will go wrong or is bad, That doesn't necessarily mean He doesn't want you to do it.

Maybe not, but maybe. A closed door. Doesn't necessarily mean that we should not attempt to go through that particular door.

[ 6 : 56 ] But that's how we think, huh? Well, that's a closed door. So that means you're not supposed to go through it? How do you know that? You realize in the Bible, A closed door and open door was only used in reference to an open door or closed door for the gospel.

Has nothing to do with the will of God. In terms of, what should I do with my life? It has nothing to do with that. A decision you have to make. But yet, we think, oh that's a closed door.

So I'm not supposed to do it? Really? How do you know that? Because this is the easy way. And this is the harder way. Well, that's a closed door.

Does the easy way always equal God's will? Does the easy path mean that's what God wants you to do? No.

It doesn't. But you realize that, as I say this, This flies in the face of our American culture.

- [ 8 : 00 ] Where we are taught that we should seek the comfortable, problem-free, less painful, more beneficial way, As opposed to the difficult, full of problems, most painful, harmful, detrimental way.
- Right? What? I mean, that's our American culture. I mean, why would you choose a lazy chair that's not really a lazy chair?
- That's what it's called. It's a lazy, comfortable chair. But that doesn't mean that's what God wants you to do.
- The easy way is usually not the right way. So if we're taking the hard road, A road many of us have to take, Then what confidence do we have?
- We'll look at this more in a moment, But Paul says, I'm ready to be bound even to die for the name of Jesus. How could he say this? Because God gives us everything to do His will, So we enjoy Him in the midst of our pain.
- [ 9 : 19 ] God gives you everything. God will give you everything. God gave Paul everything to do His will, So that Paul could enjoy God, Could enjoy Christ in the midst of the pain.
- So you can enjoy Christ in the midst of your infliction. So you can enjoy Christ in the midst of your suffering. As John Piper puts it, Quote, You will have everything you need to do His will, And be eternally and supremely happy in Him.
- End quote. From His book, Risk is right. God richly supplies us with His grace, So that joyful satisfaction is found in Him alone, Not in our circumstances.
- That's the confidence. That's the only confidence we can have. And is this not the heart of the gospel? Is this not the heart of the gospel?
- Even the very life of Jesus Himself? Aren't you glad that Jesus took the hard road? You know, I really don't want to go to the cross.
- [ 10 : 33 ] Do you guys want me to go to the cross? No! Let's bag that idea. I'm out of here. Aren't you glad that He took the hard, Tough, Difficult, Full of problems and suffering road?
- Because friend, That's how we're saved. That's how we're redeemed. Friend, That's how we're ransomed. It's because of Him taking the hard road.
- It's because the Father was going to unleash His actions. Anger, His righteous justice upon sinners. He was going to unleash it upon Jesus.
- Like when they dump the Gatorade on the coach. The Father was going to dump His anger upon His Son. Aren't you glad He took the hard road and not the easy road?
- That's the heart of the Gospel. So that sinners can be shown grace, Mercy and compassion. So that sinners can be saved. Not only is Jesus our example of taking the hard road, Jesus saves us because He took the hard road.
- [ 11 : 54 ] And if you're here today, You're not a Christian. You need to understand that God showed His love to sinners. He can show His love to you if you turn from your sin and put your trust in Jesus Christ alone.
- He will save you. He will redeem you. He will ransom you. He will show you all His grace and mercy. The easy way is usually not the right way.
- Let's go to our text and let's see how this unfolds in our passage. Verses 1 through 3. This first paragraph describes the one day stops they made during their trip to Jerusalem.
- Again, this is Luke. He's there with Paul now. Paul with his companions, his compadres. He's there going to Jerusalem. And they take this ship pattern to hug the coast.
- It was the safest way to go. They came to coast roads and then to Patera. They found this ship crossing to Phoenicia. In verse 3, they left it.

[ 12 : 57 ] They kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre. Tyre is about 100 miles north of Jerusalem. So they're getting a lot closer. Starting in verse 4.

They looked up some disciples. They stayed there seven days. Notice. And they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.

And when it came about, they said, Hold on a second. Wait a second. What? Huh? Was Paul disobeying God by going to Jerusalem anyways?

Did you catch that? Huh? Huh? Did Paul disobey the Spirit who was telling him not to go to Jerusalem?

No. I don't think so. For two reasons. And we're going to unpack this even more. But let me first start out here by saying, No, I don't believe that for two reasons.

