

In Suffering, God is Enough

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Preacher: Bro. Charles

[0 : 00] Well, thank you for allowing me to come back. I want to thank Pastor Smith and his faithfulness and his commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ! and to our ministry over in Burkina Faso. And I do praise the Lord for that. I believe that this church had taken us on when Brother Inman was here, back when we were on deputation several years ago. And I do thank you for that. I want my wife to stand because she's the better half if she would stand. This is my faithful help me for 42 plus years and God has blessed us. And I thank the Lord for someone like her as my help me. Okay. On the table, there's a little brochure doesn't mean anything, but basically it's just nothing but pictures. And you're more than welcome to take that. I wish I can give you all kinds of pictures, but I can't do it.

[1 : 05] And then when we talk about pictures, we always want to stop and talk about something that we had done in relationship to them. And I've had missionaries that would show their slides.

And before you know it, this is three hours later. They're still talking because every picture has a story attached to it. Now, I'm not sure how many people had heard me before.

How many people have been here with me before? Okay. So there's a few. So if you find these stories repetitive, it's by design.

There are all kinds of stories. There are all kinds of illustrations. And the point of the stories, the points of these illustrations is to show you how God actually works.

Because the truth of the matter is, it has nothing to do with the missionary and everything to do with the grace of God. And, you know, people say, well, the missionaries, the whatever.

[2 : 17] And the truth is, I love what I'm doing. I wouldn't want to do anything different. So when people say, well, missionaries really suffer. Not me.

I certainly enjoy what God has called me to. And I would not want to do anything else. And I know my wife feels the same way. So turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter number 1.

And I just want to give you a couple verses. And then another one in Ecclesiastes. And then basically share with you what we're doing in Burkina Faso.

And what we continue to do. And it's the same thing that what we as Christians ought to do right here in Lincoln, Nebraska. And what we ought to do all over America.

And all over the world. The truth of the matter is, if Christianity is in trouble, it's because Christians are not fulfilling what God had called them to do.

[3 : 20] And I'll talk about that in Sunday school. But 2 Corinthians chapter number 1. Look at verse number 3. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and a God of all comfort.

God is a God of all comfort. Is he not? Now this verse is written to who? To us. It's also written to Burkina Bay.

It's written to Chinese. It's written to every single person in the world. He is the God of all comfort for me, for you, and for all others.

And sometimes we don't really comprehend that. Look at verse number 4. Who, that is the God of all comfort, comforted us in all our tribulation.

Do we go through tribulation? Who doesn't go through tribulation? I think we all do. Job said, man that is born of a woman is full of trouble. Is that not true?

[4 : 31] If you're married, you're full of trouble. So, we live in a sin-saturated world. We live in a body that is sin-saturated.

And so, certainly we're going to go through all kinds of trouble and tribulations. That is the lot of life. We can't escape the fallen nature of this world.

We can't escape the fallen nature of our own selves. And so, we will go through tribulation. We'll go through trials.

We'll go through temptations. But listen to what he says. That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble. Well, the question is, how do we comfort those who are in trouble?

See, that's the question that we have to pose ourselves, or that my wife and I pose ourselves, on a continual basis. When we went to Burkina Faso, the average life expectancy was 37 years of age in our country.

[5 : 40] Four out of ten children died by the age of ten. Death is a reality in our country. Now, I will say, we're over 60 years of age now.

So, we're increasing. When we got to the country, we were the third poorest country in the world. The third poorest. Right now, we're the 19th poorest country in the world.

So, we are up and coming. But the point I'm trying to make is that we see suffering on a daily basis. We see people that are without constantly.

And we sit there and we pray and we wonder, how can we help these people? How can we comfort them in their trials and tribulations?

That's a question that I think we all need to pose ourselves. As we look around Lincoln and see people that are suffering.

[6 : 43] Now, I'm not talking about people who put on that smile and walk around as if everything is fine. Because we know, in the human heart, it's not fine.

We know, in our own families, we struggle. And that's a fact of life. And I want you to understand that.

