

Why Do We Suffer

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[0 : 00] Well, in response to questions that you have submitted, we are kind of continuing to deal with a suggestion that was given us that said, have men give their testimony like we did a few years ago.

Allow for discussion among the members. We can learn from each other. More member participation. So we're trying to be responsive to that. And a number of you have already shared your testimony, how you came to faith in Christ.

And we want you to know that everybody has an opportunity to do that. At the same time, we don't want you to feel obligated to do it. It isn't something you have to do, but it is something that you may want to do.

And if you do, we want to give you an opportunity to do so. So is there anybody who would like to take a few minutes and tell the other guys how you came to faith in Christ or some other significant thing that you're dealing with in your life?

Anything? Anybody? You're more than welcome. Okay, Joe.

[1 : 03] I'll make this real quick a significant thing. John knows my history as far as I was a runner. All the time riding a bicycle, making my heart work a lot.

About five years ago, I was cut it short. They found out my heart was only beating 25 beats per second when I was sleeping. Per minute.

25 beats per minute. Yeah, 25 beats per minute when I was sleeping. And the doctors said that ain't good. It ain't right. They put one of those meters on you that checks your heart for a whole day.

And that's when they found out that my heart was only beating 25 at night when I did that. It was fine during the day. And when I was riding a bike, because I was going to prove to them nothing wrong with my heart, I rode to actually Jeff's place up in Champaign County in Kent by his lake.

Jeff had a lake there beside his wrestling place up there. And I said, I'm going to show them. My heart's fine. So I rode up there and rode back to the hills and everything. I was fine. That night, they called me and said, Mr. Moore, do you feel all right?

[2 : 10] I said, I feel fine. Do you feel faint? You don't faint at all? No, you feel fine. Maybe a little tired, but I feel fine. Well, the doctors want to see you in the morning. So that's when they called me in the morning.

And there was two surgeons there, one, my heart doctor, and another guy. And they said, you've got a problem. I've got a problem. I'm going to feel fine. What's wrong with me? He says, your heart's only beating 25 beats at night when you're sleeping.

And he says, and I said, what's wrong with that? I said, everybody wants a little heartbeat, don't they? And that shows you're in shape, you're in condition. And I was always proud of that because it was running 38, 39 normal with wrestling.

So he says, well, he says, I said, what's wrong? He says, well, some night you're just not going to wake up. You're just going to not wake up. He says, your electrical system's going bad.

He says, your electrical system's not working. And your anoint, that first thing that starts your heart off, he says, it's not functioning. And, you know, it's just wearing out. It's not going to work anymore.

[3 : 07] And he says, but you've got a good thing. And we've got a pacemaker that can put in you. Pacemaker you can put into you that will keep it beating. Whenever it falls below 60, it's sitting out at 60. Falls below 60, it kicks in.

When it's above, it's fine. The reason I was doing fine most of the time was because you have chemicals in your body. Like, you know, this thing here, I'll probably explain it to you. Your body has chemicals in there that stimulate.

Like adrenaline, you know, it starts, helps the heart. So when I'm exercising, when I'm awake and working, I've got health. That anoint, aneroid, anoint, I can't pronounce it right, that starts your heart, it has health.

But when you're sleeping, those things don't work good. And so you see, so I have a pacemaker that keeps me alive in here. Roger here, of course, he can tell a story.

He's got a new heart altogether in him that keeps him alive. But I've got a pacemaker, and thank God I've got a pacemaker. That's it. Appreciate that, Jim. Oh, wait a minute.

[4 : 09] I'm going to tell the story where God played in that. Oh, gosh. Here, remember? That's a whole step. You remember that? Where God played in that. I was, I had to, he says, you got to, they were going to do this two weeks ago.

He says, advance. Put my pacemaker in. I says, what do I do in the meantime? Maybe I'll just go to sleep and not wake up. I says, I got to do something to keep my heart moving, you know, beating. So I'm going to take a camping trip, you know, and stuff.

So I was going down to Clinton County, Wilmington, the Cowan Lake State Park to take the camping trip. And I had to stop here because we were doing Thursdays then. We were in here on Thursdays. And so I'm going to go to Bible study first.

And I was on my bike, had my bike all loaded. Some of you guys remember it. And I'm going to take off. So I, so I, that morning, I usually eat breakfast. Normally I eat breakfast. Maybe that's why I don't eat it now so much.

