

Trials of the redeemed – a brief discussion

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[0 : 00] We're now going to read from God's Word, so if you can turn to Exodus chapter 15. We'll start at verse 22, and we'll end at chapter 17, verse 7.

Then the Lord made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days into the wilderness and found no water.

When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter. Therefore it was named Marah. And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

And he cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord made a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, saying, If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians.

For I am the Lord your healer. Then they came to Elam, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water.

[1 : 32] They set out from Elam, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elam and Sinai. On the fifteenth day of the second month, after they had departed from the land of Egypt.

And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the people of Israel said to them, Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, where we sat by the meat pots, and ate bread for the full.

For you have brought us out to this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Then the Lord said to Moses, Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day that I may test them, whether they will walk in the law or not.

On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily. So Moses and Aaron said to the people of Israel, At evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

And in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against the Lord. For what are we that you grumble against us?

[3 : 05] And Moses said, When the Lord gives you in the evening meat to eat, and in the morning bread to the full, because the Lord has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him, what are we?

Your grumbling is not against us, but against the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, Come near before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.

As soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked towards the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

And the Lord said to Moses, I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread, and then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.

In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground.

[4 : 24] And when the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, What is it? For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.

This is what the Lord has commanded. Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of persons that each of you has in the tent.

And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left, whoever gathered little had no lack.

Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. And Moses said to them, Let no one leave any of it till the morning. But they did not listen to Moses.

Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat, but when the sun grew hot, it melted.

[5 : 38] On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, he said to them, This is what the Lord has commanded.

Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will bake, and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over is to be, all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.

So they laid it aside till the morning as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it. Moses said, Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord.

Today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none. On the seventh day, some of the people went out together, but they found none.

And the Lord said to Moses, How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? See, the Lord has given you the Sabbath. Therefore, on the sixth day, he gives you bread for two days.

[6 : 45] Remain each of you in his place. Let no one go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day. Now the house of Israel called its name Manna.

It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. And Moses said, This is what the Lord has commanded. Let an oma of it be kept throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread which I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.

And Moses said to Aaron, Take a jar and put an oma of manna in it and place it before the Lord to be kept throughout your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony to be kept.

The people of Israel ate the manna for forty years till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan. An oma is the tenth part of an ephah.

All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of sin by stages according to the commandment of the Lord and camped at Rephidim.

[8 : 02] But there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, Give us water to drink. And Moses said to them, Why do you quarrel with me?

Why do you test the Lord? But the people thirsted there for the water and the people grumbled against Moses and said, Why did you bring us out of Egypt? To kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?

So Moses cried to the Lord, What shall I do with his people? They are almost ready to stone me. And the Lord said to Moses, Pass on before the people taking with you some of the elders of Israel and taking your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go.

Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb and you shall strike the rock and water shall come out of it and the people will drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel and he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrelling of the people of Israel and because they tested the Lord by saying, Is the Lord among us or not?

This is God's word. May he bless it to us. Good morning, church.

[9 : 31] How are you all doing? Good morning. Yeah, so nice day outside. Thank you all to be here and really appreciate the opportunity to be able to share God's word with you all today again.

Yeah, I get a bit emotional every time I sing this song. I know I actually asked for the song and I don't know why I did it. Yeah, it reminds me of a really tough time that I had when we were away in the U.S.

and I was studying in a seminary and yeah, my wife was suffering from a lot of health issues.

A little bit depressing, you know, leaving family and friends and everything behind and you know, the Lord has provided every day and so if I start crying during the sermon, you know why.

Yeah, why don't we pray before we start? Yeah. Oh Lord, you're just so faithful. Remember when I was young, I felt like we'd conquered a world.

[10 : 44] Nothing bad or that bad really ever happens. But Lord, life is hard that we thank you that morning by morning you show your mercies to us.

