

I. Introduction and Outreach

We spend a little time here, tap dancing until the mothers get back so we do not lose anybody. Let me just say to you, while we are waiting for the lady to come back here, really pray about and work on our Halloween deal. Everybody has friends, and one of our greatest outreaches is talking to people about what we have to offer. There is a day and age where parents need to be on top of things with their kids and learn the process of teaching them the Bible. It is today. There is so little that is done and there is so much to be done. So, you will do your part and be praying about and be thinking about who in your life God would have you bring, the invite to come.

We will have a great time that day, and we will try to reach some couples, try to show them what our church is all about, that we have a great time, a fun time, and yet it is all centered around the Word of God and all that God has for us. So, that is something we are going to do, those things from time to time. We are going to pick little events that we are just going to really focus on reaching out to people. I need everybody to get involved in some way, some shape, some form. It is a total church thing. So, please be praying about it, be thinking about it, and work with Kelly on it. We will have a great time as we get into those events and try to reach some folks.

II. The Book of Job: Context and Overview

The Book of Job. As you know, we have been coming through the Bible. We have been trying to lay out for you book by book the whole Bible. Many of you are in the process of maybe for the first time in your life, really seriously studying the Bible. We are going through and trying to give you a layout of the Bible that will work for you, something that in years to come you can take and study. Or if somebody else comes into the church later on and wants to do it, it will be an invaluable tool to really learn the Bible and help put the Bible together.

As you know, so far, we have come through the Book of Ezra in our five books here that really lay out the pre-millennial return of the Lord. We have shown you how it all worked, the pre-millennial view. We looked at the Book of Ezra, where they go back; the Book of Nehemiah, where they rebuild; and then Esther. We talked last week about the Book of Esther, probably the most unique book in the Bible, as we said, the only book in the Bible where God is not mentioned or any reference at all to the Lord. So, we have been having a good time with that.

Today, we enter into the Book of Job. I want to read as a text this morning the first twelve verses or so here of Job. So, if you turn to Job chapter one and follow with me, we will get a context for what we are going to talk about.

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. We ask You today, Father, to open up our hearts, help us to see this incredible book. Lord, help me to be able to lay it out in the way that it needs to be laid out. There is so much here, Lord, and I truly, in a way, Lord, do not know how to put it all in fashion, Father, that it will come out on the other end making sense. But, Lord, that is Your job. My job is to make sure that my heart is where it needs to be today, that my life is clean and pure in Your sight, as these people, Father, need to have their lives clean, that I may be able to give them doctrine from You, and they may be able to receive it from You. Lord, we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

The Book of Job has so much in it, it is hard to grasp it all. But if I am speaking to someone down the line that is listening to this tape, or you are here this morning and you are going weekly or biweekly, or some of you monthly, however it takes a while to get through the tapes in your Bible, I am going to try to give you the meat of the Book of Job this morning.

Last week, we talked about Esther. We saw how that Esther was a picture of the end of the times of the Gentiles. We looked at a great prophecy in Matthew 24 that talked about the budding of the fig tree, the nation of Israel, how it fits in. We saw in the Book of Esther where there is a rapture, a wedding, a feast, a judgment seat of Christ. We saw in chapter 3 the rise of the

Antichrist. We come to the conclusion that the Book of Esther, in our pre-millennial study of these books, brings us and introduces us to the first three and a half years of the Tribulation Period.

Now we have come to the Book of Job. The first thing I want to do is I want to give you a breakdown of Job. The breakdown of Job, again, is very easy. It is something that you need to put at the front of your Bible, like all the other books that I have given you, so that when you begin to read it, begin to look at it, you begin to see it in its simplicity as trying to study it in its complexity.

- Chapter 1 and chapter 2 are simply Job being tested.
- Then you go from chapter 3 to chapter 37, and we deal with Job being counseled.
- Then we come to chapter 38 through chapter 42, and we find Job being restored.

It is around these three breakdowns in your Bible that we are going to see the Book of Job, first of all, from a doctrinal standpoint.

III. Doctrinal Significance: Job and the Tribulation Period

Where the Book of Esther, and I explained to you last week, begins to be the first three and a half years of the Tribulation Period, the Book of Job is the last three and a half years of the Tribulation Period. Remember now, the Tribulation Period, that time when the Bible prophesies about the rise of the Antichrist, a time when the devil takes over the world, a time that in the order of the events in the Bible, the rapture takes place, and then the man of sin is revealed for seven years. He is on this earth. He runs this earth and he tries to establish his own kingdom ahead of God's kingdom. Then we know that the next major event would be the Second Coming of Christ. The next major event would be the Millennium, and that would be the next major event then would be taking us into the new heavens and the new earth and the New Jerusalem. Your order, your Bible would be found, that order would be found throughout the Book of Revelation, which we have taught you a few times as we have come through and talked about other things.

The Book of Job fits right into our study line because the Book of Job figures into the last three and a half years. The Tribulation Period is seven years, but it is divided into two periods. The first period runs three and a half years. This is the time period covered in the Book of Esther. During this time, the Antichrist makes an alliance with the nation of Israel. During this time, the Antichrist rebuilds the temple in Jerusalem. He comes to the point near the middle of the Tribulation Period where the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 and 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 that he actually sits in the temple of God in Jerusalem, claiming to be God, demanding the whole world to worship him. At that point, he goes after the Jew. He breaks the covenant, the bond, the peace that he has made with Israel. Now he goes after the Jew in a fashion of only pure terror.

This is the last three and a half years of the Tribulation Period, which coming through your Bible you will find called the Great Tribulation. When you find the term the Great Tribulation, it will always be a reference to the last three and a half years. The first three and a half years is called the Tribulation. The last three and a half years is called the Great Tribulation. You will find the Tribulation is called Jacob's Trouble or a Time of Trouble. You will find it is called Daniel's 70th Week. You will also find it referenced throughout your Bible in a little phrase, "those days." You will find all those terms in the back of your little bookmark there that I gave you this morning because on the backside of that is all of the things that you need to know about the words in the Bible that will help you get going. By the way, let me just say, I say this before, if you want a couple more of those, if you want to give them out to your friends and talk about our ministry, see my wife, make sure that you can get some because they are a key deal in showing people about the Bible. They are a great conversation piece and it is a thing that you can use. So, just let us know and we will take care of you.

