

## I. Introduction and Personal Testimonies

I said earlier, we go back a long way together. They are out of Canton Baptist Temple, where I was getting right with the Lord. They were already out in the field doing their work. You had a brother there and a sister, Ronnie. Ronnie helped build my observatory out there for the gospel and the stars. They have just been a part of my life.

When I first came to Kansas City in January of 1977, before a lot of you were born, we took two mission trips up to Canada. He was at St. Catharines at that point as a missionary, him and his wife. We went up there for two years and helped them establish that church by knocking door to door, having services at night, and putting on little special things for the kids. It was probably one of the greatest times, and it was very early in my ministry here. Penny Hansinger and Steve Bracken were with me. Troy, we were debating if you were on that trip. You weren't on that one, but you were in that time period.

One of the things that I never forgot is that Jerry loves people; he really does. And one of the things, and I don't think he even remembers this, but it made an impact on me. We were going door to door, passing out tracts and flyers, and inviting people to come to the services at night. Jerry and I were going together. We were talking as we walked down the street. St. Catharines, as you might guess, is a Catholic town. There was this guy out in his front yard, digging up his bushes. I thought to myself, this guy is not going to want to talk to us because we're going to intrude. He probably only has so much time to get this done. The last thing he wants to do is stop working.

Jerry went up to him and said, "You look like you need to take a break. Sit down there." Jerry took the spade and started digging out his bushes. He was telling the guy about his church. That impacted me more than anything in my life. I have never forgotten that. It was a thing that showed me where his heart really was for people. Most pastors would have just thrown a tract at him and tried to witness to him and made him mad. But he understood that if you want to get an opportunity with somebody, sometimes you have to cross over the line and do for them and allow them to see that you really care. That made an impact on me. I never forgot that. Even today, I walk up and down my street looking for my neighbors digging up yards, and I try to help them. It was a very, very great time for me to see that.

I was so glad that he's good buddies with Jim Lake, all three of us. He's been up to Jim Lake's, and Jim told him about our church. So Jerry called me, and I said, "Yeah, if you're out this way, come on by." So they're out here with us this week. He's going to preach to you. You already had the meeting, but I want to give a good Kansas City welcome to Jerry and Diane Boffman. God bless you. Thank you. I really appreciate it.

I'll try to find it. He was talking earlier about flowers. I think I heard someone say when he and Barb began to dig. He was trying to express how much he loved her and appreciated everything that she's doing for him. But in his youth, he couldn't really express himself very well. So he

went down and got this beautiful bouquet of flowers and a little card. He kept thinking, "Now what can I write on this card?" Finally, a thought came to him, and he wrote it down. He said, "Dear Barb, these flowers will fade and die, but you will smell forever." Some of you are just catching it a little bit.

I've been sitting here, and my heart has been blessed. When I talked to Brother Lake, I preached his conference every day of the year, probably for twenty-five years or so. I took some men up and built a big addition on his church. Brother Jim Lake has just been a dear, dear friend. Your pastor, the thing that I remember about your pastor more than anything else, is his love for the Word of God. That still rings in my heart, his gospel and the stars, and so forth. You've got a jewel, and he is just the way he is. He's Bob Alexander, period. He's not Dr. Bob or Reverend, the most right Reverend. Usually, he's mostly wrong.

It's just to have a pastor who loves you, and it's very, very obvious that you love him and his wife and his family. That's something that you, with your children that you're raising, are showing your children just by your mannerisms that you love your preacher. They will grow up to love the preacher. Most kids grow up eating the preacher for dinner along with the parents. But when you love them, then the children also learn to love the preacher because there's just something special about the preacher.

This church reminds me of a fellow named Bill, a true story. Bill was going to a university, and that university had a few Christians there. There still are some out there. This one fellow began to witness to Bill. One night, he led Bill to the Lord. This was just like on a Monday or something like that. When Bill asked Jesus to come into his heart and to forgive him of his sin, he said, "Well, now what do I do?" The fellow said, "Well, you need to get to church on Wednesday night." He said, "Most of them call it prayer meetings." So Bill said, "Okay." Then he said, "You need to get to a church on Sunday, follow the Lord in baptism, and so on."