And today, Lord, as we look into your word, may that same mercy be with us so that our hearts are not hardened and that your word will change our lives today and forevermore.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Right, so last week Dave spoke from Exodus 12 to 15 about how God with his mighty hands redeemed the people of Israel from slavery by offering through the blood of Passover the Passover lamb and God destroyed all the pursuing enemies, the Egyptians, in the Red Sea.

So when you read chapter 15, Exodus, the first three quarters of the chapter describes how the entire Israel, like a million people, were singing praises to the Lord and Miriam and all the women got out their instrument and started dancing away.

It was like a great party, the greatest party the world has ever seen. It was an amazing time, happy times, but great times don't always last.

[12 : 30] In today's reading we see that three days into the wilderness and they ran into some major, major issues. Imagine one million people out in the desert somewhere with no water and then they ran out of bread and then they ran out of water again.

It's like, you know, if some of you heard of or seen the images of or been to one of those Taylor Swift concerts or like a weekend concert that had happened recently, it's like 80,000 people each time, right?

We have 20 times that people but there's no lights, no Wi-Fi, no music, no sound, no nothing. It was a disaster. So what's going on here?

One minute is celebration and the next minute everything is falling apart. Across Exodus 15, 22 to 17, 7 there's an account of God putting Israel through a series of three trials just before they got to Mount Sinai to receive God's covenant law.

So today we're going to talk about the trials of the redeemed. I call it a brief discussion. Why? Because it's such a huge topic. So given the time we have we can only scratch to service.

[13 : 57] So if you believe that God wants Christians to never suffer but be materially rich and healthy and happy all the time, that's the prosperity gospel in a nutshell.

I hope our passage today may show you what the Bible thinks of that. and if you are going through some trying times at the moment whether it's a difficult job whether there are some relational issues at home with spouses or kids whether there is suffering with your loved ones with physical and mental health elderly care needs and so on my hope and prayer is that today's message will comfort and also encourage you.

If you have some experience of trials in the past but everything is a-okay at the moment I also hope that this Bible passage today may help prepare you for the next big one because they do and they tend to come.

Today's sermon will have two main sections. Section one is on understanding trials and then section two is going to be on responding to trials. Let's go into section one understanding trials.

In the Bible there are different types of hardships that are highlighted. Some hardships are consequences of our sins. For example David lost his child born to Bathsheba after he basically committed adultery with her and had murdered her husband Uriah.

[15 : 36] You see that in 2 Samuel chapter 12. And in 1 Peter 4 when Peter wrote to the Christians he said that fiery trials are given to Christians.

Don't treat that as a surprise. But at the same time do not suffer as a murderer or thief etc. I told you trials come right?

Yeah. So if you rob the bank or drive recklessly and end up in jail that is a consequence of sin which is not our focus today. And there are other hardships too.

We often call trials and they are God ordained not because of any specific wrongdoings. God gives them to his people for a good reason not to fail or to break anyone.

And we see that in Exodus 15 22 to 23. If you read the verses here it just says that God simply led through Moses Israel into the wilderness where there's no water to be found.

[16 : 44] And when they finally come to some sort of oasis and they found some water the water was not drinkable it was bitter. At that point in time have they done anything bad or naughty or said anything bad that deserves punishment?

In fact over the last couple of verses like the whole chapter before this they were just singing and dancing and praising God for his redemption. And similarly in Job 1 they also record a conversation between God and Satan on Job is to go through some serious trials not because he was sinful but because he was righteous.

He ended up losing what? His wealth his health his kids but God allowed it all for good purpose. Some might say that God kept his wife as a punishment but let's not go there for now.

This is the kind of trial or hardship we will focus on today. God giving trials to his people for a good purpose. And there is another kind of hardship too which is neither of the above.

Like in John 9 there was a blind man who was born blind. Disciples asked Jesus why was this guy blind? His sins or his parents? And what did Jesus say? He was neither.

[18 : 02] He was blind simply to show the works of God to bring glory to him. So this is not the type of hardship we will look into either. We will leave that for another time. Okay, so why does God give his people trials?

