

Facing God's Tests

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: 10 September 2023

Preacher: Jared Blankenship

[0 : 00] There is a structural element to the first couple of chapters of this book. I've mentioned this in passing. I think it would be helpful for us to give it a bit of our focus now at this point.

As we have learned, there's two major parts, two major divisions to the author's introduction here. Part one, which spans from chapter 1 and verse 1 through chapter 2 and verse 5, is really just a general statement about the series of events related to possessing the land of Canaan.

This is after Joshua's death and what happened afterwards as far as the nation of Israel coming in and possessing the rest of the land that was left for them to possess. The author in that section, that very first part, he really just kind of gives a flyover, kind of a cold history of what happened.

Then we get to part 2, which spans from chapter 2 and verse 6 all the way to chapter 3 and verse 6. And we find in this section, the author goes back and he interprets those events in light of Israel's unfaithfulness to God's covenant.

Now, here's one thing that I want you to remember for today. It will help us. These two chapters, these two parts, are not written chronologically. In other words, chapter 2 and verse 6 does not follow chronologically in a timeline, chapter 2 and verse 5.

[1 : 26] That's not what the author is doing. So we don't need to understand it that way. It's going to probably mess us up if we do. We need to understand this for the way that it's intended to be understood by the author.

It's better to understand the contents of these two sections as running parallel to one another. In fact, if we wanted to visualize it, we could stack them on top.

Both sections begin with Joshua's death. Both sections end with God's pronouncement of judgment on Israel. And so I've put together, I don't know if the chart will be that helpful, but I've put together a chart maybe to help us visualize this.

So if you'll notice here on this screen, here's the timeline here in the middle. Joshua's death is first. Then Israel does this spiral of disobedience that we find in the remainder of chapter 1, right?

And then God pronounces judgment. In part 1, this is the timeline that's followed. In the first two verses of chapter 1, we have Joshua's death. In verses 3 through 36 to the end of that chapter, we have Israel spiral into sin.

[2 : 32] This is their disobedience. And then when we get to the first five verses of chapter 2, you remember the angel of the Lord comes to Israel, and he pronounces this judgment, okay? So that's part 1.

That's the timeline. Part 2, go back to the screen before. Part 2 is down here on the bottom. The author goes back to Joshua's death. So verses 6 through 10, we have Joshua's death again.

Verses 10 through 19, we have Israel spiral into sin again. And then when we get to 20 through chapter 3, verse 6, we have God's pronouncement of judgment. Now the section that we're covering today, what we just read, could be taken as a third timeline.

So that's for the next chart. Will you pull that up for me there? Okay. So here's what we just read today. We have Joshua's death again. The author tells us Joshua dies and there's still nations remaining.

That's right there in chapter 2 and verse 23 through chapter 3 and verse 4. Then we find Israel's sin again. They didn't obey the Lord. That's verses 5 and 6 of chapter 3.

[3 : 36] Then we have God's judgment pronounced against the nation. That's chapter 2, verses 20 to 22. The order is a little bit different, but all of the distinct contents are clearly there.

So that's how we're understanding this passage. That's going to come in handy when we get to the end of our study today. But I want to introduce it to you now. Here's what the author is doing. He's starting with Joshua. He's going through God's judgment.

And he says, generally, here's what happened. Then he goes back and he does the same thing, except he interprets it in light of Israel's unfaithfulness. And then when we get here, he's still interpreting the events, the earlier events in light of Israel's unfaithfulness.

However, he does something unique in the passage we're reading today. He answers a critical question for us regarding the Canaanites that are still in the land.

This is not only an introduction of the people groups that are going to assault Israel again and again through the rest of this book. That is part of it. He's introducing us to them. Here, but it's more than that.

[4 : 38] He's telling us why they're still there. Now, remember, this should be a question in your mind. We get to the end of Joshua, and Joshua tells the people of Israel, not a single promise that God made to you has failed.

He has given all the people into your hand. So we would expect then when we get to Judges chapter 1 that there's no Canaanites left. But that's not actually the case, is it? We find that there's Canaanite people still living in the land.

And what the author does now, before he launches into the first judge, which is Othniel, before he does that, he answers this question, why these nations are still there?