But normally I eat breakfast and I always clean up every bike. You know, I was taught by a kid to clean up every bike. There's kids out there starving. Plus I'm taking this bike ride. I got to eat everything. I had eggs and pancakes and everything.

[5 : 06] That morning I could not eat. Here's this food I ordered in front of me and I could not eat. I wasn't hungry. I don't know why. I wasn't sick of a stomach. But I could not eat. Well, two hours later, my wife called me and says, they want you now.

They want to operate on you now. Right now. But there's one thing. If you eat breakfast, they can't operate. If you eat breakfast, you can't operate on you. They can't put that thing in there. And I said, well, darn it.

No, no, I didn't eat breakfast. I can, they can operate. So they operate on me in two days instead of two weeks. And somehow I think that made a difference. If I don't want two weeks, I wouldn't have been with you right today. Thank goodness for the Lord.

Thank you. Amen. Well, God works in mysterious ways. His wonders to perform. And there is no ordinary human explanation for Joe, who enjoys a good meal as much as anyone, passing on breakfast that morning.

So anyway, you know, you just wonder, we know that for those who are believers, they are indwelt by the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit, that is our human spirit, that we are the sons of God.

[6 : 15] And there are ways and things that the Holy Spirit can communicate to our spirit that activates this or that or something else that we just don't understand. Amen.

But we are, even when we think we are alone, we are not alone. He will never leave us nor forsake us. And even in suffering, we are not alone.

And suffering is something that nobody in their right mind is going to volunteer for, but it goes with the territory. This is a veil of tears in which we live.

It is wonderfully covered with a lot of good things and a lot of wonderful things and a lot of positive things, but we still live in a world that is askew from the way God created it.

It is an abnormal world. We are living in abnormal situation right now. That is the result of the fall. And our bodies fell with it.

[7 : 20] So our bodies, miraculous though they are, still have a degree of abnormality about them. In other words, fellas, you are not now what you are going to be one day.

Not even close. And, well, we'll, in light of what Joe was saying and in light of what this recent funeral and the subject of suffering, and in light of what this time, we'll, we'll go to Romans.

Now let's go to Acts. Acts chapter 9. And I want to share something with you about suffering from that and how it is the norm. And I remember hearing a story about a young man who was led to Christ by his pastor in the pastor's study.

And he left the office just rejoicing because he was a new creature in Christ and the burden of sin was gone and he felt like a new person. And it wasn't about a month later and he was back in the pastor's office again.

And he was confused and all mixed up and upset and everything. And the pastor said, well, what's, what's wrong? What's going on? And he said, well, when I was there a few weeks ago and he said, I gave my life to Christ, I thought everything was going to be different.

[8 : 56] I thought, I thought it was pretty much going to be smooth sailing. I'm a Christian now and Christ is in me and, and my sins are forgiven. And, and I was just looking forward to wonderful new life.

And, but over the last couple of weeks and it started right after I became a believer. He says, I got laid off from my job. My dog died.

And my wife said she doesn't know what to make of my newfound faith. And she's not sure how she's going to cope with it. And she's kind of pulled away from me. And I thought all of this stuff like that was going to change when I became a Christian.

And it was going to be, you know, rosy from here on out. And the pastor had to explain some things to him because we live in a fallen world and we have fallen bodies.

And, and believe it or not, in a fallenness, we are appointed to suffer. Now there are good times and we thank God for every one of them.

[10 : 03] But fellas, into every life, especially in the Christian life, some rain must fall. We are not somehow exempt from difficulty and pain and suffering and heartache just because we are a Christian.

Sometimes I think Christians have the idea that, that, that God is kind of like a, a big blocking guard, you know.

And you're on a football team and you're carrying the ball and you're headed for the goal. And Jesus is this big blocking guard, 260 pounds and six foot tall.

And he runs interference for you. And anybody that wants to tackle you or, or hurt you, he just knocks them out of the way. And you've got smooth sailing right onto the goal post. Well, it doesn't work that way.

Doesn't, Roger? No, it doesn't work that way. There is an interference that is run for us, but it is often in ways that we don't understand and sometimes don't even appreciate at the time.

[11 : 05] So, here is a man in Acts chapter 9 that is actually given a heads up that now he has changed sides.

He has come over from the side of unbelief in Christ to belief in Christ. He's changed sides. And with it comes the heat that he's going to take for having done so.

And we'll just jump in here in Acts 9. And let's, let's start with verse 10. Well, verse, verse 8.

