

Guest Pastor

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, everyone. It's great to be here this morning. Like I said, in Sunday school, it's a blessing to come and get called back to come to a church a second time. But part of the reason that we're here is my family is here today. I'm not going to make them stand up because I'll hear about it the rest of the week.

So we won't do that, but it is good to have them. Good to see all of you here this morning. We're going to take our text this morning from Job chapter 23. Job chapter 23. And briefly, I just want to explain on our book table, for those of you that have not met us before, our ministry is Living in Spite of Ministries.

And the reason it's called Living in Spite of Ministries is because, number one, God wants you to live, child of God. He wants you to live your life, but in spite of the trials that you face, in spite of the things that you go through. And we had a son that was born with multiple unique malformations.

Our son Johnny was born with a cleft lip, cleft palate. He was wall-eyed. He was profoundly deaf. Had two bad heart valves that were eventually replaced with mechanical valves.

Had a kidney transplant because he had a horseshoe kidney, which led to kidney failure. He also had kyphosis and scoliosis of the spine.

[1 : 12] At 28 years old, Johnny was 96 pounds and was 4 foot 6 tall. He had leg braces from his hips to the soles of his feet. But he was fearfully and wonderfully made by God.

And that's something that we always kept in our mind. We knew that Johnny was a gift for us. He definitely was a gift for us. But we wrote a book after Johnny went to be with the Lord just about 6 years ago.

Just 6 years ago last Sunday, as a matter of fact, was the anniversary of his home going. And shortly after he went to be with the Lord, we wrote this book, my wife and I. It's called Finding Grace and Peace in Spite of Trials and Tragedy, the Johnny Ashley story.

Our son was an inspiration to most everyone that he met. He lightened a lot of lives. He inspired a lot of people and helped a lot of people. So this is his story, but really it's the story of the grace and the strength that the Lord gave us for the 28 years that we had him and raised him and his brothers, his brother Jason and Bob.

And so that's on the table back there. I see my wife. She's the cashier. Okay. And then this, Pastor Cornwell already announced or mentioned this, the Compassionate Shepherd.

[2 : 21] If you want to know how to help somebody that's going through trials, this book will help you. This book will, gives you some biblical and practical advice on how to help somebody. You know, a lot of times we want to help people, but we don't know how.

Sometimes we say too much. Sometimes we don't say anything, but this book will help you. And again, the first book that I mentioned, I had a lady come up to me one time who had lost her husband years before.

And she said, outside the Bible, your book helped me more than any other book I've ever read. So if you know someone that's going through trials, that first book, Living in Spite of, will definitely help them.

We also have our prayer cards on the table. Please take a prayer card and pray for us as we travel. And then on there's also a gospel track that we wrote. It's a picture of our son Johnny signing I Love You.

And it was less than 48 hours before he was in heaven. And my wife was coming here to Atlanta to visit Jason and Kristen. And their oldest son, Nixon, had just been born.

[3 : 24] And while she was here, Johnny went to be with the Lord. So this was on Thursday. Johnny went to be with the Lord on Saturday. So take those. The gospel tracks are free.

Take them. As many as you'll give out. How's that? All right. Also, there's going to be a sign-up sheet. If you want to get our newsletter, we have a monthly newsletter that we send out through email. But if you're going to sign up, put your name on this, please do me a favor and write legibly.

I'm the one who's going to have to enter this in. And if I can't read it, it's going to go somewhere else. But if you'll please do that. If you're interested, please just come over to our table and say hi.

We'd love to be able to talk with you. Job chapter number 23. And we're going to begin reading in verse number 1. And if you're able, I'm just going to ask you to stand with me while we read our text here.

We're going to read the entire chapter to keep everything in context. Job chapter 23. The Bible says, Then Job answered and said, Even to this day is my complaint bitter.

[4 : 23] My stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh, that I knew where I might find him. That I might come even to his seat. I would order my cause before him and fill my mouth with arguments.

I would know the words which he would answer me and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No, but he would put strength in me.

There the righteous might dispute with him, so should I be delivered forever from my judge. Behold, I go forward, but he is not there. And backward, but I cannot perceive him.

On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him. He hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him. But he knoweth the way that I take. And when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

My foot hath held his steps. My way have I kept. His way, excuse me. His way have I kept and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.