The Book of Job lays out for us the last three and a half years of the Tribulation Period. The name Job itself means "one persecuted." Job is in the land of Uz in Job 1. The land of Uz is exactly where the Jew was going to be in the Tribulation Period. It is south of Jerusalem, down by the Dead Sea area, exactly where the Jew was going to run in the Tribulation Period. Job is on the ground seven days and seven nights when he goes through his persecution. Job typifies for us the nation of Israel, his life. What he goes through is a picture of the last three and a half years of the Great Tribulation Period.

If you come through there in Job 3, and I gave you the outline and talked about Job counseled from Job 3 to Job 37. In those chapters, you will find three friends show up to Job, and they falsely accuse him. They falsely accuse him and they add to his burden, they add to his suffering because they falsely try to accuse him. When you go to Revelation 16:13, you will find that during the Great Tribulation Period, when Israel is being run into the wilderness, the Bible says there are three unclean spirits like frogs that persecute the nation of Israel. That is Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

The Book of Job has 42 chapters in it. The book of the Great Tribulation has 42 months. In Job 42:10, you will find that the Bible says the Lord turns the captivity of Job. The Lord ceases the devil from hurting him in Job 42 and turns his captivity exactly like the Lord turns the captivity of the nation of Israel at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Job 42:11, you will find that there is a resurrection. Job gets his kids back at the end. You will find at the end of the Great Tribulation Period there is a resurrection. Israel comes back. The people killed come back. You will find in Job 42:10 that Job gets a double portion of everything he had. The Bible says at the end of his life God gives him back double. If you go to Isaiah 61:7 and Deuteronomy 28:28, you will find at the end of the Great Tribulation Period Israel gets back double everything that they lose.

At the same time, you will find a man in there called Elihu. Elihu is a type of the Holy Spirit of God. He is the writer of the book. What Elihu does is give us a running commentary behind the scenes, showing us the insight of what is going on in this time in Job's life, which is a picture for you and for me doctrinally. Doctrinally, how it applies to the Second Coming of Christ, the Great

Tribulation Period. So, we see the first thing you want to remember about Job as you are laying Job out. Get that information down. You are going to find so many references to the Tribulation Period in the Book of Job, it will take you the rest of your life to catalog them all, because Job, in a doctrinal sense, is a book that lays out the Great Tribulation, the last three and a half years, the last 42 months when the devil persecutes the nation of Israel. That material is covered throughout the Book of Revelation, particularly Revelation 12 and Revelation 13.

IV. Doctrinal Significance: Understanding the Devil's Work

The next thing the Book of Job does, which I think it does probably better than any other book in the Bible, it shows you how the devil works. Certainly, during the Tribulation Period, the devil is at work. Anytime you find where you are going to find a book that is dedicated to what the devil is doing behind the scenes, you are going to find a lot of material that shows you how he operates, because you and I need not to be ignorant of his devices. We need to understand how he is going to attack because he attacks Israel just like he is going to attack us.

In Job 1 and Job 2, we find the devil defined as he is defined in Revelation 12:10, because in Revelation 12:10 the Bible says that he is the accuser of the brethren. When you want to study the devil in the Bible, the easiest way to study the devil, and for me I always take the hardest things and break them down where they are easiest to remember. If you want to study the devil in the Bible throughout the Bible, you can study him very easily. There are two times the devil is kicked out of heaven. If you build everything else in your Bible around those two times, you are going to have an easy time to understand it.

We know that before the fall of Satan, he is back there, and when he is back there in the distant past someplace, we know that he is not the devil. He is Lucifer. He is bright shining. He is son of the morning. We know that he had a position with God and he worked with God, but the Bible says that he was not satisfied with that, and pride rose up in his heart and he wanted to be like the most high God. So, we find that the first time the devil is kicked out of heaven, he is kicked out of heaven positionally. He loses that crown. He loses the concept of Lucifer, and now he becomes the devil. Now he becomes Satan. When he is kicked out of heaven the first time, in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, when he is kicked out the first time, he is kicked out positionally. He loses his position.

At that point, the Bible says, that would be Genesis 1:2, right up to Revelation 13, right up through the Old Testament, right up through Adam and Eve, right up through Abraham, right up through the kings of Israel, right up into the church age, right up into your life, right up in my life, right up into the middle of the Tribulation Period. The Bible says his job now is the accuser of the brethren. What he does now is he stands before the throne of God and he accuses God's people, he accuses the nation of God, Israel, he accuses all of the things, all of the people that stand for God, he accuses them as the Bible says in Revelation 12:10, day and night. Right now, and from Genesis 1:2, when he was kicked out positionally, that is his job. He travels from earth to heaven, Job 1, Job 2, he goes into the throne room before God and then he accuses the brethren before Almighty God, the Bible says, day and night.

The second time he is kicked out of heaven, Revelation 12:9, and that is when the Bible says that he is kicked out as the accuser of the brethren, and now he is kicked out bodily. The first time he is kicked out positionally, he still has access back and forth to heaven and earth where he accuses the brethren before God. But in Revelation 12:9-10, right smack dab in the middle of Daniel's 70th Week, the Bible says now he is kicked out bodily, and then the Bible gives a warning, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth because the devil is come down to you." At that point, he comes down out of heaven, he is kicked out, he never goes back to heaven again, he is now kicked out bodily, he enters into the person called the Antichrist and does what he does in the Great Tribulation Period. The Book of Job lays that out so incredibly well.