[ 13 : 57 ] First, the exact content of the prophecy through the Holy Spirit is not given to us. So we can't establish that he directly disobeyed. So was Paul disobeying the Spirit by when the Spirit was telling him not to go to Jerusalem?

No, he wasn't disobeying the Spirit because he was not actually told the details of what the Spirit was saying to Paul. We're not told here in verse 4. We're told later. We're going to see that in a moment.

But a second reason, Luke said it was through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's not going to contradict himself. Last time I checked, I don't think God contradicts himself.

He doesn't. We can look elsewhere to get a better grasp of what is meant here. In chapter 20, verse 22, Paul says, Behold, I am bound in the Holy Spirit.

I'm on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, seeing that bonds and afflictions await me. We get a glimpse now of what is meant here that the Spirit was warning Paul, not commanding Paul.

[ 15 : 08 ] So it would be better for us to see chapter 21, verse 4, as a summary of what was said in verse 7 through 14, which we're going to look at in a second. So hold on.

The Spirit was revealing to Paul, to them, what Paul would face in Jerusalem. Trials, tribulations, suffering, the hard road. So in other words, it was a warning, not a prohibition, not to go to Jerusalem.

You might not be convinced at this point. We'll go to the prophecy that takes place in verse 10, 11, and 12. In just a moment, we'll kind of unpack that even more. And I will show you why it's not a prohibition, but it's a warning.

So now we can go into verse 5. Days are ended. They departed. Notice, they all went together escorting Paul and his companions to the beach. They prayed together. They said farewell.

Verse 6, they went on board the ship. And then these people, they returned home again. A sad time for the believers because they knew they weren't going to see Paul again. Verse 7 through 9.

[ 16 : 14 ] From Tyre, they arrived at Ptolemais, greeted brethren. They departed and came to Caesarea. Notice the house that they entered, verse 8.

The house of Philip the Evangelist, who was one of the seven. Notice, he's not called Philip the deacon. Southern Baptist.

Once a deacon, always a deacon. That's not how it works in the text, man. It doesn't say Philip the deacon. It's Philip the Evangelist. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11 and 12.

Jesus gave these gifts. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints to do ministry. He ain't no Philip the deacon.

He's Philip the Evangelist. And notice, he's also one of the seven that was chosen in Acts chapter 6. And also notice, in verse 9, this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.

[ 17 : 17 ] Pious, they were virgins, they were prophets. Prophetesses. Interesting, because this shows us that the Spirit comes on not just men, but on women.

Acts chapter 2. We can unpack that even more, but go to what I preached on in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. You'll see more of what that means about women being prophetesses.

What's even more interesting than what happens is what happens in verse 10. Notice. And they were staying there for some time. A certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

Coming to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands. This is what the Holy Spirit says, he said. In this way, the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

Isn't it striking that a prophet comes down from Judea? How come the prophetesses don't say this? Isn't that interesting?

[ 18 : 19 ] Agabus says this, not the four prophetesses that were Philip's daughters. Striking. But then there's something else. Second, we have a specific content of a prophecy here.

The Spirit's word about Paul to Paul and all the guys around him. He's going to be arrested, face affliction trial. He took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet.

In this way, the Holy Spirit says, in this way, that he's going to bind him, deliver him to the Gentiles. This is what's going to happen. Paul would suffer like Jesus in some way.

Now, due to the nature of this prophecy, a lot has been talked about with these two verses, verse 10 and 11 of chapter 21. And so, what we need to do, we have to deal with some major issues.

We have some major issues to discuss. I don't want to lose you at this point because we want to stick with our main theme that we see arising out of the text. The easy way is usually not the right way.

[ 19 : 26 ] But I need to unpack some of these terms. So, if I can, please let me, allow me to establish and to define some terms for us. First, let me define for you what it means to be a continuationist and a cessationist.

A continuationist is one who believes that all the gifts of the Spirit continue today. Specifically, miracles, healings, tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy. A cessationist is one who believes these ecstatic gifts ceased when the apostles died.

I would be a cessationist. So, what happens is there's no need for an authentication or verification of God's speaking. Once the apostles died, we have the completed canon.

There's no need for those gifts. They ceased with the apostles when they died. That's what's called cessationist. Now, I personally and others differentiate continuationists from charismatics.

Continuationists, they don't believe the ecstatic gifts are normative. Nor do they believe them to be an evidence of salvation. Whereas those from a charismatic point of view, usually, they do believe it's normative.