Bill went to this church on a Wednesday night that was close to the university. He went in and sat down, and they went through a little bit of the same thing they've always gone through, tradition. He said they divided up in circles for prayer time. So he was sitting there like I was with the fellows there this morning around the table. Bill sat there, and of course, this was all totally new to him. He said to the fellow beside him, "What do I do?" He said, "Well, we just pray around whatever's on our heart. And when it comes to you, whatever's on your heart." Well, he had never been to a prayer meeting, let alone even pray or know how to pray. So they all prayed, and there were fancy prayers, there were clichés, and all those things. It came around to Bill's turn, and he was scared. He said, "Hi God, this is me, Bill. I just wanted to say thanks for saving me." Which prayer reached the glories?

Then on Sunday, Bill thought, "Well, I need to go to a church." So he saw a Presbyterian Church right across from the university. He didn't know what Presbyterian, Baptist, non-whatever, the church of the summer, the church of the valley, the church of the whoever, whatever. So he decided he would go over there to that Presbyterian church on a Sunday. He went over and looked on the sign what time it started. So he was there in time for worship. He went in and looked in the auditorium, and it was full. I mean, all the beautiful white pews and the furniture

and everything, but all so, so. All he had on was just a pair of shorts and an old dirty T-shirt and scruffy looking. But he said, "Well, I need to go in and worship." So he walked into the back of the auditorium, and he was trying to find a seat. He began walking down that long aisle, looking, and everybody was looking at Bill. He just didn't fit in. So he walked all the way down to the front. He found no seat, so he just sat on the floor right there. Everybody thought, "Whoa, what is he doing here? He doesn't fit in."

Then they saw Deacon Jones in the back, and he got out of his seat, and he got his cane, and he began on his way down. They thought, "Well, Deacon Jones will take care of him. He doesn't fit in here." So Deacon Jones made his way all the way down beside the fellow, and he looked over and he hung his cane on the back of the pew. Then he sat down beside Bill. He looked up at the preacher and he said, "Okay, let's worship." The preacher got up and choked up, and he said this: "What I'm going to say today, you'll probably never remember. But what you saw, I hope you never forget." That's powerful.

We had a fellow, Diana, I remember his name, a fellow saved in our youth group. One was Duke, and the other was Rhino. There were five of them, and they all had these weird names. When Duke came in, his beard was hanging down about here, and he was just about twenty years old. Duke has been pastoring now for thirty-some years. He built one church of around 1,500. The second one off of that church runs around 1,500. He's going a little over here to where I don't want him to be, but hey, I'm not his pastor; I'm his youth pastor, but he loves the Lord. The other fellow's name was Rhino. Rhino was just kind of a big, tall fellow, and he just kind of walked around like this. He liked to draw, and everything he drew always made it a sad-looking thing.

I was teaching the college and career, and I was trying to encourage them to come out and go with me on soul winning. On Tuesday night, Duke showed up, Rhino showed up, a couple of the fellows showed up. And then, of course, the aristocracy of the church showed up. So I took Rhino with me. His hair was about down to here, and all. I mean, he was a mess. Nobody just got saved. So I took Rhino with me, and I knew where I was going to go. We had some good calls. The next Sunday morning after church, a couple of the deacons came into my office and rebuked me for taking that fellow out on visitation with me. I didn't say anything, but I know what I wanted to say. So I went in and told the preacher what they did. He said, "Well, I sort of agree with them." That sort of takes the wind out of your sails.