[5 : 21] I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him. Therefore I am troubled at his presence. When I consider, I am afraid of him.

For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me. Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

I want to preach a message this morning. What to do when you can't find God. What to do when you can't find God. Let's pray.

Father God, we come to you now this morning. Again, Lord, we thank you for what we've already seen and heard. Lord, we could pray and close this service right now, and it would have been a blessing. The song service was so wonderful.

[6 : 18] Lord, we thank you for that. Father, as we open your word now and begin to preach. Lord, these folks have come together today to hear from heaven. They've not come to hear from me. And God, I pray that you would anoint this message.

Lord, give me your power. I pray that, Lord, if there's someone here this morning that does not know Jesus as their Savior, I pray that today would be the day of their salvation. Lord, I pray for those that might be hurting here tonight.

I pray that today, Lord, I just pray that you would speak to their hearts, comfort them. God, again, I just ask you to please bless this message. Use it for thine hour and thy glory.

In Jesus' name, amen. Please be seated. On April 19, 1995, a man by the name of Timothy McVeigh loaded up a truck with fertilizer and a homemade bomb and went down and blew up the Alfred P. Mara building.

Many of you may remember that happening. There was over 160 people that were killed and over 600 that were injured and included many children that were in the nursery in that building.

[7 : 26] It was a federal building and they had a nursery where they took care of the, it was like a daycare where many of the children were hurt or killed in that explosion. And a man came up to me at work and said this to me.

He said, where's God in all that? He knew I was a Christian. He knew that I was a believer in Jesus Christ. And he wanted to know, hey, where's God?

If God's so loving, why would he allow something like this to happen? After 9-11, many people asked the same type of questions. You know, where's God? What's going on?

Why would God, a loving, caring God, allow these things to happen? Now we gave some of the pat answers. Well, you know, evil came into the world when Adam and Eve sinned.

And men are evil, inherently evil. And they need to be forgiven of their sin. And we can talk about those. But the fact that the truth is, answers to questions like that, we're not going to have this side of heaven.

[8 : 27] Not the complete answer anyway, right? We're not going to know exactly what's going on. People after 9-11 would say, well, this is the judgment of God happening in America. And this is happening. This is happening.

People came up with all types of ideas. And many of them were mocked. And many of them were made fun of, if you will, for their answers. So what were the answers?

Well, you know, every one of us here have probably struggled with the same thought at one time or another in our life. Where's God? Where's God in my situation?

Where's God in the circumstances that I'm going through in my life? We struggle with the idea that God loves us with an undying love, with a perfect love, right?

But yet, we hurt deeply. We hurt deeply. So if God loves me, why is He allowing these things to come into my life? We want to know, where's God?

[9 : 23] Job, when he wrote this book, the book of Job was at a very low point in his life. Amen? It was a very difficult point in his life. And he's responding to his friends.

He had lost his wealth. He had lost his children. He had lost his health. And his friends come to comfort him. And they're miserable comforters.

They don't help him at all. He had lost everything he had. Now he sits in ashes with boils from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. We don't know how much time has passed since the beginning of the book of Job until this point.

But we do know that it has been at least months. In Job chapter 29, verses 2 through 5, the Bible says, Job speaking, Oh, that I were in the months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when His candle shined upon my head.

When by His light I walked through the darkness. As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle. When the Almighty was yet with me. When my children were about me.

[10 : 29] So we know months have passed at least in this time. And Job is at a very, very dark time in his life. He's weary of his situation.

He's weary of the pain and the heartache. He's weary of all that he's gone through. And again, his friends come and accuse him. Job, the reason why this is happening to you is because there must be sin in your life.

Job is in the midst of the battle between the flesh and the spirit. And between fear and faith. And you can hear in his words the struggle that he's going through.

You can hear that struggle going on in his heart. And I'm sure every one of us in this room at some point have been at that same point that Job's at. Not to the level that he's at hopefully.

But gone to that, at that time in their lives wondering, where's God? Where's the Lord? We've had enough of the pain and the heartache. We've come to a place where we want an audience with God.

[11 : 33] I want to sit down and I want to talk to my Father. And I want to have an audience with the Lord. A real time to speak and to pour out our complaint before him.

Again, we struggle with the idea that God loves us. Yet we wonder why we're suffering such great pain. We can't seem to find God. You ever been there, brother? You ever been there, sister?

