

Mystery6

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[0 : 00] You open the scriptures please to 2nd Corinthians chapter 11. I want to present a couple of things for your consideration and then we will open it up for questions or comments that you may have, particularly, not necessarily limited to, but preferably dealing with the issues of prayer. And I want to remind you that the testimony that we are reading from 2nd Corinthians is a personal testimony from a man God used to write approximately one-third of the New Testament. I do not know to what extent or what kind of communication or fellowship that the Apostle Paul had with our Lord Jesus, but we know that he spent a considerable amount of time in Arabia right after his conversion and we know that there he received what can only be described as the beginning of a series of revelations. The revelations consisted of truths, information that had not previously been revealed to anyone. And the Apostle Paul was getting this information over a period of time. We don't know exactly how long the time was. I don't think he spent three years in Arabia, but he gives a kind of timetable in

Galatians chapter 1 and 2. But I suspect that he spent a considerable amount of time there. We don't know exactly how long. And I believe that it is abundant that he received multiple revelations over a period of time in successive kind of events. In other words, God did not reveal everything he wanted Paul to know that would enable him to write everything that he wrote at one time. He refers to it as an abundance of revelations. But nowhere are we told what an abundance consists of. We can only surmise that it would have been multiple or many. And I want you to read, if you will, along with me in 2 Corinthians chapter 11. And we will begin with his reminding the people of Corinth of the authority that had been invested in him. In fact, if you look at the beginning of chapter 11, there is a little marginal note that is inserted in my Bible, it may be in yours as well, that Paul defends his apostleship.

And it was necessary that he did not have been invested in his apostleship. And it was necessary that he do so because there were those who challenged it. And nothing is new. There are those who challenge it today as well.

You have heard me say many times, and you will hear me say again many times, the issue is authority. Always has been, always will be.

[3 : 21] The credence that is given to any source of information has to do with the authority that is vested in that individual or that source of the authority.

And when it comes to the scriptures, we assign the authority of it to none other than the Spirit of God, who gave us everything that we've got in this book from Genesis 1-1 to Revelation 22-21. It is by inspiration of God. That means it is breathed by God and given through human instruments, and it is designed to be the authoritative source of information for humanity.

This is God's revelation. Some say it's God's love letter to human beings. That's what the Bible consists of. And this is true of every part of the book.

It is true that there are parts of the Bible that are more inspiring than other parts, a lot of parts.

[4 : 28] We all have favorite portions. We all have portions of scripture that, shall I say, turn us on. And there are others that we just kind of, eh, just run over them and read them and get by them as soon as we can, just so we can say we've been there and read that.

But it doesn't do anything for us. It doesn't grab you. It doesn't comfort you. It doesn't particularly enlighten you. And sometimes you may even wonder why it's there. But trust me, there is not one word in the book that does not belong there, because all scripture is given by inspiration from God and is profitable for doctrine, correction, instruction in righteousness.

All of these things is designed to fill every need that the human heart has. And that's true with what the apostle Paul wrote. It's true with what John wrote.

It's true with what Moses wrote. All of these exist and function on the same level of authority. It was not theirs. It was God's who revealed it to them.

Now, if that is not true, I don't know where we would go.

[5 : 47] To whom could we appeal? For any kind of final authority, ultimate authority. And do you know, this is where a great many people are.

And they end up appealing to their own intellect, their own thinking, their own wisdom. And that becomes, in point of fact, their source of authority.

But we've got something far better than that. And we've got the word of God. So let us look, if we may, at what Paul was saying here in defense of his apostleship.

And we're going to see how in the world prayer plays into this. Because I'll tell you something. On the surface, it doesn't look like it plays into it at all.

I want you to think about that, too. Verse 16. Of chapter 11. Again I say, let no one think me foolish. But if you do receive me even as foolish, that I may also boast a little.

[6 : 52] That which I am speaking, I am not speaking as the Lord would, but as in foolishness in this confidence of boasting. Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also.