And we find out that God kept the nations there. He prevented them from Joshua's reach in order to test the generation that followed Joshua.

Four different times this testing is explicitly stated in the verses we read this morning. Three times he actually uses the word test.

[5 : 42] The fourth time he uses the word teach as a synonym for this testing. And what I want you to understand at this point is that this testing, this testing of faith, this trial of faith is typical of God's action.

He does this over and over and over in the scriptures. You understand this by experience. If you've been a Christian for any amount of time at all in your life, you understand that God tests his people. He leads us through trials. He leads us through periods in our life where our faith is tested, and he is the one that's in control of the testing. God leaves the nations, and he does it for a purpose.

There is this pattern of divine testing all through the scriptures, but we find it first in the opening pages of the Bible, Genesis 1 through 3.

After God creates Adam and Eve, he puts what in the midst of the garden? A unique tree. It wasn't that the fruit was poison. It's just that he put it there, and he said, don't eat of it.

[6 : 50] That was the significance of the tree. Why did God do that? He's testing his people. It was an instrument of testing. They were never to eat of that tree.

God was looking to see if they would take care, as the writer of Judges says, take care to walk in the ways of the Lord. And like Israel, Adam and Eve failed. But their failure wasn't the end.

Through this testing, God promises hope of a coming Savior, and the first man and woman learns something about God that they would have otherwise been completely unable to comprehend, namely, God's redeeming love.

So God is a testing God. He tests his people, and he tests Israel. And God tests his people today like he's been doing since the very beginning.

In fact, you may be facing a unique divine test of faith, even now, unlike any other that you've faced before. And if that's you, I want you to understand something about this text.

[8 : 02] There's three critical truths in this text that are here to help you and to encourage you. The first truth is this, that God is sovereign over all the events of your life.

If you're facing discouragement, or you're facing a difficult trial, or things aren't going the way that you thought they would go, it's not because God has failed, it's not because he's ignoring you, it's not because he's taking a nap, or he's gone, and he's putting his efforts into another thing.

He is in absolute control of your life, including your trial, including your suffering. He's sovereign.

Now, that should bring us comfort. It also brings us a measure of fear, right?

But it should bring us some comfort. Here's the second truth that I think we find in this text, that God has a good purpose in leading us through difficult seasons. He doesn't do it for no reason.

He doesn't do it just to make things hard on us. He doesn't do it just to give us a hard time when he knows we're going to fail him. He's a good purpose for it. Really good purpose, and we'll get into that.

[9 : 06] And then the third truth that I hope will encourage you is that there is immense hope in our failure. There's immense hope in our failure.

Even when we get to the end of Israel's failure, here, as bad as their failure was, who's still there? Reaching out his hands in mercy.

God is, right? There's always hope. Even in our deepest, darkest failures, when we do not follow the test the way that we would hope. God is there offering grace to us.

I think you'll find those things present as we work through this text together. Here's the first thing, if you like to keep notes of the particular outline. First thing that I see here is that there is testing with a purpose.

There is testing with a purpose. Thursday afternoon, Julie and I decided to break from our typical routines. Typically, her office is downstairs or either on the couch or at the kitchen table.

[10 : 08] Mine's upstairs in one of the bedrooms. The girls are in their bedroom doing their school. We never leave our home. We're hermits, I guess. We don't leave our home very often. But we're all in the house. Thursday afternoon, we were downstairs, and Julie said, let's just work together downstairs today.

The girls are up in their room, and I was downstairs. Julie was working on some of her bookkeeping work, and I was doing some reading and studying for today. One point in the afternoon, Ashlyn came downstairs, and she did so reluctantly because it was time for Julie to administer a math test to her.

And what I witnessed happening with Julie and Ashlyn in that moment was such a helpful illustration of what I was in that moment reading about Israel and God here in Judges chapters two and three.

This testing period was clearly grievous to Ashlyn. Blankenships are not math people, are we, Ashlyn? It is not fun.

It's not fun for Julie and me either. It was clearly grievous, but that doesn't mean that the test was harmful or unfair. It's quite the opposite, actually, right? We test our kids on purpose.

