

How Christ matures faith through deep trials

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, it's my privilege to bring you God's word tonight, and as I do so, I wish to bring you the warm greetings of Puritan Reform Seminary in Grand Rapids and also the warm greetings of my congregation, the Heritage Reformed Church in Grand Rapids.
- They're certainly with us in spirit and prayer this evening, and we have also been in much prayer for you and for the churches here, that God will uphold you and bless you and go before you in mercy.
- Sometimes it pleases God to lead us in our lives through very deep ways, deep ways of trial that we never quite fully grasp.
- John 13 says, What I do now thou knowest not, but thou shalt know hereafter. Sometimes that hereafter is a week.
- Sometimes it's months. Sometimes it's years. And as my father used to often say, sometimes we go to the grave with unanswered riddles, and we don't understand until the day of judgment.
- [1 : 3 2] But whatever the case may be, one sure thing is the common lot of the people of God, and that is God uses trials, heavy trials, smaller trials, to mature our faith.
- We want to be matured through easy, smooth sailing, pleasant ways, but our natures are such that easy, smooth, pleasant ways are often not good for our souls.
- And the story, the rather strange story that's before us tonight, is a story that is all about God maturing the Canaanitish woman's faith through his son, through trial.
- Actually a three-fold trial. And we know that that is the purpose of this story, because it's often the case, isn't it, in the miracles, in the parables of Jesus, as well as in individual stories that seem mysterious at first reading, that we get a hint, sometimes we get a direct statement, at the end of the miracle, at the end of the parable, at the end of the story, as to the meaning, the purpose, of that particular event.
- And tonight we have one of those before us, as we take up this text from Matthew 15, 21 through 28. I'll read again only verse 28 right now.
- [3 : 3 6] But here you have the secret, you see. Jesus answered and said unto her, old woman, great, or you can translate it in Greek, mature, is thy faith.
- Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt. And so that is the key that unlocks, this strange threefold trial, by which Jesus, tries this woman to the core of her being, with his three butts.
- In verse 23, but he answered her not a word, the trial of silence. Verse 24, but he answered and said, I'm not sent but to unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
- The trial of rejection. In verse 26, but he answered and said, it's not meat or fitting to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.
- The trial of insult. So I want to lay before you tonight, how Christ matures our faith through trials, in three thoughts, by his apparent silence, by his apparent rejection, and by his apparent insult.

[5 : 01] Now when you consider how this woman came to Jesus, urgently, and where she came, to his feet, crying out, and the burden of her coming, my daughter is grievously vexed with the devil.

You will surely think with me, Jesus is going to answer this woman wondrously right away. And yet we are immediately confronted with this astonishing truth, that even though God in his providence brought Jesus to the northern border of Israel, to Tyre and Sidon, and brought this woman down from her heathen territory, that she just so happened to meet Jesus as she crossed the border, and God himself obviously arranged this surprising meeting, she's going to look for Jesus, and she meets him as soon as she crosses into Israel, surely God will answer her right away.

The whole language of the opening verses imply that Jesus went thence, Jesus departed into the coast of Tyre and said, behold, pay attention, notice this remarkable event, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coast.

Just like Jesus had to come to that one tree, and look up and see Zacchaeus. Or just as Jesus must needs go through Samaria, to meet one Samaritan woman, so he must needs meet this woman, on the northern border of Israel, where he seldom was, but where she was coming to look for him.

And she cries out, and the tense in the Greek is, an ongoing progressive crying, over and over again, O Lord, Son of David, have mercy, have mercy, have mercy on me, my daughter, my daughter, my daughter is grievously vexed with the devil, but, he answered her, not one word.

[7 : 15] It's astonishing. Is this the same Jesus, of whom she had heard, that he answers before we call, that he carries little lambs in his bosom, that he touches and cleanses, and cleanses the unclean lepers, that he causes the deaf to hear, and the blind to see?

He answers not a word? What an objection. What a reason to doubt.

An encouragement to doubt. You know, maybe, maybe her neighbors were right, when they said, why would Jesus of Nazareth, ever hear you, a Canaanite woman?