Next Sunday, here came Duke and Rhino and a couple of the other guys. Those deacons met Rhino at the door of the church and said, "You can't come in here until you cut your hair and so forth." Rhino has never been in a door of a church since then. That changed my life. Just like you had in Sunday school this morning,

*1 Samuel 16:7*

*> But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

It's strange, you know, that it's not strange. God works in strange ways with strange people. I know all of you are expecting me to be here with a tie and suit and so forth. For the last twenty-five years, we've had a ministry called Camp BIMI, B-I-M-I, Basic International Missionary Institute. Young people sixteen and older come, and they get about thirty hours of teaching on missions. Everything like, "Why do missionaries fail?" and "What are some of the things they struggle with?" Can anybody tell me what is the number one reason why missionaries leave the field? No, I know you all talk. Anybody know? You don't know, all right? Cultural adaptation relating to the people. That's one. Anybody else? I thought I saw a hand go up to the guy with the blue hat on. Oh, he's just blowing his nose, okay. Somebody else, why? There's culture. How about language? How about finances? All these things.

You put all the problems that missionaries have on the field, and their problems are always accentuated because none of them talk like you do. None of them look like you do. In some cases, that's a plus. But the problem with missionaries more than anything else, and the reason why they leave the field, is the inability to get along with other missionaries. You sit there and say, "Whoa. You mean they have problems?" Has anybody ever left this church? Yeah, why? Because we're people. No matter where we are, it's just plain people. So we have to learn to culturally adapt. So I've culturally adapted this morning. Now I would wear my shorts, but folks, I've got the ugliest leg you've ever seen in all your life. I mean, I'll tell you what, I played football once, and I hurt my ankle, and the coach said, "Give the band-aid, Boffman needs to wrap his ankle."

Let me tell you, I've done something I guarantee there's not a man in this auditorium who has done it. My wife and I have been to eighty-five countries around the world. We were in Samoa, American Samoa, Fiji is the same. When I got there, the missionary had a good church going, and I was going to be preaching. He comes into where I'm staying, and he says, "Brother Boffman, this is what you have to wear when you preach." "Oh," I said, "really?" And he held it out. It looked like a wrap-around skirt. It was. It was a pair of pants with one leg in it. That's what it was. He said, "If you don't, they call it a lava-lava. You will offend them if you don't." Well, I knew he was right because when we got there, we went to a big graduation and so forth. Here were all the dignitaries of the island, and they all had skirts on. They would have a jacket, and they all matched. One guy had a dark blue jacket and dark blue skirt and a yellow and a green flip-flop. That's what they wear. Now you talk about feeling funny.

The second time I was in Samoa, I have two skirts. On that particular trip, all we had was girls. I was the only guy, and I was going to be preaching. So I said, before I went up to preach, "I want you girls to come up where I'm staying." They said, "Why?" I said, "Just come up and shut up, okay?" So they came up, and I was in my bedroom, and I came out with this lava-lava on. They laughed and laughed. I said, "Good. I didn't want to come up behind the pulpit, and all of a sudden, you guys be going crazy, getting all excited about my ankles." Because you don't have socks on either. But that's what they wear all the time. Youth activities, whatever, the guys. I have a picture of these two fellows. The Samoan fellows, I mean, they're strong. They look about like you. A little better looking in the back like you. Here they are bare-chested and all these muscles and this flowered skirt wrapped around them and tied. I got a picture of both of them. I want to

put under there, "What did you say about my skirt?" I said, "Nothing. I don't want to get in trouble." But you know what? That's a cultural thing. You understand that? That's a cultural thing. There are things that you do here in the Midwest that, where's Brother Foot on Long Island? You wouldn't think about doing it, right? It's just the way it is. It's better here, amen. You aren't so uptight here. Every place you go, every country around the world, there are cultural things that you have to learn to adapt to.

It's just like knocking on the door. I do remember that fellow that we stopped by, and it reminded me right away of a fellow a couple of years later. I went out on a Saturday morning myself, just knocking on doors, meeting people. I saw this young fellow, and he's working on a Mustang. I mean, what was it, 1965? The first Mustang was made or somewhere around in there. He's working on his Mustang. Well, I like cars. So I went over and I began to talk to him. His name is Ross. He was doing some things. So I spent about two and a half hours with him, helping a little bit with his car, and just had a great time. I had to get going, so I gave him a tract. I witnessed to him, invited him to church. Two years later, I can still see him on a Sunday night. There came Ross and his wife and his two teenagers in the church. I said, "I'm glad to have Ross back." He was surprised I remembered who he was. Within two weeks, I won Ross and his wife and his two children to the Lord. I said to him, "Listen," I said to him, "Ross, why did you come? It's been two years ago." He said, "Because you took time to talk with me." He said, "I went and told my wife, 'If we ever get back in church, and we need to, we're going to go to that church.'" And they came to that church.