[ 20 : 42 ] And in many instances, they believe it's an evidence of salvation. So, I differentiate those two as well as others. Now, we have to come to this particular aspect of prophecy. Continuationists and cessationists positions on prophecy.

Continuationists believe prophecy continues today, though not with the same authority as Old Testament prophets or Old Testament prophecy. The latter, cessationists like myself, says New Testament prophets were equivalent to Old Testament prophets.

So, they were authoritative and yet they ceased after the first century. With continuationists, there is a viewpoint that they have and they define it as fallible prophecy.

It's espoused by Dr. Wayne Grudem and D.A. Carson, amongst others. They actually also call it congregational prophecy, which is fallible, non-authoritative, and continues through the church age.

They don't think it's equivalent to Old Testament prophecy. They think Old Testament prophets are equivalent to the apostles. So, what does this fallible prophecy mean?

[ 22 : 03 ] congregation? It consists of personal impressions from God interpreted by the prophet and reported to the congregation. The congregation is not bound to obey it but to consider it carefully.

It's like spirit-led advice. Again, it's God guiding his people through personal impressions. And so, why am I bringing this up? Because this is one of the key passages that's used by those who are continuationists that say that this prophecy by Agabus is fallible.

Why? Because they say he doesn't get the details right. They didn't bind Paul. They didn't deliver Paul to the Gentiles. Agabus is kind of, he gives a prophecy but it's fallible.

He got the details wrong. Some continuations believe that Agabus is God's prophecy wrong and thus it's an example of fallible prophecy.

Really? He got this wrong? This is not fallible prophecy, friends. Let me give you some key chief points about Agabus' prophecy.

[ 23 : 18 ] First of all, notice how it says in verse 11, this is what the Holy Spirit says. You know, call me stupid. But whenever it says, thus saith the Lord, or this is what the Holy Spirit says, I don't think God kind of gets things wrong.

What do you think? I'm being sarcastically facetious, I know. But really, I mean, seriously, if this is what the Holy Spirit says, just some of the details are kind of off, but just kind of get the general idea, please.

I don't think God works that way. If God, this phrase, this is what the Holy Spirit says, is like the prophetic, altars of prophetic foreman that says, thus saith the Lord.

Isaiah wasn't given some spirit-led advice, nor was Agabus. point number two. The Jews did take Paul captive.

In fact, there's no reason to assume that the Jews did not bind Paul with some kind of physical restraints. In chapter 21, verse 30, it says the city was aroused, the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul, they seized him.

[ 24 : 34 ] There's no reason for us to assume that they did not bind Paul with some type of physical restraints. point number three. Jewish involvement in binding Paul was causative in that the Jews would be responsible for arresting Paul.

So they would be responsible for arresting Paul. In other words, they were the ones who were going to deliver him to the Gentiles. Which leads to key point number four. Paul testified that the Jews delivered him over to the Romans in 28, 17.

He actually said it. It's the same word that Agabus states here in chapter 21. Verse 11, 28, 17. Paul says, Brethren, though I had not done anything against our people or the custom of our fathers, yet I was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

It's the same word that Agabus uses here in 21. They're going to deliver him to the Romans. Paul says, I was delivered to the Romans by them. It's all that to say, this is not a fallible prophecy.

This is a direct prophecy from the word of the Lord. God said to Paul, you're going to face the hard road. I'm warning you. It's a warning.

[ 25 : 55 ] It's not, don't go to Jerusalem. Don't take the hard road. He's telling them, you're taking the hard road. I'm going to have you take the hard road. And I'm warning you, it's going to be a hard road. If one adopts this view of fallible prophecy, by the way, the church will have a hard time identifying and refuting false prophecy.

You leave things open to subjectivism, feelings-based speaking. This is very dangerous. You can manipulate people.

The word of the Lord says this. Now, again, I understand it should not be taken as authoritative, but people may take it that way still. It can be very dangerous.

Now, going back to our text here in 21, notice how the brethren responded to this prophecy, infallible, accurately authoritative prophecy from Agabus.

Verse 12. And when we'd heard this, we, as well as the local residents, begged Paul, don't go to Jerusalem. Ah!

[ 27 : 11 ] Now, we can understand what chapter 21, verse 4 was really talking about here. They were really sad. They're telling Paul, don't go.

They're pleading with him, don't go. With tears, the actual text means, with tears. Oh, please, Paul, don't go to Jerusalem. What two points are being displayed here? First, the revelatory warning from the Holy Spirit which is authoritatively accurate, revealing afflictions awaited Paul.