After all, every local area, has its own deity, and if he's really the Messiah, as you say, no doubt she had this discussion, with her neighbors, before, before she came. No doubt she had gone to, every doctor in the area, no one could heal her daughter, and they said, why would you go to him?

He's a Jewish Messiah, he won't hear you. And now she came all this ways, and crossed the border, and found him, and her heart was hoping against hope, and suddenly her hopes are dashed into pieces.

[8 : 49] He answered her, not a word. What is she to think? Boys and girls, if you were to come home someday, and come to your mom, in the kitchen, and you had some big news to tell her, and you poured out your heart to her, what would you think, if your mom didn't answer you one word?

You say, mom, are you angry? What's wrong, mom? Why aren't you speaking to me? Not one word. Not one word. So what must she do?

She's cried, and cried, and cried, over, and over, and over again. Well, I guess there's only one thing to do, right? It's to go back home. But you see, exactly when we don't know, but the seed of true saving faith, is planted in this woman's heart.

And faith, true faith, never turns its back on Jesus. Because true faith, has only one object, Jesus. So she can't go back home.

Besides that, she has nothing to go back home to, but a demon possessed daughter. Going back home, will solve nothing. And you see, it's the same way today, with a child of God, in all the ups and downs, and perplexities, of our daily lives.

[10 : 23] You too, if you're a believer, you have certain prayers, that are unanswered, don't you? Maybe you've got a prodigal son, or daughter. Maybe your husband has cancer, or maybe you do.

And it seems the Lord isn't hearing, your cry. You too face times, in areas of your life, where it seems the Lord, doesn't answer a word. You know, the health and wealth gospel today, where God always answers, everything right away, and if he doesn't, if he doesn't, well, it means you don't have enough faith.

That's actually a cruel theology. You know, if God always answered us, right away, all the time, I think you'd have to rip out, a good chunk of the Psalms, you'd have to rip out, other portions of the Bible, where the saints of all ages, waited on God, even in times, when he didn't answer a word.

We live in a day, when so many Christians, all around the globe, are smiling, happy, they think Christianity, is always being happy, never having a burden.

Everything's always wonderful for them, but they're kidding themselves. You see, a true Christian, knows times of sorrow, knows times of silence, knows times, when it seems that God is far away, and knows what it means, to pray for his presence, to come back.

[11 : 57] Be not silent unto me, O Lord, said the psalmist, lest if thou be silent unto me, I become like them, that go down into the pit. O Lord, speak, even if it's a word of rebuke, I want to hear your voice, I want to see your face.

Do you know those struggles? Can you say, with Samuel Rutherford, the silence of God, is the most bitter ingredient, that the Christian has to drink, in his cup of sorrow, here on earth.

And elsewhere, Rutherford went further, he said, the silence of God, is hell, on earth, for the believer. Oh, the silence of God.

The psalmist knew all about it. God's people know all about it. Jeremiah knew all about it. When I cry and shout, the Lord shutteth out my prayer, thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer, cannot pass through.

In our psalm book, I have a different psalm book than you, but we sing exclusive psalmody as well, back home, but in our psalm book, there's this, in Psalter 114, this urgent phrase, with anguish, as from piercing sword, reproach of bitter foes I hear, while day by day, with taunting word, where is thy God?

[13 : 21] The scoffers sneer. The silence of God can multiply our doubts, can dampen our encouragement, can crush our zeal.

What a burden it is. What a trial it is. Martin Luther, in 1521, when he was seeking to rebuild the church, when things weren't going well for a while, said to his dear wife, Katie, when he left for work one morning, he said, my dear Katie, I'm afraid God is dead.

He's so silent. And you know, that night when Luther came home, Katie had all the shades drawn in the house, signifying that someone had died. And Luther burst through the door, and forgot what he said in the morning, and he said, Katie, who died today?

She said, you said this morning, God. And Luther was rebuked. But you see, that's how a believer can feel.

Where is thy God? Because he's so silent. And that raises the question, the burden. Why would God do that to his people?

[14 : 45] And of course, whenever you ask, why would God, dot, dot, dot, you always have to stand back, don't you?