[11 : 17] There's a good purpose to it. The process, it strengthens our ability to learn. We don't know how to learn better or how we can increase our learning if we don't know where our learning is weak or it's missing, right?

The testing helps us with that. It also exposes what's true about us. That's the hard thing about it because we can fake it till we make it, right? But at some point, we're gonna fail.

You can't pass every test just on basic wits. You can't just get by all the time, and sometimes a test comes through, and it exposes what's true. Now, that's hard, but when it exposes that truth, it's doing so in order to build us up in a unique way, and that test revealed how much Ashlyn really understood or did not understand about exponents, and then it helped Julie to understand how to lead her moving forward.

The test was hard, but it had a good purpose. That's what we find explained about God's testing here. Look again at chapter two and verse 23. So the Lord left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua, okay?

We're back at Joshua's death now. So we're not at the end of Israel's sin at this point. We're at the beginning. Now, these are the nations that the Lord left to test Israel by them.

[12 : 34] That is, all in Israel, who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan. Now, the first thing that we see here is that God clearly had not lost control, neither had he been unfaithful to his people.

He was doing a particular work in Israel through these remaining people groups. It was a grievous work to Israel for sure, but it was a good work, and it was a work that God was intent to do.

The remaining nations were instruments for testing, and he had a good purpose to the testing. Now, there's a distinction here that we need to make. The intended purpose is what determines whether something is a test of faith or a temptation to sin, and there's a fine line between the two.

How do we know if what God was doing here was a test of Israel's faith that was good and righteous, or was he actually setting them up to fail, tempting them to sin?

Well, God's purpose is never to lead us to sin against him. It doesn't even make sense. It's not a part of his character. Why would he even do that? If sin is defined as rebellion against God, why would God ever desire to lead us into that rebellion?

[13 : 59] That just doesn't make sense. And James is clear that that's true for us. We see in James 1 and verse 13, let no one say when he's tempted, I am being tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

God does, however, test our faith, and Satan loves to use those moments to tempt us to disobey. Purpose is the distinction.

God will lead us into a test in order to build us up in faith and in his truth. Satan will come along, even using God's test, as a way to tempt us and to persuade us to disobey.

Take Eve, for example. God puts the tree in the garden as a test of her faith and obedience, but it was Satan who deceived her, tempted her to eat the fruit.

God never desires for us to sin, but Satan only desires that we sin. Take Jesus, for example.

Remember, after his baptism, after he was baptized by John, we're told that the Holy Spirit of God leads him into the wilderness for 40 days of prayer and fasting in order that Jesus might be tempted.

[15 : 19] It's the Spirit of God leading him there as a test even of the Son of God's faith. And what is it that Satan does with the test? He comes and he presents the temptations to our Lord. And he passes the test, doesn't he?

He's the only one to ever pass the test, but he does it. God only ever wants to build us up and he uses these tests, as grievous as they may be, to do that. Only Satan wants to come in and desires that we would sin against God.

Intended purpose is the difference. God did not tempt Israel to sin, but he did have a good purpose in testing them. And there's two of them here for us. The first one is this. His test was meant to teach them.

His test was meant to teach them. Look at verse two of chapter three. It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before.

So God's first good purpose here is that he might teach or that the next generation might learn war.

[16 : 25] But it wasn't simply the practice of war and fighting and defending against enemies. It was to learn God's purpose in the holy war against the wicked nations of Canaan.

There's a distinction here. God wasn't teaching them just to teach them. He didn't want them just to have an ability to fight. Part of why he's leaving them there is so that the next generation after Joshua would understand God's purposes here, what God is doing in this war against these nations.

Daniel Block is helpful with this when he says, when Yahweh expresses his determination that the present generation of Israelites should learn war, his concern is not primarily that they learn how to conduct war, but that they learn the nature and significance of this war.

This is an important part of this. God's goal was not merely that the people learn how to fight. He did not need them to be experienced warriors to give them victory.

All of those victories that they had in the wilderness wandering years, not a single one of those came because Israel was great at war. They were slaves for 400 years before that.

