

Trials of Many Kinds

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Date: 05 February 2023

Preacher: BK Smith

[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Thank you for that. Welcome. A couple things.

First thing, please turn your Bibles to the book of James. The book of James. Thrown a curveball at you. Last week I said it'd be in the book of John.

Apparently I lied to you. We're in the book of James. I had a little bit of a fever this week, so I missed out on a whole bunch of study time. So we're going back to a sermon that I had worked on many years ago.

And you haven't heard it before, but I'm sure you've heard the message many times. But it's a message that I find more appropriate to our time, whether it doesn't matter if it's now 200 years ago or 20 years ago or two days ago.

So for the next two Sundays, I'm going to do a two-part series on the Christians' response to the trials of life. Two-part series on trials and how we as Christians respond to trials.

[1 : 14] That's right. I believe my sickness was a trial I had to endure, so I'd scribble over in the middle of the night and write out my notes. No, it's not true.

One of the best sermons in my life that I had ever heard was when I was living in L.A. and we had to go to visit different ethnicities and how they did church.

And my assignment was a downtown small inner black church in the middle of Watts.

And if you don't know anything, but that's just predominant around Inglewood, a very predominant African-American, and it was by far the most majestic worship service I had ever been to in my life to that time.

And I remember the pastor starting off the subject with, I'm going to speak on something that you probably don't want to hear. Because you don't have problems, right?

[2 : 19] If you don't have problems, why do you want to hear a sermon about problems? About dealing with problems. And the amount of discord the people were literally getting up.

No, we got problems. Preacher, preach it. Tell us. Tell us what to do with my problems. And I'm this one little white kid from North Bay and Joey, from the same town as I am.

We could name all three black families in all of North Bay. It's all white. We've never seen anything like that in my life. And just the amount of life that was exuded within that.

But the problem and the question that he asked, who's got problems? Hey, we're getting there.

Who's got problems?

I do, right? Who's got trials? I do, right? It's an everyday part of the Christian life. There is a schism of Christianity that has this fairytale land idea that when you become a Christian, that you do not have trials.

[3 : 32] That somewhere when you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you had this certificate. And once you signed that, that was like, get out of problem central.

Anybody know anybody like that or thought like that? Right? Come on there, finally. There's a few honest people here. Some people did believe that.

That that would be the reality of the Christian life. Because I'm now made right with God. I'm not going to have trials. But as Dave Regeer just opened up Psalm 2 talking about, there is going to be trials of life.

Just because we are followers of Christ, it doesn't change. So the book of James is kind of a unique book. A lot of people call it kind of the Proverbs version of the New Testament.

Because there's kind of an awkward flow when you go through the book of James. Now James was the half-brother of Jesus. And when he, he didn't get saved until after Jesus resurrected from the dead.

[4 : 43] Did you know that? He kind of made fun of his brother. Kind of questioned the sanity of his brother before he was actually crucified and rose again.

And after that happened, James not only became a believer, but he kind of rose to prominence and was kind of the bishop of the Jerusalem church.

So this is actually one of the first books in the New Testament that was written. And what's interesting is that the book was written when the Christians were just starting to come under persecution for their faith within Jerusalem.

So he's writing this to a scattered people or a scattering of people. So whenever you take the time and you read the book of James, you need to keep that in your mindset.

That he's writing these words to a Christian community that has come under attack. And one of the ways that I, one of my pastors told me how to read James, is it's almost that he's giving you spiritual health check.

[6 : 02] So when you approach the book, when you read it, it's a reflection. Is this real to me? So he's going to talk about trials right to the very beginning.

We're not going to cover the whole book, obviously. But for the next two Sundays, I want to talk to you about what he has to say about trials. So I'm sure you'll turn in your Bibles to James chapter 1. James chapter 1. So you notice I got a little bit of energy, gusto after being in bed all week, right? It's good to be out alive, breathing. So starting with me in James chapter 1, it says, James, a servant of God, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The real, the word servant is actually *doulos*, which we understand is the translation for slave. It's not bond servant.

None of your Bibles is going to have bond servant or servant. But James actually considered himself a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[7 : 12] And the reason why you have servant there is when the translators were putting that in there, there's such a bad stigma, obviously, around the word slave that they dropped it.

But James doesn't want to shy about this away from the fact that he is a slave of Jesus Christ. The New Testament teaches that before we know Jesus Christ, we are slaves to sin.

