

I. Introduction to the Study of Prayer and Romans 8

We have been looking at the different aspects of that great chapter. We saw how the Bible says that our infirmity is that we do not know how to pray. We talked about how the Bible lists three infirmities that we have, the other two being our own flesh and the fact that we forget what God has done for us. Those three, as I said earlier on, every problem we have, I guarantee you, can be traced back to one of those or multiples of those, however you want to take it back and look at it.

By this time, we have laid out a complete biblical understanding as to what the Bible says about our infirmity of prayer. I am sure if you are honest with yourself and you have been coming through these lessons and following them and listening to them, and maybe working them out in the tapes that you have been taking home, you probably have found yourself somewhere in these lessons. The purpose of lessons like this is that you might find yourself, that you might see where you are at, that you might understand in a better way where your struggles are, that you better know how to work on it and how to fix it.

If you remember, so far, just to give you a quick recap of where we started and where we are at and the major points that we have talked about:

1. We saw first of all the misconception about prayer. Really, that has been more than the first lesson; it has been basically all the way through everything. Every lesson, we have talked about the wrong ideas that people have about things. Again, we will talk about those again today, but that is where we started. We talked about how we as Christians have such a misconception about prayer.
2. The second week, we got in and we talked about how God answers our prayers. We saw, again, more misconceptions along with that. We saw the absolute importance of biblical principles. All through this, as I have tried to lay it out, I have tried to just reinforce in your mind how absolutely crucial it is to understand biblical principles and how to apply them in your lives. In fact, I have talked about it for years in every aspect of my ministry. But when we got into the book of Romans, it really came into focus how biblical principles are the only thing that we have that really keep us basically between the white lines.

I thought, as we close this lesson out this morning on prayer, before we get into the next section of Romans 8, I would take at least one week, maybe two, we will see how it goes. I talked about this Thursday night, that next week we would just, I would take different subjects that you and I struggle with and we would go through and I would lay out and show you the basic concepts or the basic principles. Basically, we cannot deal with them all, but I just penned down last week, as I was thinking about it, 30 or 40 principles that we can just go from scenario to scenario to scenario, lay out the issue, and then show you some of the principles. We will not be able to explain them all the way we would like to, but I thought, that is okay because I will lay them out, I will show you what you have, I will give you the ones that really help you focus on where you are, on some of the issues that you struggle with, and then you can bring them back on Thursday

night and we can talk about it on Thursday night Bible study, how they all apply to your life and how they work. So, we are going to start, probably do that next week for at least one week, maybe two, we will just see how it goes. But again, to reinforce the absolute and essential nature of biblical principles in your life.

Then we talked about how to pray and we talked about the strange fire concept and getting the fire off the brazen altar from the Old Testament and how that fits in and how absolutely important that concept is. I showed you and told you that the cross of Christ, when He died on the cross, His death, His suffering, His agony, is the reference point for you and for me as a child of God for everything we do because it puts everything in a proper perspective of where He is at.

I told you there were four kinds of prayer:

3. Supplications, where you ask God for what we think we need or our wants or our needs are.
4. Simply prayer, where we talk with God, and I gave you examples of all these in the Bible.
5. Intercessory prayer, prayer where you are praying for somebody else.
6. Prayer of thanksgiving, where we simply thank God for what He has done for us and what He has given us.

Today we are going to look at the verse that really pulls all this material together. It puts it into an understandable format, and that is how we need to do it today. We have talked about a lot of things. We need now to draw it all to a head, draw it all to a point, and help you see how all of this concept of prayer falls into a biblical format that really works for you and for me.

Now we are going to look at one of the great verses today in Romans chapter 8. We are going to pick it up again in verse 26, but we are going to really focus on verse 28. Let us read it.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Now Father, we thank You and praise You today for the Lord Jesus. We love You, thank You for all that You have done for us, thank You for how good You have been to us, and we just ask You today, Father, to open up the Word of God and give us those things that we need today. We love You, we thank You Father for loving us even when Father many times we are so unlovable. We thank You Lord for Your grace, for Your forgiveness, for Your mercy, for all of the things that You put into our lives. And we will thank You now and praise You. Bless this day, take it Lord and use this message to tie it all together in these good people's lives that they may have a better relationship with You and understand better what You are doing in their life. In Jesus' name for His sake we ask it, Amen.

II. The Will and Purpose of God

You remember last week I told you that trying to understand the concept of prayer, trying to understand why things happen in your life the way that they do. We looked at two more principles and we talked about the will of God and we talked about the purpose of God.

Romans 8:28 basically says this: it says that everything in your life that comes in, the good things and the bad things, it says that we know that all things work together for good to them that love God to them who are called according to His purpose. There is a will of God in your life and then there is a purpose of God in your life. That will be called the purpose of God, the plan of God.

We now know from our past studies in the Bible that the will of God is a spiritual thing. It is you becoming more like Christ in everything that you do. The purpose of God comes through that will of God. As you work at being what God wants you to be, then God works His purpose through your life. That is how it takes care of itself. As you and I fulfill every day of our life to be more like Christ.

We studied this when we got into the book of Ezekiel a while back when we talked about walking in the spirit, how you are moving into that river, that fast flowing river that pictured the Holy Spirit of God. And pretty soon you got to the point where you were with your ankles, to your knees, to your loins, and we laid it all out spiritually. Then you got to the point where you were in over your head and you simply went with the flow of where the Holy Spirit of God wanted to take you. God is the greatest example anywhere in the Bible of exactly what God wants to do with you and me.

He has a purpose for you. He saves you for a purpose. He wants your life from the point that you get saved to the rapture of the church or when you go home to be with the Lord. He wants to have the freedom. He wants to have the freedom to put you into every scenario that He chooses to put you in. He wants to have the freedom with you to be able to do whatever He wants to do, that you become more like Christ every day of your life. And through that He fulfills His purpose. He wants to put you into good scenarios. He wants to put you in some not so good scenarios. He wants to be able to trust you and rely on you that whatever situation you find yourself in, no matter how bad it may be, no matter how hard or tough it may be. He wants the liberty with you, ladies and gentlemen. He wants the liberty with me. He wants the freedom with me and with you to be able to say about Bob Alexander or you, I want to, I can put them in any scenario, in any place on planet earth and I know that they will do for me what I want them to do.

There is a great verse over here in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 and it is verse 11 and 12 and it is a principle and you want to get this principle down if you do not have it already. It is a great principle.

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

You want to understand that concept, that verse? You see that great principle there? God wants you to do one thing. God wants me to accomplish one thing with my life. This is the purpose that God has for me overall. You know what it is? It is for God to get glory and honor out of everything that I do. And God wants the freedom with you and me. God wants the ability. He wants the license. He wants the okay, the green light, so to speak. He wants the ability to put you and me into whatever scenario that he wants to put us in. He wants the freedom to use your life and my life, however he chooses, that he drops you with whatever scenario, knowing that, whatever scenario he puts you in, you and I will make sure he gets the honor and glory out of it, no matter what the cost.

Now you see how important it is now, how to always keep the point of reference in our lives of Christ dying on the cross. He did that for you and for me. He paid that price for you and for me. And now he asks us to be a living sacrifice, Romans 12:1-2. And he wants to fulfill the purpose of our lives. And that purpose is that God have the freedom to put you and I into some situations that he can get the honor and glory out of. The way that you and I get through those situations, the way you and I understand the purpose of God in our life is to be tied into the will of God. The more you be like Christ, the more you will see things like Christ. The more you see things like Christ, the more you understand things the way Christ does. And the more you understand Christ, see things in Christ and put it all together in your life, the more then you will identify every circumstance that you find yourself in, not from oh this is really bad or this is really good, not in the happenings of it, but understanding that God, through God's purpose, all things work together for good. Now that is the approach that we are going to take today and try to put this into some kind of perspective for you.