It isn't how many doors we knock on. You can knock on one door and begin a revival. You can use that one gift that God has given you and touch the hearts of many. It's just when you decide to use the gift that God's given you. I have one thing that I teach in Camp BIMBI, and it's spiritual gifts. I say to the students, "You'll never function on the mission field unless you first of all know what you're speaking to." And we'll never be as good as those spiritual gifts are. I said, "So if God has called you, definitely be a pastor, don't go to another pastor's church and try to be the pastor. Amen, go somewhere else." If God has given you a gift, as we have many gifts, all members have not the same office. We being many are one body in Christ, and every one member is one another, having gifts differing. We're all different. Aren't you glad you're not like the person sitting beside you? I just started a fight. He just hit her over the head. She is glad she doesn't look like you. Or you're glad you don't look like her. But we're all different.

## II. Saul's Disobedience and God's Choice

I want to share with you something this morning that really, when I sat in the prayer time at 9:30, that was a blessing to me. I haven't talked to you. Did you get a blessing? She was in another group. Just to sit down and have one of the fellows open up the scriptures and share and pray. You could tell there's just a camaraderie there. What did you learn this morning? You were talking about Saul. You were talking about David. And how Saul, let's use the word, Saul blew it, right? He didn't kill Agag, the king of the Amalekites. He didn't, otherwise they were supposed to obliterate them. "Well, we just kept the best." "Oh, we always give God the best." Of course, I think Saul thought he was God.

When you think about Saul, Saul had three unearned characteristics in his life that he really didn't use. Saul had wealth. He had stature. And he said he was a goodly person. Then God even gave him a band of men that God had touched their hearts. And yet what does Saul do? He goes in and he offers the offering when that was not his place to do it. "Well, I just, I'm the king. I can go and I can do what I want." Oftentimes within the context of a church, there are people who say, "Well, I'm king. I can just do what I want." No, you're king. You can do what God says. Amen. Then he doesn't kill the Amalekites, as he was supposed to. God disposed of him, if you want to use that word. He was going to lose his position as king to a man whose heart God had touched.

Turn to 1 Samuel 17. This is an old familiar story. The one I trust that we're stopping to look at David and what David did with that little short man named Goliath, nine feet, nine inches tall, one foot taller than Shaq and six feet taller than Brother Foot. God said He wanted another man. So He sent Samuel out on the task.

Let's bow our heads and ask God just to speak to our hearts for these few minutes. He said I can preach until two. Of course, he said, "You're not staying here too," but I'll try my best. Most churches start at 11 o'clock sharp and end up 12 o'clock dull. You heard about the church that was so dead that one of the senior members died during the service, and they called 911. The ambulance came, and they hauled away fifty before they found the right one. I like life. Amen. When you get people to laugh, you also get people to listen. So let's ask God to speak to our hearts when we go down to the brook that David was so familiar with. I trust that we'll learn a couple of things about that brook and those stones that will be a blessing to our hearts today.

Let's pray. Father, we just thank you this morning. I thank you, Lord, for the wonderful spirit. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the singing, the good old hymns that were sung with joy in their hearts. I thank you for Brother Bob. And Lord, for the trials you've put him through over the years, and yet for the blessings. We never really are thankful for the blessings, or the trials, until we see what God does because of those. Lord, I'm sure there are people here this morning that in their hearts, they're in turmoil. There are struggles. There are decisions they have to make, and they don't know which way to go. I pray that the message would be a blessing to their hearts. May all of us leave here today just a little more rich than when we came. We'll give you the glory in Jesus' name. Amen.