We are slaves to darkness. That means we have no power in ourselves. This is what we are drawn to. We are drawn to serve self. And after Jesus Christ's scales come off his eyes, he understands who his brother is.

He now understands him as a willing slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ to the 12 tribes in the dispersions.

Greetings. That's the 12 tribes of Israel who are now scattered out of Israel. And here he is. Gives them the lowdown. Verse 2.

[8 : 14] Count it all joy. My brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds. Boom. Just drops it right there. Mic drop, right? Joy.

What are you talking about? I've had to leave my home, my family, my job, my inventory. For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

And let steadfastness have its full effect. That you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives generously to all without reproach.

And it will be given him. But let him ask in faith with no doubting. For the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

[9 : 22] Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation and the rich in his humiliation. Because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.

For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass. Its flowers falls and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial. For when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God. For God cannot be tempted with evil. And he himself tempts no one.

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin.

[10 : 24] And sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. Let's pray. Dear holy heavenly God, we just thank you for this word that deals with an area which we sometimes struggle with.

The idea of being joyful under trials. This first book that you sent out to the Christian saints of the day that was written down by your half-brother, Lord, just deals with this subject that tends to plague so many of us.

And some of us just do not respond properly to trials. For those who have questions this morning, Father, I pray that this would give them instruction and understanding, not only of your word, but of your heart, your intent, and your gracious and loving desire for us.

So, Father, just please give us attentive ears. I pray that you'd give me a clear voice. Pray that you'd subside the coughing for this moment. And that we would be able to come and worship without interruption.

In your name we pray. Amen. See, the reality is, it's easy to be a Christian when it's smooth sailing.

[11 : 55] When there's no troubles. When your kids are listening, they're doing well in school, you're doing well financially. There's stability in every area of your life. But it's entirely different to encourage someone when the storm is breaking, the wind is rocking their boat, the sky is full of lightning, and there's thunder as loud as cannon fire.

Paul, in the book of 2 Corinthians 13.5, tells us that we are to examine ourselves. To see whether we are in the faith.

To test ourselves. To see if our faith is true. As Paul writes, Do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?

Unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test. I hope you will find out that we have not failed. The test. So there's this idea that God will, indeed, test us. And one of the ways that he tests us is through trials.

[13 : 19] They are trials. And he encourages us to examine ourselves. And this is what this little book of James does for us.

It makes us ask pertinent questions of ourselves. The first one, when he says, Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.

Do you break down and shatter at the first indication of a trial? Or do you respond somehow differently?

Here, James wastes no time getting into the thick of life. And he shows us this first spiritual health check.

Which I've said, which is the believer's response to trials. So within our next two sermons, I want to answer several questions for you.

[14 : 26] The first question is, why does James begin with teaching on trials? The second question is, what is the biblical definition of trials?

The third question that I'm going to answer is, What are trials meant to produce in a Christian's life? The fourth question is, why does God allow trials?

And five, how does God want us to respond to trials? Pretty clear? I think those are pretty much all the questions on trials that we can think of.

So, and I'll be repeating those questions as we go for those making notes. So the first question, why does James begin with teaching on trials?

As I said, this book is written to first century Jewish believers. How they came to salvation, we do not know. But we obviously know that it was from the dispersion of the gospel.

[15 : 33] When Jesus Christ rose to heaven, Holy Spirit came down. And we covered this in Acts chapter 2. And the apostles received the word in faith. And they went out, amen?

They were told, preach the message of Jesus Christ. And they did. And one of the strategies the early Christians used, and most of those people at that time were Jews.

We don't really see many Greeks coming to the Lord until later in Acts chapter 6, 8, and 10. But in chapter 2, it's primarily Jewish people.

So one of the strategies they had was to go to the Jewish communities. And within Jewish communities were these synagogues. They'd go into the synagogues, and they would declare the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now at this time, the Jewish people, they had lived happily ever after in Israel and in Jerusalem. But as further persecution came against them, they started to move out.

[16:37] I actually have a very good friend of mine. She, before she came to Christ, she lived in a Jewish enclave in Iran previous to the current administration in Iran.

So when the Shah ruled before 1979, and she would tell you everything she knew was Jewish even though it was in Iran. It was this Persian Jewish enclave.

That's what they did. That was all their businesses, their families, cousins. Everybody lived in there. It was this corner of the world. And that's how they operated. So through these evangelism trips, people would get saved.