How do we comfort someone who's going through all these trials and tribulations? Many of the trials and tribulations that we ourselves have gone through and are going through presently.

Where does that comfort come from? Well, turn over to Ecclesiastes chapter 4. Now, as you're turning over there, when Jesus says in John 14, If I do not go away, I will not send a comforter to you.

Who was he referring to? The Holy Spirit. Is that not true? The God of all comfort. God himself, the Holy Spirit, is the one that comforts.

[7 : 54] We don't have the ability to comfort people in tribulation. We don't have the knowledge. We don't have the know-how. We don't have the resources to help others that are going through tribulation.

But there is something we do know. We know one who can. Is that not true? Look at Ecclesiastes chapter 4, verse number 1.

The wisest man in the world that ever was. The smartest man. The richest man. The one that said he tried everything under the sun.

This is what he said in verse number 1. He said, So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun. So I looked around.

I saw the oppressions. I saw the trouble. I saw the tribulations. I saw the afflictions of people throughout the world. He said, That are done under the sun.

[8 : 54] And behold, the tears of such as were oppressed. And listen to what he said. And they had no comforter. The comforter is the Holy Spirit. When a person accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, according to the Word of God, they receive the Holy Spirit of comfort.

The moment they're saved. One of the hardest things that I have in relationship to teaching the Burkina Bay is that, hey, the same Holy Spirit in my heart is the same Holy Spirit in your heart. See, they think, Well, because you're an American, you don't have the need of the comfort of the Holy Spirit because you have all you ever want. They don't understand human nature at this time. And Solomon continues, And on the side of their oppressions, there was power. But, they had no comforter.

The point I'm trying to make is, the greatest thing that we can do to anybody in trial and tribulation is to present to them the Lord Jesus Christ.

[10 : 01] To point them to the Savior of the world that will send them the Holy Spirit of comfort. That will lead them and guide them and help them overcome the trials and tribulations that they're going through.

Anywhere in the world, it works. You say, Well, what do you mean it works? I mean the Word of God is true. I mean the Word of God is effective.

If I could solve all the problems in Burkina Faso with my own intelligence, I would. If I had a pocketbook big enough to alleviate all the suffering because of the financial distress that people are under, I would.

If I had all the knowledge of the greatest medical profession in the world, I would help if I could. But I'm not smart.

I'm not rich. I don't have a whole lot. But this one thing I know. I know Him. And I know He is able to help them that call on Him by faith.

[11 : 17] And one of the greatest joys that I see in ministry is to be able to point people without any knowledge of Jesus Christ, point them to Jesus Christ and let God work in and through their hearts and lives.

And you know what's amazing? He does! That's just amazing. God's Word is true. It actually works. What do you mean it works?

I mean, when a person comes to Jesus Christ, immediately they get that Holy Spirit of comfort in their hearts. How does he do that? I don't know. I never claimed any knowledge.

You know, I'm like that blind man in John chapter 9. I don't know anything. But this one thing I know. Where I was blind, now I see. We don't need to have all the knowledge in the world.

We don't need to figure out what these people ought to do and ought not to do. That's not my function as a missionary. I wish I could.

[12 : 22] I wish I understood the problems of the world. I'll give you a little hint. I'm still trying to figure out the problems in my own life. To worry about the problems that everyone else has.

But I'm not there to solve the problems of the Burkina Bay. I'm there to introduce them to the one who can.

And that's our goal. I'll give you an illustration. Actually, there's several. And I'll give you more if you ask me afterwards. But these are the three main illustrations that really touched my heart and proved to me that I don't know anything.

But God does. And God actually fulfills His Word. We had a young lady. Of course, everyone's young compared to my wife.

I want you to know. But we have a young lady. For some reason, she knocked on our door in Wagadougou. And so I went out and answered the door.

[13 : 34] She said, Hey, I understand there's this old fat missionary that picks up people to come to church. And I looked at her and said, Well, I don't know about the old and the fat part, but we pick people to come up to church.

So she said, Well, will you start picking me up? I said, sure. So Mary and I, we went out every Sunday morning, picked her up in our car and brought her to church. She would come with her three kids and they were faithful.