In other words, he's saying, there are a lot of people out there that present their authorities, their credentials as their authority. And I've got some credentials, too. And I want to put mine alongside theirs.

And I'm speaking just now from a human standpoint. I want you to see what you think of this. Verse 20. For you bear with anyone if he enslaves you.

Interesting. You know, how could anyone do that? But people do it all the time. They put up with someone who would actually enslave them. If he devours you.

If he takes advantage of you. If he exalts himself. If he hits you in the face. To my shame. I must say that we have been weak by comparison.

[7 : 56] But in whatever respect anyone else is bold. And I speak in foolishness. I am just as bold. Myself. Let's think about taking it from the top.

First of all. Are they Hebrews? Are they of the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? All right. Check that for me in my box. I'm a Hebrew.

Not only, but he tells us in Philippians 1. My mama was a Hebrew and my daddy was a Hebrew. I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Not only that, but I'm from the tribe of Benjamin.

Now the tribe of Benjamin had some bragging rights. Because even though they were the smallest of all the tribes. They had established themselves in combat as being the fiercest. The tribe of Benjamin could very well have been called our special forces or Green Beret by comparison.

That's the tribe that Paul was from. Are they Israelites? Well, so am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ?

[9 : 02] I speak as if insane. Of course. I more so. In far more labors. In far more imprisonments. Now I want you to be thinking in connection with the things that Paul is telling us that he has endured.

And I want you to be thinking in terms of prayer. And what was he praying?

And what were the answers? I don't know about you, but I think it is humanly natural when you get in a really, really tight spot.

I mean tight so that your life is threatened. You don't know whether you're going to survive it or not. And do you know what the most plaintive, common cry would be from all of us when we see something like that closing in and we don't know that we're going to survive it?

First two words out of your mouth. Oh, God. Begins with a prayer. And all you're thinking about, understandably, is deliverance.

[10 : 23] Rescue. Safety. Get me out of this. Please. Do something. Are they servants of Christ?

I speak as if insane. I more so. In far more labors. In far more imprisonments. Beaten. Nine times. Without number. What he's saying is. I lost track of it. I lost track. This man. And the message he had to preach.

So. Incensed. Those on the listening end of it. That they just could not abide him. They struck out of him.

They tried to kill him. They thought they had on at least one occasion. There were those who actually took a vow. Took a vow among themselves to God that they would not eat or drink anything.

[11:23] Until they succeeded in killing that man. What kind of animosity. And hatred. Would be generated.

Where could it come from. That would cause people to think that way toward another human being. And all he was doing. All he was doing. Was talking.

He wasn't hurting anybody. He was just. Delivering. Information. And he engendered. This kind of opposition.

I'll tell you. It wasn't just human. It was supernatural. The opposition. And it was. In part. The adversary. And I'm not suggesting that the people get off the hook.

But I am suggesting that they are in concert with the adversary. In the opposition that they presented against Paul. Far more imprisonments.

[12:21] Beaten. Times without number. Often. In danger of death. Five times. I received from the Jews. Thirty nine lashes.

Think of that. Five times. Thirty nine lashes. This was. Three strands.

Of rawhide. You've seen. Rawhide. You know what it looks like. Three strands of rawhide. About two feet long.

Each one of them. And each strand. Was affixed to a handle. About a foot long. And he would take that handle. And.

Each of the rawhide strands. Had pieces. Of metal. Or something sharp. Embedded in them. So when they.

[13:21] Lashed someone who was. Standing there. With their hands tied like this. And their back exposed. And they were whipping them with this. They give them.

Thirteen. Thirteen lashes. And those thirteen lashes. Consisting of. The three strands of rawhide. Do the math. It's thirty nine lashes. Individually. I cannot imagine. What this man's back.

Must have looked like. What do you think he was doing. While those lashes. Were being laid on his back. Ripping.

