

But God

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[0 : 00] see if you got one. Oh, man. I always say I'm not going to do this. I even... But...

That's right. He has different plans. After singing like that, it's like we're in the throne room before the Lord and saying how great He is.

And now we're here to hear a message that He has prepared for us, that He wants us to listen to, that He wants us, if we're able, to take notes. Hopefully you've come expectantly to hear a word from the Lord.

I usually have about eight pages of notes for the sermon. Today I've got over 20 because I have Zach to thank from last week.

He went 45 minutes short. So I'm going to take his 45 minutes. I'm going to add my hour to it that I normally do. And you guys are going to be here for a while.

[1 : 07] I'm just kidding. But today you should be excited because the first three verses of our sermon today, of the...

Come on, Mark. The first three verses that we're going to be looking at are about your very favorite subject. They're about you. Yes.

About you. And we all love me, yourself. We all love ourselves. And we know that because we think of ourselves constantly. We think the world revolves around us.

It's all about us. It's all about us. And that... I mean, you think about if you have a... If a photo was taken of the group today and it was put up someplace out there, before you left, you'd want to take a look at that photo and who's the first person you'd look for?

You. That's just the way we are. And I guess that's all right. Especially if we look pretty good or we dressed right or something like that.

[2 : 16] Anyway, our hair looked good and stuff. Did it look good today or something like that?

Anyway, we always think about us. Zach shared this morning in Ephesians 1 and about the glorious redemption that the Lord did for us.

But it has a starting point. It's got to start someplace. It's got to begin someplace. And it does begin with us. And it's not a pretty picture when we look at us.

How Scripture shows us, tells us what we're about. In Ephesians 2, it starts out with, and you.

So again, these first three verses are about us. So if you're able, please stand and we're going to be reading from Ephesians 2 and we're going to go from verse 1 through 7.

The bulletin says 5, but it's really 7. I did a mistake there. Anyway, so here we go. Ephesians 2, 1 through 7. And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

[3 : 36] Among them, we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

But God, being rich in mercy because of his great love, with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

so reads the word of God. Let us pray. Father, just thank you for the opportunity to be here this morning, to hear your word, to, in my case, be able to deliver the word.

Just thank you for that privilege. I do ask that, Holy Spirit, that you would quicken the people, everybody here, whatever you have for them to listen to, what you have for them, that it would prick their heart and that they would take it with them to share.

[5 : 05] Thank you for your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. So the first three verses are about you and me and what our condition was B.C., before Christ.

Verse 1, and you were dead in your trespasses and sins. Your trespasses, we've been told, trespasses and sins are two different things.

There's also transgressions, but trespasses, to just think of that simply, just think of that if you see a sign that says no trespassing and you say, meh, I'm going to do it anyway.

It's just like God's laws. You see God's laws and you say, meh, I know what he says, but I'm going to do it anyway. So it's intentional, it's willful disobedience to God.

That's what our trespasses are. And then our sins, sins are simply as if you were an archer. I'm sure you guys have heard the analogy that if you're an archer and you're aiming for the target and you miss the bullseye, you miss the mark.

[6 : 20] And that's what sins are. You're missing the mark. Sometimes intentional, sometimes not, but you're just going through life and you're missing the mark compared to God's laws. And so it's sin.

So anyway, but what were we, when we're doing these trespasses and sins, we're dead. We're dead. Think about that for a second. You're dead in your trespasses and your sins.

It's how we all started out. That's just amazing to me that we're dead.

What is a dead person? They can't think. They can't eat. They can't drink. They can't take care of themselves. You're dead.

Now, of course, we're talking spiritually here because we're not, obviously, we weren't physically dead. So, spiritually, we were dead and we couldn't eat the word of God.

[7 : 17] We couldn't drink of it. We couldn't meditate on it. Couldn't do any of those things. Couldn't do things to please God. We were trespassing and sinning against him. Verse two, in which you formerly walked.

Now, the word walked has the connotation of that it's like meandering. So, you're dead spiritually and you're just meandering through the world.

You got no purpose, no nothing. You think you do, but it's all an illusion. And so, you're just meandering, just wandering around. I heard it said that, no, I won't go there.