Why test a person through hardship? Well, for a variety of reasons. First, it's to reveal, which is in your bulletin, or prove a person's nature or character.

In the Exodus 15-17 story today, Israel proved to be a rebellious nation full of people, full of resentment. Three times they lacked food and water, and what did they do?

Three times they grumbled. Twice they accused God of wanting to mass murder them by withholding food and water, despite his saving grace. In Exodus 16, God told them he would provide them with manna daily, okay, so do not keep the manna until the next morning.

But what did they do? They disobeyed and kept the manna, so it stank and started going wormy. God also told them to stop gathering on the seventh day, that is, keep the Sabbath to the Lord, and they went out and gathered.

[19 : 19] Now, keeping Sabbath, and in fact, all of God's command, are God's call to his people into sonship, not into another form of slavery. God wants his people to reflect his character and the things that he does.

So God rested on the seventh day, so he wants his people, his sons and daughters, to be like him. Be holy because I am holy, and like Jesus said, be perfect because your Father in heaven is perfect.

God's call to obey is not to call people into slavery, put a huge burden or yoke on them, but to call them into sonship, like father, like son.

But the people of Israel did not get it. They were proven to be a rebellious people. And Jesus, in Matthew 4, on the other hand, was also led into the wilderness to be tried and tested.

For 40 days, he had no food or drink, but he didn't grumble a single time. In fact, Satan tempted him with all the tricks to repeat Israel's prior mistakes, which we saw in the passage today.

[20 : 38] But Jesus proved to be absolutely obedient to God as the Son of God, whom God is well pleased. And that is the first thing that God declared when Jesus came out of being baptized by John the Baptist.

With us as Christians, God uses trials to reveal our character, how broken we are, and how much we need him, and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The beauty is that he does not judge us by our character, because we are hidden in Christ, as Paul says in Colossians 3, chapter 3, verse 3. It is like we are pieces of silver jewelry, and if you're familiar with silver, or have some silver earrings, whatever, they always go black.

That is us, that's our character, that is how we're supposed to be judged. But what we need is to be gold-plated, and Jesus is our gold, he covers us all the way through and through, so that when God sees us, he only sees Jesus' character, which is pure gold.

God gives his people trials to prove their nature and character. That is the first reason God puts his people through trials. The second reason God gives his people trials is to humble and teach his people, us, to live God-dependent lives.

[22 : 01] In Exodus 16, the Israelites started to complain about their food. It's been 45 days since they left Egypt, so their bread had probably run out. God gave them a few simple commands related to the manna, how much to gather on each day, and how long to keep and not to keep the manna, etc.

Why? God says in Exodus 16, 4, and you can take a look with me, he says, that I may test them whether or not they will walk in my instruction.

To walk in, in the Hebrews mind, is to not go for a hike, but to live with or live by. In Deuteronomy 8, verse 3, when Moses was speaking of this same manna incident to the Israelites, he further explained that God humbled you and let you be hungry and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know that he might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

In other words, true living is not by what goes into our mouth, but what comes out of God's mouth. God's put people through trials in order to humble them so that they may experience how life-giving and dependable his every word is.

American author Joni Erickson Tata, who suffered a diving accident when she was a teenager and was made quadriplegic, basically paralyzed from the neck down, one said that in a way, I hope I can take my wheelchair to heaven with me.

[23 : 50] I know that this is not biblically correct, but if I were able, I would have my wheelchair up in heaven right next to me when God gives me my brand new glorified body.

and I will then turn to Jesus and say, Lord, do you see the wheelchair right here? Well, you were right when you said that in this world we would have trouble, because that wheelchair was a lot of trouble.

But Jesus, the weaker I was in that thing, the harder I leaned on you. And the harder I leaned on you, the stronger I discovered you to be.

What a prayer.

Instead of praying for the Lord to take away our trials, maybe we should pray and ask God to make us better at leaning on him through our trials.