There is a great chapter in Job, in fact, the two greatest chapters in the Old Testament on the devil are Job 40 and Job 41. The two greatest chapters in the New Testament are Revelation 12 and Revelation 13. When you come through Job 41:12, you find this verse. God says, talking about the devil, "I will not conceal his parts, his power, or his comely proportion." You will find three places in the Bible that lay out his parts, his power, and his comely proportion. When you come to Genesis 3 with Adam and Eve, you will find laid out his power. When you come to Job 40 and Job 41 with Job, you will find defined his parts. When you come to Revelation 12 and 13, you will find defined for you his comely proportion. The Bible is the greatest book in the world that lays out the devil. That is why the devil hates the Bible. That is why the devil down through history has worked overtime to change that Bible because if you destroy the words in the Bible by changing the words, you destroy the cross references in the Bible that show you who the devil is. So, from a doctrinal standpoint, wow, the Book of Job is an incredible book. It shows you the Great Tribulation Period. It gives you insight into how the devil operates.

V. Practical Significance: Why Do the Righteous Suffer?

The third thing that the Book of Job does is the Book of Job, without a doubt, probably without a doubt, is one of the most practical books in all of the Bible. If there is any book in the Bible that has taught me more about people, if there is any book in the Bible that has taught me about how to deal with people, if there is any book in the Bible that has showed me the issues of life. When we get into Job, we are getting into the first of the five wisdom books. We are going to be going into Psalms, and we are going to be working right on down the line. I am telling you, you take these five books together, as you will see in weeks to come, and you have got everything you ever wanted to know.

The Book of Job, from a practical sense, answers one of the great age-old questions. I am asked this all the time. I bet you if I had a dollar for every time somebody asked me this question in the last 35 years of my life, I would be so rich, I would not know what to do with all the money. The answer is this, and Job answers this book: Why do the righteous suffer? Why do the righteous suffer? And why do bad things happen to good people?

That is the question today. If I have been asked one time, I have been asked a thousand times why little babies die. If I have been asked once, I have been asked ten thousand times why there are some of God's people who live and love God and want to do what is right, why do they have to go through some of the things that they go through? When you see men out there that hate

God, that are atheists who claim to have nothing to do with God in their lives, they seemingly live good, healthy lives all of their lives. Sometimes it can get confusing.

I need to preach the rest of this message now that I have got the doctrine out of the way. I want to preach it to you from a personal side, because if you are ever going to get into the ministry, if you are ever going to work with people, and I say "get into the ministry," I am not talking about pastoring a church. I am talking about getting to the point where I can have you deal with people in their problems. There are many things you are going to have to learn. I want to talk to you today about a few things that God showed me out of the Book of Job, because I had to go through a learning process. I did not wake up one day 30 years ago and know everything I know about the Bible. There was a process of time. As I said, the Book of Job, to me anyhow, is probably one of the greatest practical books in all of the Bible. I know it is the greatest book that answers that question: Why do the righteous suffer and why do bad things happen to God's people?

There are four or five things that God showed me over the years that the Book of Job does for me. Maybe it will not do it for you, I do not know. I am only preaching to you what God has shown me. But I know this: God has shown me some things about this book that helped me understand why things are the way they are. If you are ever going to do anything for God, the first thing you are going to have to do is understand people. The key to understanding people is understanding yourself. If you try to figure out everybody else without figuring out yourself, if you try to delve into everybody else's problem without solving your own, you are on thin ice and you are in a bad situation. I have learned how to deal with people, but I learned how to deal with people based on looking at myself and dealing with me, because I am a people person. I hope I am a people person, but I am a people person. I am a person who is a people. You know what I am saying. I do not know what I am saying. I hope you have it figured out.

VI. Personal Lesson 1: Putting Suffering in Perspective

1. The first thing this book does for me: It puts suffering in perspective for me. I think one of the things that, and I need to say this today, I dare not go any farther without saying what I have got to say. There are a lot more people in life who have suffered more than I have ever suffered. There are people in this building this morning who suffer all the time. You do not know how inadequate I feel preaching this message that I am going to tell you about something about suffering. If there is any time in my life when I feel like I do not have the stuff to say, what do you do? I want somebody to walk around here and you cannot even sit down because you are hurt so bad. I know some of you have been through that, that I do not know how you got through it. I just have got to tell you this: I do not know how to. Whatever I am going to, most of what I am going to say, it is not to you. You have taught me more from what you went through than I ever could teach you about what I am going to say. But maybe what I can say will help. The last thing I want, because I am going to get wound up here in just a minute, if you cannot tell my spring is getting tight. The last thing I want to do is to think that I am preaching to you folks. I get so sick of myself. I get so sick of the way I am.

I will tell you what, the Book of Job put suffering into perspective for me. I do not know if you have ever seen this or not, but when you come through Job 1 and Job 2, you will find out that Job loses in seven days what you and I will never lose in our lifetime. It says it starts out in Job 1:13, and I want to tell you something. There may come a day in your life where you are faced with real suffering, not the self-inflicted kind that we all give ourselves and walk around wanting to pretend we are suffering. I am talking about real suffering. I am talking about things that go way beyond my own little petty things that I have to try to deal with. I am telling you, Job loses in seven days what you and I will never lose in a lifetime. It is in this concept where you begin to understand and you begin to see the perspective of suffering in the right perspective.

In Job 1:14-15, it starts out like this. Do not even look at your Bible, just listen to me. I do not want you to lose it by concentrating. You can go back and you know what it says. We have all read it a thousand times. Look at it on your own. But listen to it. He comes down through there and the Bible says that he has got everything he could want. He is as happy as could be. He is Big Ben Cartwright on the Ponderosa. Little Joe and Hoss and Adam are out there running all over the place. He has got horses. He has got camels. He has got servants. He is the richest man in all the East, the Bible says. In one day, there was a day, the Bible says, when his servants ran in and said, "Job, you are not going to believe this, but your oxen are gone, your asses are gone, and your servants have been killed." Before that guy even walked out of the room, another guy ran in and he says in Job 1:16, "The fire of God has fallen and all your sheep and all the servants are killed." Before that guy ever got out of the room, another guy ran in in Job 1:17 and says, "Your camels and your servants are dead. They are gone." In one breath, in one stroke, everything that Job worked for, everything that Job had, everything that Job labored for, everything that Job built, everything that he was entitled to was taken away. Riches to rags, his stock market collapsed. He lost his job. He is in financial ruin, and his 401k just went out the window.