Yes, I will. I always do. And then I get myself in trouble. Anyway, so the meandering around is like a walking around drugged, so to speak. You got to, everything's cloudy and foggy and stuff.

It's almost like, let's see, what was the analogy? I was heard that when you go to the store with the wife and she meanders and the guy is going, I know I'm going to get myself in trouble.

[8 : 19] Never mind. Forget it. We're not going there. Anyway, so you meandered, formerly you meandered according to the course of this world. The course of the world, that is the fads, the, and you're like a weather vane.

You're blowing to and from. You're just, oh, this new fad. Oh, you start going that way and then, oh, the fad changes. You go over here. So we're just being meandering, but we're actually being directed by the course of the world.

So again, this is what our condition was. Think of that. And so, a course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air. And of course, who is that? That's Satan.

So he is the one that's behind the scenes directing things, directing those fads, directing, some are good, some are bad. We all get back to the same thing of when Satan's involved in it, his number one thing is just to get you, your mind, your activities, your work, everything off the Lord and onto the world.

That's what his scheme is. And so, that's the course of the world, just leading you according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

[9 : 39] So, it's currently working, it's currently going on. We see it today, again, talked about already this morning, the, how crazy the world is and stuff.

Just nuts. And then verse three, among them, we too all formally lived in the lust of the flesh.

It was our lifestyle. We formally lived that way. We too were like that. We know it. In the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, we were depraved.

We had a depraved mind that we just, and we lived for that and we indulged ourselves in our desires. Flesh of the mind and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest are still.

So, the wrath, the, we were doomed. So, we, we know that about ourselves now that we're on the other side of it.

[10:53] And it, it, it, man, when, if you just stopped right there and, and, and Paul in writing this, and God, the Holy Spirit directing this to Paul to write and just stopped right there, it would be pretty dismal.

And it would be, oh my gosh, look at how, uh, there's no hope. What am I going to do? But, then there comes the good news.

And, because thankfully the narrative doesn't continue with you and me because it's not about you and me, it's about God.

It changes over to him. And that's verse four. But God, but God, two little words and how powerful they are.

Um, but, in itself, is a powerful word. Um, depending upon how you use it in a sentence, um, it could be negative or it could be, it should, it could highlight the negative or it could highlight the positive.

[11:59] Uh, an example would be, um, I love you, uh, let's see, what do I have down here? I gotta be careful. I love you, but your attitude stinks.

As opposed to, your attitude stinks but I love you. You see the difference. There's a shift there that happens. One ends negatively.

I love you, but your attitude stinks. And that's what you're left with. The other one, your attitude stinks, but I love you. It just shifts. And so they, they call that the other side of but.

And you should think about that when you're talking with people. Try to stay the positive on the other side of but. On the right side of but.

When you're exhorting somebody, when you're trying to help them, you're not doing it to be mean, so don't be mean in your language. Look at the other side of but. Form it with the other side of but.

[13:00] So we've got but is a powerful word. And then when we put it in conjunction with God, it's an unstoppable word.

It's an unstoppable phrase. Two words that are just, oh, just powerful. But God. Here we are in our horrible condition. And then verse four, but God.

Being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us. The great in mercy.

That, how, how big is his mercy for us? It says here that it's great.

That's an adjective, right? Trying to describe how big God's love is for us. When I was reading this, it reminded me of when my children were younger and all were at home and we were playing the little, a little adjective game of trying to top each other in the, of trying to describe the biggest thing.

[14:15] thing. The biggest. And then another kid would pop up and say, the greatest. And then the, the humongous. And then the, the best of the best.

And then it just kept going. They kept amping, or, you know, trying to outdo the other one. Saying what thing was better. What, what was the greatest, you know, like this. The, his great love.

And I'd like to put in a different word here and I'll tell you that in just a second. But, so we were playing this game and going back and forth. The universal. You know, that's how big that is. It's the universal thing in, in, in all.

And as we were playing, all of a sudden, and I know this may sound strange to you, but this is really what happened. We were playing and then I heard the Lord speak to me, not audibly, in my head.