[25 : 06] A step at a time and a day at a time. The third reason, the third point I would like to share about the why of trials, it's not so much about the why of trials, but to talk to others about the why of trials.

trials. When people are going through actual trials and sufferings, a most natural question people tend to ask is why. And we can see that in Exodus chapter 17 verse 3.

The Israelites asked why. Why? Why? But what these people who are in pain most likely don't need is for us to give them a lecture on how the Lord is using trials to reveal their character or to humble them.

That's not what they need. They also don't need us to tell them in a personal way that they are being punished because they did something wrong, like Job's friend did to Job when he was suffering his losses.

And I've learned from my spiritual mentors, much wiser men than me who are in their 80s, that the best we can do is what Paul says in Romans 12, chapter 15, and I read, Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

[26 : 33] And if the people who are suffering push us on why a good God would allow such a bad thing to happen, like I was once asked by a man in front of his whole family, why would God, if he's good, allow my 12-year-old daughter to die of a car accident, the best thing to say is, I do not know why, but I know that God is good and that he is faithful.

So in explaining the why of trials to people who are hurting, it is best to be a listener and not a lecturer. This concludes section 1, the understanding of trials today, and so let's move on to section 2.

section 2 is on responding to trials, and I will share three tendencies and something about overcoming them.

First tendency when facing trials is that people and us tend to bitterly grumble against the Lord. Once upon a time, a middle-aged monk, nothing against middle-aged men, by the way, that's me by the way, named Gabriel, checked into a monastery in Europe where monks are supposed to practice the spiritual discipline of solitude, which means they don't talk to anyone, they'll hide in their room for five years, and they're not allowed to speak a single word to anybody for the whole year until the end of the year when they will be summoned into this headmaster's room, like the head monk, and they will be allowed to share just two words, like a summary of everything that they contemplated for the whole year.

And so, the first year had passed, and Gabriel showed up at this head monk's office, and then the head monk asked him, your two words, and Gabriel said, bad food.

[28 : 39] I quit.

grumble. And the head monk said, Gabriel, I'm not surprised, because all you did since your arrived was grumble. In these three wilderness incidents where Israel lacked water and food that we read today, the word grumble was used ten times.

Don't count it now, I actually counted for you. Yeah. Instead of keeping up with praising the Lord and rescuing them through the ten plagues, which wasn't that long ago, all they did was grumble since they got there.

Not a single word of gratitude. The wilderness had quickly turned worship into whinging. Does God know what he's doing?

Is the Lord really for us? How is this fair? That's the heart behind the grumbling, a heart of distrust that is not different to that of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when Satan was testing them.

[30 : 16] Have we not felt the same in our own wilderness moments, my friends and brothers and sisters? Do we not sing praises on Sundays and then on Monday before lunch when things don't go as we planned it, we already start whinging?

A way to overcome the bitterness that swells up in our hearts whenever we face our trials and suffering is to remember the Lord's past faithfulness.

Where is that in our passage today? In fact, that's all over our passages today. You see all this naming that's going on in Exodus 15 to 17.

In Exodus 15 to 15:23, Moses talks about this place where they found bitter water. What did he do? They named it Marah.

And then in verse 17:7, where Moses struck the rock to get the water, he named it Massa and Meribah. Marah, Massa, Meribah. And Massa, Meribah literally means test and strive.

[31 : 28] Why all this naming? You call something something to help you recall something. That's what it is. All this naming is to help people remember how great God's faithfulness was towards Israel despite their unbelief.

These were all done and all named so that people may remember how the Lord graciously provided and provided and provided to an ungrateful people that did nothing but grumble.

And beside Marah, Massa, Meribah, there's also one more name in the passage. What is it? Manna. Right? Yeah, Manna.

I wonder why all these M's? Manna means what is it? And in Exodus 16:32, the Lord commanded them to keep a jar of manna, not for one day, not for one week, but for future generations, a jar of manna like a two-liter bottle that never expires.