And bow. Because God, there's a thousand reasons for doing what he does, no doubt. You see, our lives, our lives are like a big, we call it in America, I'm not sure what you call it, a big jigsaw puzzle.

With thousands of pieces that interlock each other. We can only work with one or two pieces at a time. Well, we men, maybe you women, can work with three or four. But you see, you can only work with a few.

But God sees the whole picture. He knows what he's doing from the beginning to the end. He knows the end from the beginning. And he has many reasons.

And so we cry out, Lord, what thou doest now, I don't know. But by faith, even when he's silent, we grab hold of his promise and we say, but I shall know hereafter.

[15 : 56] Because I trust God more than I trust myself. But even though we don't know all the answers, far from it, the Bible does reveal two major pieces of that puzzle that we can be confident based on the word of God are reasons why God sometimes remains very silent to his people.

And for the first one, if you have a Bible in front of you, if you just turn with me a moment, please, to John 11, to John 11. And you look at verse 6.

When Jesus heard, therefore, that Lazarus was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Now, just think about that with me for a moment. The Bible says he loved Lazarus. The Bible says a messenger came and said, Lazarus, your dear friend whom you love dearly is sick unto death.

He's dying. Jesus is six miles away. He's in Jerusalem. Bethany is only six miles away. Still today in Israel.

[17 : 19] And when he hears, therefore, that his dear friend Lazarus is dying, Jesus abides two days. in the same place where he was.

Does that make any sense to you? It sure didn't make any sense to Mary and to Martha. They both approached him privately when he came. Lord, if thou hadst been here, when he finally arrived, you see, Lazarus was dead.

Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. And we're so good at giving if language to the Lord.

If only this had happened. If only I had done that. If only the other thing had happened, then that wouldn't have happened. But you see, verse 4 tells us why Jesus abode two days still where he was.

When Jesus heard that, he said, verse 4, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. You get the point.

[18 : 26] Translated into your life and to mine. does God get more glory when he answers all our prayers right away or does he sometimes get more glory when we come to our wits end in prayer and our flames of prayer seem to go down into ashes and then from out of our ash heap he answers our forlorn cries and they burst into flame and fulfillment and we give him all the glory.

glory. You see, the simple question is how does Jesus get more glory? Does he get more glory by healing a sick Lazarus or by raising a dead Lazarus?

And in your life does he get more glory sometimes by answering your prayers after you've given up and come to your wits end and surrendered it all over to the Lord Jesus Christ and his intercessory prayers?

and then he answers you at such a time and in such a way and in such a place that you give him all the glory.

You see, that's one reason why he's silent sometimes to get all the glory. He will not share his glory with you or with anyone else.

[19 : 46] But there's a second reason and that's the reason in keeping with the purpose of this story that is the maturation of that seed faith of the Kenyanish woman.

You see, God wants his people to mature. Boys and girls, let's think of it this way. When you were a baby, I mean, you were like one month old.

what happened when you cried? Your mom was right there or your dad and they were trying to help you. Whenever you cried, they gave you exactly what you wanted as soon as they could.

You were a baby. Now, what would you think if you were eight years old and your mom went to the store and as soon as she left for the store, you would just weep and weel like she's never going to come back.

You'd say, your mom would say, something's wrong with that boy. He's not growing up. He's not learning that there's times when I'm going to be away.

[21 : 02] And it's just part of growing up, isn't it? that you can't always be together with your loved ones, that there's ebbing and flowing in our relationships. I'm missing my wife in these days.

She's far away. I don't sit down and cry. I trust I will see her again. That's part of growing up.

And you see, spiritually, the Lord wants us to grow up. And part of that growing up is that we learn to walk by faith and not by sight. We learn to wait on Him in prayers also in times of silence.

It's like when I was nine years old. My dad, it was a very special time. My dad took me from Kalamazoo, Michigan, all the way to Hoboken, New Jersey, through the Appalachian Mountains, to the East Coast, to pick up my grandfather.

Those were the days when people didn't always fly over the ocean, but they came by boat. But when we took that trip, we went through a long tunnel.