And he was playing along with us. It was wonderful. And just playing, obviously he didn't need to play along. He knew what the greatest word was.

[15:19] He knew what the biggest word was and that you can't top it because it's the biggest in the whole wide world and universal and everything else. and so he, so he goes, he goes, I got it.

And he, he said it like that in my head. I got it. I mean, like he's playing with us because that's how the kids were and saying, I got, oh, wait, I got it. And he was saying, oh, wait, I've got the biggest word for you.

And he says, so. And I went, huh? So? He goes, yeah, God so loved the world. I went, oh, Father, you are so neat.

And just playing that game with us and shared, you know, told the kids that and everything. And I don't know if they still remember it or not, but it was powerful to me and I've never forgotten it.

So when I see this, that his, he is rich in mercy because of his great love, his, he loved us so much. That's what I like to put in there.

[16:22] He loved us so much. God, you are good. Because of his great love with which he loved us. So he took his love, which is who he is, and he, with that love, he loved us.

Even when we were dead in our trespasses, in our transgressions, which are even greater sins, and what did he do after he, by loving us and showing us his mercy when we were dead in our transgressions, he made us alive together with Christ.

He did three things for us by loving us with his great, so great mercy. He made us alive instead of being dead with Christ.

in verse six, and he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So he made us alive, he raised us up, and he seated us with him.

That's pretty neat. When we were dead and we had no ability of our own to do any of this stuff, he loved us while we were yet sinners.

[17:45] But God, horrible situation, can't be fixed, you might say, if you were looking on the outside, there's no way. We can look at some friends or acquaintances and we can say, there's no hope for them.

There's no way God could save them. They're, uh-uh. But God, but God, when he gets put into the equation, everything changes, but God.

He steps into the situation, he made us alive in Christ, he raised us up, and he seated us with him. And I, I mean, and I'm sure you guys are doing it, I hope so, that you're taking a moment to actually marvel at that again, marvel back at your salvation, reconsidering or rethinking about what you were before Christ, before God, and what you are now.

Who you were, where you're headed, all is lost, but God. Us, left by ourselves, is hopeless, but with God in the equation, it changes the negative into the positive.

[19:09] negative. And this, of course, is a biggie. But how about other situations in our life that seem hopeless or dead, like those maybe other friends or something, but also things that we find ourselves in?

There are other times that God will step into the scene and change the negative into the positive. In fact, there are 45 times that are listed in scripture, but God.

45 times that phrase is used, but God. Things seem hopeless, they seem helpless, but God. I'm going to talk about a few of them here, and I'm going to give you some references.

I would like if you guys would just, if you're taking notes, that you just simply write down the reference for right now, rather than turning to the reference, and the reason I'm doing that is because we tend to, once we, first of all, it takes us a minute to find the reference, and then we're missing part of what's being said, and then when we get there, if you're like me, you start reading the passage.

Whoa, what's that say? And we start getting into that, and again, we're tuning out what is being shared. So take down the reference, absolutely, and look at it later, and see how but God injects himself into situations to make it into a positive.

[20:39] What about an area with marriage and struggling? In Genesis 20, we have the story of Abraham, he is sojourning at this point in Gerar, or however you say that, G-E-R-A-R, where, anyway, he's sojourning into that area with his wife, Sarah, and he comes across the king of Gerar, or whatever, and Abimelech, and he's scared, Abraham is scared for himself.

Oh, no, we, the men will find you so beautiful, Sarah, that they will kill me so that they can have you. So let's, I'm going to devise his plan.

In fact, this is the second time Abraham has done this. He did it one other time, it worked, so why not do it again? This is his fallback safety net, I guess, because, you know, Abraham, just like you and me, doesn't always trust God.

He's a good man, obviously. He is faithful, and he, but in this instance, that he gets there, and so he tells them, the Abimelech and the men of the city that Sarah is his sister.

That is my sister. Oh, okay. And so they leave him alone, and they take Sarah, and Abimelech puts her in his harem.

[22:15] Now, at first glance, you're thinking, yeah, that's bad, you know, that's not a good thing, but what's really going on here? You got a very, very selfish husband.