They were excited. It was amazing. And then one Sunday, she came forward and got saved. We were excited about it. She said, I'll never get baptized. Well, guess what happened?

She got baptized, became a member of the church. Everything was going great. Now, you understand that she's a typical Burkina babe. She did not have any education being a woman. She was from a village, married a man, and they moved into Ouagadougou and had three children by him and then he left. Here she is in the capital city, two to four million people, without any income, without any ability that they even communicate effectively.

[14 : 39] and she had to go and do whatever she could to feed her kids. I've seen her out there on the street corner with a mango in her hand that fell from a tree, holding it up for the pastor buyers and the cars and the mopalettes to stop by and buy that mango for a penny or less than a penny.

And she did that over and over again. And I remember one time going to her house, and this was after a while, that she had a goat's head that she was cooking.

And I said, wow, I said, your kids are going to eat good today. She said, oh, no, missionary, that's not for my kids. I'm going to take them out on the street and sell them to the pastor buyers.

That's how she made her money. Now, she also had one advantage that most of these other ladies don't have. She had her in-laws live in the capital city.

So they said, we'll give you money each week to feed our grandchildren. So she took it. Well, one Sunday, Mary and I went to pick her up and she got in the car and she was really quiet.

[15 : 55] We come to church. She got out of the car. She went into church and she sat down in the front row as she always does. But when the singing commenced, she did not sing.

That's unusual because she's loud and boisterous when she sings. But she wouldn't sing and she just kept her head bowed. After the services, we said, something's wrong with Jermaine and so let's bring her home last.

So we brought everyone home first and then we brought her home last. She was getting out of the car. I said, Jermaine, honey, tell me what's wrong with you. And tears began to flow down her cheeks.

She said, missionary, she said, I don't know what to do. I said, what do you mean? She said, my in-law said, if I keep coming to your church, they will not give me any more money to feed my children.

And that made me mad. And I thought, well, who are they? Don't you worry about it. I will take care of you. I got the money. It wouldn't cost much, two dollars a week to feed her kids.

[16:58] But I really felt God touched my heart and said, now wait a minute. Are you her God? Or am I her God? And I knew God didn't want me to say anything.

And you know how hard that was? It's devastating. And so I said, Jermaine, we can't, we can't do anything. We don't know what to do.

We can't answer your question. But we'll pray with you. So we prayed and she got out of course, tears still flowing down her cheeks. And we didn't know what to do.

We prayed that entire week about what we should do. I thought about giving money to the neighbor to give to her. I thought about sending it indiscreetly and everything. And God kept saying, no, no, no, she has to trust me, not you.

And so we, when it came time for us to go pick her up on Sunday, I actually thought about not going. Why waste her time? But we went there anyway and she actually got in the car and her kids and came to church.

[18:03] But she's still quiet, wouldn't say anything, sat in the front row, didn't sing. And we didn't know what to do again. So we brought her back home and she got out of the car, still quiet.

Second week, same thing happened. By the third week, she's out there singing and just like her old self. Well, being the nosy preacher that I am, I wanted to know what happened.

So after church, I said, Jermaine, whatever happened between you and your in-laws? And you know what she said? She said, me and my in-laws? Oh, I'm just trusting the Lord.

I don't understand that. She has no education. She can't read and write. She has no job. She has three kids to feed. Her husband had left her.

Her in-laws had discarded her. And yet, here's this girl with every problem in the world and she's saying, I'm just trusting the Lord and smiling about it.

[19:04] How did God comfort her heart? Because who she had in her heart. Do you understand that? God worked in her heart.

Wow. That's just amazing. And we get to see what God does all the time. I'll give you another story. Caddy, actually Mary knew Caddy's older sister and she said her sister needed a job.

She was a young Muslim woman and so Mary hired her to come into our house. And Mary is very evangelistic and so she started witnessing the Caddy and Caddy pretended she didn't want to hear it.