### III. The Challenge of Goliath

In 1 Samuel 17, we gave just a little bit of a background. Of course, you've had the background in Sunday school this morning or prayer time.

*1 Samuel 17:1-13*

*> 1 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.*

- > 2 *And the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.*
- > 3 *And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.*
- > 4 *And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.*
- > 5 *And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.*
- > 6 *And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.*
- > 7 *And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.*
- > 8 *And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.*
- > 9 *If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.*
- > 10 *And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.*
- > 11 *When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.*
- > 12 *Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul.*
- > 13 *And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.*

Now here's the background. Saul had been given, God had spoken to Samuel and said to Samuel, "Go choose a man, go get a man of the house of Jesse." He didn't know which one; he had eight sons. And He said, "Because one of the sons of Jesse will be the king that will take the place of Saul." So Samuel goes to the house of Jesse. He speaks to Jesse, and Jesse has his seven sons lined up. Eliab was the oldest, then Abinadab. One by one, they would come and they would stand before Samuel, and God would say to Samuel, "Not him," all the way down to the seventh one. "It's not him." Now, couldn't you imagine all those brothers looking at themselves and saying, "It's none of us. Who is it?" And Samuel says to Jesse, "Do you have any more sons?" "Yeah." "Where is he?" "Oh, he's out taking care of the sheep." By the way, God chooses the one that's doing the job. He's out taking care of the sheep. "But he's just young. He's just a ruddy, kind of a rough kid." Samuel says, "Bring him in." And they went out and they got David and they brought him in.

Now if you were one of the older brothers, what would you be thinking? "This is a joke. Who is he?" Eliab said, "Hey, I'm the oldest one. I deserve to be king." You hear the muscle in that chest? Samuel looked at David. He was kind of young and rough. And God said, "That's the one." And Samuel pours oil on David's head, and he anoints him to be the king of Israel. I don't think it was strange that all seven of the sons were there because God was telling those seven sons, "It's not you. It's him." Because I'm sure within that family, they would have had an argument as to who should have been the king. Sort of like Moses, you know, Miriam and Aaron. "Hey, can't we be, give us a little bit of the glory of Moses?" God says to the three of them, "Come on in the tabernacle. I want to talk to you." I can see Miriam walking beside Aaron. "God's going to let Moses have it today, isn't he?" And when they went in, God says, "I will call who I will call." And He said, "Moses is the leader." You know, Aaron didn't get the leprosy. Who did? Miriam. You know who led the pack? Miriam. Yet Moses interceded, and seven days later, they were all able to continue the journey. So here are the seven sons of Saul, and here's David, anointed to be the king.

#### IV. David's Arrival and Eliab's Rebuke

So now we come to the time of battle, and David's three brothers are out to battle. Jesse says to David, "I want you to go and see how the battle is. How it's going." He said, "I want you to take some cheeses and breads." If you read all the things, he had a load on him when he left to go out to check on his brothers. He gets there and he hears all the noise that was taking place.

*1 Samuel 17:21-28*

- > *21 For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.*
- > *22 And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.*
- > *23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.*
- > *24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.*
- > *25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.*
- > *26 And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?*
- > *27 And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.*
- > *28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left*

*those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.*

By the way, he said he would give him his daughter, Michal. You'll find there was a time when Saul said to his men, when he gave him Michal, his daughter, he said, "She will be a snare unto him." And Michal was certainly a snare unto him. Because of her foolish actions, she lived life childless, which was a curse for the women in Israel.

What was God looking for when He was hunting for David in the first place? He was hunting a man after His own heart. But here's the evaluation of his oldest brother, Eliab, which I said is the reason why I believe that God brought the seven men and then brought David and anointed him to show them, "This is God's man." Because he turns around and he says to David the very same thing that he had in his heart, "You're here for your haughtiness, for your arrogance, for your pride." David was there because his heart was right with God.

David said, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" And there was.