III. Three Reasons for Life's Challenges

I also told you last week, I believe it was, another incredible concept and you should have this one down. This one would change your life if you apply it and you really take it to heart. And that is, I told you last week that things happen in our lives for three reasons. It will never be four, sometimes yes it will be a combination of all three, sometimes it will be just simply one of the three. But I guarantee you there will never be a fourth one.

You know what the problem is with us and it is true of us entirely. We overcomplicate the things of God, we really do. That is what we do best. We live in a society that overcomplicates things. I mean when you have got 16 TV sets up there with 28 hand controls and everybody does something different and then you go one and ties them all in, it will not be long before you can run everything in your house from a little hand path. It is so complicated. Everything we do, everything we do in this world only complicates what God intended to be simplified. And we do the same thing with God in the Bible. And I am telling you, I want you to understand the reason why we get so out of touch with reality and so struggle with so many things is because at the end of the day it is simply this. We do not see the problems we go through or our relationship with God in that basic simplistic form.

I can guarantee you that when something comes into your world, and we talked about this last week, when something comes into your life, something comes into your world and you are faced

with it or you struggle with it or there is something that you are not sure of how this thing works, I can guarantee you, I can guarantee you that that is happening in your life and unfolding itself for one of three reasons. And it does not have to be complicated.

Now the first one we talked about is the fact that we are out of fellowship. Hebrews 12:5 tells us very clearly that if we are God's child, He is going to be a good parent and if we step out of line, we are going to get whacked. He is going to gently bring us back into fellowship with Him and sometimes not so gently, but He is going to bring us back. So it does not take a rocket scientist to know when we are out of fellowship with God. We like to pretend it does, but the truth of the matter is if you are saved here this morning, you have the Holy Spirit of God living inside you. And that Holy Spirit of God, it pulls back from anything that is not biblically right and biblically correct. And that Holy Spirit of God will, it is like touching something hot. The moment you touch it you know it is hot. You do not have to have somebody tell you that is really hot. You do not have to have, you do not have to keep your finger on it for an hour and say oh boy that is hot. You do not have to do that. You know the moment you touch it there is an adverse reaction because what you touch was completely against what you enjoy in life.

Now the Holy Spirit of God is the same way. He enjoys holiness by the way. He enjoys peace, love, joy and all the good things that go along with the fruit of the Spirit. And the moment you touch something that is not in line with that, He reacts. And you know it. You do not have to walk around saying, "Well, I wonder if I am out of fellowship today." You know it. You may not want to admit it. You may try to do everything in yourself to get around it. You may alibi it, rationalize it and everything that you want to do. But when it all comes down when it is just you and God, you know you are wrong and you know you are out of fellowship. I mean you can fool your wife, you can fool your husband, you can fool me, you can fool your friends, you can fool everybody in this world except God. Truth of the matter is you cannot fool anybody who really knows how the thing works because any man loved God. The same is known of him. I mean it shows but that is another message. Good message, but it is another message.

The second thing we talked about was the fact that sometimes we go through things because God has something that He wants us to learn. There is a message in what we are going through for you and for me.

Then the third thing we talked about is sometimes that we are going through something or something that befalls us in our life and God has put us into a situation that He wants to get you and me to somebody else who has a clear need and it is through this road of adversity that He lines us up. Sometimes it will be a combination. Sometimes you will be out of fellowship with God and God will whack you but as He is whacking you He will show you something. Sometimes you will be out of fellowship with God and as He whacks you and He shows you something He will actually once you get right with God then put somebody else in your world. Sometimes it will be a combination. But you know what? The first one is easy for everybody to discern and you do not have to think about it.

Today we are going to examine this principle even more closely and we are going to see basically the cause and the effect of the struggles that we face in life and how to intelligently pray our way through them.

IV. The Bible Corrects Misconceptions

Most Christians that I have met are under the thought idea, and it is a charismatic teaching that goes along with their philosophy and theology. But most Christians followed the thought of a book that I read many, many years ago which simply with the title of it was, *Why do bad things happen to good people?*

Now the idea on it is simply this, that the good things in life that happen to you and me are from God and the bad things in life that happen from you and from me are from the devil and that is basically the concept. And this book, I think, forms the idea of basically where most people are at today because it permeates our thinking and almost every sermon you hear and certainly as I said through the Charismatic Church it is so vibrantly preached and taught. And the book is very misleading and is a good example of how people read something instead of the Bible and get a bad concept that only adds to their dilemma.

I have told you from time that we have started that the Bible is the book that corrects all the bad things in life and that is why, and most people do not do this, that is why you should not read all the other books out there and then decide what the Bible says, you ought to read what the Bible says first and then view all the other books through the Bible but that is just the way it should be.

At the same time, I want to say this to you young Christians, there are so many dynamics to this. You know some of the things you go through when you first get plugged into the Bible or you first get saved, you know how it works, you get plugged into the Bible, you get saved and you leave church and you really have that good feeling and then you know what, when you get home you find out your dog died, your cat died, your canary died, your truck blew up and your house was burning and burned down while you were gone and you know your whole world comes crashing down. Some things happen in our lives along those areas simply because they are the natural things. The devil wants to keep you and I from ever plugging into God and he knows that when you are a young Christian you are very vulnerable and he knows that it is easy to discourage a young Christian and it is easy to take from them the joy that they have and that is what he tries to do. The devil cannot get your soul in hell if he loses you when you get saved and he is going to do double duty on you to make sure that you do not accomplish what God wants you to accomplish even though you are going to go to heaven. That is just the way it works.

I have seen the devil work on people that Christians for 20, 30 years and finally the Christian gives up but he has had 20, 30 or she has had 20 or 30 years of living in the world and then the devil after about 20, 30 years the devil says okay go ahead and do what you got to do for God now I am done with you. Problem is by the time you get to that point your body is wrecked, your mind is wrecked, your heart is wrecked, your morals are wrecked, everything about you is just tainted completely and the devil just takes his hand off you and says you can go now go serve God because you know why? He knows now you cannot. You have ruined your life, you have ruined your body, you have ruined your mind, you have ruined everything about you. What is

there left? You are just a walking around carcass. Some things happen just because of the fact that once you get saved the devil is going to come after you.

Now what do you do in a time like that? Well that is why God gave you a church, that is why God gave you a pastor, that is why God gave you a Christian friend. God said, "Draw nigh to me, I will draw nigh to you." You get into that thing and you let somebody help you. Sometimes you know when you first get right with God, and I do not want you getting a misconception about this, when you get right with God and you really try to do what is right, sometimes your world just comes apart. Sometimes it is because of the law of sowing and reaping, Galatians 6:7. Sometimes it is because you know what you have done things in your life, put your body in certain circumstances and now that you are right with God that is great praise the Lord. But God does not give you a new liver if you ruined it with cirrhosis of the liver. God does not give you new lungs if you burn them out with cigarettes and lung cancer. He will save you and he will use you but you know what he is not going to go back in and fix all the things that you did to your temple when you were out doing your own thing. He will use you where you are at for the rest of the time you have but you know what by that time most people they just fall apart they cannot handle that kind of stuff. That is why I want you to realize that in many young Christians some of the stuff that happens to you right after you make that decision to get saved or right after you make that decision to serve God they happen because of the fact the devil wants to stop you and you have got to that is where you have got to dig in.

My point and what I just said is this: I do not care where you are at, if you are a young Christian today and you made some mistakes in life or you just got saved and you want to really get the thing going, here is what my advice is to you. You do not necessarily have to go through the three things because in your case you are kind of excluded from that, you are just now getting into this and the devil is going to whack you, he is going to take what you already did. God is not going to hold you accountable for it, you got it right with God but the consequences, the bad choices are always going to be with you.

The Bible says that a guy in the Bible named Esau. Esau was a vain person. Esau looked at his birthright that God gave him. Now in the Old Testament the birthright was a great thing. It was the right by birth and the first born had that birthright. It was a right by birth to get a double portion of everything that the father had, your own physical father. The birthright had with it not only a physical thing that you got the double portion of the father's blessing, it also came with some spiritual things. It gave you the right to have the gift of prophecy from God. It also gave you the right to be in the line of Christ. It is an incredible thing to have, to have the birthright back in the Old Testament as the first born.