Where's the Lord? Now we need to remember that Job lived in a day before there was the written word of God. The most scholars, which I'm not one, but I read scholars and they tell me what to say.

But they believed that Job lived during the time of Abraham. So the written word of God was not there. So everything that man knew about God was either through personal experience or through word of mouth.

And so Job's at a point in his life where he wants to speak with God. But what we do know is that Job desired to have an audience with the Lord.

[12 : 36] And then when God finally does show up in the book of Job, he doesn't answer Job's questions. As a matter of fact, Job doesn't have any answers for God either. There have been times in our lives where we wanted to find God and talk to the Lord.

Ask our questions. Ask our questions to the Lord. Yet it seems as if he's abandoned us and he's nowhere to be found. Job and his grief here in chapter 23 shows us an outline that you and I should follow at those times when we can't find God.

When we don't know where he is. Verse number 1, the Bible says here that we ought to come with our complaint. Verse 1 says again, Then Job answered and said, Even today is my complaint bitter.

My stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat. I would order my cause before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me and understand what he would say unto me.

Will he plead against me with his great power? No, but he would put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with him. So should I be delivered forever from my judge.

[13 : 56] Hey, Job's pain was great. But I want you to notice something. He acknowledged his pain. He acknowledged his pain.

He didn't stuff his pain. He knew that the Lord was the only one that could help him in his time of trial. He wanted to lay out his grief before God. He wanted to know where he could find the Lord.

He wanted to hear what the Lord would tell him to comfort him and to encourage him. He also knew that the Lord was the source of strength that he needed. He didn't believe that God would condemn him.

Child of God, when you're going through your heartache, when you're going through your pain, when you're at that point in your life where you're going, Man, Lord, where are you? Come with your complaint.

Acknowledge your pain. So often, as the children of God, we don't want to admit that we're going through a difficult time.

[14 : 57] We don't want to admit to people that we have questions. We don't have to admit it to one another, but admit it to God. Acknowledge to God, Lord, I'm dying inside.

Lord, I don't know where you are. Lord, my heart's breaking. Lord, I hurt so deeply, I can't breathe. Lord, I need you.

Acknowledge your pain. Don't just stuff our pain. We need to cry out to the Lord. Psalm 40, verses 1-3 says, I waited patiently for the Lord. And he inclined unto me and heard my cry and brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings.

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it and fear and shall trust in the Lord. We must be willing to pour out our complaint before him in our brokenness.

You know, today we have the knowledge that the Lord is with us, right? The Lord is in us. You're a child of God. If you've been born again by confessing your sin, asking the Lord Jesus Christ to save your soul, believing on him as your only way to heaven, you've been born again.

[16 : 13] You have the spirit of God that dwells inside of you. You know, we know practically that we have the presence of God in our life. We have the word of God. We have time in prayer where we can talk to God.

But still at times we seem to not know where God is. We have the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. John chapter 14, verses 26 and 27. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance.

Whatsoever I have said unto you, peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

The Holy Spirit, which is God, will comfort you and I in our times of trouble. We do not need to look for God in the sense that, you know, where is his presence?

His presence is with us. You need to understand that today. If you're saved, God is with you. He is in you. He is never going to leave you nor forsake you. We were in a church not too long ago, actually in Atlanta, Georgia, where a guy was using the ESV, all right?

[17 : 20] I'm a King James guy. And he was saying that the Holy Spirit is the helper. The helper. Well, friend, I don't need a helper when I'm dying. I need a comforter.

And God chose the word comforter to give the title comforter to the Holy Ghost. Why? Because Jesus says, my peace I leave unto you. I'm giving you my peace.

My peace comes from the comforter. The comforter of God. The comforter of the Holy Spirit. When we want to know where the Lord is and what the Lord has to say, we have his word today, right?

We can look into his word. His word will speak peace to our situation. When our son Johnny was born with all his problems and all the things that went on, I blame myself.

I blame myself. This is my fault. And I dove into the book of Job. And I read the book of Job because I thought Job was some sort of superhuman being.

[18 : 19] Because he went through all the trials that he went through. I thought, man, this guy's got to have some sort of secret that I can have, that I can learn from him, in order to be able to stand what we are going to be facing for the rest of our son's life.

Well, can I tell you something, friend? Know what I found out? Job was just a man. Job had the same questions I did. Job didn't get the answers to his questions either. Amen. Amen.