He is thinking of just himself at this point. You know, they, Abraham and Sarah have already been promised that they would have, that Abraham would be a father of many, of nations, and no child yet, and yet he's basically not selling Sarah off into a harem, but he's, you know, hey, this is my sister, you go ahead and take her.

I'm okay, I've been spared, I'm alright, instead of trusting in God. I don't know, but I think that if I did that to my wife, I just don't think that she would be too happy with that.

And so, and that sets up a very dangerous situation. So this marriage, I would think, was a little bit strained at that point, especially when this is the second time that happened.

So this is a strain in the marriage, and I think that again, we can probably all relate where most men in a marriage are selfish.

[23 : 32] They think of themselves more, and don't think of the wife, and we're not going to get into all that, but anyway, the bad situation here. And, but what happens to change it around?

In verse three of Genesis 20, it says, but God. So this is my sister, Abraham's safe, Sarah gets taken into the harem, and things would have happened, obviously, because the harem is meant for concubines, and you guys get the picture.

So not a good situation, and so God needed to intervene in this. So but God, God goes to Abimelech in a dream, and he tells him, you're a dead man.

Why? Because you took a married woman into your harem. Huh? And he was wondering, this was fascinating when I was looking into all this stuff, because I'd never seen it before, about some time went by after Sarah got taken into the harem.

And the reason why we know that, because this just didn't happen within a week or two or something, I had some amount of time, we don't know how much time went by, but some amount of time had to have gone by, because when God told Abimelech that you're a dead man, he wasn't saying, I'm going to kill you, what he meant was you're dead in the sense that you are impotent.

[25 : 13] You won't even have any, you have not had any desire for this new beautiful woman in your harem. You have no desire for her.

In fact, you have no desire for any women anymore at this point. That's what he means by you're dead. You're dead in that sense. You're a dead man. And Abimelech was now realizing what was going on in his city, because all the men had the exact same problem in the city.

All the men were impotent. And that's how we know that time had to have gone by because Abimelech was saying, are you going to destroy and wipe out this nation, this people, meaning his people, meaning that there was not going to be any more children because all the men were impotent.

So there wouldn't be any more. So that eventually, that race, that people would die out. And Abimelech saying, what are you going to do? And so that's how serious this got and how much God was protecting and how he intervened supernaturally.

Obviously, he gave back Sarah back to Abraham and said, I had no idea. Shame on you, basically, for not telling me. Here's all these cattle.

[26 : 41] Here's all this money. Now, please go. Although, hey, if you find a place around here that you want to live, go ahead. Because I also found that interesting that Abimelech knew God to some degree.

He had to because he knew who was speaking to him in the dream. And anyway, so the point is that a bad situation and God stepped into it.

He intervened. But God. Another situation. Let's see. How about in-laws? Anybody have any in-law problems? Are they all wonderful and great?

Well, in our next story in Genesis 31, we have Laban. Laban, the father-in-law of Jacob and Rachel and Leah are his wives.

And Laban, every time he turned around, is cheating him. He's just cheating him out of everything and telling Jacob that he's got to stay longer to now marry Rachel after he stayed seven years to marry Leah.

[27 : 48] And now he's got to stay another seven years. And then, oh, after that, now I need you to grow the livestock and everything and Jacob does these things and his flock is getting bigger and bigger while Laban and his son's flock is diminishing.

And so he's ready to cheat Jacob again. So the in-law, cheating, cheating, cheating the poor son-in-law. And so he's ready to probably kill Jacob.

He was going to go after him because he's not very happy with him. And but God, verse 7 of Genesis 31, but God didn't allow that to happen. He stepped in.

Okay? Again, but God, but God, in-law problems. How about a dysfunctional family? Genesis 50. You guys know the story.

And that's all about the brothers who sold Joseph into slavery and then, you know, tells their dad, hey, Joseph died.

[29 : 02] Here's the coat of many colors with blood on it and everything. And what happens to Joseph? He, of course, over time, finally becomes basically the prime minister of Egypt.

And he's the second in charge. And the famine comes along and basically at the end, you know, saves his brothers and his father and stuff from the starvation.