[17 : 43] God didn't need them to be experienced in war. He didn't need them to be experts in it. That's not what he needed. He can give victory to whomever he chooses. God desired to teach them why the fight mattered to begin with, that they ultimately were not warring for themselves, but they were warring on behalf of their God.

The people of Israel, they were to look at the nations that surrounded them through the lens of God's holiness, and in this sense, the surrounding nations that were left after Joshua were to teach them about who God is.

And such is the case with various tests that God sends your way as well. The tests that God leads us to are not meant to make us into stronger people.

We think that sometimes. We think that we have to go through tremendous difficulties in life in order that we might be a strong person, but that's not true. He leads us into these things not to make us stronger people, but to give us a stronger faith so that we might see more clearly his majesty and his glory and his power and his holiness, and that through this testing, we might be faithful Christians, not stronger humans.

This was James' conclusion as well. In James chapter one, count it all joy, my brothers, he writes, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces

steadfastness, and let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect, complete, lacking in nothing, maturity, spiritual maturity is what he's referring to here.

[19 : 30] I can't tell you all the particular reasons that God may be allowing you to go through whatever it is that you may be going through today, but what I can say for sure is that he has a good purpose in it, and central to that purpose is that you may see him more clearly, that you may rely on him more firmly, not that you would become a stronger man or woman, but that you would become a more faithful follower of Christ.

But there's a second good purpose in this text. It's this. His test was meant to expose them. His test was meant to expose them.

Verse four. They were for the testing of Israel to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

Now, let's go back to our illustration with Julie and Ashlyn on Thursday with the math test and the exponents. Part of the reason that Julie tests the girls in their studies is so that they can know how much they truly understand, right?

Before Ashlyn took that test, she came down and she showed me one of the formulas and the problems that she had that I assumed was going to be a part of her testing on that day had to do with exponents. Well, Ashlyn's in the sixth grade. It's been a long time since I was in the sixth grade.

[20 : 54] I don't know what exponents are, but I guessed, and I guessed wrongly, and I taught her the wrong way to do this, and it took us a while to figure that out. Now, she could have gone immediately from me explaining it the wrong way to taking her test, and she would have failed miserably, or she could have not taken a test at all, and she could have just continued in her math studies, and she would have been worse off for it because she wouldn't have actually understood how little she understood about the exponents, right?

That was the purpose of the test. It showed dad did this wrong, and he taught you wrongly, right? Had a purpose. It exposes the reality of Ashlyn's knowledge, and though failure brings grief, it also reveals how to move forward, doesn't it?

Without the math test, Ashlyn's potential for growth is significantly diminished. Now, of course, God already knows what is true about us.

His tests are not about revealing something to him. He already knows. He doesn't need to send a test in order for his mind to be enlightened. Who's the test for then?

It's for us. It exposes something in us. God's tests reveal to us the true nature of our spiritual condition.

[22 : 21] Something we are prone to self-deceive about. And without his test, our potential for spiritual growth and maturity is greatly diminished.

There's a good purpose in the testing of God. He builds us up. That's the purpose. Second thing I want you to see in this text is this. Failing the test.

Failing the test. If you've paid attention at all in these first five sermons of the book of Judges, you will understand that this was coming. Failure. Verse five.

So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites. They did not drive them out. They did not destroy them as God had told them to do. They lived among them. They lived among the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, all the enemies of God.

Their daughters, they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters, they gave to their sons, and then the final step, they serve their gods.

[23 : 25] So God leaves a few groups after Joshua's death. Death detests the nation, and as we have seen described over and over in these first two chapters, the people fell miserably.

But God's test wasn't something that he hadn't prepared them for. You ever take one of those tests in school? Maybe it's a pop quiz or something like that, and the teacher really hasn't done a good job of preparing the class, and basically everybody fails.

Not the case with God. God had already described this exact progression of sin and judgment to the nation if they would not listen to him, and if they would fail the test.

In fact, turn in your Bibles back a few pages to the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy chapter seven. Would be more helpful for you probably to set your eyes on it in your Bible than on the screen.

So Deuteronomy, I don't even know if I put it on the screen. Deuteronomy chapter seven. And I want to read the first five verses here. Deuteronomy chapter seven.

[24 : 35] Verse one. When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and he clears away many of the nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you.