And they went from being slaves of the law to being slaves of Jesus Christ. Now the problem was they were no longer Jewish, right? They didn't want to do the Jewish ways.

They didn't want to adhere to the law. They now adhered to a person named Jesus Christ. It was freedom. Hey, things are strange. Get out of here. Don't want to do business with you.

[17:41] You're kind of talking strange things. We don't want to get into that. So a lot of people were losing friends, family, businesses. So they were suffering in a great way.

Many of the themes in James deal with those who were persecuted by the rich. So we know that many of our Jewish Christian friends, early brothers and sisters of the faith endured much.

And it simply destroys the myth by becoming a Christian. Doesn't mean life gets any easier here on earth. So one of the things, and you can ask Dave as a pastor, one of the elders who've served here in the past, such as Carl or Chris, who presently serves.

One of the most difficult things for a pastor to do is to pastor someone through trials of life. How would you feel losing a loved one?

And I showed up and I said, hey, count it all joy. Right? Be joyful. A better day will come. Right?

[18:57] This can only make you stronger in the faith. The truths of scripture really don't sell in the moment, do they? You know, one of the first years when I was a pastor, there was a young man in my church, and he decided to join the army.

And this is when I lived in the United States. No small decision. And I actually counseled, I would not sign. He wanted my signature as a sponsoring individual that he would be a good member of the army.

And I didn't think he would. One, it's kind of funny. He was too independent, but he was too smart. But he hadn't finished an education. And the problem is, you would be going into a mechanism of order where you're really smart, but there's not a lot of educated people.

So what happens is, in case you don't know, until you have a university degree, you can't be an officer. So he'd have to start right at the very bottom, and I thought he would lack the humility to do so.

And what happened? He got kicked out. And being kicked out of the army is a big deal in the States. It's to be dishonorably discharged. And it would stick with you. And it can be a problem. And one of the things I remember telling him when he came back was, the whole, I told you so, God's got it, wasn't going to really suffice for this poor kid.

[20:26] Right? There was so many other lessons that he needed to learn. But the problem was, he kept telling all his officers in charge what to do. And not only that, he was posting it on Facebook.

You know? And I was like, I can't even believe they're allowing you on Facebook in the army. But I remember telling him, you need to shush your mouth. Like, stop. Like, this is going to have huge consequences for you.

Didn't know, ran into a problem. What did we do? We got together as elders and we tried to help him get him a job where that mark against him wasn't going to hurt him.

And we worked at a time that we knew we needed to bring him to a point of maturity so he could understand what happened. But what I believe to be one of the best examples is by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ on how to serve someone who's in great pain.

And we've covered this in John 11. When Jesus was informed that Lazarus had died. Remember that? He returns.

[21:36] He's on the road. Martha informs him that Lazarus, her brother, is dead. He meets Mary, her sister, and said that if he had been there, he wouldn't have died.

John 11, 33 states, When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

And he said, Where have you laid them? They said to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. What's amazing is he could have just said, Hey, if you give me five minutes, Lazarus is going to be alive,

and all this weeping is going to go.

But that's not how it usually works with trials. Often we need to sit down and just identify and be with a person in their pain. And I believe the best thing we can do as believers in Christ is just to be with them and to serve them, not solve the problem.

However, this leads me to teach, leads me to why I teach on these subjects, so that we as believers in Christ will know how to properly respond to our friends and family's sorrow.

[23 : 06] That will inevitably happen through trials, but our own as well. So that is the answer to the first question of why does James begin with teachings and trials?

Because it's an everyday part of life. Whether you choose to admit it or not, it is. Question number two. What is the biblical definition of a trial? Trials are defined here as tests.

And tests, when we write a test in school, it's an examination of our knowledge, right? How do we understand the information? Some people believe that these trials being talked about are temptations.

It is very true that a trial can turn into temptations. But right here, James is referring to trials of life. And what that means is challenges of life that are from the external. You with me on that? There are external issues that come against us.

[24 : 10] It's not an internal struggle. Now that external can lead to an internal struggle, which can lead to temptation in sin.

So we know the story of Jesus Christ being in the wilderness. And it says that Satan brought these temptations against him.

They weren't inward temptations for Jesus. They were on the external. You with me on that? So the external can turn into an internal. But what he's talking about here are just the external challenges of life that we can go through.

The tense of the verb here tells us is that this is a continuous process of testing.

That life is a continuous process of testing. It's never going to end on this earth.