His flesh open. Blood flowing. Potential of. Infection. Setting in. In the healing process. And all the rest. What do you think he was thinking.

[14:19] What do you think he was doing. I know what I would have been doing. I would have been praying. Oh God. Please. No.

Make him stop. This is enough. Can you imagine. The apostle Paul thinking. Is this what I bargained for.

Do you remember. When God. Confronted. Saul of Tarsus. On the Damascus road. And later. He called this man. Ananias. To go to him.

And lay hands on him. And not. Not to be confused. With Ananias and Sapphira. That's a different Ananias. And Ananias said. I've heard a lot. About this man.

How he hates you. And hates everybody. That loves you. And. And the Lord says. No. You go your way. I've got the right guy. I've got the right guy. And I. Will show him.

[15:14] What things. He must. Suffer. For my name. Why. In the world. Would God.

Call. Anybody. To suffer. Is that a way. To treat your friends. Hmm.

Five times. I received. From the Jews. 39 lashes. Now note. From whom he received. He didn't get this.

From the Romans. Got this. From the Jews. His own countrymen. This is persecution. Of Jews. On Jews. Three times.

I was beaten. With rods. I'm not real sure. About the rods. Their size. Or exactly. How that was administered. But I can promise you this. It would have been painful. And it would have just.

[16:15] Beaten lumps. And bruises. All over the body. Once I was stoned. That was at Lystra. And apparently. The only reason. They left him. When they did. Was because.

They thought. He was dead. He probably. Really looked dead. And you know. In point of fact. He may have been dead. I don't know.

But he talks later. About. A man. That Paul. Knew. I don't know. Whether he was. In the body. Or out of the body. Which is another way.

Of saying. I don't know. If there was. Life. Or death. Had set in. But this is. Some of the visions. That he's talking about. Three times.

I was shipwrecked. A night. And a day. I have spent. In the deep. I have been. On frequent journeys. In dangers.

[17:11] From rivers. Dangers. From robbers. Dangers. From my countrymen. Dangers. From the Gentiles. Dangers.

In the city. Dangers. In the wilderness. Dangers. On the sea. Dangers. Among. False brethren. That must have really hurt. I've been in labor.

And hardship. Through many. Sleepless nights. In hunger. And thirst. Often without food. And yet. In another place. He's going to say. I know how to. Be abased. And I know how to abound. I know how to eat. Meager porridge. And I know how to enjoy.

A sirloin steak. He's been. Experiencing both. Sleepless nights. Hunger and thirst.

[18:08] Often without food. Cold and exposure. Apart from. Such. External things. There is the daily. Pressure. Upon me.

Of concern. For all the churches. Hmm. Now. What do you think. Paul's prayer life.

Consisted of. During all of this. And where do you see. Miraculous. Deliverances. If he had prayed. I just.

Don't see any. All I can see. In the text. Is that he went through. This whole. Lethargy. Of mistreatment. Of abuse.

Of torture. Of punishment. Being. Totally innocent. Of anything. And yet. On the receiving end. Of this. Don't you think. He ever wondered.

[19:04] What is God. Trying to do. And why is he. Allowing all of this. Happened to happen. To me. What have I done. To deserve this. And when is this.

Going to end. What do you think. His prayer life. Must have been like. Well. Let's look at it.

And see. Come back. If you will. To Ephesians. Chapter 3. And then we'll. Open it. For your questions. And comments. About prayer. Ephesians. Chapter 3. And what the.

Apostle Paul. Was praying. About. And for. We not only. Find it in three. We find it in one. As well. Well let's look. At one first. And I'll just. Jump in. Jump into this. With verse 15.

And here he says. In Ephesians 1. 15. For this reason. I too. Having heard. Of the faith. In the Lord Jesus.

[20:00] Which exists. Among you. And he's talking about. The people at Ephesus. The believers. And your love. For all the saints. I do not. Cease.