[22 : 09] My dad had not warned me about these tunnels. I started getting claustrophobia. I said, Dad, is this tunnel ever going to end? It was long. And my dad said, oh yes, oh yes, we'll come to an end.

When we come to an end, you're going to see a little prick of light. And as we break out into the sunshine, the light is going to get bigger and bigger and then we're going to break out in the sunshine. And he said, you'll enjoy the sunshine more than ever before.

And I did. And ten minutes later, we're in another tunnel. And another. There's like eight of them. Long tunnels. And later I thought, you know, that's what spiritual life is like.

God brings us through tunnels into sunshine, through another tunnel into sunshine, and somehow, you see, when we come into those tunnels and it seems like he's silent and we cry out to God and everything is dark and everything is dreary.

He seems to be pushing us away. But see, as he seems to push us away with one hand, he's secretly, as Peter puts it, drawing us by his spirit with the other hand to himself.

[23 : 12] So that when we come out of that particular trial, that particular tunnel, our faith is stronger than it was when we went into the tunnel. It's God's maturing process.

As we grow up, we need tunnels. tunnels. You might even call it tunnel theology. Because through the tunnels, we learn to enjoy the sunshine.

And so, we need both reasons. God must be silent at times in our lives to get the glory himself and to mature our faith.

But now, this woman does not go home. She seems to pass this first test. She still clings to Jesus. So now you think Jesus is going to answer her cry.

But no, there's another trial. There's another trial. Look at verse 23. The disciples come and they say to her, say to Jesus, send that woman away for she crieth after us.

[24 : 25] But he answered and said, here's trial number two, I'm not sent but into the lost sheep of the house of Israel. What a trial this was. It's a double barrel trial, really.

It's a trial of rejection. Apparent rejection. The disciples reject her. They said, send her away. They're being very bad disciples, aren't they?

for three reasons. They're showing selfishness. They said, she's crying after us. She wasn't crying after them. She's crying after Jesus. And they're showing pride.

She's crying after us. Send her away. They're superior to her. Well, in a way, you can understand the disciples because they just left Jerusalem because they were trying to arrest Jesus because there was too much noise going.

And they hear this woman crying in the streets and their thought is, oh, the authorities are going to come and arrest us here on the borders of Israel because of this woman who just keeps crying. So they're looking after their own skin.

[25 : 30] But thirdly, they don't only have a problem with selfishness and pride here, but indifference. They don't really care about this woman's soul and her need and her child.

Just get rid of this problem. Send her away. But as poor of examples as they are, at least theologically in our minds, we can get our arms around it because we can say, they're sinners.

But how do you get your arms around this? But Jesus said, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. What do you do with that?

He's perfect. He's the Messiah. He's the one who loves poor, needy sinners. And now he seems to reject her. She's lost all right, but she's not a sheep.

She's not of the house of Israel. It's as if he's saying, woman, your time has not yet come. I haven't gone to the Gentiles yet.

[26 : 37] That will happen one day after he dies and he gets resurrected, ascends to his father, he's going to send his spirit. On the day of Pentecost, the middle door, a petition between Jew and Gentile will go open.

John Calvin puts it this way. It's very carefully worded in Calvin, but he says something like this. It's as if Jesus said to her, woman, it's not your time yet.

You can't raid the table when the meal is being set up because right now I am not in my priestly role of bringing the gospel to the ends of the earth, but I'm in my prophetic role as a Jewish Messiah fulfilling what I need to do.

One day, the day will come when the gospel will be opened, but now you're trying to raid the table in the middle of the meal being arranged.

But how would this woman feel? She can't wait years. Her daughter is grievously vexed with the devil. Rejected by the disciples.

[27 : 48] Rejected by Jesus. What's she going to do now? Now surely she'll go home, won't she? Surely. Well, if there's no saving faith, I suppose she would have.

You see, by nature, if we don't have saving faith, when we don't get answers from God, we turn away and we rebel. Actually, by nature, we don't even want to get that close to God, do we?

As long as God gives us a decent spouse, decent kids, decent job, decent church, well, God can keep his distance.