[25 : 20] We live in a fallen world. We are always going to face sickness. We are going to face death. We are going to face other people.

We are going to always have that element around us, which is constantly going to test us and test our faith.

So because of this, the trials James is writing about is not about one specific trial, but various types of trials.

Like I said, these are external trials. Temptations are definitely usually seen as internal trials.

So what James is simply talking about is the hardship of life. Little, in case you don't know, we are growing older.

[26 : 20] Day by day. For some of you who are young, virile, and strong, you don't think about that. But some people, when we get to a certain age, the knees don't work as quickly when you turn.

Right? The mouth doesn't close all the time when we mean to make it cough or eating or whatever. Right? Just certain things. And as any guy knows, hair starts to grow out of your ears when none of it does on your head.

Like, who can figure these things out? Right? But these are trials. We have to identify with something new. I distinctly have this memory in my life.

When I grew up, and I hope Joey takes no offense to this, but I hated living in my hometown, North Bay. It was an okay town, but all the action was in Toronto.

Right? You know, I didn't like hockey in the Toronto. Blue Jays were in Toronto. It was only three hours away. So any opportunity I had to get out of North Bay, I took it.

[27 : 30] And I figured, you know, if I can only get out of North Bay, all my troubles will be over.

Right? You know? And then I get down to university, and I remember thinking after my first year, you know, after my first year, I'm at Western.

I'm going to master this. And, you know, years two, three, and four will be so much easier. Right?

And it never happens. You don't. You're always getting your assignments in at the last moment.

Then you start thinking right at the very end. And when you're a student, I'm working full time, trying to get through school. And I'm like, I can't wait when I don't have to pay for school and I have a career, because then I won't have any money worries for the rest of my life.

Right? Then you start getting a job. Then all of a sudden, there's other financial pressures. And now my wife and I are like talking. I can't wait until we retire.

We have no financial pressures ever again. Right? Yeah, we don't have that conversation ever. Right? But you keep thinking, like, there's these different stages of life you get to.

[28 : 29] You've conquered it, and it's going to get easier. You know what I mean? Like, 18 is going to be so much better than 13. Right? I can drive. 21 for all the wrong reasons. Then, you know, I'm an adult.

When do they see us as adults here? What, 35, 36 now? But anyway, you keep thinking there are these stages. It's just, but every stage has its own trials, has its own challenges.

Even for some of you, the kids are out of the house, and now they bring in their grandchildren for you to deal with. Right? Like, it's just life. So trials encompass a lot of things.

It can be persecution for your faith. It can be bereavement over the loss. And I don't mean loss of a loved one, but loss of a life that you were hoping to have.

I know John Piper, and I've mentioned this before. He helped me a lot. I wanted to have kids grow and have all that kind of stuff, and Lord didn't have that for me. You know, I got married later in life.

[29 : 41] And he said, take some time just to grieve that loss. Because I grew up with that idea that that was going to be my life. But my life changes plans. Some of you have lost spouses along the way.

Children along the way. Plans have changed. Health issues. It just, it didn't work out the way you thought it was when you were 25. Right?

And sometimes, we have to grieve those life processes and move on with the life that God has before us.

But those are trials. Work issues. Poverty. Being rich. I've told you before, one of my friends married into the richest evangelical family in the world.

And you don't want those problems. Like, I remember telling them out and out. I would never, like, Lord bless you for the issues that go on in your life.

[30 : 44] Because I thought it was totally different for you. Sickness. Some of it has to deal with accidents. Anxiety.

Loneliness. Disappointment. Sometimes they are present issues. Sometimes they are past issues. These trials vary, but one thing is very clear.

They are unavoidable. They are unavoidable. Simply put, any difficulty in life that threatens our faithfulness to Jesus Christ is a trial.

So, question number three that I want to answer for you is, what are trials meant to produce? Take a look at verse three.

For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And I'm actually reading from James 2.

[31 : 51] And it says, And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect, complete, Oh no, this is from chapter one, sorry.

I wrote it wrong. It says, It's an interesting choice of words that he uses here.

It produces steadfastness, which leads to perfection and completion.

Who doesn't want to be perfect and complete? I think we all do. But something needs to be produced in us before we reach there.

You see, the ultimate goal of trials is to produce maturity in Christ. Trials are a spiritual health check because our reaction to them reveals our heart condition.