Giving thanks. For you. While making mention. Of you. In my prayers. All right. Now we've got. The apostle Paul. That is going to pray. For these people. What is he going.

To ask God. To do. On behalf. Of these people. And I want you. To notice. In it. What. Is absolutely. Totally. Missing.

What is missing. Is anything. Having to do. With. Stuff. Materialism.

Pray. That the God. Of our Lord. Jesus Christ. The Father. Of glory. May give. To you. A spirit. Of wisdom. And a revelation.

[20:59] In the knowledge. Of him. I pray. That the eyes. Of your heart. May be enlightened. So that you may know.

What is the hope. For the confidence. That is wrapped up. In his calling. What are the riches. Of the glory. Of his inheritance. In the saints.

And what is the surpassing. Greatness. Of his power. Toward us. Who believe. These. Are in accordance. With the working. Of the strength.

Of his might. Which he brought about. In Christ. When he raised him. From the dead. And seated him. At his right hand. In the heavenly places.

Far above. All rule. And authority. And power. And dominion. And every name. That is named. Not only in this age. But also. In the one to come. And he put all things.

[21:55] In subjection. Under his feet. And gave him. As head. Over all things. To the church.

Which is his body. The fullness of him. Who fills. All in all. Now it's interesting. As you look over that prayer.

We do not find. One single thing there. That has anything to do. With something material. Or physical. This is all spiritual.

This is all a prayer. For understanding. For gaining. An appreciation. Because actually. It is out of your understanding. And appreciation. That your attitude.

Is set. And it is out of your attitude. That your actions follow. So it all begins.

With information. You've got to have the information. Because you cannot process it. If you don't have it. That's why. Information. Is so critical. That's why.

[22 : 52] Getting information. Is so critical. That's why. Fake news. Is so damaging. Because it's not. The real. Stuff.

You've got to have. Truth. To process. Truth. So that you've. Got the real. Thing. To engage. In processing. That will enable you. To reach a conclusion.

That will. As a result. Enable you. To take action. Based on the conclusion. You reach. Everything is wrapped up. In information. Werner Gitt. Was right. When he. Pinned the words.

Made the video. In the book. In the beginning. Was information. That's what. The gospel is. It's just. Disseminating. Information. Now.

Come over. If you would. To chapter 3. And look at verse 8. And you would think. You would think. That. He'd made his case. That he'd made his point.

[23 : 46] About prayer. But. In chapter 3. In verse 8. He says. To me. The very least. Of all saints. This grace. Was given. Yeah. Well.

What about all the beatings. And what about all the shipwrecks. And what about the stoning. And what about the imprisonments. And what about the days. And not you spent in the deep. Where do they come in. And you know what Paul would say.

They are. Relatively. Incidental. You see. It all depends. On your perspective. If you've got the perspective.

That most of us have. All of those things. Are reason enough. To tell God. You'll have. My resignation. On your desk. First thing in the morning.

But Paul had a perspective. That would not allow him to do that. That would not even interest him. In doing that. And do you know what. He wants.

[24 : 44] For you. And for me. Is to develop. That same perspective. That enables you. To see things.

As they really are. Not as the world. Says they are. This is one of the reasons. We are here right now. Doing what we're doing. We are all working.

On our perspective. Perspective means. The way you see things. The way you understand things. Because it is out of that.

That you will set your agenda. And you will determine your priorities. To me.

The very least of all saints. Was this grace given. To preach to the Gentiles. The unfathomable riches of Christ. And to bring to light.

[25 : 39] What is the administration. Of the mystery. Which for ages. Has been hidden in God. Who created all things. Paul's saying. That's my agenda. That's what I am charged with.

That's what I've got to do. That's what my commission is. It's to bring to light. What is the administration. Of the mystery. And that of course. Is wrapped up in the person. Of Jesus Christ. And who and what he did.

Not only on behalf of Jews. But on behalf of. The entire world. And I am called by God. That's my task. That's my job one.