And when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, listen to what the instruction is. Then you must devote them to complete destruction.

You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me to serve other gods.

Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. But thus shall you deal with them. You shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their ashram and burn their carved images with fire.

Okay, that was the lesson, right? That was the classroom lesson. What Israel's facing now in Judges chapter two and three is the test from the lesson that God gave in Deuteronomy seven.

[25 : 53] He said clearly, I'm gonna give the people into your hand, but if you disobey me in this, by going and living among them and then intermarrying with them, eventually you are gonna begin to serve their gods, and then my wrath will ensue.

My judgment will come. Through intermarrying with the people of the land, Israel became willing worshipers of the gods of the land, and there's a word of warning and application for us in there, and this isn't there.

I think it's Barry Webb who said, the surest way to end up loving the world yourself is to bind yourself to someone who already does. The surest way to end up loving the world yourself is to bind yourself to someone who already does.

Hence the apostles' warning, do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness or lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? What portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? A New Testament application to an Old Testament problem with Israel.

[27 : 09] God hasn't instructed us to conquer nations through war. Thank goodness those days are behind. I guess in some sense they're ahead, but for right now they're behind.

He has commanded us, however, not to align ourselves with unbelievers in ways that compromise our Christian faith. Because the same progression of sinfulness that happened to Israel is the same progression of sinfulness and failure that will happen to us when we do not exercise wisdom regarding who we're going to marry.

When we do not exercise wisdom regarding the most intimate friendships of our lives. When we do not exercise wisdom about where we send our kids for schooling and for education.

When we do not exercise wisdom when choosing a company for which to work. All of these things require discernment and wisdom. And if we begin aligning ourselves in ways that compromise our faith, what will inevitably happen is we will in the end make ourselves unidentifiable as believers anymore.

It's the same progression. It's the same test that we continue to fail. Israel does it over and over and over and so do we.

[28 : 32] Now Jesus does something that seems impossible, right? He comes in and he says, here's how we're supposed to live in the world. I'm going to leave you here. I'm not going to take you out of it. I'm going to leave you here and I want you to live in this world, not in isolation, but in the process of living in this world, you're going to have to be my light.

Seems impossible, doesn't it? Well, it is without the working of the Holy Spirit in us, but there is a danger here, isn't it? That if we align ourselves in a way that's unfaithful or unhelpful, we're going to set ourselves on a trajectory of serving other gods.

Don't let the most crucial relationships of your life be with unbelievers. It cannot be that. It will be a danger to you and to your family and to your children.

Thirdly, I want you to see grading the test. So we've seen testing with a purpose. We've now seen Israel failing the test and how often we fail the test as well.

Now I want you to see God grading it. Now do you remember how the narrative timelines are stacked? We throw up that second chart again there, Becky, just to remind us.

[29 : 50] Here's why it's important. When the author says that God left those nations to test Israel in chapters 2 and verse 23 through 34, right here, okay?

Where is this at in the timeline? Joshua's death, if you can see it, right? Okay, that's important. When God says that he left those nations to test Israel in chapter 2, verses 20 to 22, where is it at in the timeline?

God's judgment. So there's an initial purpose to the testing that then transforms to a different purpose after they disobey and after they fail.

That's what I want you to see here. This is gonna be helpful. If you'll hang with me when we get to the end, I think that it will encourage you. This refers, these verses I'm about to read, it refers to the time after Israel's apostasy, and it records God's response.

Verse 20, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he said, because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left in order to test Israel by them whether they will take care to walk in the way of the Lord as their fathers did or not.

[31 : 12] Israel's offense against God was personal, and the consequences severe. The nations initially left to test them would now be used by God to judge them.

Now there's an important thing to understand here. God was not breaking his covenant with Abraham when he refuses to continue driving out the people.

He's not breaking covenant. What he's doing is deferring the blessings of this covenant to another generation. He will always be faithful, and he ultimately won this battle with Israel, particularly the King David, and then ultimately in King Jesus.

But he's not breaking covenant here. He's deferring its blessings to a different generation. God must judge sin, and he was not gonna look the other way when Israel failed this test.