Esau was a man that despised his birthright. He is like a lot of God's people today. The Bible says that he was a man of the field back there in Genesis. What is the field a picture of? The world, that is right. He was a worldly man. He was a worldly man. The Bible says he was a hairy man. But he looked at his birthright and he said, "What is this to me? I do not care about that. I do not care about the birthright. I do not care what God has for me. I am a mighty hunter. I am out here in the world. I am running up and down in the field. What good is a birthright to me?" And you know what he did? He sold his birthright. Jacob came along, his brother, and he said, "I

will tell you what, you are hungry." "Oh, I am about to starve to death." "All right, I just made a nice big pot of chili, venison chili." Esau said, "Man, I want some of that." Jake said, "What will you give me for it?" He says, "What do you want?" He said, "I will take your birthright." You know what he did? He sold his birthright for a bowl of Dixon's chili. He sold everything that God had for him for a mess of pottage. And do not sit there and tell me, "Well, he did not know." He knew exactly what he had. He sold everything that God had for him for a mess of chili.

Then the Bible says over in Hebrews 12:16-17:

Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

It says, "for one morsel of bread sold his birthright." But afterwards when he sought the blessing, in other words he wanted it back, he was rejected. The Bible says even though he sought it with tears, he wept to get back what God had for him. You know what? Too late. And that is what happens with a lot of God's people. And the lesson of Esau and Jacob is a great lesson for every young Christian because Esau, like so many of God's people today, looked so frivolously at what God had for them and he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. And God has a purpose and God has a plan for you and many of us just like Esau sell the things that God has for us for very cheap things this world has to offer.

My point is this: wherever you are at, young Christian, whatever scenario and problems you find yourself in, dig in, start giving God your life and start giving everything including the dumb bad things that we have done in the past. Whatever situation you are in, let Him take charge and let God now get the honor and glory out of even in those things that you did that were wrong by simply starting to do what is right. Put a contrast in your life. Put a contrast from where you were to where you are. Let people see the way that you did things then and the way that you are doing things now. Forget about the fact that you screwed up a lot of things back here. God can even get the honor and glory out of that if you put such a contrast in your life.

The Apostle Paul is a great example of that. We think Apostle Paul was the greatest Christian to ever live and he was. We think of the Apostle Paul who was the man who God personally took them out, shined on, and gave him the gospel of the church and he was. But also at the same time the Apostle Paul was the guy that before he was saved was persecuting and killing Christians because they wanted to believe in Christ and he was against everything that God wanted him to do. But one day on a road to Damascus God called him and God dealt with him and he got it right and it was such a contrast in his life. Truth of the matter is it was the contrast that gave him more credibility with God than anything else in his life when you really study it because everybody knew the way that he was and now everybody saw the way he was. Contrast is the greatest thing you can give God. It is a good thing. So do not worry about that you may be struggled in the past. Do not worry about that you may be a young Christian and you are dealing with some issues right now. Dig in, let there be a contrast in your life and let God get the honor and glory out of the thing that you did wrong by now doing the things that are right and let the

world see the difference. You know what the problem is? You know what the real danger is in that? You will make that decision, it will last for two weeks and you will be right back out into the world again. There is no contrast to it.

"Bad things happen to good people." Really? Now this is the great principle you want to get this principle down in Romans 8:28 and it says this:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

There is the will of God in your life, being more like Christ. To them who are called according to His purpose, there is the plan of God in your life. You see how the Bible corrects all the bad things you read in books? You see how the Bible, if you just stick with the Bible as your definitive book, straightens out all the bad theology that is out there? I do not know how many people have read that book. I do not know how many people have heard guys on the radio or television or heard preach mess. I have heard them saying, talking about how that the bad things in life are from the devil and the good. No, this verse says here that in reality, there are no bad things that happen to good people because all things work together for good. I do not know why people miss that.

We talked about the will of God being more like Christ and that is true. But you want to really an insight into the will of God in your life? It is 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Here it comes and it ties right in with it.

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

See that thing now? How do you give thanks in everything if that is the will of God and the will of God is being Christ-like? How in the world can giving thanks in all things be with all God when the will of God is being like Christ? The only way you can give thanks in everything is to see everything from God's standpoint. See how it works? It is not hard. In fact, it is too simple.

V. The Book of Job: A Definitive Study of Adversity

Now the will of God in your life, and you have heard me say this before, it has a God's will and God's purpose. You have heard me talk a lot about defining verses. Next week when we get into some of these principles, you are going to see that many of them are defining principles and you hear me talk a lot about verses. In fact, in my Bible, I do not have them all, in time I will, because as I, if you show me on Thursday night when you ask a question or one on one and I see something or you bring something up, I will mark them. I have probably got many of them marked in my Bible. But when I find a verse that is a definitive verse, I will mark it down. I will put a little red square around it and you have heard me talk about that and we have seen examples of this that there are definitive passages in the Bible. A passage is more than one verse and I will mark those in the Bible. You have heard me talk about definitive verses, definitive passages, but also there are books in the Bible, complete books that are definitive books. And we are going to talk about one of them today.

Going through the trials of this life, God has not left us comfortless. He has dedicated one whole book to understanding the struggles that we go through and everything that we do, and of course it is the book of Job. Now I want you to turn from Romans 8 or wherever you were there and I want you to come over to the book of Job because we are going to go through some of this stuff here together and I want you to see this. I want to lay down a storyline for you.

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.

And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

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

And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And 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, and still holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause?

And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. what? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Now when Job's three friends heard all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place. Eliphaz the Timnite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

Now this is the storyline and we want to put this into some kind of practical perspective so you can relate to it. But remember now we have got God's will working in your life and we have got God's purpose working in your life. And now we definitely know that all things work together for good to them that are called of God. So the book is out the window where it says, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Now we are going to look at this thing and put it into some kind of perspective.

Job in seven days' time, I want you to note some things here. Really in one day he goes through this ordeal for seven days. But Job in seven days' time loses what you and I will never lose our whole lifetime. Some of you, God forbid, may lose a child. Very few people will lose all of their family at one time, and yet I know that happens. But probably never everybody who lost all their family at one time never got home and found out that everything they had financially is gone. In other words, my point is this: Job loses in one day what you and I will never lose in a lifetime, probably. I do not know of any person, and maybe some exception to the rule out there, that lost in a lifetime what Job lost in one day. That is pretty significant, I think.

I mean when you go back to that chapter in chapter one, I look at the breakdown. He loses all of the physical things in life basically in the order of their importance. The first thing in verse 14, he loses his asses and his oxen. I do not know if you are keeping score or not, but the Bible says he had 500 she asses. It says he has 500 yoke of oxen. Well, a yoke of oxen is two oxen to a yoke, so he has got a thousand oxen. And in honor of that, they killed a servant. He lost everything right there. In verse 16, it says the fire from God came down and killed the sheep and his servants. The Bible says he had seven thousand sheep.

Now this is the first thing I want to begin you to see here as we kind of weave this thought into here. There are so many things to put in here but we just got to stick with what we got to do. Did you notice how the person came in and said, "The fire from God came down"? You notice how that when something bad happens in your life, it always, it always, it is always God's fault. See that? How many times does somebody have some tragedy before them? I have heard them say, "Why did God do this to me?" Maybe God did not do it at all. Maybe you did because you are not doing what is right with God. How many times have somebody said, "Oh, I lost my job today. What am I going to do? God, why are you doing this?" God said, "Maybe I did not do it. I gave you the job, remember? You did not have a job and I gave you a job and then you kept all of it and did not give anything back to me so I just took my job back. But you did not want it after all." See how things work? People look at things, it is always God's fault, is not it? And I will tell you the truth, if it is not God's fault, then it is my fault, but it is always somebody else's fault when it comes to things like that.