Is to bring these things to light. Because you can't act on what you don't know. In order that. The manifold wisdom of God. Might now. Because it wasn't before.

Might now. Be made known. Through the church. That's you. To the rulers. And authorities. And the heavenly places. These are angelic beings. These belong to the spirit world.

[26 : 38] This was in accordance. With the eternal purpose. With the eternal purpose. That's another way of saying. This is in connection.

With what God had in mind. All along. But never let it be known. Until now. Which he carried out in Christ Jesus.

Our Lord. In whom we have boldness. Boldness. I love that. I love that. In whom we have.

Boldness. And confidence. Listen. You know the only basis. For boldness. When you stand before someone.

And speak. The only basis you have. For being bold. Is based on what you know. And the fact that you know.

[27 : 36] You know what you know. That will put a spine. In your backbone. That enables you to speak. And say forth. Because you know.

You are on. Solid. Ground. No point in speaking tentatively. People can't build anything. On tentative information.

It's got to be. Based on. Thus. Saith. The Lord. And once you've got that. Under your belt. You have every reason.

For boldness. And no. Justification. For timidity. In which camp. Do you think most Christians. Today belong. You can answer that. For yourself. Therefore. I ask you. Not to lose heart.

[28 : 32] At my tribulations. On your behalf. Paul is saying. I.

Am. And have been. Paying. One. Heck. Of a price. To get this information. To you people. And. I just want you to know. I have no regrets. Don't call a pity party for me. My tribulations. On. Your behalf. For they are for. Your glory. That is your ultimate. Glorification. And for this reason. I bow my knees. Before the father.

Praying. Oh God. Get me out of this mess. Not hardly. From whom. Every family. In heaven. And earth. Derives its name. And here is my prayer.

[29 : 28] For you. That he would grant you. According to the riches. Of his glory. To be strengthened. With power. Through his spirit. In the inner man. So that Christ.

May dwell in your hearts. Through faith. And that you being rooted. And grounded in love. May be able to comprehend. With all the saints.

What is the breadth. And length. And height. And depth. And to know the love of Christ. Which surpasses knowledge. That you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Now. To him who is able to do exceeding. Abundantly. Beyond all that we ask or think. According to the power that works within us. To him. Be the glory in the church.

And in Christ Jesus. To all generations. Forever and ever. Amen. Wow. This is. This is amazing.

Got to read one more verse. And then we're going to open it up.

[30 : 28] It's in Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8. What a remarkable man. And the man is so remarkable.

Because the God behind him. Is so remarkable. I want you to look at Romans 8. And verse 18. For I consider.

Or reckon. Or determine. That the sufferings. Of this present time. Could he be talking about his own sufferings?

Well of course he is. But could he also be talking about your sufferings? Because he does use that. Plural pronoun. Our. Doesn't he? Hmm. Hmm.

They are not worthy. To be compared with the glory. That is to be revealed to us. And then he goes on. And explains how this is going to play out.

[31 : 33] And that eventually. It will result in. The redemption of our body. And our bodies of course. Have not been redeemed. The payment price. Of redemption.

Has been paid for our bodies. But it has not yet. Been applied. To our bodies. It has only been applied. To our spirit. And that is what God regenerated.

But the time is coming. When it will be applied. To our bodies as well. So all of this. Needs to be taken into consideration. In connection with Paul's prayers. And what he prayed for.

And what he endured. And. So what have you to ask. By way of a question. Or a comment. That you would like to make. Okay.

Mr. Craig. Thank you for your. Fine strong young legs. We're going to put them to work. Comments or questions. First one is one that you cannot resist.

[32 : 33] I believe that's your father. Prayer as.

The purpose of prayer being encouragement. Asking God to encourage us. But the verse that came to my mind is. And I think it's in the Gospels.

Where he says. If ye have. Ye have not. Because ye ask not. And perhaps that's in James. But. So my question is. Is the purpose of prayer. Different now.