## V. David's Preparation and the Stones

So what happens? I think basically Saul wants to know, "What's your resume? What have you done? Who are you, just this ruddy kid that's been out taking care of the sheep? What experience do you have in the face of giants?" David said, "Well, I killed a bear and a lion." I can see Saul saying, "You gotta be kidding." I love it when he talked about killing the lion. He got out of the hold of the lion by the beard. You know how close that lion was to him? That close. Maybe it was that close. I don't know how long his arm was. He's just one sneeze from being swallowed. But he said, "I killed a bear and a lion." That's a pretty good resume. He said, "If I killed the bear and the lion, who is that Philistine? It's nothing."

So Saul says, "Well, you gotta put on this armor." What did we say? 125 pounds was just what they call the mail. 15 pounds is his shield, plus his sword. I mean, this is a lot. But then Saul takes his stuff and he puts it on David. Not all that was on Goliath. I can see David just walking around, all sort of bent over and just like, "Man, I can't do anything." He said, "I can't use this stuff because it has not been proven. I have not proved it." So what does he do? He used to go off. Can you hear the clashing? Can you see his brothers? "What is he doing now?"

David reaches in his pocket, and he pulls out what he's really familiar with: his sling. That's really what he's used to with his sling. Didn't have a comb in it, but he had a sling. David had a bag. David had gone down to the brook.

*1 Samuel 17:39-40*

*> 39 And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.*

*> 40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.*

The word "script" is what we would say like a wallet, but it was really in back in those days a bag. Let's stop and look. I have a couple of stones in here, in case I thought I had some enemies here or something. Let me tell you something about these stones. Where did David go first? He went to the brook. What did he choose out of the brook? What kind? Smooth stones. How many? Five. One fellow said because Goliath had brothers. But here's what I want you to look at this morning.

## VI. The Brook of Preparation

You make it an outline.

1. The brook was the place of preparation.

The brook was a place of preparation. Not preparation in this case for David. It was a place of preparation for the stone. Every one of us are just like this stone. Yes or no? You go into a brook, and you begin to feel the stones, and some of them are rough. They're pointed. If you were to pick up that stone and try to throw that stone across the water to see how many times it skipped, if it was not a smooth stone, that's it. It's in. The brook was a place of preparation.

Now listen closely. Turbulence in the brook begins to make the stone smooth. God uses turbulence in our lives to help take off the rough edges. Yes or no? What does James say?

*James 1:2-4*

*> 2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*

*> 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*

*> 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

Every single one of us goes through turbulences in our lives. Your pastor knows I've been through a few turbulences. I know he has been. I don't know a man of God, and I've read a lot of biographies, that there has not been turbulence. There have been trials. There has been testing in their life to bring them to this place. One word we wrote in the brook several years ago entitled, "Rocks are what you climb on, not what you trip over." Sometimes we get in that brook and we say, "Well, I don't want to stay here very long. It's cold." When the storms come, the rocks begin to roll over one another and hurt.

But our lives right now, every single one of us, I don't care how long. The twenty-eighth of this month will be my sixtieth anniversary of my salvation. I'm now thirty-nine. Jesus said, "Before you were formed, I knew you." Praise you, notice in Camp Luz over in Dalton, Ohio, is where I got saved sixty years ago. I was one rough stone. My wife will tell you I'm still a rough stone. She calls me Peter Pan. I never grow up. That's the boy in me. Every man needs to have a little boy in him every once in a while. Amen. That way you can play with your grandkids, and you

can buy your kids a train, and they get there, but you say, "I'm talking, don't touch it." Every one of us has to be willing in our lives to go through those trials so that God can take and someday make us, someday God is able to use us. See, the stones will miss the mark if they're not smooth enough.