But the word of God still spoke to my heart. And that thought comforted me, saying, hey, this man is something special. And I'm just a man, just like him.

And if God can get him through what he got Job through, he can surely get me through anything. It was a comfort to me. We may not get all the answers that we're looking for, but we will learn that we can trust the Lord through our trials.

When we come with our complaint before him, we know that he hears us. Right? You know, if you're a child of God today, and when you pray, God hears you.

[19 : 21] He hears your words. He knows us, and he will comfort us. We have direct access to God through Jesus Christ. We can come confidently to his throne.

Hebrews 4, verses 15 and 16. We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, because we have a high priest that can be touched with it, because he knows what you're going through, because he knows what you're going through.

Therefore, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. We don't come cocky. We come confidently. We come knowing.

Knowing. When I cry out to God, he hears me. Knowing that when I'm crying out to God, if I also know that I'm right with God.

Hey, you know the Lord knows how you feel today. The Bible tells us again, he can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We have the privilege of prayer to lay out our complaints before the Lord.

[20 : 27] So come with your complaint. Then come seeking after the Lord. Look at verse number eight. Behold, I go forward and he's not there. And backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him.

He hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him. But he knoweth the way that I take. And when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Job didn't know the presence of God in his grief.

In his grief, in his heartache, in his pain. He searched to see God, yet he couldn't find him. He may not have been able to see God, my friend, but Job also knew that God saw him.

God saw Job. God knew, knows where I, he knows the way that I'm taking. He knows what I'm going through right now. He also knew that the trial that he was facing had a purpose.

It was refining him. Even though you and I, we have the word of God and we have prayer, many times we still wonder, man, where's God? Where's God? We have a desire for the presence of God.

[21 : 32] Far too often, many Christians give up when they're in the midst of a fire. When they're in the midst of a trial. This is too much. I can't take it. And they give up.

Not able to reconcile God's love in their pain. Can I tell you something, child of God? Seek after God. Seek the Lord. Psalm 42, verse 1. As a heart panteth after the water, brook's soul panteth my soul after thee, O God.

Even though we know that the Lord is with us and in us, we need to dig into the word. And spend time in prayer. Begging God for a touch from heaven. Begging God, Lord, I need you.

I need you. I know practically that you're here. The Lord's in our presence right now. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am with you. I am in the midst of you. That's what Jesus said.

So he's here right now. But don't you want to experience his presence? Not just know it mentally. Not just have a, yeah, okay, I comprehend that.

[22 : 31] He's here right now. But don't you want to experience his presence? Hey, child of God, when you're in the midst of your problems, in the midst of your heartache, in the midst of your pain, that's what you need. You need the same thing.

Well, the Spirit of God dwells inside me. I can read the word of God. I can pray. I know all that. I know all that. But Lord, man, show me thy presence. Show me thy presence. Speak to my heart.

Give me a personal touch from heaven. Amen. We also need to live with the knowledge that, though we may not see him, he's watching us.

He knows the way that you take right now, child of God. He knows where you're at. Your problems and your heartache and your pain haven't caught God by surprise. He knows exactly what you're going through.

He's watching you. He's watching over you. There's a purpose to our pain. Now, let me give you some suggestions here.

[23 : 39] You want to minister to somebody's heart that's going through a trial? You don't need to tell them that. Not when they're in the midst of the trial, all right? Well, brother, you know, there's a purpose to your pain.

You know, God's going to use this for his honor and glory. And all this is true, right? But when you're in the middle of it, man, you don't need to hear that. What you need to hear is, man, I'm praying for you.

I'll pray for you. I'll do whatever I can to help you in any way that I can. 1 Peter 1, verse 7, That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

God is working his plan in us in our pain. Your pain is not in vain, child of God. He is developing us into people that he can use for his divine purpose.

But you know what? And I know I said this last time I was here, but every one of us have a sphere of influence. Every one of us have people that are watching us, whether it be family, friends, co-workers, classmates in school, whatever it is.

[24 : 49] And when you're going through a trial and you're going through a heartache, all our focus is generally on us, right? What I'm going through, the difficulty that I'm experiencing. But can I tell you something?

All the people that you have an influence on are watching you. And if you've told them you're a child of God, you have an opportunity to use that as a testimony to exhibit God's grace, strength, and power in your life.