Than it was. During the Gospels. Or during the administration. Of the kingdom. Should we be viewing prayer. Different than. A lot of the New Testament.

Talks about prayer. Prayer. Because you have examples. Like the. The judge. And the woman. Who comes and persistently asks. And things like that. And there the focus. Seems to be on things.

[33 : 28] And I have noticed. As you pointed out today. That the Apostle Paul. Never talks about things. He talks about our inheritance. Being in heaven. Okay. Thank you.

Let's go. First of all. To. That's a very. Very good question. And it's really. Germane. To what we're talking about. So I do appreciate. To John's Gospel.

Chapter 15. And. What we're going to share. With you now. From John's Gospel. As a young Christian. Not having been a believer.

More than just a couple of years. And. Struggling in. Struggling in. Academics at Cedarville College. Because I was such a.

Terribly poor. And I do mean poor. Poor student in high school. All the way going through. And I flunked everything. And had no application. Wouldn't apply myself. And ended up going to summer school.

[34 : 26] Three different years. Otherwise I was going to be set back. A whole year. And I was just. I was just irresponsible. And kind of a smart aleck kid.

Know it all. And. My first. My first semester. At Cedarville. My grade point average. Was. Point six. That was it. Of course. A four point. O. Was. Perfect. I didn't even. A one point. O. I had point six. And. I don't mind telling you. I did some praying. And I'm also. Willing to confess.

That if I had done. More. Diligent studying. And less praying. Especially the way. I was praying. I would have been a lot better off. And so would my grade point average. But.

[35 : 19] I was kind of caught up. In. Not understanding. What this thing was. Called prayer. And how it was supposed to work. And I suppose. Maybe in looking back. I considered it.

More like a. Maybe more like a. Kind of like an abracadabra. You know. Where. Where. Where. Where people think that.

That God. Is your celestial bellhop. You know. Where you just cry out to him. And he comes running. And provides whatever you need. Or whatever you want.

And people get really distorted. Kind of views like that. And this is one of them. That. Provides that kind of thinking. And it's in chapter 15. And verse.

Well. Let's. There are. There are a number here. But. Let's. Let's look at. Verse 7.

[36 : 19] Jesus is speaking to his. Apostles. Now really. That ought to be your first clue. To whom. Is he speaking. Remember. Miles Coverdale.

And his rules. It shall greatly help you. To understand scripture. If thou mark. Not only what is spoken. Or written. But of whom. And to whom. At what time. With what words. And verse 7.

Jesus says. If you abide in me. Which literally means. Remain in me. And my words. Abide in you. Or remain in you.

Ask. Whatever you wish. And it shall be done for you. Over and out. That's pretty straightforward. Isn't it? It shall be done for you. By this is my father glorified. That you bear much fruit. And so on and so on. And look if you will.

[37 : 16] At 16. And verse 23. Chapter 16. And verse 23. And in.

That day. Well now. That requires a little bit of. Qualification. What is that day? In that day. Again. Jesus is speaking to his.

Apostles. And by the way. Just for your. Understanding. John's gospel. Is radically different. From the synoptics.

Matthew. Mark. And Luke. It covers different material. It's got some of the same things. But some. Many things are completely different. And when you get in. To John's gospel.

Beginning with chapter. 12. Chapters. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16.

[38 : 13] 17. 18. All transpire. Within 12 hours. Oh. Whoa. Think of that.

That's really fast moving content. All of those chapters. Occur. Within. Within a 12-hour period of time. And Jesus is communicating.

With his 12 apostles. Judas will. Slip out in the night. To do his nefarious work. And. That's the setting. for which we have this account that is given here in verse 23.

In that day you will ask me no question. Truly I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, he will give it to you in my name.

Until now you have asked for nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in figurative language, an hour is coming when I will speak no more figurative language, but will tell you plainly.