But she did and she just kept quiet. Mary would bring in these vegetable ladies to her house and she would witness to them knowing that Caddy was listening. and Caddy, even though she was raised with her dad and the two wives, grew up in Ouagadougou as a Muslim.

But after, I don't know, several months, if not a year, she came to us. She said, well, you know, I'd like to start going to your church. We said, okay.

[20:27] So we started picking her up to come to church. She started coming and started listening and before you know it, guess who got saved? Caddy got saved.

Caddy got baptized. She really began to grow and it was exciting to see God transform this young Muslim woman. Well, as is a habit in Burkina Faso, you get a month off, a complete month, 30 days off and many of them will take time out to go visit family in the villages.

Well, Caddy took her month off to go visit in her village and she brought her little 10-year-old nephew and something terrible happened.

She said that, and with tears, again, flowing down her cheeks as she related the story, she said, missionary, I demanded, I asked, I pleaded with the boy, her nephew, to go greet his grandmother.

His grandmother was a shaman and so with Caddy deer prodding him, he went and introduced himself to the grandma and the grandmother placed a curse upon him and he got sick that night.

[21 : 53] Caddy got worried so she brought him back to Ouagadougou, put him in the best children's hospital we had in the entire country and he died because of a curse.

I don't know, but he died. Caddy come to work, tears flowing down her cheeks. She said, I can't, I don't know what to do. Why did God allow this to happen?

What do you say? What do you say? We're going to try to defend God? We're going to try to speak for God? We just watched her cry and we prayed for her.

She said, missionary, I don't think I can go to church anymore. So she stopped coming to church. We watched her cry day after day, week after week. Why did this happen?

Well, after a while, she came to us and said, well, I think I need to start going back to church. And she started going back to church little by little. And after a few months, she was back to normal, singing and fellowshiping and having a good time just like she did before.

[23 : 09] In fact, in our Bible Institute, all the guys didn't even understand or didn't even know what had happened to her and her nephew because something had completely changed in her heart.

How did God wipe away her tears? I don't know. But I know He did. Why? Because He's God. And He is the God of all comfort.

He didn't say that we're the God of all comfort. He said He's the God of all comfort. So when we point people to Him, He's the one who will deal with their heart and comfort their heart through the trials and tribulations that they are presently going through.

That's what He did. I'll give you another illustration. Dominic was raised in the village of Uwando, one of the first works we started.

His parents had died when he was young, a young adult, a teenager. So he lived on his own in his own hut. He decided by his own testimony, he was determined to be the best animist that he could be.

[24 : 23] And then we came to the village and God allowed us to go from hut to hut to hut. Now we were going hut to hut to hut. We didn't knock on doors, so we would clap. People would come out and then they would sit under a tree and then you talk to them for two or three hours.

Visiting over here is a long time. But their point is, hey, you asked them to come out, so now you're going to talk. And you can't leave until they give you permission to leave.

So sometimes you're stuck there for hours. But anyway, we were out there and we were witnessing to the family after family and Dominic saw us and saw the car and came up to us the first day and he started following us around.

First day, followed all the huts. Second day, he met us in the morning, followed us through all the huts. Third day, he did the same thing. He didn't respond.

Dominic had a sixth grade education which was pretty high for that village. We held our first services that Sunday and Dominic came forward and got saved.

[25 : 33] It was a blessing. And so soon after he was baptized and we were beginning to start our Bible Institute so I asked Dominic if he would like to come in and be a part of our Bible Institute.

He said, sure. So he started coming into our Bible Institute. He'd come in on the weekdays and be a part of our Bible Institute. After two years, I realized God's hand was upon him.

So I said, Dominic, would you like to go out to your village and preach? He said, sure. So we got him on Mopelet and every Sunday morning he'll make that trip out there to his village about two and a half hours away.

He'd preach and come back that Sunday evening. Well, in our Bible Institute, we had a get together and I asked Dominic if he would like to give a testimony to the other Institute students.

He didn't tell me what he was going to say. He didn't say anything. He said, yeah, I'll do it. So without saying anything to me, he got up there in front of all the other students and he related this story that I want to tell you.