And that's what people will notice. They will notice that, friend. They'll notice how you and I react to our situations. I always say the Christian life isn't so much how we act.

Amen? Although we like to make sure everybody acts properly and does things properly, but the Christian life, friend, is exhibited in how we react.

How we react to situations. The Lord will purify us, and we will shine like gold if we stay faithful to God.

[25 : 50] Then, come with a confident testimony. Look at verse number 11. My foot hath held his steps. His way have I kept and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.

I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. Job knew his relationship with God was right. He had the confidence in that.

Again, like I talked about in Sunday school, God's testimony of Job was pretty profound. Man who fears God. Man who is a perfect and upright man.

One that fears God and eschews evil. Avoids evil in his life. That's what God said about Job. But Job knew he had a relationship with God.

Job chapter 16, verse 16 and 17 says, My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death. Not for any injustice in my hands.

[26 : 50] Also, my prayer is pure. In verse 19, he goes on and says, Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. Job was self-aware of his walk with God.

He knew where he was at when he walked with God. He walked in the path that the Lord laid out for him. He obeyed the Lord's commands, and his words were more important to Job than his daily food.

Do you and I have that same kind of confidence? Do you have that same kind of confidence in your testimony? In your walk with God today? Do you have the kind of confidence that you would say, Man, I know I'm walking with God.

I know that this trial has come into my life to strengthen me and to show my testimony and not the chastening hand of God. Do you know that today?

When trials come into our lives, do we even stop and consider, Now, wait a second, wait a second. Is this God trying to get my attention? Is there something in my life that God's trying to change?

[27 : 57] Is there something that I need to get into my life that I haven't been doing? Is God trying to correct me? Or is this something that God's going to use to change me, to strengthen me, and to build a testimony for his honor and his glory?

Like I said earlier, I blamed myself for all of Johnny's problems. I blamed myself for the years that I ran from God, for the years that I was away from the Lord.

I got saved at 19, lived for the Lord for a while, went back to my old lifestyle, and it wasn't until 10 years later that I got my heart right with God. Under conviction every day of my life.

Knew I wasn't right with God. Knew I was doing the wrong things. Knew all these things. And when Johnny came into our lives, I thought, Man, this is the chastening hand of God on me. It took a while, friend, for me to realize, No, John, that's not the chastening hand of God.

I'm blessing you. I'm blessing you with this child. I'm blessing your life with this trial. I'm blessing your life with all the things that you and your wife and your family, your other sons are going to have to go through.

[29 : 08] It's a blessing that I'm going to use in your life. But it took a while to get there, friend. I'll be honest with you. I'll be honest with you. We should always do a self-examination when trials come into our life.

And if there's nothing between our soul and the Savior, look to see what the Lord might be doing in your life. Have confidence in knowing that He's doing a work that could never be accomplished in your life had you not gone through that trial.

He's doing a work that would never have happened if you hadn't gone through what you may be going through or have gone through in the past. What's your attitude towards the Word of God?

Are we living in obedience or are we living in rebellion? Do we esteem the Word of God more important than our daily food? We need to run to the Word of God in the midst of our trials.

Romans chapter 15 verse 4 says, Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

[30 : 15] Might have hope. Is the Bible a priority in your life? Did you get up this morning and say, Okay, where is it?

Where's my Bible? Oh, you say, No, I got it on my phone, preacher. No, I know. That's not what I'm talking about. Hey, did you get up this morning and wonder where your Bible was? Or is it a priority in your life? It's something that you, you prioritize this even more important than your daily food.

And then, friend, we need to come in contrition. Look at verse 13. But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him.

Therefore, I am troubled at his presence when I consider I'm afraid of him. For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me, because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

Job acknowledges that God is in control. God is in control. His circumstances were in the will of God.

[31 : 26] Man. Boy. God placed a huge target on the back of his servant Job.

Right? Have you considered my servant Job? The devil's going, well, yeah, you got this hedge around him, I can't touch him. You're protecting him, how am I going to get to him?

Oh, yeah? He goes, yeah, take down your hedge, and he'll curse you to his face. Job had a target on his back. You ever felt that way, child of God?

God allows things to come into your life. Lord, why? Where are you? Hey. God appointed Job for the trials that he experienced.