[39 : 17] And then in verse 26 again he says, and in that day, in that day. And the later portion, I'm looking for, let's see, where is that? Well, I don't recall where it is now.

I don't think I have it jotted down. And if I do, I can't read my writing. Anyway, Jesus is talking again to his apostles, and he refers to about they're just asking, and he will do it.

And he says very deliberately, very specifically, Verily I say unto you, you who have been with me from the beginning.

Isn't it amazing that a present-day Christian can look at that text and somehow read themselves into that? That's very specific in its qualifications.

Jesus isn't saying this is open to everybody who believes or everybody that loves God. He's saying this is special, specific instructions for you who have been with me from the beginning.

[40 : 30] He's talking about those of you who signed on as my apostles three years ago and is now coming down to the end. And he gave special promises to them that he never gave to you, never gave to me.

So how is it then that we are supposed to pray in light of this? Well, in John's Gospel, and this is where you will find so many of them, the prayer is qualified, and he is addressing the apostles exclusively.

And he is promising certain things by way of prayer for them that he never promised to you. But I never made that distinction because my position was, as a relatively new Christian, and I don't think I've been a believer for more than a year, was that everything that God put in the Bible was intended for me.

And I'm supposed to apply everything that's in there. And if I don't, it will only be because I am weak in my faith, and I need to somehow pump up my belief factor, and I need to be more convinced, I need to be more persuaded.

And how am I going to do that? Well, I didn't know the answer to that either. And I would pray that God would do just all kinds of wonderful things that I was convinced were really for his glory, and I suspect many of them were.

[42 : 04] But nothing came of it. And you kind of wonder, what's the problem, and why are not getting these answers, and why I know God hasn't changed, so it's got to be me.

It's got to be the problem with me. Must be some sin in my life, so I would agonize over that, and try to, I could identify with Martin Luther. He would go to his father confessor when he was still a monk practicing Roman Catholicism, and he would spend three hours with him, confessing every single thing that he could ever think of, that he ever thought wrong or ever did wrong.

And then he would scare the death. When he would walk away, he would go back to the father confessor again 15 minutes later about something that he had forgotten and confess that. And you just try to cleanse your soul and make yourself so holy and so religious and so close to God that he will not be able to resist whatever it is that you ask he will do because you're holy enough, good enough to receive it.

And that's all a bunch of malarkey. But listen, how many times have I told you that one of the major consequences of the fall is that we reason with a warped logic?

And let me add to that, being a Christian does not exempt you from reasoning with a warped logic.

[43 : 34] We still have a fallen mind that needs to be adjusted and corrected by the authority of Scripture because the tendency within us is to just think all kinds of wrong thoughts and gather wrong ideas about the way things are and they aren't that way at all.

But that's where your skewed logic will lead you. And the logic of a believer is no better than the logic of an unbeliever except he's got the resources of Scripture to offset his incorrect thinking. And this is why we don't think as the world does. For the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him. So, comments or questions?

Someone else. Okay, Marie right here. I think Colossians 1 is another good example of the contrast between the prayers that are mentioned in John and in Paul's.

Colossians 1. Okay. Colossians 1. Nine on. What specifically were you thinking of? The beginning, verse 9?

[44 : 53] Yeah. Yeah, Colossians 1. Yeah. Paul says, For this reason also since the day we heard of it, that is, of there being in Christ, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Why? What's the point? Read on. So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Folks, this is traveling first class. This is the ultimate. This is, listen, this is for you. You are not an exception to this. This is for you. This is for everyone in the body of Christ. This is Paul's prayer for them. This is the goal. This is the thing that upends your life and gives you a sense of joy and peace that the world cannot even imagine.

And it only works for believers and it only works with this attitude. It's amazing. Absolutely amazing. My, I told you before, when I came to appreciate some of these things, it wasn't hard at all to pass from the gimme prayers.