[26 : 42] It's the first time I ever heard of it. He said that one Sunday he was going out to his village and as he was driving his Mopelet, he came upon a rock quarry which was on top of a hill.

As he started going up to the top of the hill, he looked up and he saw a man all in red. And he was hovering. His feet was not touching the ground. He said, did he really see that?

I don't know. He thought he did. So he stopped. He said, I didn't know what to do. So he said, I started praying and asking God what I should do. As he was down there praying, another Mopelet

come by and he jumped up to get the guy to stop and the guy wouldn't stop.

So he watched the guy get all the way up to the top of the hill where that man in red was. When he got up to the top, the Mopelet crashed. So Dominic immediately ran up there and helped this man on his Mopelet and brought him into the next town of Moteiru and dropped him off at the clinic. Never saw that man in red again. As he got out to his village, he began to walk towards his hut and he looked around and there was blood all over the place.

[27 : 56] There was chicken pieces all over the place that was spread around, all around his hut, his house. And he knew what it was. See, that's a curse.

It's an animistic curse. See, they slaughter a chicken as a way to say that you're in danger and you need to leave. So Dominic, he understood what was happening.

He understood that somebody was trying to drive him out of that village. It ended up being his brother. But he said, he said, I did not know what to do.

He said, I looked around, I saw all that blood, I saw all those chicken pieces. He didn't know what to do. He said, so I picked up all these chicken pieces and I cooked them and I thank God for my meal that night.

God is God. God is my witness. That's exactly what he said. He said, well, how could a guy who grew up in animism, not fair animism anymore, who he had in his heart?

[28 : 58] We're not supposed to solve the problems of the world. That's his job. And so many people try to solve other people's problems without introducing people to the problem solver.

You know, as you read the Word of God, you see where God says he brings tribulations and trials into people's life for them to say, hey, wake up, pay attention.

I love you and I want you to come to me. And sometimes those trials and tribulations are actually all the time, it's meant to draw each one of us closer to him.

And right in the midst of all the trials and tribulations that we go through and that others around us are going through, God says I have an opportunity to use you, to reach others with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it does not depend on how much knowledge you have. You don't got to get a psychological degree, you don't got to get a medical degree, you don't got to get all this other stuff. What you really need and what I really need is just a relationship with him.

[30 : 24] And our goal is to point to him. Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world. after saying all that, guess what?

Who's qualified to be a missionary? Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Show me in the Bible where the qualifications are your knowledge. Huh?

Well, what did the Sanhedrin say about the apostles in Acts chapter 4?

These are unlearned and ignorant men. I qualify. Right there, I qualify. These are unlearned and ignorant men, but they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

The issue is not our knowledge. The issue is our faith in him. Is it not?

[31 : 26] So, when people say I don't qualify to be a missionary, what does that mean? I don't understand that. If I thought that everything in Burkina Faso depended on my knowledge and Mary's knowledge, we would last.

We would not last. But see, the ministry does not depend upon me or my wisdom. it depends upon him. And our goal in Burkina Faso is to say, hey, look, the Savior of the world, he died for you. He will give you that Holy Spirit of comfort if you just turn to him in faith. I mean, that's exactly what we do.

We don't go around and try to solve all the problems in Burkina Faso. My goodness, that would take a lifetime and I wouldn't even have done anything. But we are confident in one thing, his ability to help people, his ability to help my family here in America, his ability to help my neighbors right here in America.

Because it doesn't depend on us, it depends on him. and the work we do in relationship to Jesus Christ is simply single-fold. We have a single purpose.

[32 : 59] Look. Look. Look. What's that song? Look and live? That's what we do. We point people to Jesus.

Anything else doesn't matter. You want to know how to help people in the flesh? You've got a whole world out there trying to do that. The whole world is trying to help people.

Are they not? You walk around and people are trying to say what this world needs. Well, we need what's that thing called?

We need democracy. We need these other things. Really? You actually think democracy is going to change the heart of a person. Well, a person really can't hear unless you feed them.