But second, the reaction of Paul's companions and the other believers. Heartfelt, but wrong.

See, now we understand what they were doing in 21, verse 4. The Spirit wasn't telling him not to go to Jerusalem. They were telling him not to go to Jerusalem.

What they meant to be so loving. We care so much for you, Paul. Don't do this. Friends, that was something that Paul should not listen to.

[ 28 : 21 ] Wait, wait. Should not listen to taking the easy road? Yeah. Yeah. And notice Paul's reaction.

13. What are you doing? Weeping. You're breaking in pieces my heart, is what the word means. You're pounding on my emotions.

Notice he says, he was ready to be bound and even to die for the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul took the revelatory prophecy as a warning, not a prohibition.

Paul was not disobeying the Holy Spirit. He was doing what the Holy Spirit was compelling him to do. He's realizing, it's God's plan for me to take the hard road.

It's God's plan for me to take the difficult way. It's God's plan for me to take the difficult path. Death. This is not a fallible prophecy.

[ 29 : 35 ] Paul was ready to risk his life for the sake of the gospel. He was ready and willing to move ahead in spite of the warnings given to him from the Holy Spirit. He was ready. And we already asked the question why.

How? Why is he able to do this? Paul, I'm ready to be bound and even to die for the name of Jesus. How? Because God gives us everything to do his will so that we enjoy him in the midst of our pain.

God wisely supplies us with his grace so that joyful satisfaction is found in him alone, not in our circumstances. And notice that this in verse 14, seeing that he would not be able to be persuaded, he fell silent remarking, the will of the Lord be done.

The believers who loved him, they said, let God's will be done for him. Oh, we love you. We love you so much.

We want you to take the easy road. Let God's will be done. And this should be our response when we do face difficulty, trials, or suffering.

[ 31 : 01 ] Instead of bailing out of the affliction, or praying that I could bail out of the affliction, we should embrace it as God's plan for our lives and ask for grace to endure.

But that's not how we react, is it? Normally we say, God, what the heck are you doing? Get me out of this. Or maybe I'm the only one who prays that.

In 15 and 16, these days we got ready, started our way to Jerusalem. Manson was in Jerusalem, maybe outside Jerusalem. They stayed there with him. He was a disciple of longstanding.

and thus ends Paul's third missionary journey. Friends, this passage shows us that sometimes well-intentioned people who dearly love us can be wrong about what God desires.

In other words, the easy way is usually not the right way. some may not understand why the harder, more difficult path must be taken. I mean, we want it to be an easy, comfortable, safe, secure road, path, way.

[ 32 : 32 ] And we pray to that end. And yet maybe that's not what God wants. many times it's not what God wants.

Many times, friends, the easy way is not the right way to take a statement that flies in the face with everything we grew up with, everything our culture screams at us, all that we're taught, it goes against that.

Paul knew what God wanted him to do, and where he wanted him to go. He was prepared to pay the price of his life to do it. Yes, he could have avoided it. Think about it.

It would be so easy. Think about it. Paul could say, you know what, remember, he had some of the money from the churches, he was going to give it to the church in Jerusalem.

him. So he could have said, you know what, Timothy, why don't you guys just take it? I'm going to chill out with Philip and Caesarea. Just kind of hang. I'm going to make it back up to Antioch.

[ 33 : 42 ] I'm going to do a trip to Rome from there, and then I'm going to go to Spain. He could have done that, huh? That would have been a lot, say it, easier, safer, right?

It should have been a whole lot easier. It should have been a whole lot safer, wouldn't it? This applies to any number of situations that we deal with in life, especially when we deal with evangelism, missions, life's choices, a career path.

life. Just because something is hard, difficult, or seems to be a closed door, that doesn't mean no.

Just because something that we do or want to do will be really hard, doesn't necessarily mean that's the very thing we should not do. Well, that's going to be hard, so I'm not supposed to do it.

That's a closed door. How do you know that? How do you know you're not supposed to try and go through the closed door? How do you know if that's the point of why it looks like it's a closed door?

[ 35 : 03 ] Maybe the open door is the wrong way for you to go. You ever thought about that? But that's our culture, isn't it?

That's how we grew up. Why would you decide to do something that's hard? I mean, people would be like, are you stupid? Or what? Right?