And verse 20 tells us what was going on. And he says, when he's talking to his brothers after he's revealed himself to them, and he says, what you meant for evil, God meant for good.

But it starts out by saying in verse 7, but God didn't allow that to happen. But God, he stepped in again, another time.

Dysfunctional family. How about a time when you were, after you've been saved and sin is tugging at you or something, and you're afraid of falling back into old ways because you're scared or something like that, you're lost, you're confused, well, there's a time in, what happens in Exodus 13, what's going on there.

[30 : 23] This is when the Israelites have been saved from Egypt, they've, the Exodus has happened and God is ready to take them through the desert and over to the promised land, but he says, I'm not going to lead them the straight path, I'm not going to lead them straight, you know, from point A to point B, the shortest point, I'm going to take them circumvently because they would have to go through the Philistine territory and they would see war and he said to protect them, how did, after leaving Egypt, the Israelites when they, when they see war might want to go back to Egypt.

Egypt represented sin, it represented the flesh, so God was protecting his people, he intervened, but God took them down a different path and guided them with a pillar of cloud and fire, cloud during the day, fire by night.

So, I guess the point on this is, if you're ever afraid of going back into your sin, just cry out to God, he can change it, he can change your direction so that you don't go down these paths that are scary and stuff.

When I read that, I think of my, one of my brothers, he was secretly heavy into alcoholism and he struggled and struggled and struggled and I think I told this story, he, where a man came in, a competitor came in, business-wise, came into his office and said, hey Mike, if you don't change, you're going to lose your family, your home, your business, everything, your children, your wife, if you don't stop drinking and the guy got up and left.

That was it. Anyway, so my brother, of course, I got to change and everything and he vowed right then to do it but he was scared to death of falling back into that sin because it had such a grip on him.

[32 : 40] He didn't know what to do and so he was crying out to the Lord and saying, you know, basically what it got down to is, Lord, if I ever take a drop of alcohol again, may it just taste bitter to me, may it be horrible, but more importantly, he changed his direction of how he went home because before at work he didn't drink.

During the day he didn't drink. It was after hours that he would drink and so on his way home he would stop by the liquor store, get whatever amount and he would guzzle it and by the time he got home he was nice and buzzed.

And so the Lord told him to change his direction. Don't take that route anymore when going home. Go different. Break that habit. Don't ever go that route again.

Don't ever without your wife, without anybody else, without having an accountability person, don't go there any longer. And he didn't. And to this day he's sober. And that was now getting on 20 years ago.

So praise God for that. But so but God but God intervened. He sent that man to him to warn him because he loved him.

[33 : 56] Hey, you're going to lose it. You're going to lose it all. Pretty cool. How about and I'm sure that we all can relate to this one too. How about when you're drying you're thirsty?

This story comes out of Judges. Oh, by the way, I didn't say the other afraid of falling back into the ways. I said that was Exodus 13. The actual but God part is verse 18 of Exodus 13.

All right. So now dry and thirsty, we're looking at Judges 15. And in this situation, Samson had just killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass.

He got that and he just went to town on them, killed them. But after that happened, you can imagine, even though he had strength, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he had strength but he's still a human and after all that's done and the adrenaline goes away, he was dry and thirsty. So much so, he was so dry and thirsty that he says, I think I'm going to die. That's how bad it is. I'm going to die if you don't do something God.

[35 : 14] And so in verse 19, but God, there he is again, right there in the midst of it, and he intervenes, but God carved out a hollow place and water came forth.

A spring came up and he was quenched and he was renewed. That's pretty neat. So when you're dry and thirsty spiritually, we're talking spiritually here, when you're dry and thirsty spiritually, cry out, but God will intervene and give you springs of water.

Let's see. Oh, and did I give the verse on that where the but God came in? Verse 19 of Judges 15. Moving on to 2nd Chronicles chapter 20, when you face battles.

Do you guys face battles now and then? Obviously not the cling, cling, chunk, chunk with the weapons and stuff, but we do face battles in our life.

We all do. Could be mental, could be physical, could be sickness, could be anyway, battles all over the place.