We are going to see how this, how the devil works behind the scenes and how it is a great study and how the devil uses people in your life that are good saved people that maybe are your friends, maybe even your spouse, and they are going to heaven but because they are out of touch

with the reality of God, the devil uses them in your point of need to help put you down a little bit farther. You better learn some things out of the book of Job. As far as I am concerned, there is only one thing that Job teaches and yet Job teaches about 16 billion 443 million things. As far as I am concerned, it only teaches one thing. We will get to it in a minute.

But Job in seven days' time, basically in two days, first day, second day, he loses what you and I will never lose in a whole lifetime. He loses all of his asses and his oxen and his servants. He loses his sheep and his servants. Then in verse 17, the camels get taken and that is fine, you need a cigarette anyhow. But the camels get taken, three thousand of them, and they killed his servants again. And if tragedy upon tragedy was not enough, he lost everything monetarily. He lost, he is bankrupt. Everything that he had, they did not have money in a bank back then, they had their money in cattle, sheep, oxen and all of those things. He is financially ruined. He loses everything that he had.

And then tragedy upon tragedy in verse 18, and you have got to see this, one guy comes running in and says, "You just lost this." And by the time he is done, he is just taking a breath and Job is saying, "Wow, that is tough." Another guy comes in and says, "Oh, you lost this." He says, "Oh, that is, it is a continuation." It is right one way after the other. He does not have a chance to process it. It hits him all at one time. Ever had something like that happen in your life? Ever have something, you talk about getting sideswiped, blindsided. And now when he is contemplating all this tragedy of tragedy, you know what they always say after a fire on channel 9 news, do not you? And I feel sorry for people around Christmas time, anytime they end up five o'clock news, six o'clock news, somebody comes on and says, "Well, you know, this family down here, they lost their home and the house is in smoking and it is two o'clock in the morning and the little kids are shivering, they got a blanket from the, they lost everything." And the woman says, and the man says, "How many times have I heard this tragedy upon tragedy, lost their house, did not even get any pictures out, lost everything, probably lost their animals, their pets, everything is gone, nothing." And yet what do they do? They try to pull themselves up and I have seen them say it, you have heard them say it, we have read it, we have all witnessed it. They said, "You know what, we can replace the house but we still got our family here. We can rebuild with that." And I thought Job, I bet Job was thinking the same thing. I bet you Job the first thought had come into his mind, he says, "Well, you know what, that is, we can replace that, that is okay, I still got my family." And no more did he get that out of his mouth and tragedy upon tragedy somebody comes in and said, "Joe, everybody in your family is dead. Your kids, their wives, the daughters, your grandchildren, everybody. They were sitting over at your boy's house having a great time and a great wind came down and tore the four corners off the house. They are all dead, Job, they are all dead." Well that is just in one day.

Then in chapter two, now he had to be dealing with terrible grief and agony and I would dare to say that right now the loss of his financial assets pale in comparison to losing everybody in his family. He has gone through now something that you and I in one day, ladies and gentlemen, one day he has gone through in one day what probably you and I will never, never experience in a lifetime. And if that was not enough, not only is he dealing with a grief of a physical loss, but now the phone rings and it is the doctor's office, the medical report just came back and now he

has been diagnosed with some absolutely terrible horrendous disease that you could ever imagine, all in two days.

Now I want you to see something here and for me I think this is the point of what I am trying to get across to you today. Job now has lost in two days and he goes through this experience for seven days. There is a reason for that because at the end of the seven days we will see it in a moment, but seven is the number of perfection in the Bible which means there God, there God, which means that whatever you go, I will just give you this now, it means get this now, here is another principle, it means this: whatever you are going through will be in God's timing and it will be in God's perfect timing and it will be God's perfect solution and God's perfect timing because his went through in the number seven and the number seven is the number perfection, then there is some perfecting in what you and I go through.

I jumped ahead there but I was afraid I would forget that because I did not have that on my notes. God just put that play in from the bench. But I want you to stop and see something here. He loses in two days where you and I will never lose in a lifetime. Some of you may die of cancer, some of you may die of in a car wreck, some of you may die tragically, some of you may die 90 years old in bed. But I doubt very seriously if anybody in this room or anybody on planet earth will ever have it all happen the way it happened to Job. Maybe some people got close but probably never happened the same way that it did.

Yet I want you to stay, stop and see something here very clear. This is something very great. I do not think you probably, you probably have heard the story of Job a thousand times. I bet you it is one of those stories that you could ask anybody who Job was, everybody knows the story of Job like the story of David and Goliath, like the story of Noah. There are just certain things that you hear down through life, you know, and you just, you know about it. You may not know about Abishag, you may not know about Billy Bob or over here, he is a guy that hung out at 7-Eleven. But you know, you know certain people. But I bet you never thought considered this in the way that I am laying out in a practical application.

And the thing that I want you to see that after he went through all that he went through, do you realize that Job has no Bible? He does not have any Bible. Job is a contemporary of Abraham. Genesis chapter 19. There is no Bible in print. Moses writes the first five books of the Bible long after this. Do you have a Bible to go through what you go through? Yes, you do. Did he have one? No, he did not have one. He did not have one. He did not have a Bible.

I will tell you something else. He did not have a pastor. He did not have somebody that he could draw spiritual strength from. He did not have somebody in his time of calamity that he could call on a phone and say, "Hey, look, I am going through something deep. I do not understand it." He did not have, he did not have that. You have it. He did not have a church. He did not have a place where he went on Sunday and Thursday night and where he sat down and somebody laid out the Bible or took the time to say, "Now next week I am going to give you 40 principles that you can apply. Now let me take four weeks and show you about prayer. Let me give you this. Let me do that. Let me bring you through on New Year's Eve and show you the Song of Solomon how to have a great relationship with God." We have got a guy in a church who will put it in book for

you. You do not have just to get the tape now. You can take it home and study it. Child training, you want to make sure your kid does not go to hell? Okay, we got a program for you now. You can get it now. You can even get it in print. He did not have any of that. He did not have that. He did not have any of that. He did not have any indwelling Holy Spirit of God. He had no relationship with the Holy Spirit of God like you have. There is no indwelling Holy Spirit of God in the Old Testament.

I will tell you something else. He has no Christian radio. He has no Christian TV. No 700 Club. Imagine that. No books like you can go back there and get. Why in Job's time if somebody said, "Do you have a good book in the Bible?" They would say, "What is the Bible?" Not only is there no Bible, there are no books on the Bible. No Christian psychologists. No Christian therapists. No purpose-driven life to help him. No CDs. No videos. When his three friends show up, they do not even help. And there is the other part of that thing, how the devil uses. You notice down here when his three friends show up, you know what, when you are sick or you are going through something, you know I have to go, I have to go see people in the hospital sometimes who, who, who have the written, as far as I am concerned and probably everybody else on planet earth, they are in a hospital because of the fact that they have not been doing right with God. I mean, I do not know if they figure it out, but to me, knowing their lives and knowing what they do and how they live their lives and then they wind up in a hospital with some kind of disease or some kind of problem or some bad car wreck or their back broke or their legs broke or whatever the case may be, it is hard for me to go in in a situation where I know that person is there because I am a pastor, you see, and a pastor ought to be able to say whatever he needs to say to his people to help them get to where God wants them to be. And I really like that and I really would like that, but you know as well as I do, in a perfect world that may happen but it does not happen in our life. And you walk in there and the guys or the gal, whatever, they are in some kind of thing and the first thing you want to say, and I do not want to say it like, "I told you so," it is not that attitude. I do not, I want to stop their agony. I want to stop their pain. They think that once the doctor puts some morphine in them and they get healed and get back out their pain will stop. I know better than that. I know that their pain was not caused because of a car wreck. Their pain was caused because they have grieved the Holy Spirit of God so long and God has had enough and the next stop may be the mortuary.