But you see, if you're a true believer, no, no, you've got to have God. God, you can't turn your back upon him. You've got to cling to his feet.

You've got to worship him. And you see, here's another sign we know that this woman's faith is true. Because the Bible says, then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

[28 : 56] Just when she's rejected. You know, when you get rejected by someone, what do you do? Well, most of the time we hurt, we bleed a little bit, but we turn away and say, well, if they don't want me, then I, you know, I've just got to go on and live my life.

That's all there's to it. I can't be crying over spilt milk. I can't be grieving over this rejection. There's always going to be some people that are going to reject you, and so you go on with your life.

But you see, if you're a believer, you cannot handle the rejection of God. You must have God. You must worship his son. Then came she, when she was rejected, and she worshipped him, and she said, Lord, help me.

What's going on here? But Jesus is maturing her faith. Do you notice the difference between her two prayers?

She comes praying this, O Lord, thou son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with the devil, and her second prayer is, Lord, help me. What a difference.

[30 : 09] What's going on? Well, she came saying, Lord, thou son of David. Son of David is the Messiah title. And Jesus is answering her, I'm not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

and she replies by just calling him Lord. Lord, it's true, you're only, you're the Messiah, but you're also Lord of heaven and earth.

So that name son of David is stripped away. She just appeals to him as the Lord of the world, as the Lord of the universe, as the Lord of her territory as well. And then notice this, help me.

Where did her daughter go? I thought she came because her daughter was grievously vexed with the devil. Well, she did. But this is important.

How many of you sitting here tonight, if you've had children, how many of you have never had any troubles with your children? Ever? No one.

[31 : 18] I'm sure. Did it ever dawn on you that one reason why the Lord makes all our children so different from each other? There are no two children alike.

And if you're like me, you'll say, it's incredible how different personalities of my children are, how differently they need to be treated, how much wisdom I need for each child. And you see, has it ever dawned on you that one reason the Lord gives us children is not only to rear them for him, of course, that's very, very important.

He loans them to us to rear them in covenant ways, looking to him for converting grace. But another reason the Lord gives us children is to try our faith, to mature our faith, especially for you moms, as a mother.

So much of the responsibility falls upon you during the day. How many times haven't you cried out to the Lord? Lord, help me! Lord, help me! And your prayer was reduced to something short and sweet and urgent.

You know, sometimes our shortest prayers are our very best. And you know, everything is in this prayer. The word Lord reaches up into the heavens.

[32 : 45] The word me reaches down into the hellishness of my own unworthiness. I'm a sinner. And the word help is a mediation word. At least hold with one arm upon God and one hand upon the sinner and brings them together.

It's all there. It's so beautiful in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. You remember boys and girls when Christian falls into the slough of despond? And there's a man there.

There's a man there who pulls them out. Remember the man's name? His name is Help. Help. And in my Pilgrim's Progress at least, there's some marginal notes that I had when I was a boy.

And I still remember as a boy reading in the marginal note that Bunyan said, Help is Jesus. Thou has laid help upon one who is mighty.

Lord, help me. Be my Savior. Deliver me. God uses the trials of daily life, the disappointments, the crushing defeats, the mysteries.

[33 : 57] God uses those things, circumstances that disappoint us and confuse us and overwhelm us to mature our faith. That's why most of our real prayers are circumstantially motivated.

God brings us into tight places and we learn to cry out in our prayers. We learn to fall at his feet and worship him and cry out, Lord, help me.

A prayer that's simple enough for a three-year-old and a prayer that a 95-year-old does not get beyond. To try our faith. That's it.

What a wonderful prayer this is. And notice she worshipped him as she did it. This is a true prayer. She worshipped him. The word worship, by the way, is a beautiful word in Greek.

It's actually pros kuneo. Pros means, it's two words, pros means towards and kuneo means to kiss. So to kiss towards, literally, which means in the Greek understanding that all the stream of my affections goes out towards the object of worship.

[35 : 15] It's as if when the Lord rejected her, she said, Lord, I can't do without you. It's like Esther, if I perish, I perish, but Lord, I need you. I need someone greater than King Ahasuerus. I need you, the almighty Lord of heaven and earth.