[46 : 48] Oh God, give me this, give me that, give me something else, do this, do, you know, where you give God orders and tell him what needs to be done and sometimes we even tell him how to do it. But, my prayer life is characterized more by thanksgiving than it is anything else.

and I want to make a comment that I hope you'll never forget because it's changed my life, it's changed my prayer life for sure. If God has a will or a position or a preference or whatever you want to call it in his own being about you, could it be improved upon?

Is there something you can do or be to make it better? What God has for all of his children is the ultimate.

But it's difficult for us to accept that because sometimes as a Christian, life hurts.

Hurts bad. Could it be that, could it be that it is God's will that you hurt?

[48 : 21] could it be that it's God's will that you die? Well, you're going to, you know.

We all are. But I am persuaded that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

And I know somebody is saying right now, somebody's saying right now, maybe even here or listening to this message on CD, they're saying, well, that's all well and good for you, Marv, but you don't know my situation.

You don't know how I'm hurting. You don't know how I'm disappointed. You don't know how I'm doing. You don't know. Well, God knows. God cares. And God sometimes just does not intervene when we are going through a really deep valley and a lot of pain and a lot of heartache and physical issues where this doesn't work, that doesn't work.

Someone said, when you get to be my age, what doesn't hurt doesn't work. where is God when you need him?

[49 : 51] Where is God when he could take this pain away, take that problem away, take that disappointment away, take that heartache away, and why doesn't he do that?

And I'll tell you one thing, if I were God, I sure wouldn't let my kids suffer the way God lets his suffer. And do you know what this is?

this is just Job's wife. Job, you old fool, don't you know when you've had enough? Curse God and die. Get it over with. And how many of us would be able to come back and say, you speak as a foolish woman.

Shall not we who have received good from the Lord also receive adversity? Who are we to think that we should be somehow exempt from life's pain and difficulties?

Who are we to think that while others went through bloody seas, are we somehow to be exempt from that?

[51 : 15] Does God have a bloody sea for you? It might be by way of disappointment, might be way of physical difficulty or pain or heartache of some kind, or it might be eventually, who knows, might be martyrdom.

What do you think the Apostle Paul was thinking when the Lord told him that he's going to suffer a whole lot of things for his namesake?

What do you think Paul was thinking when that executioner knocked on his cell door? He says, it's time, Paul. And he escorted this man who wrote one-third of our New Testament outside the prison to where there was a clump of trees in the midst of which there was a block, a chopping block.

And on that block, Paul the Apostle laid down his head and his neck and waited for the cutting edge of that executioner's axe.

What do you think was going through his mind? Was he looking for a miraculous deliverance? He'd had that, you know.

[52 : 44] Good old Philippi, those jail cell doors just burst open in that earthquake, freed everybody. Glorious time leading that Philippian jailer to the Lord.

But now has it all come to this, a cold edge of steel. But it won't last long. It won't even be a second. It'll just be a fraction of a second.

And the head of Paul the Apostle is going to drop from his body and he'll be gone. But where will he be gone to?

And what will await him when he gets there? Okay. Would you open your hymns, please?

We're not going to sing. We're just going to look at the lines. Hymn number 494. My father is omnipotent and that you can't deny.

[53 : 49] A God of might and miracles is written in the sky. It took a miracle to put the stars in place. You know what that was? That was physical.

Took a miracle to hang the world in space and that was physical. But when he saved my soul, cleansed and made me whole, it took a miracle of love and grace.

That's not physical, that's spiritual. Let's pray together. Thank you, Father, for this time to share and enjoy together. We recognize that it is fraught with many shortcomings because we are people of shortcomings who depend upon and look to you for the abilities we know we don't have.

And our prayer this morning is that something of this content may lodge in the hearts and minds of those who are receptive to it so that perspective and change and agendas and outcome may be graciously, powerfully altered because we've come to understand and appreciate truths that we didn't know before.

And to this end, we will dismiss these people in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.