But can you imagine bringing flowers and candy and saying, "Hey, if you do not get right this time, you are going to die"? Can you walk in and say, "Had enough yet, Zach? You get it straight? You figured it out? Are you really as dumb as you look? What has God got to do to you, Zach? You have got to kill you." That is not the best bedside manner when you are going to see somebody in the hospital. You know what? That is the message they need. Oh, cannot do it. You have got to go in, you say, "Well, how are you doing? Are you doing okay? Oh, that is so bad." You want to go, "What is the matter with you? You want to pull up by his hair, put him back down, wake up, see what God is doing in your life. Do not you understand there is a purpose, there is a plan, there is a will and all you are doing is your thing in life." Cannot do it. There are maybe those seven things I told you a pastor has to do. Well, this one falls under the auspices of placate because you cannot do it. Very few people as you go through the ministry of life with can you really be honest with when you need to be. Very few people do you ever cultivate the

relationship with. Oh, and I know people tell you all the time, "Well, you know what, if I am ever not doing what is right, you tell me." Try that sometime. That is fine when everything is going well in your life. But when you are now out of fellowship and you do not want to get caught, you have changed your position. You just did not tell me. And you do not have to tell me, just send me a postcard, "I have changed. Do not mention it." I will get it. I will get it. I will get it. Nobody who is really in a lot of agony wants somebody coming in and saying, "You know why you are going through what you are going through? Because you are not right with God." Now that is what his three friends did when they showed up. And his three friends are an interesting study and they are a great interesting study in dealing with people in counseling. Their three friends, they have general truth. Everything they are saying is right. They are just not applying it because they do not have the understanding to show the situation. And you know what the devil does? Sometimes the devil will use good people who mean well in your life. Sometimes the devil will, you will find yourself in a scenario and the devil will use people in your world who love you, who care for you, but because they do not have a clue on what is going on, they get used not by God but by devil to add to your agony.

Now I hate to say this but even his wife did not help him out any. Help meet that she was, she should have saved somebody, she asses and lost her. But it does not work that way. Do you ever notice his wife? Now Job has lost everything that he has had and I, if I know human nature the way that I know human nature and I have been in this business for a while now, I would say that probably if Job is as who he thinks he is and says he is and he claims to be, I would say that his wife probably somewhere along the line is blaming him. I just get that air in all of this. It first came into play when somebody ran in and said, "The fire of God," and they brought God into something that God did not bring the fire. But there is a message in that. We will get to this in a second. But here is his lovely wife, oh I do not know how lovely she is, but here is his wife, remember back in chapter two verse five, and this is where this underlying thing all come together, remember back in chapter two verse five when the devil and God were having a conversation and the devil said to God, "Hey, you know what, you reach your hand out and touch him and he will curse you to your face." Now his wife shows up down here, bless her little heart, in 2:9 and she says, "Curse God and die." I wonder where she got that idea. I wonder where that thought came from. I wonder who implanted that seed in her mind to tell that to her husband in the most precarious time of his life. You see how the devil works? The devil will work through people that you are friends, people that love you because he wants to make sure that when he squashes you, he squashes you good.

Now there is a great lesson here and this is as far as I am concerned, this book has a lot in it. I even got into the doctrinal side of Job. I even got in in much to the inspiration or the historical. But as far as I am concerned, it teaches one great truth and it is a truth that I need to know and you need to fully understand that I need to fully understand. He had no Bible. He had no pastor. He had no church. He had no indwelling Holy Spirit. He had no friends. He had no wife that was going to help him out. He had no Christian radio. He had no TV. He had no books. He had no CDs. But all he had, ladies and gentlemen, was a relationship with God. And my point is this: God should be enough in your life because God wants to take you and put you in scenario just like this. God wants to, God wants to have the ability, he wants to have the license, he wants to

have the okay from you, he wants to have the green light from you that he can lift you up, lift you up, lift you up, take you up, put you up, you up, you up and put you anywhere in any scenario that you will stand for him and give God the honor and glory because God has a will and God has a purpose.

You see in America we think that purpose is to get rich. In America we think that purpose is to get everything we want. In America we think it is to get the biggest and the best and the newest and to live way beyond our means. Job is a picture of a man who loses everything. He has nothing and he has nobody. He does not have one fingernail of what you and I have today. We have the Bible. You have a pastor. You have a good church. You have the indwelling Holy Spirit of God if you are saved. You do have Christian radio. You do have Christian TV. You can scratch off the 700 Club. You do have books. You do have all of the things that you can put to. And why is it that we, God is not enough for us? Why is it, why is it that God was enough for him when he had nothing but we have everything that he did not have and God still is not enough? Now you need to think that through this morning.

VI. God Sets the Limits

Now there are a number of things that I want you to see here today and I want you to keep that last thought in mind. There are a number of things that we need to look at here in the light of Romans 8:28 that helps us figure out why things come into our lives and gives put you into a better perspective of how to deal with it.

Now look at Job 1:6-8. It says there, and we talked about this, "there was a day." And let me just say this, God wants there to be a day in your life. God wants to have a day of adversity in your life. Now this is hard for American Christians. I understand it. I know what I am saying and maybe many of you young Christian, it is hard for you to grasp and I do not want you to think you are going to go out here, you are going to get cancer tomorrow. I do not want to think right here and God is going to put you to a head-on collision and put you into a paraplegic so you can walk around and and give your testimony, show people you can write letters with your nose. That is not what I am saying. I am saying God wants to have you where he can put you any place, any place at all.

You know the thing that really bothers me about this story in my own personal life, I cannot speak for you, but it really bothers me because I know how this scenario plays out up in heaven and it is probably played out a hundred million times since it took place in Job chapter 1. You know what this thing shows me? The first thing it shows me that it was not the devil that brought Job's name up. It was God that brought Job's name up. God had confidence in Job. You know what God saw in Job? God saw in Job that here is a man that you can do whatever you want to and at the end of the day he will stand up and you will still love me. God, I wish he could say that about me. I wish, I wish, I wish for every one of you that God could say that about you. Do you see how small this makes us compared to what it says there? Do you get a grasp of that? How we all get this way? We all think you will get in your Bible a little bit, you know, you will learn to attend spiritual laws, you know, and all this stuff, get an institute and you work with some people and we all think that we are coming to the point now where we can really, do you

realize how small this makes us right here? How absolutely minute we stand up against a guy like Job? I wish to God, ladies and gentlemen, that God could bring my name up in every scenario when said, "Have you considered my servant Bob?" And the devil says, "Yeah, he ain't much." And God says, "Yeah, you are right, let us move on to somebody else." Oh, I will tell you, I will tell you, it was God that brought Job's name up. It was not the devil. The devil did not say, "Oh, what about Job?" God says, "Have you considered my servant Job?" I told you when we started, put your name in there, take his out.

Now here is what really bothers me about this. God comes up there and he says, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, a man that upright, righteous, that eschews evil." Now you know what the devil comes back and says, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" You know the devil, devil is pretty arrogant. Did you ever, you see how could you imagine anybody standing before the throne of God arguing with God like that? But that is what he does right now. He is the accuser of the brethren. Now there will be a day when God will say some things and he will not have much to say back. But right now that day in here, what, what the arrogance of that. God goes up and he says, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" Oh, well you have got to get the whole scenario. Devil comes walking back there, you know, God sitting on the throne, walked into the throne room and kind of looking around and says, "Things have changed a little bit since the last time I was here." God said, "You got to, which, which can I help you? Where have you been?" He said, "Oh, I have been walking down up and down to earth checking things out." God says, "Oh really? Have you considered my servant Job?" "Yeah, he ain't much." "What do you mean he is not much? He loves me." He says, "But why should not he love you? You made him the Ben Cartwright, got 150,000 million acres down there. Look at all the asses he has got, the camels he has got. Look at all the horses he has got. Look at all the money he has got. Look at all this or got. Why would not he love you? What is the matter? I mean, you think that he is going to turn his back on you when you have given him everything he wants?"