Lord, help me. Have you ever been there? have you ever been inside of God's vice grip and he's tightening the vice grip and it's a trial too big for you and he tightens it a little bit further, he doesn't give you any relief and he tightens it a little bit further and a little bit further like a piece of wood in the vice grip and you can screw it so tight that finally the wood itself makes a noise, it squeaks out as it were and you feel like you're in that vice grip and you cry out, Lord, help me.

Or sometimes perhaps you can't utter a word, sometimes you can't get beyond the word Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord.

Sometimes it's a sigh, sometimes it's just a cry. Samuel Rutherford said, better let, better let thy prayers be without words than without heart.

And from the bottom of your heart you just groan, you groan to him. You have no words left, you're at the wit's end of your prayer. You just groan to him and in the feeling of your heart you're just praying that the Lord Jesus would take over your wordless prayers and that he would present them to his father and that he would pray for you and take it over for you.

[36 : 57] Lord, help me. I don't know the answer. I don't know the way. I don't know the future. I see no solution. I see no hope, no help. Lord, do thou help me.

This woman wonderfully passes the second test. Wonderfully. You see, that's what the maturation process does through tunnel theology.

through rejection. The believer just comes closer to God. Closer, ever closer Lord, I press to thee.

But then there's a third trial. Still no answer. A third trial. Verse 26, but, a third but, but he answered and said, it is not fitting to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs.

What in the world does that mean? You know, the Gentiles were called dogs by the Jews. It was a term of reproach. I don't know if it's the same in Scotland as America, but if you call someone a pig, that's a very bad name.

[38 : 11] Don't ever do that, boys and girls. It's rude. That's an insult. But that's what Jesus did. What in the world? Why would he do that? It's a mystery at first.

Confusing. But you see, this woman has not yet admitted her vileness. She's been being matured, but she's never confessed her sinfulness.

She's worried about her daughter, but she's never said, I'm unworthy, I'm unclean, I'm like a filthy beast before thee. She really has no natural rights to Jesus because she's a cyber Phoenician.

She has no religious rights to Jesus either because she's a Canaanite. She has no citizenship rights. She's an outsider.

But she hasn't yet admitted, I'm a vile, filthy beast before thee. So what is Jesus doing here? He's maturing her faith for the third time.

[39 : 15] How is she going to respond? Is she going to fail this third test perhaps? Is she going to say like Abner, am I a dog's head and walk away in anger?

Oh, she answers with a wonderful, wonderful, amazing answer. Martin Luther says, she ensnared Christ in his own words, he who loves to be so ensnared by sinners.

Truth, Lord, she says. Truth, Lord, I'm a dog. I'm a vile, filthy beast. You see, dogs at that time were considered unclean.

Most of the dogs were wild dogs. The big dogs were all wild dogs. In the Old Testament times, all dogs were wild. Nobody had a dog for a pet.

In New Testament times, they were just beginning to bring little dogs into their houses as pets. And Jesus actually uses this language.

[40 : 23] You can see it in the New King James Version translation. It says, little dogs, little dogs, yet the little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall for their master's table.

Jesus says, it's not fitting to take the children's bread and cast it to the little dogs. And you see, this woman is listening very carefully and she understands what Jesus means.

He's talking about those little pet dogs that come in the home. They get the leftover scraps of the meal. And what she responds by saying is, yes, Lord, I'm willing to be your little dog.

I don't want to interrupt the table in the middle of the meal with your own disciples. Yes, Lord, I'm unworthy. Yes, Lord, I'm vile. Yes, Lord, I'm filthy. Yes, Lord, I don't deserve anything.

But surely thou art the Lord of heaven and earth. Surely now that thou art on the edge of Israel, surely thou canst let a few leftover crumbs fall across the table down to this Gentile dog.

[41 : 26] Oh, Lord, truth, Lord, yet, she engages in what Job called a holy argument with the Lord. Job 23.

I would fill my mouth with holy arguments. That's what she does. And you see, that's the way to pray. That's the way to be a spiritual beggar with God. Truth, Lord, I'm poor, yet thou art the rich one who became poor, that poor sinners may be made rich in thee.