I know what I am telling you. It is tough when you lose the monetary thing, the physical things, the things that sustain you. It is tough, but we are not done yet. That represents his financial fabric. But then somebody runs in in Job 1:18 and says, "Job, I have got some terrible news. Your sons and your daughters have been killed in a tragic accident." Now on top of the financial loss, he has a physical loss. Oh, what a terrible thing that is. I do not care if you are saved or not. I am not saying that we do not have the right perspective of death and somebody is going to heaven. But the bottom line in there is a connection. There are emotions. There are feelings. There is grief. He did not just lose his wife. He did not just lose one of his kids. He lost every member of his family.

Then in Job 2:7-9, when he is sitting there weeping, the doctor calls him on the phone and says, "Hey, you know what, Job, on top of everything else, you have got a terminal disease that is going to be so painful and so racking that you are going to sit on an ash heap with a piece of broken pottery scraping the pus off your boils." How is that for perspective? In seven days' time, he loses what you and I will never lose in a lifetime. He loses his monetary value. He loses his personal loss with his family, and he loses his physical loss of his own health. Oh, I will tell you, it takes so little to derail us today in the world that we live in. I will tell you why, the more you

have, the less it takes to ruin your day. That is why people who do not have anything are usually the happiest.

I am telling you, I am no authority on suffering. I cannot even begin to understand where you folks have been. I look around this world and I know God's people suffer. Sometimes I guess I am telling you, and I am not preaching this to you. I am preaching it to me. I am not preaching to anybody else. I am just saying this is what this book taught me. It taught me to put suffering in perspective.

I know a man one time, his name was Manly Beasley. Manly Beasley was one of the most unique individuals I ever found in my life. He is dead now. But he traveled around the country preaching. While he was traveling, he had five different forms of cancer. He looked like death. He looked like he had been dead for two years. He was gray. He was emaciated. His eyes were sunken back in his head. But you know what? In all that he must have suffered, in all that he went through, and I watched him after he preached how exhausted he was, how he had to, he could not even stand through the invitation. He had just, he wore himself out, and he did that year after year after year after year. Yet I want to tell you something. If you ever talked to him, there was never a time in his life that you did not walk away from him and you did not wish you were him. He never walked around carrying his sorrow.

I will tell you something else. That is something else I respect about you folks. People that really suffer and have been through suffering, you cannot even tell they are suffering. You could have never told that Manly Beasley had five different kinds of cancer. I am telling you. You know what the difference is? The difference is in the world we can identify. It is like John Kerry and John McCain. John Kerry spent 120 days in Vietnam, and he goes around telling everybody in the world he is a hero. Let me tell you something. John McCain spent three years in the Hanoi Hilton in the POW camp, being tortured, being laughed at, being mocked, while guys like Kerry in the Hanoi Hilton today in the museum. There is a picture of Jane Fonda and John Kerry, your next president, and the communists of South Vietnam say what great service they did to us defeating the United States. Is that the guy you want for president? Go ahead, friend. I do not care. But he is no hero. Let me tell you something. If you are a hero, you do not have to go around telling the world you are a hero.

John McCain, he was senior commander in that POW camp, and they wanted to make a trade, and they said, "You know what?" I mean, you cannot understand how it was in those POW camps. They tortured them. They put electrical wires on them. They tried to get them to do everything in the world to deny America. They tried to get them to do what John Kerry did, and they would not do it. They came up and they said that John McCain, "We will trade you out and let you go home because we have got a deal going politically, and we are going to send you and release you." He said, "I am senior commander here. I am not leaving until my men leave." You have to find that piece of information in a book someplace hidden that nobody ever reads anymore. You know why? Because when you are a real hero, you do not have to tell anybody. You just do it because that is the character you are.

I am telling you, I appreciate the character of men and women who suffer, who you never know they suffer, who they always have a smile on their face. You have to read between the lines to see the pain. They do not go around telling about what they have been through and all this, looking for sympathy. They bear it. I do not know how they bear it, but they bear it. I am not preaching this message. I am preaching this message to us, every one of us who move around in life wanting the world to feel sorry for us.

We used to have a girl in our ministry a number of years ago. I read once where an eagle or a red-tailed hawk can see a mouse move in a field at 500 feet. This woman had him beat. She could spot somebody wearing the face of "feel sorry for me" at a thousand yards. They would be walking through the parking lot, and she would swoop like a big eagle, come down, and she would say, "Oh, you are having problems today, are not you? Oh, tell me, tell me, tell me. Oh, oh, oh." I will tell you, I had a talk with my dogs last week. I was watching the news at six o'clock about bomb-sniffing dogs. They make \$175 an hour. They hire them out at KCI. I am sitting there, I am looking over at Buddy, he is looking at me. Daisy, she is on her back on her floor in her sleep, but her head out like that. Tinker was on the other side. I am saying, "Hey, hey, look at that. You lose a tennis ball in high weeds, I do not care where it is at, Daisy will find it." I cannot tell you what Buddy is good at finding, but you do not want to know. But I am telling you, I said, "Guys, look, if you could train your sniffer to smell out bombs, look how much money you could make for Daddy."