You know the thing that is bothering about that is when the devil wanted to get one up on God, he did not go after Job's integrity. He did not even go after Job's sinlessness. You know what he went after? He went after the attitude that Job really loved God with the right attitude of heart. That is rough. That is rough. It shows me the great plan behind this that the real issue that the devil nails God on is do we really love God or we just give him lip service because all he has given us? Do we really love him down in our hearts or we just talk it about God? If the devil went before the throne of God this morning and brought your name up, could God say, "Hast thou considered you, considered me"? Would he have to pass us by because he knows that the devil would have him? I mean, you know what bothers me? The bothers me, the devil cannot get God on sin. He cannot get him on drinking. He cannot get him going on on on anything that is that he can nail him on. You know what really bothers me? The only thing the devil can nail God on is me. I do not like that. The only dirt that the devil can throw in God's face is me. When he stands before God and he lays me and you bare and says, "Why, why would not he love you? Look what you have done for him. What is the matter? You think I was born yesterday, God? Hey, he loves you. You have given him everything. Why would not he love you? Take what he has got and let us see what you have there." God had enough faith in Job to say, "Let us go for it. You want to roll the dice? Roll them up." Oh God, I hope in heaven when he brings my name up,

God does not look down and say, "Yeah, you are right, let us try somebody else." That bothers me. If it does not bother you, you have got to check out your salvation.

I think of how many times I must have let God down. How many times in my life when God, the devil went into that throne room and wanted to make me the point of the object and wanted to and use me, my love, my dedication to throw it in God's face that I am a, I am somebody who gives God lip service but deep down inside my motive is not pure, my heart is not really loving him. I am one of those ones who just talk the thing but never walk the walk, never do it the way that it is supposed to be done. Hey, let me tell you, the real issue is not when all goes right but the real issue is when all goes upside down in your life. That is the real challenge. That is the real test. You and me allowing the devil to get the victory over God Almighty by using my insincerity to throw it in God's face. Now that is a tremendous concept you better grasp today because if you think that the little, little intrusions into the throne room stopped in Job chapter one and two, you are solely mistaken. The devil will try to take every child of God who gets saved, takes that press of salvation and then tramples God's sacrifice under their feet and throw it in God's face every day. And you and I are glad about that. It does not, you had hit out a move you to your knees and it will bring me to a brokenness.

VII. God is Enough

Now let me show you the second great concept. We are going to find this in Job 1:12 and Job 2:6. In Job 1:12, and this is another great concept, God says to the devil, "Okay, you want to play this game? I will put my man up against you. I know what he is made of. I know he can stand it. I know he has got legs of steel. You can take all that he has." That is the first deal. "See if you go down and take all the things that he has." God says, "You can go ahead and take him." Devil says, "All right." Walks out that door. Just as he gets to the door of the throne room, God says, "Oh, by the way, you cannot touch him." Devil looked around and snarled and said, "Okay." Second time he came back, the deal was now that he wanted to touch him. And in Job 2:6, God says, "Okay, go ahead and touch him this time. You did not break him the first time. You know what? You will not break him the second time. Go ahead and touch his body now. Give him whatever loathsome disease you want to give him. My man will stand." He walks out that thing with a smile on his face and just as he gets to that door, God said, "Oh, by the way, you can touch his body but you cannot kill him."

Now I like that. You know why? You know what that tells me? That tells me whatever I am going through when God chooses for you and me to go through some adversity for God's purpose, that tells me that the devil cannot step one inch outside of what God says he can do. You know what? I can deal with that. I can deal with it when I know that it is by God. I can deal with it when I know that it is God's hand. I can deal with it when I know it is not the devil himself or not some man out there. I can deal with it and I can get through it because if I know that and I am in God's hand, even the adversity that I go through is good because all things work together for good.

That is why one time back in 2 Samuel 24 is my one of my favorite stories. David sins against God by numbering the people and that brought in an air of national pride. They were no longer

trusting on God, they now were trusting in their great numbers and God is surely displeased. And God comes down and he says, "David, we are going to play a little game. Go play a little game." He says, "Up here I have three doors and you win a prize." You know that television show, "Grant, we went behind door number one, we are doing number two." He said, "I got three doors now. Let me tell you, David, behind these doors are how I am going to punish you and Israel for what you did against me. Now I am going to tell you door number one is a great plague is going to come and that plague is going to kill a lot of people. Door number two now is going to be pestilence and a bunch of bugs are going to come in and they are going to destroy everything you got. Door number three is I am going to deliver you into the hands of your enemy nations." Now David, big tough king, makes all the big decisions, "Choose which way I am going to whack you." I love it. David said, "Do not have to pray about that one, Lord. You know what, you give me one or give me two, I do not want three." You know what David said? He says, "I will put myself, if I am going to get whacked, then I will put myself in the hands of God because he said I am never afraid what God does to me but I am afraid what man would do to me." He chose God.

Hey, I am going to tell you something, when I see that thing in Job, that great principle that the God let the devil go so far but God finally said, "You cannot touch him," and then he said, "You cannot kill him." The devil in the first scenario could not have touched him if he stayed up all night long and tried to do it. In the second scenario, he could have never killed him if he wanted to all through eternity. You know why? Because God set the limits because this was something God had for Job to learn. God help us to learn it today. And the thing that just bothers me, I am going to say it one more time, is God found him worthy. God said, "You, I trust him. You want to put Job through it, you go ahead. You know what? I do not care what you say about him, what you do to him. I do not care how you lie about him. I do not care how you manipulate the circumstances against him. I do not care what you do. I do not care what you try to do to him. You know what I know about my man Job? At the end of the day, after all you have done to him, tried to do to him, after you maligned him and destroyed him and did everything in the world to try to ruin him, my man will still be standing." Oh, I love Job. I just wish I could be like him.

Now I want you to know that we do not have to deal with the first one here and those three things I gave you because there was no sin involved in this. We know that. I mean if you look and go back and break it down here, you will find there that the first time, the first disaster in chapter one when he loses all his physical things in his family, look at his response in Job 1:20-22:

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

There is no sin there. Boy, he came through that with flying colors after he lost all the law. I wonder if we would just lose half of that where we would be doing then. On the second disaster, look at Job 2:9:

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

Here is his lovely little help meet. Then said his wife unto him, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Can't you just see her doing it?" But he said unto her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall not we receive good at the hand of God, and shall not we receive evil?" Now I am going to tell you something, that is as close as you are going to get to Romans 8:28 in the Old Testament right there.

You know what amazes me about that? What he said. Now I know he has lost everything. I know he is in terrible agony and he is sitting on an ash heap. You do understand the scenario. He has got boils. You ever have a boil? One boil? If you ever have a boil in a certain part of your extremity, you cannot sit down. If you have them on your elbow, you cannot, every time you touch it it gets big, it gets yellow, it gets, it gets a head on it and you know what the obvious thing happened, do not you? It becomes a little volcano. But they are sure you cannot touch them. Imagine having them from the sole of your feet to the crown of your head. He had boils all over his body and the pus oozing so bad and they are busting. He is sitting on an ash heap with a piece of broken pottery scraping off the boils and the pus from his body. And when he answers his wife after his God has done everything that he has done, it does not even look like he raises his voice. That is said in an even strain. There are no exclamation marks in it. There is no underlining it. It is not like, "Woman, cannot you say I am going through something? God is going to give it to me so we are going to get through it." He is talked in the same even voice that he talks all the way through this. You know why? He had no Bible. He had no church. He had no Holy Spirit. But he had God and God is enough.