Truth, Lord, I'm blind, but thou hast eyes alved for the blind. Truth, Lord, I'm weak, but art thou not the strong one. Truth, Lord, truth, Lord, truth, Lord, whatever he says against me, no matter how bad it is, art thou not a God who has crumbs, even for heathen dogs.

Now, Lord, if it's a crumb from thee, if it's a crumb from thee, it's worth everything. It's worth everything. I just know it's from thee. You know, when our children were young, then I would I would my wife would come to me before my birthday, and she'd say, you know, it's going to be your birthday soon.

The children would like to get you something. Do you have some money? So I give the money to my wife. My wife gives it to the kids. The kids go out, and they buy me a gift, and they bring the gift to me.

[42 : 59] And always along with the gift, they would do some little drawings. Now, honestly, the drawings were very bad. And if it was anybody else's kids, I would have thrown them away right away.

But they were my children. And when they would give me the gift, with the drawing, see, I would have been very cruel to say, well, you think you're giving me a gift, but it's really my money.

And I would have also been very cruel to say, oh, this picture is just terrible. Instead, I thank them, and I embrace them, and I take the picture, and I take it over to my study, and I hang it on my wall.

This is my child's drawing. It's special, because it's from my child. You see, that's what the Lord does with us. Everything we have that's worthy is from the Lord.

The least speck of faith. This woman's faith, too, is really from Jesus. She doesn't know it yet. Everything is from the Lord. He gives it to us, and we give it back to Him. And He's so good.

[44 : 05] He says, oh, woman, great is thy faith. Thy faith. He gives it away to her. It's really what He's done. And He embraces her with joy in the end.

But you see, when it's from God, well, it's never ugly, of course, like a child's picture, so the comparison doesn't hold there. But just because it's from God, no matter how small it is, it's big.

Because it comes from Him. Just like when it was from my children. It's a big thing. But with God, His gifts are always perfect. Even a crumb is big.

And this woman recognizes that. Her fate is being matured drastically. She says, truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat the crumbs of the master's table. Just give me a few crumbs and my daughter and I will be satisfied.

side. She sticks her foot in the beggar's door. And she won't go away. She won't go away. And that's the way, that's the way to pray and to wrestle with God.

[45 : 11] You know, my dad used to tell this story that when he was nine years old, my grandparents lived in a very, very poor house, probably about as big as our double car garage today.

And just a three room, very small rooms. And a train track went behind their yard and the train would often stop there and then beggars would get off and they'd come to the front door.

One day a beggar came and my dad answered the door and the beggar looked down at this nine-year-old boy and he said, I need a sandwich. So my dad went to my grandmother and he said, there's a beggar in the door and he wants a sandwich.

Oh, my grandmother says, you go tell him we're just as poor as he is. So my dad did it, went to the door and he said, we're just as poor as you are. My dad went to shut the door, but the beggar stuck his foot in the door and he wouldn't go away.

He looked down at my dad and he said, just one slice of bread. My dad didn't know what to do so he went back to my grandma and he said, the beggar won't go away.

[46 : 17] He wants grandma said, he's a real beggar. Make him a whole sandwich. You see, that's what the Lord does with us, doesn't he?

When you're six months old, you just cry once, you get an answer. When you're ten years old, your parents don't always answer you right away.

God doesn't answer us. We grow up. He tests us by silence. He tests us by rejection. He tests us by insult. And sometimes he's waiting to see, will you stick your foot in the beggar's door?

Will you plead on? Will you keep on knocking? You remember again, the Christiana section of Pilgrim's Progress, when Christiana is let in, and the children are let in, and mercy stands without, and she knocks, and she knocks, said Bunyan, until she like would have fainted.

And finally, the door opens, and the Lord lets her in. You see, God is sovereign. Sometimes we have to wait long, sometimes we have to wait short, but God knows how to test us. And we have to keep putting our foot in the beggar's door.

[47 : 31] I don't know how that is here, but in America, often salesmen come to the door, and you almost always know it's a salesman, because they knock once, and if you don't answer right away, they're gone. And you finally get to the door, and you see, oh, the salesman's halfway to the neighbor's house.