Man. Even though Job wanted an audience with the Lord, he became afraid of his presence. Before he was troubled by God's absence, now he's troubled with the idea of being in the presence of God.

[32 : 29] Wait a minute. What am I asking for here? The conflict between the spirit and the flesh again and faith and fear. His heart was soft in that he couldn't bear the thought of being in the presence of God.

Fear had taken hold of him. If you remember in chapter 3 in the book of Job, Job wished he'd have died from the womb. He wished he had never been born. Lord, if this is going to be my lot, if this is what's going to happen, why didn't you just let me die so I didn't have to go through all this pain, so I didn't have to go through all this heartache.

Job asked God, why, why, why, over and over again in chapter 3. But the Lord kept him alive to face the trial that he was in the midst of. It was the will of God for him to go through all these dark days in his life.

Friend, the Lord is in control of your situation also. Whatever heartache, whatever pain you're going through, there's nothing that happens to you as a child of God that is outside the will of God.

That's not filtered through the hand of God. Romans 8, 28. Amen. If you're in the middle of a trial right now, please forgive me for quoting this to you, but, and we know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

- [33 : 47] I know I told you before, there was a time where I hated that verse. Shortly after Johnny was born, man, people used to quote that to us all the time. Well, you know, all things work together for good as they go home to their healthy children.
- They go through their life. They're not heading to the hospital. Amen. It's hard. The Bible's true. The Bible's true. God has worked all things together for good.
- If it wasn't for all those trials, it wasn't for all, I wouldn't even be here today. Amen. The Lord worked it all together for good. Even when we are at odds with the Lord, he will work to bring us back into fellowship with him.
- His will in many situations is not seen immediately, he isn't. Hey, we, you know, you and I have trials that are appointed for us, just like Joe.
- Remember, I preached the message last time I was here. God chose you. God chose you for the trial that you're going through. Again, you say, you say, well, I don't know that I like the fact that he chose me.
- [34 : 56] Hey, he might have taken and put no target on your back. But he's doing it for his honor, for his glory, and for your good. Many times we're troubled by the thought of standing before the Lord, and we ought to be.
- We may want an audience with him, but in his presence we will see our sinful self. You know, it would be good for every one of us to catch a glimpse of God's holiness every once in a while.
- understand how holy he is. We want to be in his presence. Friend, we'll see how sinful we are and how weak we are.
- The Lord has given every one of us here a life to live, a life to enjoy, and to be tested. We are alive for a particular mission. No one is immune to darkness.
- Ask the Lord to show you, guide you into his will. What do you do when you can't find God, man?
- [36 : 00] You know what you do? You come. You come. You come. Come with your complaint. Even though you may not see God in your situation, you need to cry out to him.
- Know that the Lord is always with you in the person of the Spirit of God. Seek after the Lord. Come and seek after the Lord. Man, search for him.
- You don't know where God is? Dig, dig. Oh, he's in me. He's in the Word of God. I know that. But don't you want to experience his presence in your life? Come with a confident testimony.
- Child of God, you're saved. You know your sins have been forgiven. Amen. You're on your way to heaven. But are you right with God? Are you right with God? Say, what do you mean, preacher?
- I'm on my way to heaven. I'm a child of God. No, no, no, no, friend. You can break fellowship with God by harboring sin. By holding on to sin. You've been convicted by the Holy Ghost of something and you refuse to obey the Word of God.
- [37 : 07] This is going to break fellowship. Be sure that your trials are not the chastening hand of God and then come in contrition. Come humbly.
- Know that God's in control. Know that God's doing a work. Nothing happens in your life without it being filtered through the loving hand of your Heavenly Father.
- Heavenly Father, we come to you now and we thank you, Lord. We praise you. Lord, there's times we don't know where to find you.
- Practically, we know you're here with us. But Lord, let us experience your presence even in this service right now. promise of God is that you're here. I pray that you would speak to hearts.

Lord, there may be someone here that's not forgiven of sin, does not know that they're on their way to heaven, does not have the confidence of the presence of God in their life.

[38 : 06] I pray right now, Lord, that you'd speak to them. Maybe Christians that are here, Lord, that you're dealing with about areas of their life that they may need to get right.

Lord, no doubt in a crowd this size there's people that are hurting. Lord, this church has been through a lot over the last year or so, last year and a half, two years.

Father, I pray that right now you would speak and let man be silent. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Amen. Pastor.