Then I thought of this lady. I wanted to call her on the phone. I felt like saying, "If you can sniff out bombs like you sniff out dirt in people's lives, her nose makes a vacuum, her nose could suck a golf ball through a garden hose, man, I am not kidding you." She has got some, she could just, she had every piece of dirt in the whole wide world. Her title was Minister of Information. If there was anything wrong with anybody, she knew it. She always found a willing supply of people who were willing to tell her their troubles, their sufferings. She would run the suffering flag up the suffering flagpole. She would get the suffering trumpet and blow the suffering charge. Real heroes, you do not know who they are because they never brag about themselves. Real sufferers, you have got to pry. You have got to ask. They do not wear it on their face like they do on their face that everybody can read it. Oh, Manly Beasley, an incredible individual. Incredible. I will tell you what, I did not know him for long, but I learned so much from him. You say about suffering? No, no, no, about putting suffering into perspective. Because I am just like most of you. I like to feel sorry for myself. I have my corner in my house where I suck my thumb. I like to whine all about things that I do not like. When I get some little ache or pain, oh, I am suffering. Let me tell you something, my friend, real heroes do not have to spout out that they are a hero. Everybody knows you are a hero by the way you walk and the way you carry yourself. I do not think I have ever heard John McCain any time, and all the heroes I ever bring up, he has war unless somebody asks him. You know what, he is a hero. John Kerry is a phony. He does not want to be like most of us.

VII. Personal Lesson 2: A Spiritual Yardstick for Maturity

2. The first thing it did, it gave me a perspective for suffering because I need one. I get so sick of myself, I get so sick of the way I am. The second thing it taught me: God gave me a yardstick, a spiritual yardstick to measure my spiritual maturity. You know, in dealing with people or in situations of life, you have two aspects: you have respond and you have react. I know this is nothing new. You folks that have been around for a while have heard this over and over again. But we are in the Book of Job. I do not know what else to say.

You are not responsible for the bad things in life that happen to you. You cannot. Nobody can hold you accountable because something goes bad in your life. I mean, you look within yourself and make sure it is not chastisement of God and all the nine yards, but the bottom line is, nobody, I cannot hold, I cannot blame anybody because, but what you can blame is how you, how you respond. Do you respond to it or do you react to it? All my young Christian life, I scratched my head. That is why I have a bald spot right here. No. You think I have lost my hair because I am getting older. No. I have scratched my head for 25 years looking at things that I did not understand, or God taught me four or five things out of the Book of Job. I am not kidding you.

All my life I saw men and women that were held up as leaders. I saw them in churches. They had great Sunday school classes. I saw them, they were deacons. I saw them, they worked every ministry. They helped people in all kinds. I mean, they were, they, I mean all my life. I would watch them at a time in their life when they would just fold up. I am not talking about just stupid stuff that we all do. I am talking about major meltdown breakdowns. I mean, I just could never figure it out. We all do dumb things. I am not, I am not even, I am talking about, I watch people who, when something happened, they are like, and they just folded up like a broken cardboard box.

Then out of the Book of Job one day, I learned the great truth. I learned it is not how well you know the Bible, or you need to know the Bible. I know it is not how great you preach. I know it is not how many you run in your church, how big a church you have, or how big your Sunday school class is, or whatever. I know it is not how many people you can work with. See, we look at all those things and we see those in ourselves and we think and people think because, and then we get disillusioned. But you have got to get it. I had to get this. I had to realize that it is responding versus reaction. None of those things really show your maturity. None of those things really make you as a Christian. What really makes you and I as a Christian is how do you respond to adversity? When your world falls apart around your neck, how do you deal with it?

In other words, when you really get squeezed, that is another thing, and you have heard this story before, I am going to tell it again because I must have told this story a million times. Manly Beasley told it a million times. He was preaching and he was up there and he asked the abstract question. He said, "What do you get when you squeeze a lemon?" The lady down in front raised her hand. In fact, it was the same lady that had the vacuum cleaner for her nose, if I remember right. She is still around, by the way, and I do not think that I love her. I do. I am just telling her the way she is. I love her. She still calls our house every once in a while, see how we are doing. Every time my wife is talking to her, I just go like this, "Do I find out that she said she is not coming to our church?" And I relax a little bit.

Old Manly Beasley, he got up there and he says, "What do you get when you squeeze a lemon?" The lady down front, she says, "Mr. Beasley, you get lemon juice." He says, "You know," he says, "that is what you would think, would not you?" He says, "You know, back where I came from a couple of years ago," he said, "there was a guy that was going into grocery stores and he had some kind of arsenic poisoning in hypodermic needles. He was going into the grocery store and without anybody seeing him, he was injecting poison into lemons. People were buying the lemons, taking them home and making lemon juice and dying. They could not find out, figure out why this poison was in their system." Then they tracked the whole thing back, and it was a trail of lemons or whatever, and they got back there. He said, "You know what?" He said, "When you squeeze a lemon," he said, "you would think you get lemon juice. But the truth of the matter is," he said, "when you squeeze a lemon, what is really on the inside comes out." You see, when you squeeze Christians, you think you ought to get Christian juice, stuff that makes you make it. But the truth of the matter is, when you get squeezed, when adversity comes, what you get is really on the inside. Really on the inside.

I am telling you, I watch people. I deal with people. You know, you can buy all the books in the world to talk about the spiritual gifts of people and all the attitudes of people and how this and all that. You know, great principles of leadership. But I do not know. I get my books, got 28 principles of leadership. You know, get my book. It is coming. I have got nine. You can get there quicker. You know, get my book. You know, it has got 106. You will be really wise when you get my book and all these things. You know, go to my seminar. Go to this. Well, I got a thing the other day where it talked about a big old color flyer about that big with everybody in the world on it. Talking about how to send your Christian leadership here. You know, and we will figure out who spiritual leaders is, what who spiritual gifts is, what. We will bring them back. You send them to us at five hundred dollars apiece. We will send you back the greatest leaders the world has ever seen. That is all too complicated for me when you know the Bible, because the bottom line is you want to find out what anybody is, where anybody is at. You want to find out what true spirituality is. Just look for two things.

3. The first thing I look at is their family, because your family, Father, is the mirrored image of your walk with God. I do not care. You can make every excuse in the world. The bottom line is your family is what your walk is, what your family is. "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth." Sorry. That is just the way that it is.
4. The second thing I look at is what you get upset about, how you handle adversity.