Okay. Well, let's, let's, let's say Saul got up from his ground, from the ground. This is after the Damascus Road conversion. Actually, I don't think he was converted on the Damascus Road at all, but we'll talk about that later.

He got up from the ground and through, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing. And leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight and neither ate nor drank.

[12 : 11] Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, behold, here am I, Lord. And the Lord said to him, arise and go to the street called Straight and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul.

For behold, he is praying. And I want to just insert something here. I think that is key. I think when, when the Lord told Ananias that Saul is praying.

He had not prayed up until this point, and yet he had been there three days and three nights without eating or drinking anything because the man was in shock from having seen the risen Christ and having heard from him on the road to Damascus.

And now he is praying. And I would just insert here for your consideration that that expression indicates a change.

He has moved from a position of questioning and quandary and wondering and replaying that event to the place where he has said, okay, Lord, I'm your man.

[13 : 32] And neither, neither you nor I can begin to identify with the radical reversal that took place in this man's life.

From being the chief persecutor of those who believed in Jesus as their Messiah. From being the chief persecutor to becoming the chief proclaimer is a 180, the likes of which we can't even imagine.

I mean, he has changed sides. And the side that he used to be on is now going to consider him a traitor. And they're going to put out a contract on him and they're going to try to kill him.

So that goes with the territory of being a believer. Now, I dare say that we're not facing that kind of opposition. We don't have any bullseyes painted on our back because somebody's trying to kill us because we are a believer.

But persecution and suffering takes many venues and comes in many different ways. And all I want to say right now, in case you haven't already come to this conclusion, don't be surprised if something really painful, negative, and hurtful comes your way.

[14 : 46] Just remember, it is part and parcel of living as a fallen believer in a fallen world. And God has not removed that capability from you simply because you are a Christian and you're on the right side.

So he has had a breakthrough and it is as if God is telling Ananias, he's ready to listen now and he's ready to be my man now because he's praying.

And to whom is he praying? He's praying to that same one that accosted him on the road to Damascus. And we are told in verse 13, Ananias said, Lord, I've heard from many about this man how much harm he did to thy saints at Jerusalem.

And here he has authority from the chief priest to bind all who call upon thy name. But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.

For I will show him how much he must suffer. Wow. Suffer for my name's sake.

[16 : 03] And Ananias departed and entered the house. And after laying hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And when Saul laid hands, or when Ananias laid hands on Saul, I can only imagine that that hand of Ananias was trembling. Here I am and here is Saul of Tarsus in the flesh.

And I'm supposed to lay my hands on him and pray for him. And he's, boy, I sure hope this works. Because he's going to be in a world of hurt. Immediately, there fell from his eyes something like scales.

He regained his sight and he arose and was baptized. And he took food and was strengthened. Now, I want you to fast forward, guys, over to Acts, I'm sorry, Romans chapter 8.

Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8. And let's begin reading with verse 12, if we may.

[17 : 23] Romans 8 and verse 12. Paul is reaching a conclusion and he says, So then, brethren, we are under obligation not to the flesh to live according to the flesh.

For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die. But if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again. But you have received a spirit of adoption as sons.

By which we cry out, Abba, Father. And that word, Abba, is an Aramaic term. And it is the equivalent of our English word, Daddy or Papa.

Abba, Father. The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

[18 : 36] If indeed, or actually it could be rendered since here. This is the first class conditional clause. It doesn't mean if. It doesn't mean maybe we will and maybe we won't.

But actually it means since. Since. So the idea is it goes with it. Since indeed we suffer with him. In order that we may also be glorified with him.

And to be glorified means. That we will eventually. We will ultimately be. What and who we ought to be in these present bodies.

That will undergo an incredible transformation. God is not finished with us yet. We are in process. And the time is going to come.

When these bodies. Will be as Paul said it in Philippians chapter 1. Change this. This vile body. Which means this weak body. This utterly dependent body.

[19 : 39] Is going to be changed into a body. Like unto Christ's glorious body. When he came out of that tomb. Can't begin to imagine. What that's going to be like. But it will not be subject.

To all of the negatives. That this body is subject to. It will be a glorified body. It will be a body. That has been. That has graduated.

Through a process. Of glorification. Into. A body that is like that. Which Christ had. When he came out of the tomb. And. We cannot begin.

To understand. What that's going to be like. But he talks about it here. And he says in verse 18. I consider. Now remember. This is a guy. Who was appointed. To suffering.