You turn around, and you say to your wife, you must not have wanted us very badly, he only knocked once. Did you know that John Bunyan once made a list of his top ten sins that he grieved over the most?

And somewhere on that list, number three, number four, is this. I don't keep on knocking at the door of grace. I give up too quick. Are you knocking at the door of grace?

Are you sticking your foot in the beggar's door? I will not let thee go except thou bless me. Give me a few crumbs from the master's table. Ah, she passed the third test.

Actually, she puts us to shame. She had never heard one sermon. She just heard rumors about Jesus, and she believes in him as a messiah, and she trusts him, and she needs him, and she goes to him. What a blessing.

[48 : 37] She sticks her foot in the beggar's door, and by the time Jesus is done with her, after these three trials, you see, actually she's quite mature in her faith. And then Jesus can hold back no longer.

He's like the greater Joseph. The brothers come to him, and he can't hold back any longer. He finally says, I am Joseph. It's as if he says to her, I am Jesus. I am, I am the woman.

Woman, I am what you say I am. Oh, great. Mature. Is thy faith. You realize what I was doing to you, woman. I wasn't really being silent.

I wasn't really rejecting you. I wasn't really insulting you. That's why in all three of my points, you notice my title was apparent silence, apparent rejection, apparent insult. How you say, but how then could this woman find what she needed?

How could Jesus say to her, be it unto thee as thou wilt? How could he open the storehouses of grace to her as it were? It's almost as if Jesus goes from rejecting her and insulting her and being silent to her, as if he hands her the keys to his storehouse and says, woman, you can go in, you can take anything you want.

[49 : 52] Be it unto thee as thou wilt. And she goes in and she takes, metaphorically, she takes two big loaves of bread, one for herself, one for her daughter, and she goes home. And her daughter is made whole from that very hour.

Are you jealous of this woman? But how could she get it? How could she get it? She is a Gentile. She was unworthy. She was a sinner.

You see, the answer is Jesus. the one who endured the real silence is Jesus. So he could speak to this woman.

My God, my God, with a loud voice the Bible says, why hast thou forsaken me? Silence.

Deafening silence. Jesus. Not pushed away with one hand and drawn with the other. Pushed away with the two holy hands of his own father. Rejected of heaven.

[50 : 56] Rejected of earth. Rejected of hell. Rejected on every hand. Rejected even by nature. The sun would not shine upon him. And insulted. They slapped him in the face.

They spit upon him. They mocked him. They crowned him with a fake crown and a purple robe and said, hail king of the Jews. You see, because he endured the real silence and the real rejection and the real insult, we have to follow in his shadow.

But he endures the substance. So we have these little mini silences, these many rejections, these many insults that we have to bear because we're followers of Jesus.

Take up the cross, and deny yourself and follow me. But he bears the real thing. I don't know if you have any Canada geese over here, perhaps not, but in America, there's lots of flocks of Canada geese that are flying overhead all the time during migration season.

And you always know them because they're in a V shape. There's always one goose that's in the front. He takes all the wind, but he can only last a little while. And he drops out and he goes to the back of the line.

[52 : 14] And the next goose, because they're following in the wind stream, takes the front, and he gets tired and he drops back. It's beautiful to see. Teamwork.

What you see in salvation, Jesus is the front goose always, and he takes all the wrath of God upon himself. And we just follow in his wind stream, if you will.

Yes, we have to suffer, but our suffering is not meritorious. our suffering is there to mature us and to ripen us for glory. So we follow him all the way to Jerusalem, down the Via Dolorosa, to the cross, not to pay for our sin.

He's done that all, but because he wants to mature us, to ripen us for glory. do you understand the trials through which God is leading you this way, that actually God wants to mature you in the most holy faith?

Because Jesus has been there for you. he will never let you down. He endured the real silence, the real rejection, the real insult, so he could say to you, oh man, oh woman, oh boy, oh girl, oh teenager, mature is your faith.

[53 : 55] Be it unto you as you will. Amen. Amen.