You see, the first one, your family will define your walk. The second one, how you deal with adversity will define your maturity. I do not need to know anything else about you because everything else that is in the Bible is found in those two, those two, those two. I am telling you, the real question in your life and my life, and that is why it gave me a yardstick for my own spiritual maturity because it showed me how immature I was, how that I would react versus responding, how that when adversity came, here I am up here preaching to you. I am up here preaching all of the great things about the Bible. Yet when a little adversity comes, nothing compared to what some of you folks have been through. When my little adversity comes, oh, go look out.

VIII. Personal Lesson 3: God as the Author of Suffering

5. The third thing it taught me: It showed me that God is the author of suffering in my life, not the devil. In John 9, there was a blind man. I do not know if you remember the story or not, but they came to Jesus and they said, "Who did sin? This man or his parents that he was born blind?" Adversity. Jesus said, "Nobody sinned. He is blind that the glory of God could be manifest."

I had a friend of mine call me a couple of weeks ago, a friend of mine in the ministry for a number of years, a young man, compared to today. He told me he had cancer. He has been diagnosed with cancer. He said, "You know what?" He said, "They think they spread a lot farther than it probably should have. So I just want to let you know, I love you. I wanted you to know that. I have got to go in there for some tests, and you just pray God would have His own way." You know, when you hear something like that, my first response is get on a plane and go down there. My first response is do something because I am a fix-it guy. Do something to fix it. You know what he said to me? I am asking him a bunch of questions about what do they say? Because once he said it is further advanced than what it is, that is not good. Maybe in the bone. I started asking him all these questions. He says, "You know what, Bob?" He said, "I only know one thing for sure." I said, "What is that?" "That God gave me this cancer. So we will just see where He goes with it from here." Now, how do you deal with that? There is a man who understood that adversity comes from God.

In the Book of Job, you know what you find? God had something that He wanted Job to learn. He had a message for Job, but God used the delivery boy, the devil as a delivery boy, to bring that message. Sometimes in our lives through adversity, I do not understand it. Sometimes through our lives, through adversity, God has something He wants us to learn, or maybe somebody around us that He wants to learn, or God is going to do something through us that He could not do any other way. He wants us to be part of it. He wants us to see it. The bottom line is we get so hung up on the delivery boy, we never get the message. God had a message for Job. Growing through adversity, this great book shows me that adversity comes from God. God is the author of suffering. Nobody snuck into your life.

I do not know if you know it or not, but Job 1:8 and Job 2:3, when the devil came in that day before the throne room, God brought Job's name up. The devil never did. God said, "Have you considered My servant Job?" Why? Well, I will tell you one thing. I already know the end of the book, and Job's life was a lot better with God after what he went through than it was before, even though it seemed like he had everything. You know what? I cannot promise you, I cannot promise anybody that your getting better if your suffering will be in this life. But bless God, we know it will be on the other side in life. God does things, puts things, suffering, adversity in our lives that maybe right now, my friend, you do not see, and you do not understand. I know it hurts, and I know you have pain, and I know across this city and across this country, there are thousands of God's people who are suffering with real problems, not the self-fabricated kind that we have, real problems. They do not understand the answer, and they do not understand the why's, but I am telling you, my Bible says in Romans 14:7-8, "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." There is always somebody watching your life and how you react to the

adversity of life. You say you are a child of God, you say you are a Christian, and they watch you, and they watch the adversity, and they watch you turn from God, and watch you get your nose bit at a joint, they watch you walk away from God. Adversity, you will either turn to or you will turn from God. But you will go one way or the other. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's," the Bible says. Oh, not only is that Book of Job a great book doctrinally, I am telling you what, it will answer the questions of life, of why we have to go through in this life. We have not got to the answer yet, by the way. I am just showing you the things. Wait till the answer pops in here in a minute. I am just showing you things that God has showed me. I am preaching this message to you today from my own heart of where I have been and what I have struggled with.

IX. Personal Lesson 4: God is Enough

6. And to me, this is the greatest truth. The greatest truth of all. Job lost in seven days all the fabric of what we call society. He lost his family. He lost his health. He lost his economics. All the things that we look at society and weaving society together to make us happy and complete. He loses in seven days what you and I will never lose in a lifetime. Yet, my friend, oh, you have got to see this. Job has no Bible. He was not able to run to John 3:16 and 1 Peter 5:8. He did not have a Bible. There are no copies of the Scripture. He did not have a church. He did not have a place where he could run, where people would pray for him. His family got killed, all that, his wife, and she should have died. The only help she offered is, "Curse God and die." You know, I often wondered where she got that from because that is the same thing the devil said he would do when he stood before God. Wonder where she got that idea.

He has no Bible. He has no church. He has no preacher. He has no CDs to listen to. He has no Christian counselors. They are any good. He has no therapist. He has no meds he can take. He has no 700 Club he can tune into. He has no Christian radio. He has no Christian books. All he has is three miserable friends who want to self-persecute him unrighteously and make fun of him and tell him that he is the problem. Hey, you know what? He has no Bible. He has no church. He has no preacher. He has no Bible study. He has no nothing except, except, except God. The greatest thing I want you to see from this is that God is enough. All the other stuff is great. I am glad I have got a Bible. I am glad I have got a church. I am glad I have got friends who love me and pray for me. I am glad I have got things I can study and I am glad I have got things I can read and listen to. But the bottom line is this: You better begin to live your life just like it is only you and Him. Because in Job's day, it came down to just him and God. How you deal with adversity shows me exactly what my own personal relationship with God really is.

Oh, do not give me this stuff about your King James Bible. You can have that King James Bible. You can read that King James Bible. You can study that King James Bible. You can know that King James Bible frontwards and backwards and lay out the ten works on the Antichrist's nose. You know what? It does not mean you know the author of the King James Bible. It does not mean it is your own personal relationship. I am telling you God put that in there to tell you that when you do not have anything, you better have God because God in your relationship with Him

is enough. God is enough. You better live your life like it is just you and Him. Oh, it is great to have Christian friends. It is great to have all the things that we have. But I am telling you, so many times we put the emphasis on those things. It is the emphasis on just building the relationship with God one on one that pleases Him. Then when the adversity comes, that is why we fold up.