Why would you decide to do something? There's going to be trials here, but I'm going to go and do it. Are you nuts? Why would you do something that's going to bring pain? Or suffering? you? Why would you do something that's going to bring hurt?

I mean, think about it. Isn't that what Jesus said? If you're willing to come after me, you must take up this furry little bunny and follow me.



I want to be a Christian. What did he say? Deny yourself.

[ 36 : 07 ] Take up the cross. Now for us, we're like, take up the cross, yeah, we're all the time. We're on my neck. You say that in the first century? Okay, who wants to sign up to be hung up and suffocate to death?

Me. You want to suffocate to death? How many of you want to hang up on a cross naked? Not me. Do you want to do that?

They knew what Jesus meant by that. You're crazy. I'm not going to do that. I don't want to hang naked on a cross. I don't want to suffocate to death.

Are you nuts? That's why not a lot of people want to become a Christian, huh? Why would you decide to do something that's going to bring hurt and pain?

Now, what I'm not saying, I'm not talking about moral decisions like, you know, I know it's going to be hard, but I'm going to divorce my spouse anyways. No, no, that's not what we're talking about here.

[ 37 : 14 ] Okay? But like choosing a career path or changing something. me going to Jerome, I mean, I go there and people, there's people who just can't stand us being there.

They just despise us. Just being there, not even talking, even saying hi. They say, I have disdain for you. Here's another example.

Exercising. Like running, lifting weights. you run, you lift, the next day, I can't move. You're sore.

Somebody touches you, I don't know how to touch before. But you do it anyways. And some people look at you and say, you're an idiot, why are you doing that? Because supposedly, it makes me faster, stronger, bigger.

But it's hard, it's difficult. There's pain involved, that's the reason why not everyone does it. right? That's the reason why not everyone follows Jesus.

[ 38 : 27 ] Now, again, what I'm not saying is that unless you have a horrible life, you're not really serving Jesus Christ. Oh, I need to have a horrible life or I'm not really a Christian. No, that's not what I'm saying.

Come on. Or I'm not saying that you have to take risks for selfish, self-exalting reasons. That's wrong too. Now, I'm not saying we should always, always choose the harder, tougher road.

That's dangerous. That's not wise. Why would I take Schnebly Hill Road instead of going 179 to I-17? I mean, isn't it funny you watch tours? Oh, look at sweetie, we go Schnebly Hill Road, it'll be the easiest route to take, let's go.

Into little smart cars, right? Oh my goodness, oh no. Right? Now, I'm not saying you do that, okay? I get that. Maybe I'm not able to take Schnebly Hill Road.

Some of us are not able to take that route because we don't have the right vehicle or something's wrong with our current vehicle or something like that. that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about how most of us play it safe.

[ 39 : 38 ] Most of us make choices that will bring the most comfort to us. And most of us don't like pain. And we don't want pain. I mean, can I tell you, when we got that flu, like a month, a couple months ago, I was so angry at God.

I'm like, what are you doing? I just prayed that morning, thanking you that we have not been sick, and you screwed me over. I was mad.

I was angry. And I was sinful. But most of us want to be entertained, rather than give sacrificial love.

Most of us settle for pleasure. would rather settle for pleasure than any type of adversity whatsoever. That's how we roll in America, isn't it?

And yet, remember, friends, that easy way, it's usually not the right way. And remember, God gives us everything to do His will.

[ 40 : 57 ] So we enjoy Him in the midst of our pain. And think of it this way, it's an opportunity to identify with our Lord. It's an opportunity for you to identify with your Savior.

our Father, our Father, we know how we're so prone to this.

We know we make choices that's going to be comfortable. and it's there and we realize it but we pray. When those painful, hurtful, sorrowful times happen in our lives, and instead of cursing you like you heard me curse you, needing your forgiveness.

And thank you that you gave it to me, even though I'm an idiot. Your grace would so overwhelm us.

Your love would so overtake us. Once you love us in Jesus Christ, and though there's afflictions that are there, we can say, we overwhelmingly conquer.

[ 42 : 39 ] Because we're convinced, neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from your love for us, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Satisfy us. us long for you. Amen. Let's take a few more moments.

Just ponder, think, some time of quiet solitude at this point in our service. Think, mull over what we've seen in God's Word.

We'll take a few moments to do that, then we'll do our time of giving, sing our last two songs with our closing prayer. Ponder what we've seen in God's Word. May the Spirit convict you and comfort you, encourage you and exhort you.

Lord, 're wide and that's your hope.

[ 43 : 55 ] Thank you.