[33 : 20] Trials reveals our heart condition. Do we take responsibility for our trials?

Do we choose to willingly endure our trials? Do we blame others for our trials?

Do we complain about our trials? Do we murmur during our trials?

Do we push responsibility on others for our trials? Only you know how you respond.

Do you experience fear during your trials? Do you experience anxiety during your trials?

[34 : 18] Do you see, some trials are indeed our making, and some are a natural consequence of living in a fallen world.

As I slowly begin to know you after being here for, it'll be five years next month, you know that? Five years I've had the pleasure and blessing of being here with you. I am getting to know your stories and seeing how your faith has been shaped.

And some of it through the harshness of life. Some of them is through the blessings of life. Some of it's hearts, whichever it is. But it's your life that is shaping you to be the person that I am getting to know you now.

You see, maturity of character is not the result of the number of trials in our lives, but our maturity is the result of how we face our trials.

You get that? It's not the amount of trials. It's how you face those trials. I'm convinced, after doing this pastoral gig for 15 years now, that sometimes the reason why a certain trial appears in a person's life over and over and over is because it hasn't completed what God intended it to complete in your life.

[35 : 43] You were given an escape, and you took the escape, and God just put you back on that highway to that trial. You might have had six weeks, six months, six years apiece, but that trial's back.

And I believe it's because God wants to do something specific in your life that is intended to make you mature, perfect, complete, and lacking in nothing.

The fact is, as I believe James wants us to learn, is that trials will demonstrate ultimately if our faith is authentic or inauthentic.

Maturity is produced not by years of your life as a Christian, but how we learn the lessons of life that trials produce.

So, to conclude this sermon, I want to provide for you, why does God allow trials? And I'm going to give you eight reasons for them.

[36 : 57] One, first reason God gives you trials is to strengthen your own faith. To strengthen your own faith. Exodus 16, 4, it says, Then the Lord said to Moses, Behold, I'm about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them whether they will walk in the law or not.

And what he was meaning by that is, God gave, when he took his people out of Israel, he gave them enough food for that day. But some wanted to hoard that food.

And you know why they hoarded? It's because they didn't trust, right? They didn't trust. Was God going to be as good tomorrow as he's good today?

God told them, I will provide for you tomorrow, but they don't. When I was younger in university, I worked in a transition house for kids that were either abused or been through some horrible situations.

And there was one young kid who was raised in an orphanage in South America. And it was a horrible life for the kid, but we could always smell rotten food in his bedroom.

[38 : 17] And basically where he grew up, they would just literally throw the food on the ground. On that day, you got food. Other days, you didn't. So you would take and you would hoard.

But now he's living in London, Ontario, Canada. He's got a really nice home. He's got a really good place. There's meals. I'm cooking him meals. That was my job in the morning.

When the kids would wake up, they'd have their oatmeal, their eggs and bacon, everything. It was there. It wasn't going to change. But he would always take more and hide it in his room.

For he just had this fear that he wouldn't have food anymore. So God was testing his people. 2 Chronicles 32, 31 says, God left him.

He's talking about King Hezekiah to himself in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart. What's that saying? We don't really know who we are until we're alone and no one's watching us.

[39 : 18] Right? Are we indeed people of integrity? Right? God uses spiritual trials for us to take stock of our heart, to do a spiritual inventory of ourselves.

Do we have a strong faith or a weak faith? He's not judging whether one is bad and one is good, but it's good to acknowledge where you are. Amen? Amen?

You don't go to battle when you're ill-prepared. The question is, when in the midst of times of trouble, do you rely on yourself or do you rely on God?

Second reason God gives us trials, to humble us. To humble us. None of us have a problem with pride here, right? There's no problem with pride. 2 Corinthians 12, 7 says, So to keep me from becoming conceited, this is Paul.

Paul, who was in tune with God more than any other man at that time. God, he kept him from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelation.

[40 : 29] A thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Trials are given to us to remind us not to let our own trust in the Lord turn into presumption in spiritual self-satisfaction.

Too often we just say, ah, God's got it. And you don't even think about it. You don't honor him. You don't give him thanks. You just think God's now due you.

The greater our blessings, the more Satan will tempt us to look on them as our own accomplishments rather than the Lord's. I think the most beautiful story, and I say beautiful story, is the story of King Nebuchadnezzar.

God had given him his kingdom, and until he bragged while the words were still in his mouth, basically turned him into an animal for seven years, right? Look at all that I've done.