X. Personal Lesson 5: The Devil Finds Our Weak Spot

7. Then the last thing or almost the last thing. The fifth thing God taught me: The devil will always find our weak spot. Job was a picture of a great Christian. Job 1:1 says he was perfect. He was upright. He hated evil. Job 1:5 said he is offering sacrifices for his sons when there is not even a law that says you have to. He is doing that based on what he saw in the stories of Cain and Abel and what he has learned with Noah. I mean, what an incredible guy he is. In fact, he is so incredible that in Ezekiel 14:14 the Bible says that during the period of time when the captivity, when Israel is in total complete disarray and they hate God and are far away from God, God Himself said, "You know what? If three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, lived during this time, they are the only ones that could get any kind of righteousness because of the fact in this whole world nobody is righteous except those three." In fact, there are seven men in that Bible that God gives special mention to that will teach you every aspect of your Christian life. Job is just one of them.

God Himself said in Job 1:8 to the devil, "There was none like him on earth, a man that feared God and was a servant." Now the devil in Job 1:9, he challenges that and he says, "Why not? Why, You have given him everything he has got. Hey, you know what? You take what he has got. He will curse You to Your face." God said, "No, I will not." "Yes, he will." "No, he will not." "Yes, he will." "No, he will not." "Yes, he will." "Go ahead and see." You know what happens. He comes down there and he loses everything financially. He loses his family. He loses his own health. He is sitting on an ash heap. His wife comes over and says, "Curse God and die." He is in terrible agony, suffering with the loss of his health, his family in grief, in mourning with no money. Three friends, Dr. Fine, Dr. Howard, Dr. Fine show up and begin to falsely accuse him. Yet the Bible says Job 1:22 and Job 2:10, get all this, Job sinned not. He is a pretty good guy. He is better than me. That is incredible.

But in that there is a great lesson. The lesson is something I have talked to you about from day one. Went into detail on it many times. It is the word balance. Because when the devil could not get him to sin by what he was doing with him, he got him to sin another way. The great lesson is this balance in our lives, balance in our lives. You see, we think because we do not drink, smoke, if you are going with girls that do, then we are not like the rest of the world, that we are okay. Now we think because there are people out there that we are not like, there are people out there in the world, Christian people, we are not like them. We do not do those things. I am not involved in that. We begin to, we begin to think that we begin to fall into that trap that Job fell in, and the devil with all that he did could not get Job to curse God. But he got him.

There lies the danger for us who try to live right. Because when Job was defending himself so much against everybody who was attacking him, he swung the other way and he fell into self-

righteousness. He fell into the piety of being self-righteous. The only thing that Elihu, type of the Holy Spirit of God, found in Job 32:1 is the fact that Job was righteous in his own eyes and justified himself rather than God. As far as I am concerned, from a practical application, Job 27:6 is the key verse in all the Bible. Job says, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." In that he got self-righteous.

I am telling you there is a real danger in defending yourself. There is a real danger in being right. So right. Let us just start pointing out everybody else's problems that you fall into self-righteousness. I was reading Martin Luther one time. Martin Luther, without a doubt, is the most hated, persecuted man in all of Christian history. I do not agree with everything him doctrinally. But he took a stand against the Roman Catholic Church in the Reformation by nailing those 99 theses to the door at Wittenberg in Germany. He was the most hated, written about hate literature man that you have ever met in the history of the Christian world. I mean, there is more written on Martin Luther than any other man, for and against. Half the world hates him. The other one time a guy when he says, "Martin, do not you know the whole," what he was doing back then was not popular, and somebody went in one time and he said, "Martin, do not you know the whole world is against you?" And he said, "Why, against the whole world then." He has written in one of his books one time and what he said. He says it was in a book on a commentary, one of the books of the Bible. He says, "Every Christian ought to get drunk every six months so the devil does not take advantage of him." I looked at that and I thought to myself, "Well, I can know a lot of God's people like that advice." When I started his life, I found out what he was saying. What he was saying, he was defending himself and what he believed that he was so fed up with a balance that he would defend himself and then he has fallen into self-righteousness. Hey, it is a lot easier to deal with your drunken stupidity sin than it is your self-righteous sins. You see, everybody sees when you get drunk. Nobody sees when you get self-righteous for a while. You can hide it for a while, but it comes out.

I am telling you, you get so busy, we get so busy defending ourselves when we are attacked, when the adversity comes, and I know it is just a matter of time. The adversity comes, and I am trying to cover all the expansive adversity, not just physical suffering, but I am talking about when you are attacked, when something does not go right, when somebody talks about you, when somebody says. I mean, I am telling you, you get so caught up in all of that that you run to the other side and you are so busy defending yourself. You fall into self-righteousness. The only thing that upset Elihu, the type of the Holy Spirit of God, in Job and that whole book, was Job justifying himself.

XI. The Ultimate Answer: Christ's Suffering

Why do the righteous suffer? Here comes the answer, and I am done. Why do the righteous suffer? Why do good things, bad things happen to good people? Why do some of us have to bear the load? Why do we go through the things that we have to go through? Well, let me just tell you this, within the Book of Job, there are several great chapters that go along with Psalms 22, Isaiah 53, Isaiah 52, Isaiah 50, and so many other places in the Bible. But in Job 30 and Job 16:10, you will find that the sufferings of Christ at its worst time is a period, a picture of Christ suffering on

the cross for you and for me. Job was one of those great books that goes behind the scenes and shows you in a way that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John could never show you what the agony and the suffering that Christ paid on the cross. Oh, my friend. Why do the righteous suffer?