[36 : 35] Could be things at work, children. But anyway, 2nd Chronicles 20, this is the story of Jehoshaphat and all the armies are coming against him.

He is overwhelmed, or he is over, not over, just overwhelmed, but he's also outnumbered. There is no way that he can win this battle.

And verse 15, it says, the battle is not yours, but God's. And we know the story, we know what happened. God routes them and has them kill each other, and all kinds, so God took care of it all, right?

If you're facing battles, the battle is, just understand that these are all symbols of what we go through. It doesn't have to be the actual thing that's happening here.

So if you're going through a battle, understand the battle is not yours, it's God. And remind him of that. Tell him of that. God, this is your battle. I think of another story where a pastor had just, his church just kept growing and growing.

[37 : 53] He kept moving and moving into different buildings because it just kept getting bigger and bigger. So he had to, finally, there came a point where he had to buy land and then they had to build on it.

And so they did, they purchased the land, they got a good deal on it and everything, and a huge chunk of land.

And now it was time to build the building. And every day that he would go home, that he passed by that intersection where that land was.

and his heart would just sink. And he just, man, how in the world are we ever going to finance this? You know, and just all the whole thing about it, how are we going to get the zoning, how are we going to get all the logistics of it?

And, because he's just a man, he's a preacher, he doesn't know about all this stuff, he doesn't know laws and rules and regulations and everything, so his heart would just sink when he just saw that land and he knew it was Satan that was putting that thought in him, that battle was going on with him.

[39 : 02] And finally, he came to the point and he said, no, the battle doesn't belong to me, but God, it belongs to you.

You're the one who's causing the growth, you're the one who's causing all this, so it's on you, I don't need to worry about it. You're doing it, you're going to take care of it.

And the church now is, yeah, it's a massive church and all kinds of different things, it has schooling and just Marietta, I don't know if you've ever heard about it in California, and there's a Calvary Chapel, Chuck Smith, so Marietta, big, huge place, and so many things have happened out of that. But anyway, that was the battle that he faced for quite a while. So verse 15, the battle is not yours but God's. How about have you ever not had, you struggle with compassion for people?

This would be in my area where I find I have trouble for having compassion for people now and then, in the story of Jonah, Jonah chapter four, that, of course, after God, or that Jonah, he took, he dropped Jonah off at the beaches of Nineveh through the whale, and he preached like he was told to finally, and what happened?

[40 : 39] The Ninevites repented, and Jonah's going, I told you they were going to repent, didn't I tell you? You got to understand who the Ninevites were, they were not good people, they were a horrible nation and did horrible, detestable things, and so, Jonah, first of all, was just astonished that, what, you want me to go preach to them?

No, and, of course, the whale tried to run away, the whale takes them back, and anyway, so now they're repenting, and he's not happy, he is not a happy camper, he's angry that they have repented, and that the people are spared, he has no compassion for them, you know, he forgets that, you know, what do we see in chapter 2 of Ephesians, that dead in your trespasses, let's see, all these things, he forgets that he was just like that, or he was still just like that, anyway, no compassion, and in fact, no compassion so much so that God still had compassion on him, and he sat under a vine, and God caused the vine to grow, and he, it grew up, and it shaded him over the day as he was looking over the city, and God's talking to him and saying, what right do you have, why are you so angry that I saved Nineveh, you know, what is that to you, why, you have no right to be angry about that, and so, anyway, he's sitting underneath his vine, and God causes the vine to grow, it shades

Jonah, and he's nice and comfortable there, he goes to sleep at night, and during the night, God sends a worm, and in the next morning, the worm devours the entire vine, and now, what happens with Jonah, he's angry again, what?

he had more compassion on that vine, because it got destroyed, because it got eaten up, than he did to the Ninevites, so, God did that on purpose, verse 7 of Jonah 4 says, because Jonah was not compassionate towards the people, he said, but God appointed a worm to attack the plant, so God again, had to intervene, he had to force Jacob's, Jonah's hand, and show him that, look, you're more compassionate over a silly vine than you are human beings, and so, maybe we need that from time to time, where we have more compassion, we think about something else, more than we think about human beings, what comes to mind with something like that is, save the whales, whales, and yeah, it's important, but what about the human beings out there, or save the human beings, where's that out there, we don't get that,

I don't mean to pick on whales, you can put, PETA will put in anything in there, you know, save the, whatever, save the spotted owl.!