Here's the key. I asked a young man, "Are you totally smooth now?" He replied, "No." My point is that so often we say we don't want to stay in that brook long enough. Who was the one who chose the stone out of the brook? David did. Why? Because David had spent a lot of time out there taking care of the sheep, playing his harp, and practicing with his slingshot. Sometimes we get so rambunctious, and we want to get out and do something when we're not ready. Then there's a lot of times when we need to be out doing something, we enjoy the coolness of the brook. But the brook in our life is the place of preparation. When you got saved, when you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, God took and He put you in His brook. Amen. God wants to take and wants you, and listen, when He's ready to pull you out, He will come and pick you up.

We had a dog one time. I've already talked to the preacher; he's got a dog, some people have dogs. Our dog's name was Muffin. When we went to get Muffin down in Niagara Falls at a dog shop, here was this little cage and all these little puppies. I mean, they were the cutest thing, and one of them was just laying over there like this, looking at you in the brook. There's one. I mean, no matter, "Take me, take me, take me, take me, take me, take me," we're talking. We had the choice of picking him up and bringing him home. We had him for seventeen and a half years until he went to be with Rin Tin Tin. God will pick you up and put you where He wants you to be when He knows you're ready. Don't be afraid to stay in the brook until it's time to be used of God.

## VII. The Script of Protection

So David first of all went to the brook, the place of preparation. But then in our text, it says that he took those stones and he put them in a script or instead of a wallet. But it was like a bag really. Now listen closely.

2. The wallet or the script was a place of protection.

You say, "What do you mean?" It's already been through that place of turmoil, that time of turmoil, the turning in the waters and the cooling down of the waters and the ice or the heat or whatever. And those rough edges are off, and then he comes over and he picks that up and he puts it here where it's in the script. It's hidden. You don't see it. Here's a good illustration. It's like a young man graduating from Bible college. He thinks he knows everything. He says, "I've got my AB," and the world says, "Shut up, sit down, and we'll teach you the rest of the alphabet." God takes him and He puts him in a church under a pastor. He's a little arrogant and causes all kinds of trouble. Maybe he gets fired or whatever. But what he doesn't realize is that God has put him there as a place of protection because just because he's been in the brook doesn't mean he knows everything.

God will put you in that place of protection in your life. Just like when God brings a child into your home, that child really is in the place of protection. It's your responsibility and it's my responsibility to protect our children. This is a hidden protection. I imagine every once in a while, let's say if the stones could speak, "Let me out of here! I'm ready to be minister of music at this big place. I'm ready to be the pastor. I'm ready to be the youth pastor. No, I don't want to be the custodian. Clean the toilets? Are you kidding? That's below me."

We take students all over the world on mission teaching trips. We find someone who is a pain in the neck. You know what I do? They get the job of cleaning the toilets, the bad jobs. We had one guy with us, and he would watch everyone that we gave a job. He wanted to make sure he had the best job. I gave him the worst job. Why? Because it builds character in his life. He finds his real want. God will put you in the place of protection because His desire is to use you. If we are not willing to stay in the place of protection, that script around David's shoulder is just like the sheep that goes astray. What does he do? He goes and he catches that sheep and he brings it back, and it runs astray, and he brings it back constantly. So finally that shepherd thinks in his heart, "What can I do to keep this sheep with me?" What he will do is purposely break the leg of the sheep. Then he'll mend it, and he'll hold, put that sheep over his shoulders, and he'll carry that sheep everywhere he goes for two or three or four weeks, however long that takes for that leg to heal.

There comes a day when he takes that sheep, and the sheep is able to stand, and he takes that splint off. He starts walking away, and you can go on. "Go on." "Nah. I'm not going there." You know why? Because he learned that this place, or in the sheep's case, around the shoulders of someone who loved him, was his place of protection. The closer we walk with the Lord, and the more we love the Lord, and the more we're in God's Word, the more we realize how much the Shepherd does love us. "My sheep know my voice," He says, "and I know them." We're willing to stay there.