And I want to tell you what you ought to prepare your life for. Maybe you will never get there. Maybe you will never get there. But I will tell you how you ought to prepare your life. I do not care where you are at. I do not care how old you are. I do not care how much time you have got left. I do not care if you are just a young Christian, a medium Christian or you are well done. I do not care. It does, I do not care what classification you are in. You ought to be preparing yourself that God can put you someplace where you are all by yourself. Someplace where you have nobody you can call. Someplace you are where you cannot get a hold of anybody. Nobody can help you and you have to stand or fall on your relationship with God. I would like to see God put something in a situation where you did not have a Bible because you could not get one. I would like to see God put you in a situation where you could not, you had no, had no nothing you could do on your own. That you, you, I would like to see you in a situation where everything that was falling down around you and to see if you could stand for God. You see there may not be a time in this world where you have what you are holding in your hand right now. There may come a time when that is taken from you. It may come a time where that you do not have that anymore. And there may find yourself in a scenario where you find yourself someplace where they will not let you have it or you cannot get it. That is why the Bible says, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." It is not any good to have it there if you do not have it here.

I told a Catholic one time, I said, "Why, like, you know what the difference between, I do not want to get into Maria and Saint this and Saint that. I was going to tell you the biggest difference between your religion and my will. I got somebody can steal yours. Nobody can steal mine." Why? "Somebody steals, sneaks into your church and burns it down, you got no place to go. Somebody goes in and steals your candles and beads, you cannot even pray. Somebody goes in and steals your hymnal, you do not even know what to sing. Somebody steals your Bible, you know what, you, you are lost." "Well, yours is the same way." I said, "No, it is not. You cannot burn down my church. I am the church. I said somebody could kill your priest, you cannot get mine, he is up there." Oh, as far as my candles and beads, take them, I do not need them anyhow. You cannot take my Bible, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." It is not about what you have in your hand today. It is what you put from that in your heart today that determines how you stand. And Job had none of those things. Why, why is not God enough for you and me? Why is not God enough for you and me? I do not understand that.

God had a message for Job. Sometimes in life, now that we understand this great story better, we also understand about prayer. We also understand now how that all things that work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. Now we understand the model. One whole book is devoted to you and me going through the adversity of life. You know what we have learned? We have learned some great lessons. But the greatest lesson ought to be, God is enough. And then the next thing you learn that God had a message for Job. He has got a message for you and me. What he did in Job was he used the devil as the delivery boy from the message. The message came from God. The devil was a delivery boy that God used to get the message to him. What we do is we get, because we have no relationship with God, we do not understand prayer, we have so many misconceptions, we get so scared of the delivery boy, we never get the message.

VIII. The "Combo" Prayer

Now how do you pray through something like this? How do you pray through something like this when something befalls you? Putting all the equations together, putting all the things together, understanding God's purpose, understanding God's will, understanding there are three, four different kinds of prayer. I am going to show you, I am going to show you now if it is sin and you know it is sin, get it right, get a plan, get moving again. My best advice: problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that caused them. I am going to say that again because you probably want to write this down because it is worth a lot of money. Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created those problems. You have got to let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus and get to another level to solve them problems. But you want a plan. If it is sin, get honest with yourself. Realize that God has a plan and a purpose and you are wasting your time doing life the way you are doing it. There is no purpose, there is no plan, there is no will of God. It is just you are doing what you ought to do. Maybe you are mad at God, maybe you are indifferent to God, maybe you are not even saying, I do not know what your deal is, but the bottom line is you need to get a perspective. God has got a plan for you and it only gets fulfilled as God's will for you. If it is sin, get it right, get a plan and get moving again.

Now if it is in the second or the third one, here is what you are praying. Something along this, this is not a canned prayer. This is not like in Matthew where you find the Lord's Prayer, everybody. This is not the prayer for you. This is how I would pray. Not that I am any prayer warrior, but this is, this is in my own stupidity, understanding a little bit that I do understand, this is how I pray. And now this is what I call "combo prayer." You understand that? You go to this afternoon, you are going to go to eat and if you are anything, you know, you go through a drive-through like McDonald's and they, they, they, you can, they do it two or three ways. You can go through there and and they will tell you all the time, "I want two cheeseburgers, I want a large fry and I want a Coke." And they will say, "Sir, you can have that in a combo for for less money." "All right, give me the combo." You understand combos, do not you? You get a Big Mac, chicken fries and all those things, right?

You know what? I do not take, I eat it fast food but I do not allow my kids or grandkids to eat at fast food. I think fast foods are very deceptive and I think the devil uses fast foods to destroy the credibility of you with your child. No, I am telling you because you play right into that. You can do whatever you want to do. You raise your kids the way you want. I made the mistake and that is my kids. I do not take my grandkids there. When they get old enough, they are going to eat places that are true places to eat, not places that deceive them. You know it is like Christmas, you know, you tell your kids you are Santa Claus and they grow up one day and figure you are a liar because there is no Santa Claus. We are going to have and we will probably at Easter time, we will have an Easter bunny up here when we do it right. Say when we talk about kids, Santa Claus coming down the chimney, we talk about setting claim wars and Constantino wire to get him when he comes down. We will have Road dress up in her bunny suit and then two or three you guys with 12 gauge will make her run out of the parking lot and all the kids will watch and we will shoot that rabbit and then eat it for supper. That is how we are going to do it. We do it but we keep it on.

And I will tell you, you make a tragic mistake. I was watching, I was in there the other day and it just hit me. God showed it to me. I mean God shows me things. I see things from God. I see things from God. I stand there in line, McDonald's, mom and two little kids. They are sweet kids. Kids are obviously going to go die, go to hell because mom playing at a deception, lying to a kid. Stood out there and walked that thing and mom said, kids said, "What do you want?" She says, he says, "I would like some," and they told the mom, mom says, "I would like, I would like chicken, I would like two orders of chicken fingers." Struck me, chickens do not have fingers. They have bills. They have combs. They have feathers. They have feet. They have no fingers. Allowing your child to grow up in this world under the delusion that chickens have fingers and they can freely at any point in their life walk into a restaurant and say, "I would like an order of chicken fingers," and everybody in the restaurant on the sign everywhere is under the same deception. I wanted to reach over that lady and say, "Ma'am, there are things in life that you need to get straightened out on. If I was president, I would change some things." Ma'am, I have two dogs at home and they are called Labradors Retrievers. I tell them every day, "You are not a Lab. You are not from Labrador. You are from Newfoundland." There are no such things as Labradors. They are from Newfoundland. I drive, I, I do not understand it. Why do you, why do you park in a driveway and drive on a parkway? The whole world is out to deceive you. The whole world.

They are not French fries. They never were made in French. You do not even know where they were made. And chickens do not have fingers. You say, "What did that have to do with anything?" It is a combo deal. I am talking to you here. Here is my combo prayer. Oh, you so pious people. You know what? You are going to go through the drive and you are going to see chicken wingers and the lady is going to be on the chicken fingers. Well, that is combo fingers and wings. Fingers and wings. Chicken finger, fingers, chicken finger, fingers. Whatever the case may be. It is a combo. It is a combo. And you are going to go through and you are going to crack up and she is going to say, "Ma'am, can I help you?" And go, she is going to hear this cackling on the other end of the deal.