Look at all that I've done. It's easy to become proud. It's hard to become humble. One of my mentors when I was in seminary was a pastor, and hopefully he's the one who's going to be leading us to Israel, but he would always tell me, BK, don't believe your own press coverage.

[41 : 54] Don't believe. No matter how many people will ooh and ah over a sermon and who you are, don't believe it. It's a lie. It's something that you always need to keep in front of your mind.

So two, to humble us. Three, to remove our reliance on worldly things. John 6, verses 5 and 6 says, lifting up his eyes, then in seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, where are we to buy bread so that these people may eat?

And it says, he said this to test Philip, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, 200 and there I would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.

But the big issue that Philip was looking at worldly resources to feed the people, rather than Jesus Christ who had already fed us 6,000 people earlier, right?

You know, where's his first thing? Hey, Jesus, you've got it. You're right, I do. But he's like starting to get stressed. Do I have enough money? Do we have enough people to serve them? The fact is, the more we accumulate material possessions and worldly knowledge, experience and recognition, the more we will be tempted to rely on them instead of the Lord.

[43 : 16] These things can include education, work success, important people we know, honors we have been given, and other worldly benefits that are often not wrong in and of themselves, but they can turn quickly into burdens to us spiritually.

The funniest story, my buddy gives me permission to tell him, his biggest thing that he loved was his credit rating. He had a perfect credit rating. He loved his credit rating. He lives in the States. When he came to seminary, he's the only guy driving the new SUV, right? Like, he's the guy, I can take time off work. I have saved so much. I got so much money where the rest of us are working seven-hour jobs, trying to make it through.

And he was so perfect. So he was kind of like me, my age, not married. At the end, he falls in love with this girl. And lo and behold, she's got like \$100,000 school debt, right?

She was a doctor. Crazy, right? So he's like, I can't marry her, you know? Like, she's got debt.

That's nuts. And she was a psychologist. But he ends up taking her on.

[44 : 19] Taking her on, that's a horrible way to say it. Anyhow, the Lord breaks through to his selfish heart, and he marries her. And the first baby something happens, and guess what?

The insurance doesn't cover another like \$150,000 of debt, right? Ah! And he's working in Christian ministry.

Lord, what is going to happen? He's making nothing. And his old company happens to call him and said, Hey, kind of heard things were a little troubling through you through a friend.

Would you like your old job back? You get all your old accounts back. And it made mucho dollars.

And he just kind of slid in there, and that's what he's still doing. And he serves as an elder in his local church.

He's now adopted three other kids along the way, and they have a wonderful life. And I think my wife has got a chance to meet her wife, and they just connected. They're just a wonderful, beautiful family that they're doing now.

[45 : 22] But he will tell you in his testimony, he didn't want to give up that perfect credit rating, right? That was his, I'm good. Fourth, reasons to call us.

And, you know, trials aren't always big things, right? They're little silly things, too. Stuff that we hold on to value. Fourth, to call us to eternal and heavenly hope.

Let's be honest. If this world was so great, we would not long for the next world. Amen? For I consider, as Paul writes in Romans 8, 18, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

There was pains of groaning on this earth 2,000 years ago. And we hear it today, right? They're just moving the doomsday clock even closer now.

[46 : 25] People are in disarray. You guys saw the news, eh? The whole world's falling apart because a Chinese balloon happened to float over Canada and the United States. Oh, no! The harder our trials become and the longer they last, sometimes the more we look forward to being with the Lord.

I hope it wasn't for a balloon. But anyway, it's easy to forget that this is not the life that we are destined to have. But sometimes it's easy to forget God in the midst of all this.

But trials give us a longing for Him. Fifth reason why God brings trials. To reveal what we really love. To reveal what we really love.

Like the example of my friend with his credit rating. Luke 14, 26 says, Just like Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac not only proved his faith, but it showed his supreme love for the Lord.

My friends, this is so easy for us to fall into. Our trials reveal our idols. Much like our earthly reliance on things, they will pass away. We can elevate relationships and other things over God.

[47 : 49] We can elevate our families, our health. I've seen many Christians pursue relationships with unbelievers as their desire to marry became more of an idol and an excuse for disobedient behavior.

The sixth thing we learn from trials is to teach us to value God's blessing. To teach us to value God's blessing. This is important.

Psalms 63, 37 says, Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise your name. So I will bless you as long as I live.