Why? So that the future generations of Israel may remember that the Lord had faithfully been feeding their ancestors for 40 whole years in the wilderness, every single day.

[32 : 48] To overcome our distrusting heart in the wilderness, we need to turn whinging into worship, start recounting his blessings and how the Lord has shown us undeserved grace again and again and again, from our daily bread to our everyday breath to all the good times we had and all the bad times and trials that we have experienced to date.

And then somehow they have magically dissipated. The Lord has been faithful. Remember God's grace all the way to the cross.

That way, even in the midst of a major trial, we may pray what Job prayed in Job chapter 1. The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. And also in Job 19 where he said, For I know that my Redeemer lives and at last he will stand upon the earth.

that's the first tendency when we face trials, bitterly grumble against the Lord. The second tendency when we face trial is to lust after our old lives.

[34 : 08] Life would have been better if I weren't a Christian, wouldn't it? Exodus 16.3, as we see it, the sons of Israel said, With that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt when we sat by the pots of meat when we ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Did Egyptians really let the Israelites have lamb stew for dinner or bread to the full? That's questionable, isn't it?

were they really dying of hunger out in the wilderness? I don't think so. The Israelites said in chapter 17 verse 3 that they needed water not just for them and their kids, but their livestock.

They have all these cows and goats and probably chicken as well running around needing water. So how are they dying of hunger? There's no way they're dying of hunger.

So what's going on with these folks? Well, they were physically redeemed from slavery, but their hearts still in Egypt. Dissatisfied with their circumstances, they began imagining in their heads that life was better in Egypt and that their future as promised under this Yahweh God was overrated.

[35 : 38] When facing trials, have you ever said to yourself that things used to be so much better when I was not a Christian? I know I have. When I was not a Christian, I could steal, I could lie, I could cheat in my tax returns, indulge in food, alcohol, gambling, watch dodgy shows, do anything without feeling too bad about it.

Wasn't life so much more fun and satisfying? Before I was Christian? Absolutely. So when I was going through a marriage meltdown, or when I was having a bad patch in my corporate career, or when my kids were driving me insane, checking that she's there and listening, you know, I was literally thinking about these things, yes, life was good, what am I doing here as a Christian?

I've lusted after my good old lives and my good old days. I'm not proud of it, but that's what I've done, and I may do it again during hard times.

So how can we overcome the lust of our old lives? One of my mentors, Dr. John Hanna, his name, once said that you can't just will away something sweet unless you replace it with something sweeter.

You can't just think and say, oh, I'm going to stop it, you know, you can't just will it away. In response to Israel's lust after their imaginary good lives in Egypt, the Lord literally had provided something sweeter to them as a replacement.

[37 : 13] He rained down manna, which 1631 says, tasted like wafers with honey. Now, that's a whole lot of sugar in their mouths. And for Christians, he didn't just rain down manna, but sent his own beloved son, the true manna of heaven, to be broken for us and to fill our thirsty hearts to the full.

Jesus said in John 6 35, and this is preached not too long ago, I'm the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Notice here that Jesus didn't say in past tense, whoever came to me and believed in me will never hunger or thirst. Both actions comes and believes are in present tense.

to be fulfilled by Jesus is to come and to trust in him day by day, moment by moment, savouring his sweet amazing grace that saves a wretch like me.

Only Christ and what he has done is sweet and satisfying enough to overcome the lust of our lives and of our old lives in the midst of our trials.

[38 : 33] So that's the second tendency when we face trials, lusting after our old lives. And the third tendency, and this will be our last point today, when facing trials, is we could be putting God on trial when trials persist.

When Israel arrived at Revedim, which means the place of rest in Exodus 17, they had already grumbled about the water and about the food. And here again, they ran out of water.

What is different this time is that they have escalated the issue into some sort of lawsuit against Moses and against God. They quarreled or contended with Moses in verse 2, accused God of attempting to murder them by thirst in verse 3, and they threatened to stone Moses in verse 4.