How do you pray through something like this? How do you pray through what Job went through when you find yourself in the scenario like Job was? What do you say? You understand now God's plan, God's purpose, God's will. Here is what I would say. I have said it many, many times. Not the model prayer. Everybody's prayer has to be between you and God. But the attitude: "Lord, I do not know why I am in this. Lord, I, I have looked in my heart, looked in my life and I cannot find any sin. But you are Lord, I am so stupid. And Lord, if I am missing something, if there is something here in my life that I have missed or I have willingly just glossed over from Your word, please Lord, show me what that is. But Lord, this is tough. And what I want to tell you, my flesh, my flesh wants me to ask You to take this off of me. I want to pray, Lord, Lord, take this away. Get me out of this, Lord. But Lord, I know that You have a plan here. There is a purpose for all of this. And Lord, I do not, I do not ask You to take it away even though my flesh, I want it to. I know, I know beyond that and I do not ask You to take it away. Lord, I do not even ask You to help me to know why. But Lord, just let me give You the honor and glory out of this. Lord, do not let me fall. Do not let me fail. Do not let whatever You are trying to do through this take me out of it. Lord, if You get more honor and glory out of my, out of my infirmity or my even my death, Lord, just let me give You the honor and glory. And if somebody, if it is something for me, Lord, that You have got me to learn, I am going to grow through, then God, give me the grace to see it. Do not let me be so focused on myself and my pain or what I have lost or this or that. Help me to see it and understand to learn from it. Lord, if it is somebody else, if it is something else that somebody else that needs something from me, somebody else that needs to help, help me to stay faithful that I do not quit, that I can, I can go all the way to the end of this, that Your will can be accomplished and Your purpose. The Lord is bad as it hurts. And Lord, it is like my heart is going to fall out. It is like I cannot go on another step. And Lord, everything I do, everything I think, it just, I just, it just overwhelms me. And Lord, as bad as it hurts, as weak as I am, Lord, give me the strength to trust You through this. God, help me to have the grace to fulfill Your will and help me pull tight into where You are at and help it to be Your will, Lord, and not my will. Lord, there is anything in this that is my will, Lord, take it out and put Your will. And if anything that I have said, anything that I have asked supersedes over what You are going to do, Lord, just count it to my own stupidity. And Lord, Thy will be done in everything that You do." That is giving God the green light. You see that is not asking God to fix it. It is a combination of all four of them prayers. It is a picture of intercessory. It is a picture of giving God the thanks. It is a picture of the prayer that David had just talking with God. And it is also a picture of God if there is somebody else supplementing somebody else for what they need, an intercessory for what somebody else needs.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

When he is at the highest point of his agony and I cannot even imagine him being there, but oh it would be my prayer, it would be my life, it would be what I would think that every child of God would want to say. I wish in my scenario I could be what Job was and say what Job said in Job 13:15. When his friends are down on him, when his wife is down on him, when he has lost everything that he has and the agony of his disease for these seven days has been absolutely horrendous. He says in verse 15, one of the greatest verses anywhere in the Bible, one of the greatest principles you will ever find, he says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him: but I will maintain my own ways before him." You know what he is saying? He says, "I do not care if he kills me. I am not going to turn my back on my God because I know that God is enough to get me through this." You are at your best with God when our lives are at its worst. We do not know that. American Christianity would have a hard time to think of that.

I talked last week about David Ring. You want to see what I mean? You be your own judge. I talked last week about one of the greatest examples you ever find in life in David Ring. I told you to go home and Google him up on your Google search and there is a video, several videos of who he is, what he is, shows you there. And I bet you half of you never even thought about it once you left last week. Man said one time, "Great ships were not built to set in dry dock. Great ships were not built to set in harbors, but rather great ships were built to sail the sea, to weather the storms, to get from port to port." When God saved you, he made you a great vessel and he did not design that vessel to sit at dock. He did not divine that vessel to sit in a dry dock someplace. He designed that vessel to sail the rough seas of this world, to always stay afloat and to go to the port of call where God has called you to go. That in Job's like, like ours.

For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

Someday it comes to an end. You know I read something one time a while back back in 1 Kings 20. It is a great story and it is a story about the Syrians and Israel is going up against him in battle and it is a great principle and it is one you had to write down and it is a great counseling principle. It is a great principle for life. They are making fun and they said they got Israel down in a valley. Doctrine is the valley of Armageddon. But put a practical, said they got them down in a valley and they said to the nation of Israel, "You know how we know we are going to whip you? You know how we know that we are going to whip you today and beat you? Because your God is the God of the hills. Your God is not the God of the valleys." You know what the Lord told Israel? "You go ahead and fight them. They are going to learn a great lesson today. They are going to learn not only am I a God of the hills, but I am a God of the valleys." But the great lesson is this: their victory was in the valleys. And my point to you is this: your victory will never be when you are on the hill. Your true victory will always be when you are in the valley. You do not need God when you are on the hill. You need God in the valley. And claiming you got a great victory when you are on top of everything, giving thanks for all things and claiming a great victory when you are in the valley, that is something, that is something.

IX. Conclusion: God's Purpose and Our Victory

Well, Job's end came as it always will. Somebody said one time, "This too shall pass." And in Job 42:10, the Lord turned the captivity of Job. The Bible says in verse 10 that he gets double back everything that he lost. The Bible says in Job 42:12 that the, that the, that the God, that the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning. And you know what? I guess that is really the answer to all this. That is probably the great pulling all together key to everything we have talked about the last four, five weeks. The ending of your life being better than when you started it. The ending of our walk with God better than when we started walking with God. The process of growing through our adversities, learning the lesson that Job learned, receiving the message that God has for us, understanding the great truth that God is enough, and understanding that the greatest mark that you can ever have with the child of God, there is not how much do you know about the Bible, not how many people did you win to Christ, not anything other than does God have the freedom in your life to pick you up and put you down in any scenario knowing that you will stand alone for him when you have nothing but him. That is the great concept. That is the great concept.

In Job's case, it was not sin that brought his name up. It was God brought Job's name up because he brought it through it all because Job was going to be better when he was through it than he was before he went in it. And yet at the same time, how can I miss this? How can I miss the fact that Job's suffering and my suffering is through the will of God and the purpose of God and goes back to Calvary's death on the cross of Christ? And how can I miss that in Job chapter 30 and Job chapter 16 and many places in Job where his adversity mirrors perfectly Christ's death on the cross?

You know how many characters there are in the Bible? You know how many stories? How many stories of victories? How many stories defeats? How many men and women who lived great victorious lives who went down in flaming defeat, who struggled with everything that we struggled? I have often wondered, I have often wondered if God would ever write a third testament. You know we got the first testament, Old Testament, the New Testament. I often wondered if God ever in the future, and he probably will not, but I often wondered if God ever wrote a book, a Bible about the time that we are living because it ends in Acts chapter 20. I have often wondered if God ever wrote a Bible, another addendum to the Bible, another testament so to speak of the New Testament church that like in the Old Testament, the New Testament, he went down and he picked the names of people and told stories and told everything in there that just the way that he wanted to get there. I wonder what story he would tell about me. I wonder what story he would tell about you. Would you and I fit into a story of great victory or great defeat? Will we just be one of those little unknown people in the Bible that never stuck their neck out for anything or would be somebody that took a chance for God and did exactly what God wanted to do?

You see, we know it was not sin. We know it was not sin. God brought Job through it because, well, the second thing is he had something for Job. But God also brought him through it for the third thing. It was for somebody else. And ladies and gentlemen, not only to go through it for himself that he learned something, he went through it for somebody else to learn something. And that somebody else is you and me. God put him through what he went through so you and I could

understand one great central truth, ladies and gentlemen, and it is what I leave you with: God is enough. Your relationship with God should be enough. And the victory that we have with God will never be on the hills. The victory only lies in the valleys.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Oh Father, we thank You and praise You today for the Lord Jesus. Now we thank You, Lord, as we come to an end of this great study. We look at all of the aspects of prayer that we have seen and try to pull them all together. We find it in a great defining book, a book that really answers all of the questions. And we should have so much information for now, Lord, that we can, we can move forward in what we need to do no matter where we are at. Lord, help these young men and young ladies to understand the great truth that God is enough. And the reason why we struggle with where we struggle with and the reason why do we have the problems we have and the reason why even today in this room we have the attitude that we think we so cleverly mask, the real bottom line is God is not enough. And help us to get to the point, help me to train these people to be a people that can God can put anywhere. God, never let our insecurity or our, our motive for loving You be thrown in Your face when the devil brings our name up. God, help us. Help us to always stand strong for the things that You have us to stand for, especially in these last days. Help us not to falter. Help us not to be weak. Help us to get self out of the way and help us to be everything that God wants us to be. And we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for His sake we ask You, Amen. You are dismissed. Please take time if you want to sign up for the Easter egg thing back there. There is a paperback.