In your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will bless you as long as I live. My soul will be satisfied with fat and rich food. And my mouth will praise you with joyful lips.

Trials teach us to value the spiritual things of God which he has blessed us with abundantly. His word, his care, his provision, his strength, his salvation, his church, our relationships and the fellowship that we have and we can experience in this church is an eternal blessing.

[49 : 07] Number seven, to develop enduring strength for greater usefulness. Second Corinthians 12, 10 says, For the sake of Christ then, I am content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities.

For when I am weak, then I am strong. Thomas Manton, Christian writer, once wrote, The worth of a soldier is never known in times of peace.

I think any athlete or artist, expert in their craft knows that by training adds strength, skill and ability. And those things aren't always fun.

And the eighth and final reason is to better help others in their trials. It's to better help others in their trials. Second Corinthians 1, 3, 4 says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

I can tell you, I have seen some of my friends go through some of the worst type of trials, and I wonder how will they truly endure.

[50 : 36] But they come out of it like it was nothing, because they had a special connection, because the Lord met them there in the deepest depths of their pain.

That's Psalm 23, amen? In the valley of the shadow of death. And they have come out so strong, so able, so capable.

Before, I would have never asked them to help someone. And now they've been uniquely created through that pain to care and to comfort to another member of our family like no one else.

So, those are the eight reasons, if you remember. I gave you five questions that I wanted to answer. The fifth one, and I don't remember, I've got to look at my notes, is how God wants us to respond to trials.

We're going to get into that next week. Let me pray. Dear Holy Heavenly Father, Father, sometimes we see, what the trials have produced.

[52 : 14] Some of it's good, some of it's not good. Father, some of us know that we are more anxious than what we should be.

We're more depressed than we should be. We complain more. We struggle more. We're quick to look at the negative than to look at the positive.

Father, for some, I pray that this sermon would be a turnaround period. A place where they can do that spiritual health check and realize that maybe they're not so solid with you.

that maybe they have resorted to dealing with trials in humanly ways rather than spiritual ways, which we will get into next week.

Father, I pray that the saints here would take the time to read these verses this week. to ask themselves, to ask themselves, are these realities, are they becoming more mature in you?

[53 : 21] or are they becoming more childlike in how they respond to trials? Father, my hope and desire is for every saint here to desire to be mature in the faith.

Lord, I pray that you would continue to sustain those here that are in trials. Hard trials, long trials. Trials that cause us to weep. For some, we've lost loved ones.

We've lost children who no longer want to serve you or parents or friends who've turned away from the faithful father and it hurts. And some of it was because of trials.

And sometimes it was because of Christians were immature and responded to them incorrectly. Instead of being met with love and a kind and open ear, they were met with judgmentalism, with hostility, with offense.

[54 : 38] Father, forgive us all. Forgive us for our immaturity. Forgive us for our sin. Forgive us for our fear. Forgive us for not trusting you.

Father, as we come before this table, which is reserved for those who know you and put their faith in you, maybe today is the day where we're making that confession and we're repenting.

We're making that decision to do things in your strength rather than our strength. Maybe today is the day that I, we don't trust our own ingenuity, our own riches, our own health to solve our problems.

But even in the abundance of fruit and blessings that you have given us, we're still going to trust you first. Lord, this table represents a commemorative time when we come together to give thanks and to remember you.

We're commanded to remember all that you did on that day before you went to the cross to die for our sins. You asked us to keep doing this until you return.

[56 : 13] When? All things will be made perfect and right. But until that time, we will live with trials. They will be a part of our lives, whether small or big.

But we can still be thankful. We can still remember what you've done for us on the cross. We can still remember that you suffered more than any man could ever suffer.

The greatest injustice that ever happened, you endured. You are a righteous man, perfect, complete, the Son of God, who gave your life for us.

The righteousness, the righteous death that you endured, we should have received. Because we are broken, we are rebellious, we are selfish.

But you are not. And because of that, we can live. And we can come to this table, and we can boldly come before your throne and know that we are indeed children of the Most High.

[57 : 39] So Father, during this time of communion, may we take some time to ourselves to think about these things, to examine our lives, allow your word to wash over us like a fresh mountain river, to cleanse us of our iniquity.

may we put behind our selfish, complaining ways. May we come to you this day with a new heart.

We love you, Father. We love you for the work you did on the cross through your Son, and that you would indeed be glorified in this.

In the saints' prayer, said amen. Amen.