I will show him. What great things he must suffer. For my name. I consider. That the sufferings. Of this present time.

[20 : 37] Are not worthy. To be compared. With the glory. That is to be revealed. To us. Because. Or for. The anxious longing.

Of the creation. Waits eagerly. For the revealing. Of the sons of God. He's talking about. The whole of creation. The whole planet.

Is reduced to. Degradation. And ruination. As a result. Of the fall. When Adam. And Eve. Fell. They brought.

They brought. Everything. Crashing down. With them. Someone has said. Have you noticed. That even. The babbling brook. Babels in the minor key.

It too. Is out of kilter. The anxious. The anxious longing. Of the creation. All of created. Waits eagerly. For the revealing.

[21 : 33] Or the disclosing. Or the final presentation. Of the sons of God. For the creation. This is. Everything. All the vegetation.

All the animal life. The entirety of creation. The whole planet. Is under this curse. Creation was subjected. To futility.

Not of its own will. But because of him. That is God. Who subjected it. In hope. That is. The word confidence there. In the absolute guarantee.

In the complete confidence. That. The creation. Itself. Also. Will be set free. From.

Its slavery. To corruption. Into. The freedom. Of the glory. Of the children. Of God. When you get. Your glorification.

[22 : 30] The whole planet. Gets its. Everything. Will be in tune. Everything. Will be. As it ought to be. And when Jesus. Was here. Performing. His miracles. All he was doing.

With each miracle. Was restoring. That situation. To the original norm. And the original norm. With which God.

Created. Our first parents. Did not. And could not. Include blindness. Or deafness. Or lameness. Or anything else. But all of those things. Come as a result. Of the fall.

We hear they are going. To be reversed. And when Jesus. Performed his miracles. He always did it. On somebody. That was suffering. From some kind. Of an abnormality.

Whether blind. Deaf. Lame. Whatever it was. And in that person. He restored them. To the original norm. And one of the expressions used.

[23 : 27] I think it's in Luke's gospel. It's a beautiful. Beautiful thing. Jesus. Says that Jesus. Healed the multitudes. And he made everyone. Who was sick.

He made them. Every. Whit. Whole. That's a word. We don't even use anymore. It's an old English word. W-H-I-T. Whit.

He made them. Every. Whit. Whole. And that word. Whit. Means. In their entirety. So that if he healed somebody. Of blindness. But he had a bad heart.

He got. His blindness healed. He got his heart healed too. Everything. He made him. Every. Whit. Whole. Jesus. Didn't just fix. What was obviously wrong.

With every individual. He fixed everything. That was wrong. With that individual. Of course. They ended up. They still died. Like everybody else. But they underwent. A complete.

[24 : 24] Reversion. Of what. Sin. Had brought. Into the life. It's a beautiful thing. And Jesus said. If I. By the spirit of God. Cast out demons.

Then the spirit of God. The kingdom of God. Has come unto you. Jesus. As the king. Everywhere he went. The king. Brought with him.

Kingdom. Conditions. Every situation. He was in. Was broken. From something. Somebody. Or something. And he fixed it. He changed it.

And can you imagine. That's what's going to be wholesale. For the whole planet. And for all those who are believers. So we know. Verse 22. We know. That the whole creation.

Groans. And suffers the pains. When does it start? Starts in childbirth. Starts in childbirth. Think of that. The very act.

[25 : 24] Of an individual. Coming into a fallen world. Is coming now. Through a fallen body. And the experience is. Of pain. Boy.

That really gets things. From the get go. Doesn't it? And the mother. Who is going to deliver that baby. Suffers the pain. And not only this. But also. We ourselves.

Having the first fruits. Of the spirit. The spirit. Is the first fruits. That's the down payment. Of your salvation. When you came to faith. In Jesus Christ. The spirit of God.

Came into your body. In a way. That none of us understand. And the spirit of God. Regenerated. Our. Human. Spirit.

Didn't change the body at all. Body still the same. Body still going to die. But the human spirit. Inside of you. That nobody has ever seen. Was regenerated.

[26 : 23] That's the part of you. That was born again. That's the part of you. That was made new. That's the part of you. That was changed forever. And that. Is the down payment.

That's all it is. That's just the down payment. That's the guarantee. You know. There is a. A saying among. Among realtors. That when somebody.