One of the most unique experiences I ever had a number of years ago. I got to go to Chiefs training camp. My wife had went several times. There were some people that took food up there and they had a business and they would get recognition from it, and Barb would always go and I never went, but the last year we went, I went. It was one of the most interesting times, and I do not care that much for football. But I found a guy that I just sat down on the grass and watched all afternoon. Barb was over hitting on Marcus Allen. You laugh, her and him got to be good buddies. I was a little worried about there for a while. When Marcus Allen starts calling my house to talk to my wife, he better have some bucks in his back pocket. I am not kidding you. I got the phone call one night and I answered the phone and said, "Hello." The boy said, "Is Barb there?" Then I said, "My ass, who was calling?" And he kind of laughed and he said, "No." Well, I can tell by his voice who it was, and I said, "Barb, this is Marcus Allen on the phone." She had been talking to him and her dad would go back and she knew more about football than anybody I ever met in my life. She knew Paul Brown who knew Shottenheimer, and he was sitting in the grass talking and she got talking to Marcus and Marcus was going to bring all the backs over for dinner because it never worked out. But he was starting that television program. We had that television program. He was telling him about it. She said, "I would like to come." "That would be great." He said, "How many tickets you want?" And she said, "Well, my daughter and me and her husband will probably go and everything." And he said, "Okay." He says, "When it all gets set up," he says, "I will get you some tickets." Well, you know how that is. "Thank you. What is your name?" "I forget who they were." And on she goes. Well, the phone rang and he said, "Oh, by the way, how many tickets you want?" And then he said to my wife, "Well, you can come anytime you want. Just tell me how many tickets." My wife says, "Well, how do I get a hold of you?" "Let me give you my home number." For five bucks you can have Marcus Allen's home number today.

She was over there kibbitzing with those guys. I am sitting down in the grass and I am fascinated by one guy. One guy. Gunther Cunningham. I will tell you what. I walked away from there and I told my wife, "I said, you know what, if that guy ever, I do not want to be saved or not. But I said if he ever got saved, he would be a great preacher." He understands the fundamental of getting people to do what football says you are supposed to do. Just like a preacher understands the fundamentals of getting somebody to do what is new in the Bible. I am sitting down there. I will never forget this as long as I live. He knows how to motivate people. I cannot use all the language he used today, but boy, he knows how to motivate people. I am sitting down there and I just had to sit down in the grass and he is running the drills. It is hot. He is out there, you know, and he is telling them what to do and over that day and they play to play. I mean everybody got smacked up in the middle and evidently the guys that he was coaching did not do what they were supposed to do. Now these are guys that make twenty million dollars a year. I mean he is a guy, we were there one night and that Jerome Wood guy that was his rookie year and he was that we ate with him, you know, in the thing there. He just had a signing pocket, a signing bonus, three million dollars. "Sign your name down here. Here is three million dollars. And we are going to

give you another twenty-five million for the next two years. But here. Want to get a burger on the way home? Here is three million bucks." Big burger for me, boy, I will tell you.

And here out there, you know, and these guys. I love that sound too. I think helmets hitting pads hitting, man. Everybody is proud in the middle. This guy and a guy did, two or three guys did not do their play that he is responsible for. I guess that, you know, and he did not do what was right. They come trotting off the field like, "Show me some sympathy." He went out and he said, "Hey. What are you looking like that for? That is your blankety-blank job." Well, I heard that, never forgot that. He motivated him. They may not have been great football players, but he had a way of describing job descriptions that was unlike anything I ever heard in my life. Why do you suffer? Hey. It is our job. It is our job. A football player gets twenty million dollars to go out and crack his bones, break his neck, break his legs and suffer so we can win a Super Bowl ring. The King of Glory died on a cross and He bought your salvation and my salvation with all the blood and all the aristocracy and all the gold in heaven. The Bible says that God has vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. I do not know if this will help, but all I can tell you is this: if you really suffer and you truly suffer, all I can say is you have got something that the rest of us do not have, that God sees in you a chosen vessel that through that suffering God can do in your life or somebody else's life or maybe in all of our lives what God does so well. But you have got to get the perspective. You have got to use the yardstick. You have got to understand that God has a message for us. You have got to understand that God is the author, not the devil. You have got to understand that suffering, that is our job. That is our job. That is our job. That is our job.

Gunther Cunningham was saying, "Hey, we are paying you big bucks. That is your job." I am telling you God died on a cross of glory. You know what? "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." In that day, it is our job. Hebrews 13:12 says, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Listen to me. Suffering adversity, it is our job. It is just one more tool in the Christian toolbox. One that we get so caught up on the devil and all the perspective and all the things that the delivery boy does that we miss sometimes. We miss sometimes what God is doing. All I am telling you, we do not see it all now. I do not understand it all now. I could not even begin to give an explanation other than the fact that it is your job. But on the other side, we will understand it and you will see and understand greater than we do now. That God saw something in you that He did not see in the rest of us. Maybe our time is coming. I do not know. Maybe we are not to the place where you are, but I know this. I know the Book of Job for me puts suffering in perspective. There is a day I do not talk to somebody on the phone or know what you have been through, that it does not give me more respect for you. And respect for what God has done in your life. It has been an encouragement to me to see you go on when other people would have quit.

XII. Conclusion: The Value of Suffering

I do not know what to tell you. I told you it was going to be hard. I told you I felt so inadequate. But I know this: God gives us the right perspective. He gives us the right yardstick. He gives us everything that we need to see and understand. He shows us that God is the author of suffering.

He shows you that God is enough. He shows us that our job is suffering. All I can tell you and all I can leave you with is this:

It will be worth it all
When we see Jesus.
Life's trials will seem so small
When we see Christ.
One glimpse of His dear face,
All sorrow will erase.
So bravely run the race
Till we see Christ.

It is our job. After what He did on the cross. What can I say? What can I say? It is a difference between a real man of God and a superficial man of God. It is a difference between a real woman who stands for God than a superficial. It is a difference between someone who takes the adversity and all of the pain and does with it what God wants them to do, versus the rest of us who complain about every little diddly thing in life that means absolutely nothing. It is a difference between maturity and immaturity. It is a difference between being strong and being weak. It is a difference of getting the blessings of suffering or losing the blessings of suffering. But in that day, it will be worth it all. Every head bowed and every eye closed.