That's basically getting ready to execute him. God's perspective, they were testing the Lord by questioning his presence in verse 7, chapter 17, and trying his patience.

They were effectively saying to God, where are you? Show me the water. In a nutshell, they are putting his character and his existence on trial when trials persisted.

[40 : 00] From our perspective, we may think that Israel are just being ridiculous, but now they have experienced no less than 14 plagues, right? Ten plagues in Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, turning bitter into sweet, and then raining down quail, raining down manna, and there are more.

How on earth can they say, is the Lord amongst us or not, in verse 7? The point here is that seeing is not always believing.

God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

He told Moses to take the same staff that he used, which struck the water in Egypt and turned the water in blood, and then bring a group of elders to Mount Sinai, that's Horeb, struck the rock, and miraculously caused water to gush out, enough to feed over a million people in the wilderness.

That is something like two million litres of water a day. The Israelites were contending with God and putting him to the test, but God, instead of giving blood which they deserved, comforted them with plenty of water and gave them rest.

[41 : 21] As Christians, let us be reminded that we are not immune to similar behaviours to the Israelites. When things don't work out the way we want for a very, very, very long time, we may be keeping to pray and pray and pray, but there is silence.

There seems to be no answer. Don't we sometimes test God by asking him, God, show me a sign? Or God, how about we do a deal?

If I do that, do this, why don't you do that for me? Take my trials away. That is actually testing God and as we saw in Matthew, that is exactly what Satan did when he tested Jesus.

Indeed, the Lord has been even more gracious to us than to the Israelites in Exodus in so many ways. You know the rock that Moses struck and the water came flying out?

In 1 Corinthians 10, verse 4, Paul says that rock is Christ. On the cross, Christ took the trial that we deserved and was condemned for our sins, not his, and was struck not by a staff, but a spear.

[42 : 44] John 19, 33 to 34 tells us that both blood and water came out when that spear went into Christ's side, for you and for me.

So what are the implications for us when we face trials and trials persist? For those of us who are in Christ, our trials are purifications like gold being refined by fire, and they are not God's judgment because Jesus had taken God's judgment for us.

Trials can be painful, but they are loving disciplinary actions or training, not wrathful abuse. Think of a swimming coach telling his team to do 100 push-ups.

He's not there to break them. He's there to make them stronger. Romans chapter 8 verse 1 says, there's now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

When trials persist, let us rest in the fact that God is not putting us back onto the stand to try us. His court is adjourned, and for now, he is sanctifying us, making us become more like Jesus before he returns.

[44 : 05] When trials persist, there can also be time when we feel like that God has abandoned us or has turned his face away from us and has caused everyone else to do the same.

That's just like the psalmist in Psalms 88. This psalmist was feeling totally hopeless and he did not even have the strength to write something like, I still trust in you, O Lord, like most of the lament psalms do.

But God's actual presence is not dependent on our perceived feelings. God will always accept rather than abandon us because Christ, bearing our sins on the cross, had already taken the abandonment that we deserve.

The Bible also tells us again and again that our God, Jesus Christ's presence and his works continue on earth even though he's now gone to be with the Father.

His presence and his work continues through the Holy Spirit that now lives in us. We can grieve and quench the Holy Spirit but if we trust in Christ, his Spirit is in and among us every second of the day and he will never leave us without condition.

[45 : 26] So dear brothers and sisters, when trials persist, no matter how you feel, never lose hope. And I conclude as Paul Tripp writes in his book, 40 Days of Hope.

Our hope has a name and his name is Jesus. Let's pray. Our heavenly Father, again we thank you for your faithfulness.

When life gets tough, Lord, give us strength, strength, no, give us weakness to lean on you so that we can know you and your strength.

Shine the light of Christ and his death and his resurrection upon us, Lord, so that our hope can be loud and clear every day all the time.

We love you, Lord. In your son's name we pray. Amen. Amen.

[47 : 04] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.