Signs on. To buy a house. They are supposed to put down. What is called. Earnest money. And the earnest money. Is kind of like.

A buyer's. Guarantee. To the seller. That he's going to go through. With the deal. And that takes the house. Off the market. Because it's considered sold.

And you got earnest money on it. And that means. That the full payment. For the property. Is going to come. And it's a guarantee. That it's going to come. Because you've got.

[27 : 21] Earnest money. Well the spirit of God. Is the equivalent. Of earnest money. That God has deposited in you. It's the down payment. And it is.

Your guarantee. That what God has begun. In you. He's going to finish. He will accomplish that. Which he has begun. In you. And this is.

The word that is used here. Is first fruit. Same thing. It means. It means. The first part. Of the crop. That has been planted. And grown up. The first part. That ripens first.

Is ready for pick. Even though the rest of it isn't. There's always some. That gets a little more nutrients. From the soil. Or gets a little more sun. And it ripens earlier. That's called the first fruits.

And the spirit of God. Is the first fruits. Which is the guarantee. That the rest of the job. Is going to be completed. And that will be. Your body.

[28 : 18] Because. When. Salvation. Was applied. To you. It did not include your body. It just included. The down payment. The spirit.

Making your spirit. Inside. Alive. To God. And he goes on to say. We know. The whole creation. Groans. And suffers. The pains of childbirth.

Together. Until now. And not only this. But also. We ourselves. Having the first fruits. The down payment. Of the spirit. Even we ourselves.

Groan. Within ourselves. Waiting. Eagerly. For our adoption. As sons. What? Namely. The redemption.

Of our body. Your spirit. Has been redeemed. But redemption. Has not been applied. To your body. That's why.

[29 : 13] We still live. In a fallen world. With fallen bodies. The time is coming. Guys. Thank God. When that. Is going to be. Completed also. And the down payment.

Is our guarantee. That God. Will complete. In you. What he has begun. And he will. Fashion your body. Like under that spirit. And it is.

It is amazing. Waiting. Eagerly. For the redemption. Of sons. To wit. The redemption. Of our body. That would be the completion. Of the transaction.

For in hope. That is. Again. Confidence. This is confidence. It's not. Maybe. The mythical word. For hope. Is el peace. And it never means. What we mean.

By hope. We mean. When we say hope. It's always got a question mark after. And all it means is. That's what we want to happen. We hope. I'm going to propose.

[30 : 09] To my sweetheart. I hope. She will accept it. You know. What's that mean? It means. He's on pins and needles. Because he doesn't know for sure. What her answer is going to be. So he hopes that she will.

No, no. That's not the way the Bible uses the word hope. We would. Translate it into the vernacular today. And say. The biblical word for hope. Is what.

The kids. Especially the kids playing basketball. Would call. A slam dunk. It's a done deal. It's finished. It's completed. For in confidence.

We have been saved. But confidence. Confidence. Confidence. Confidence that is seen. Is not. Confidence. For. Why does one.

Also hope. For what he sees. This is anticipation. For the future. But if we hope. Or have confidence. For what we do not see. You're relying. And simply trusting.

[31 : 05] On what God has said. Then with perseverance. We eagerly. Wait. For it. That's. Perseverance means.

Staying power. It means. Even in these bodies. Because of the regenerated spirit. Of God. That is within you. It is always too soon.

To quit. You just never give up. That's the meaning. Of perseverance. You just plug on. Even though. With the limitations. The debilitation. The sufferings.

That come with this body. You just keep on. Plugging away. Someone said. When you reach. The end of your rope. Just tie. Why not? And hang on. Because.

It's always too soon. To quit. And this is a beautiful thing here. With perseverance. We wait eagerly for it. It is. Just. Just beautiful. And in the same way.

[32 : 00] The spirit also. Helps our weakness. We do not know. How to pray. We do not know. We do not know. We do not know. The spirit. The spirit himself. The spirit himself. Intercedes for us. With groanings.

Too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts. Knows. What the mind of the spirit is. Because. He intercedes for the saints.

According to the will of God. And we know. We don't have a hunch. We don't suspect. We don't think. We know. This is an absolute confidence.

And we know. That God. Causes all things. To work together. For good. To those who love God. To those who are called. According to his purpose.

That's a beautiful passage. And I can't tell you. How much confidence. And assurance. I have gained from this. In connection with the subject. Of suffering. And when.

[32 : 57] When you look at. The physical suffering. That we. Are sometimes called upon. To endure. I think of the dear lady. That. The service I held.