Okay? You give them food. So they go to hell with a full belly. What does that change? What does that change? I'm trying to encourage you, however feeble I'm doing it, is for you to realize that what you're doing for this month during the missions emphasis month that you're in right now is to realize that the greatest need in this entire world and even in Lincoln is him.

[34 : 26] It's for this church to stand pointing to him. Try that. Walk outside downtown Lincoln and just start staring out. Others will start looking up with you.

What you looking up? Jesus, that's who I'm looking at. It works. It works. Why? Because it's not about us.

It's about him. And so as you go through this missions month and you hear these different missionaries realize it's about you.

It's about what you're willing to do to point others to him. Does that mean you're willing to go to your neighbor? to that family member that told you don't talk to me anymore about Jesus?

Yeah, there's a lot of problems that we all go through. We're not exempt because we're in church. We're not exempt because we're Christians. We still live in the flesh. We still live in the fallen world.

[35 : 32] Paul can say at the end of his life after writing 13 New Testament epistles, this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came in the world to save sinners of whom I am present and chief.

See, now that's the first error in a Bible I ever found. Paul could say that but he didn't know me.

That's the truth. We have not arrived yet.

And if any man thinks they have arrived, they have deceived themselves. Each one of us struggle in the flesh right now. And our need, each one of us, is him.

And in the midst of our own struggles, our own trials and tribulations, God says, remember, keep your eyes on him, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

And that's what we do. Hey, we go through struggles, but we don't him. We know how the story ends. We know exactly what we need.

[36 : 43] And we all, if we're a Christian, a born-again believer, we have the Holy Spirit of comfort in our hearts. And there hath no temptation taken me, but such as is common to men.

But God will with the temptation also make a way to escape that I may be able to bear it. And as you continue reading, we're not going to, but as you continue reading 2 Corinthians chapter number 1, he talks about that very thing in that chapter.

We are comforted by God in the tribulations and the trials that I am going through so that I'll be able to comfort those who are in a similar trial of affliction.

So, anything that I go through, God has prepared me to reach others with Him. With Him.

Maybe that's one of the reasons Paul said, most gladly, therefore will I glory in tribulations. Why?

Because he understands that his testimony, his witness will be more secure because of the things that he went through.

[37 : 59] Why? Because we found out in our daily walk that God is faithful. What He said to me, He will perform.

What He said to you, He will perform. In whose timing? Well, in His timing. Hey, if it was my timing, I wouldn't have any problems.

But see, that's not what problems are designed to do. We have a wonderful opportunity to reach out with the love of Jesus Christ.

You know, I was reading J. Vernon McGee again, and he said that if you go through what God expects of us, he said that these shall know ye are my disciples by the fundamentals of the faith.

Is that what he said? No. By your love. By your love. We love those who are in trials and afflictions.

[39 : 06] There's only one way. Pointing them to Jesus. Pointing them to Jesus. You've got millions of people all over the world giving out money to help those in poverty.

And I wish I had the money to hand out. Just like Peter, silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I they in the name of Jesus Christ.

Well, what's he talking about? You can do this all the time to the poor. Jesus said the poor you're always going to have with you, but their greatest need is Jesus Christ.

And we who are here in this church who know Jesus Christ have the answer for the problems of this world.

I didn't say you know how to solve them, but you know the problem solver. And so that's what we want to do. That's what we do in Burkina Fossil. That's what we try to do everywhere else we go.

[40 : 04] And that's exactly what this church is doing in relationship to the missions and in relationship to bringing in people and to reach out to those in this community and around Nebraska and even in Iowa the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Father, we come before you. We want to thank you, Lord, for your blessings and your mercy and your grace. And Father, I pray that your will will have a free course.

I pray that you'll touch hearts. Lord, the greatest need that I have is Jesus. Lord, the greatest need that others have is Jesus.

my family, my friends, my neighbors, my fellow countrymen. This world needs Jesus Christ more than anything else that we can offer.

Father, I pray that you give us a passion to have all our energy devoted to making Christ known among the heathen.

[41 : 12] For it's in his name we pray. Amen. Thank you.