I want you to consider for just a moment the personal nature of sin that breaks covenant with God. If you get pulled over by a cop for speeding after church this morning, this afternoon, it has no relational significance to that police officer to write you a ticket.

[32 : 34] Right? He doesn't care. You haven't broken his heart by speeding today. Right? But he's gonna write you a ticket. Right? He's gonna judge you. But he's acting as an agent of someone else's law.

Right? Okay? That's a different kind of situation. You're not really breaking our covenant. You're just doing something you're not supposed to do, and somebody's gonna punish you for it. But if your wife discovers that you've cheated on her with another woman or man, it has all the personal significance in the world, doesn't it?

You haven't broken a law. You've broken a covenant. And there are serious consequences that come with breaking a covenant with a lover. That's precisely what's happening here between God and Israel.

And it's the most common way that God describes our sin against him. Barry Webb, again, is helpful here. There is a covenant relationship between God and human beings inerrant in creation. The offense is greater, though, for those who have been brought into a special relationship with God by his gracious redeeming work for them and in them.

[33 : 50] That was Israel, right? They weren't just any nation. They were God's chosen nation. And it wasn't because they were great. It was actually the opposite of that.

They were the worst. God chooses them. He sets his love on them. They see his power at work in them and for them in the years of wandering coming out of Egypt and into the wilderness and now through the Joshua generation.

They have a unique covenant relationship with God at this point. Sin is never a minor issue with God. It is personal. And the personal nature of sin is magnified when it is committed by those who are in covenant with him.

In our terms, it would be for those who commit sins who have experienced the gracious work of God in salvation. It should grieve us when we sin.

It should grieve us because we know the grace of God. That's why it should grieve us most. It's personal. But God will never break his covenant with those on whom he has set his redeeming love.

[35 : 08] That's the encouraging thing. He won't do that. He will not take away your salvation. But he will judge your sin. And he will judge it at least in this sense.

That he may defer the blessings of that covenant so that you do not fully experience the joy of your salvation in the here and now.

You understand this. The most miserable person on earth is not the person who is without Christ. The most miserable person on earth is the person who has Christ but lives in sin against him.

You understand the nature of breaking that covenant. God in his judgment does not remove your salvation. That has been put on Christ but he does and he may defer the blessings of joy of that salvation in the here and now.

He may defer that beyond this life. We should never feel good in sin. We should never be content to live in it.

[36 : 12] He should grieve us. He should grieve us. But it's not old judgment in this section. That's the great thing about it, right? Again, we see the wonder of God's justice and his mercy being brought together here.

Look at verse 22. He left these nations when Joshua died in order to test Israel by them whether they will take care to walk in the way of the Lord.

Now this is interesting. This was his initial reason for the test, right? Now they've failed. Why would he issue the test again? There's only one reason.

Because he loves them. He doesn't cut them off. He doesn't abandon them. He doesn't say, I'm done with you. I'm going to find someone else.

Forget all those other things. He doesn't do that. Though they committed adultery against him, he would not cast them out. Despite their sin, he was faithful again and again and again to offer his mercy in an attempt to lead them to repentance.

[37 : 23] That's what judges is. It's this cycle of Israel's failure paired with this cycle of God's mercy. Again and again and again they fail and again and again and again he delivers them and he extends his mercy.

This is the wonderful grace of God. No matter how often we fail the test, he pursues us and he offers us mercy anew and afresh every morning the word tells us.

Says Kristen Getty, what grace is mine that he who dwells in endless light called through the night to find my distant soul and from his scars poured mercy that would plead for me that I might live and in his name be known.

What grace? Are you being tested by God today? The answer is yes whether you realize it or not.

It may be more or less severe than other times in your life but the fact is is you're probably being tested in some way. Remember God's tests are always with a good purpose even if you can't see it.

[38 : 47] it's a good purpose that he has for you but even if you fail or if you have already failed his mercies are new.

He'll give you another test. We call it a makeup test when I was a kid and if enough people in the class failed the teacher would reissue the test because it looks bad on her if everybody fails, right?

God doesn't do it for the same reason. God does it because he loves us because he's a merciful God. As John Newton said there is more mercy in him than there is sin in us.

Turn trust him. NING