Just this past weekend. She was. She was a wonderful lady. Who knew and loved the Lord. And.

And had a wonderful testimony. Everybody appreciated. Alice McDowell. And she was just a quiet. Unassuming lady. Who. Had an aura of godliness. About her. That everybody appreciated.

And. And in her last few years. When. Severe Parkinson's. Overtook her body. And she couldn't do anything. But lie in bed. And suffer.

And create bed sores. And this went on. For year after year. And. You wonder. You look at a situation. Like that. And in our humanness. Yeah. We know that God is in charge.

[33 : 53] But. Let's face it. You're still human. And you have to look at a situation like that. And especially. If you happen to be Bill. Her husband. And you wonder. Why is God allowing this?

Phil Yancey. Phil Yancey wrote a book. Several years ago. That. He addressed it as. The question. That will not go away.

And the question is. Why? Why? Why am I going through this? What did I do to deserve this?

Why is God allowing this? What am I supposed to learn out of this? What have I done wrong? How have I offended the almighty? Like. This was Job's plea.

You know. Job. Suffered all these losses. And he prayed to God. And he said. Look. If you'll just tell me. What I did wrong. Or how I offended you.

[34 : 52] I'll do whatever I can. To make it right. But the agony. Is in not knowing. And not knowing. Can only be addressed. By quiet. Confident. Trust. And let me tell you fellas. That's going to be the hardest thing.

You're going to have to deal with. Some of you know what I'm talking about already. But eventually. You're all going to find out. Because. Living in a fallen world.

With a fallen body. It's going to catch up with you. If it hasn't already. It's going to catch up with you. And it's going to leave you wondering. What did I do to deserve this.

Why am I going through this. And God's supposed to know everything. And do everything. And I prayed. And why doesn't God answer my prayers. I prayed thus and so. And Paul tells us here in this passage.

[35 : 52] He says. We don't know how to pray as we ought. Why don't we? Because we don't know everything. We need to know. Fellas. If you and I understood.

How dumb we really are. We'd be embarrassed. Sometimes we think we are so smart. That we've got all the answers. We know thus and so. Thus and so.

Fellas. Compared to what there is to know. We're not. We're not even a drop in the ocean. I mean. We're talking about. An infinite God. With infinite wisdom.

And omniscience. And everything that goes with it. It's just. Just amazing. So. So. What do you do. About what you can't answer. And what you can't figure out. Faith. Faith.

Faith. Yeah. Faith. Faith. Faith. You just say. Lord. I don't have any idea. Why I'm going through this. I don't know what you're trying to accomplish. In this. But. And I had prayed this.

- [36 : 52] Lord. I don't want to be a slow learner. I want to learn. I want to learn this lesson. As fast as I can. So I can get out of this situation. Get out of this hole. Or whatever it is.
- And. Paul. I'll tell you guys. Second Corinthians. For. Just go there for just a moment. I think that's where it is.
- If it hasn't moved. Yeah. Second Corinthians. Chapter 11. This. This is one of God's. Choicest. Servants.
- And. If there was anyone. Who deserved to have. God run interference for him. And just remove all the obstacles. It was Paul the apostle.
- Because. No. Hey guys. Nobody had more to offer. By way of a message. Than this man. And you would think. The least.
- [37 : 48] The very least. That God could do for him. Would be giving. Smooth sailing. And happy. Reception. But everywhere he went. Was bumps and bruises.
- And everything. Negative. And the people to whom he. Preached. The most. Wonderful message. That anybody. Could ever hear. They resented.
- And they persecuted him for. And even tried to eliminate him. And. Paul talks about this. He says. Hmm.
- My oh my. Let's just jump in with verse. 23. Are they servants of Christ?
- I speak as if insane. I more so. In far more labors. In far more imprisonments. Beaten. Times without number. Often in danger of death.
- [38 : 43] Paul. How many times did they. How many times did they. Take their canes and sticks. And beat on you. Paul says. I. I don't know.
- I lost track. I lost track. I don't know how many times. They beat me. Five times.
- I received from the Jews. Thirty. Nine. Thirty. Nine. Lashes. Thirty. Nine. Lashes. Three times. I was beaten with rods.
- Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. A night and a day I've spent in the deep. I've been on frequent journeys.
- In dangers 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.
- [39 : 39] Dangers among false brethren. I've been in labor and hardship. Through many sleepless nights. In hunger and thirst. Often without food. In cold and exposure.
- Dangers in the sea. Apart from such external things. There is the daily pressure upon me. Of concern. For all the churches. Are the people getting what I've delivered to them.
- By way of information. Are they believing it? Are they propagating it? And he had emotional pain on top of it. And all of these physical things. And listen guys. It's important that you understand this.
- This is not a list of complaints. Man's not complaining. He's not saying. Oh woe is me. Look at all that I have to endure.
- For the cause of Christ. Listen. This is a man who's saying. Yeah. And I will suffer gladly. That the power of Christ may rest upon me. I want you to understand.
- [40 : 35] A very important principle here. And we talked a little bit about it. But when God called Paul. To the mission that he called him. To preach.
- Jews and Gentiles. The message of the cross. He did not say. Now Paul. All of these people out there.
- Are going to really be glad. To be given this life giving message. That you're going to be giving them. Nothing of the kind. Fellas listen. The reason Paul had opposition.