Then who's the one, the shepherd again, is the one who chooses the stone out of his script for the purpose for which he has them. I remember quite a few years ago, I love the Eagles. I'm not talking about Philadelphia. I love Eagles. I love to study the Eagles. When I was in Canada, I had a theory, about eleven or twelve, maybe fifteen messages on the Eagle. The part I love the most was when they would take those young Eagles, and they would build the nest. The largest nest they found of Eagles weighed over 2,000 pounds in the top of a tree. They would have those young Eagles, and the mother and the father, the male and the female, would both take equal care of those young Eagles. But now they're beginning to grow, and they're starting to get their wings, and their old feathers are falling off, and they're ready to learn how to fly. But hey, it's comfortable in the nest. "Oh, it feels good here."

The word says the male or female, but usually the female, she'll take and she will stir the nest. You know what that is? When you stir the nest, what she's doing is she's pulling up the sticks and so forth. It's not a comfortable place to be anymore. "I can't find any place. I'm an ascension." She gets that young Eagle up to the edge of the nest, and she literally shoves that out of the nest. That Eagle has just gone all over the place. But the male Eagle is down below, and he watches that. When he sees that that young Eagle is not learning it, he will come up underneath that

young Eagle, and he will catch that Eagle on his wings and carry it back up. The Lord says, "I will bear thee up on Eagle's wings." He will take that young Eagle and he will put that Eagle back in the nest. Can't you say that Eagle? "Oh, man, I don't have to do that again." Well, mom throws him out again. There he is. That Eagle just, he just, flying all over the place. This may happen two or three or four times until finally he learned why they're working. "Wow, this is great."

When I was up in Alaska, I'd go out early in the morning. My wife said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going eagle hunting." I remember being as one. I looked up this huge pine tree. There was a big Eagle's nest on top. All of a sudden, I saw this one Eagle. "I'm going to have you for lunch." I asked one of the fellows, "How many young Eagles die in this process of learning to fly?" He said, "40% die in the process." Then I said to him, "Why?" He said, "Because they refuse the wings of the other Eagle or the parent." When that parent comes under, and that parent has all the ability to pick up that young Eagle, that young Eagle fights and refuses the wings of that parent, and that young Eagle falls to its death. Doesn't that sound like a lot of Christians? When God wants to do something for us, and He's put us in that place of protection, He takes us out, but we fail because we refuse the wings of an Eagle, and He is our Eagle.

## VIII. The Sling of Participation

So we have the brook of preparation. We have the script of protection. What does he do with that one that learns how to fly? Listen closely. It says he puts it in a script.

3. This is the place of participation.

You got that? It's already been in the place of preparation. It's already been in the script of protection. Now he pulls it out and says, "I'm ready to use you." David puts that stone in the place of participation. What does he do? He goes up. Remember it says the Philistines were one side and the Israelites on the other side, and the valley in between. I can see David carrying that stone and walking down that valley and going up. The discourse between David and Goliath was really quite interesting. Saul says, "Who am I, a dog? I'll send this kid. I'll make mincemeat of him." David said, "Well, I killed a lion. I killed a bear." David began to make that sling go around and around. I can see Goliath just laughing his head off and saying, "Who is this kid? I'm Goliath. The whole army is afraid of me, and you send a kid." He puts his head back, and just as he puts his head back, David lets go of that sling, and that stone gets Goliath right between the eyes, and he drops dead.

You don't find in the word where it says, "Whoa, that stone did a great job." It wasn't the stone. It's the Shepherd. It's the Shepherd that did the job. So often we want to take and we want to give ourselves the glory for what we do. But it's God that does it. God puts us in that place of preparation. God puts us in that script of protection. God will put you in the sling of participation. But in the end, it's God that gets the glory and not you or me.

## IX. Conclusion and Invitation

Where are you in your walk with the Lord today? Where are you in your love for the Lord today? In your service for the Lord today? If you're in the brook, stay there until God gets you out. If you're in that script, and it's dark in there, and you just don't seem to know what's going on, just wait, He'll get you out when you're ready to be used. He'll put you in the right sling, and He'll bring the victory because the stone does not get the praise. It's Him. That's why we're here in prayer.

With every head bowed and every eye closed. The way you get in that brook of preparation is first of all knowing Jesus Christ as your Savior. To know that you've been born again.