And you need to understand this. Because this is a great biblical principle. That pervades everything. Our fallenness. Our spiritual.

Emotional. Physical. Fallenness. Is something that we were all born with. And we inherited it. From our first parents. And there isn't anybody who escaped it.

[41 : 34] Except Jesus Christ. And the only way he could escape it. Was by the virgin birth. That's one reason he was born the way he was. But this fallenness that we're dealing with.

Is in its entirety. That means our intellect is fallen. How else do you think. Human beings. Are able to come up with some of the.

Screwiest. Insane ideas. Absurdities. That you could ever imagine. Such as. If you don't like being a male. Not a problem.

You can be a female. If you don't. Now. That's as nutty as it gets. Where does that kind of thinking come from? Comes from our fallenness.

Listen. Every human being. Apart from Jesus Christ. Every human being. Is born. With an impaired.

[42 : 31] Intellect. With skewed. With skewed reasoning. With warped logic. It's part and parcel of our being. That's the way it is.

That's part of our fallenness. And God did not tell Paul. I want you to preach this message to these people. But I'm going to. Overpower.

And overcome. Their fallen intellect. And their logic. And their reasoning. And allow them to see. The truth of your message. So that they will eagerly believe.

God didn't do that. You know. When he bestowed this thing. Called volition upon us. Which is the power to choose. The power to make choices. Made you a free moral agent.

And by the way guys. That's what provides the basis. For our accountability. We are a free moral agent. We are not pre-programmed.

[43 : 27] To our behavior. Other than. That which comes with the fall. That is part of our pre-programming. In the same way that your physical characteristics.

Is part of your pre-programming. On the basis of what you receive. From your mother and your father. By way of genes. And all the rest of it. So. We deal with the world. We deal with the world.

That is fallen. That does not have the capacity. To exercise. Solid logic. And reasoning. This is why.

When people. First hear the gospel. Their usual reaction is. Well I don't believe that. Well that doesn't make any sense. Well I blah blah blah. And on and on.

The same kind of objections. That most of us give. When we hear the gospel. And this is why. We have to usually hear it repeatedly. Before it sinks in. Because it has to overcome. That warped logic.

[44 : 23] And reasoning. That we have. And that is going to lead to. Hostility. On the part of people. Who do not want. And will not receive the message. So it's part and parcel.

And Jesus said. Listen fellas. Told his disciples. Right before he went back to heaven. He said. In the world. In the world. In the only world we got. You will have.

Tribulations. Don't be surprised. You will have tribulations. It's part and parcel. Of being on this world. But be of good cheer. Because I've overcome the world.

And the death. Barrel. And resurrection. Of Christ. Makes all the difference. In the world. That's. That's. That's everything guys. Don't ever forget. The cross. Of Jesus Christ. Is. The.

Centerpiece. Of the universe. The greatest thing. That ever happened. Since creation. Is that. God was in Christ.

[45 : 23] Reconciling the world. Unto himself. That. That's everything. That's everything. And that provides the basis. For some.

Those who believe. To be removed spiritually. From that fallenness. And brought into a new estate. And a new position. And it's called being. In. Christ.

Which of course. Makes all the difference. In this world. In the world to come. And I can see. That the food is here. And I cannot compete. With that. So thank you Michelle.

I appreciate the service. Guys. Sorry I didn't leave time. For Q&A.; But I didn't know. She was coming. That's my excuse. So. Thank you all. For being here.