[43 : 59] Anyway, have compassion on people, if you need it, God will, but God, God will intervene in your life and show you why you need to have that compassion and where you're misdirected in your compassion, maybe have more compassion for your car, I don't know, you know, all of a sudden it gets wrecked, it's like, oh, it's like, how come you don't feel that way for people, you get the point.

Let's see, how about times of temptation in 1 Corinthians 10, you know, first of all, we know that Satan is like a roaring lion looking, whom he, looking, or seeking whom he can devour and tempting us, and so there's times when we are tempted, sometimes it's by our own desires, as James puts it, but in 1 Corinthians 10, we are told that no temptation has overtaken you, that such as is common to men, meaning that we are going to be tempted, it's common to man, everybody goes through it, to one degree or another, whatever sins we're tempted with, but sometimes, like my brother said with alcohol, I can't get out of this, I'm so scared and everything, but we're also told in verse 13, when we're being tempted, but God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but will provide a way of escape, but God, he intervenes again, when we're being tempted, again, this is an ongoing thing for all of us, and I think that we can all relate, he says that he's given us, but God has given us a way of escape, what is that way of escape?

A lot of times, it's back to that, take a different route, change your habits, don't take that second look, don't turn on that channel or don't watch that movie, stories told of a man who loved donuts, and it kind of showed, he struggled with donuts, he loved donuts, come on, man, and so the doctor told him, hey, you better quit eating all those donuts, not good for your health and heart and everything else, and so, all right, and he knew God would also tell him that it was just confirmation from the doctor, and so, all right, I'm not going to eat any more donuts, and so, as time goes by, a month goes by, and he hadn't had any donuts, he's doing real good, and then, you know, things start, your willpower, your conviction or whatever starts to wane a little bit, and he goes, you know, you know what would be nice for the boys at work, they'd all love a jelly donut,

I'll just be the hero today, and I'm going to get some jelly donuts and take them on in, Lord, if it be your will, let there be a parking space right in front of the donut shop, and sure enough, there was a

parking space right in front of that donut shop, after he'd gone around the block 30 times, and we can justify things, we say things like that, Lord, you know, if it's okay this time, then let this, and then we kind of make it happen, and I don't know, we play games, but God, but God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you're able, and provide a way of escape, this one I'm saving for last, so yes, I'm almost done, man, parenting, there's a big one, good old parenting, how does

God get in there, this one is interesting, a little bit of an interesting twist, and why he saved it for last, this is taken out of Genesis 48, and our but God verse is going to be verse 21, but what's happening here is that I didn't write down who it was, I believe that this one is Isaac, no, I don't remember who the patriarch that's dying, anyway, he says to, hang on, I'm going to look it up, Genesis 48, ah, you guys can't, don't do it, I'm doing it, it'll remind me, 48, and Israel is dying, and verse 21, Israel, and Joseph, that's who

[49 : 24] Israel is talking to, is Joseph, or Jacob is talking to Joseph, um, no, is that Jacob? Now I'm getting confused, forget it, let's just stick with what scripture says here, then Israel said to Joseph, behold, I am about to die, behold, I am about to die, and the reason this is put under parenting is because this is such an important point, that we so often, when our children come to us, um, with problems, with issues, struggles, whatever they are that are going on, we as parents want to try and help, of course we do, and so we, you know, if you can picture it, I mean, again, um, symbolically that, you know, the kids are coming to you, and you're taking them by the hand, and you're helping them through this struggle, or whatever, you're, you're, you're guiding them through, and Israel says to

Joseph, behold, I am about to die, we need to understand that as parents, I'm about to die, we all are going to die, every one of us, obviously, and so we have to be careful how we solve our children's problems, how should we be doing them, we mean well, sometimes it's financial, we'll give them money, sometimes if it's relational, we'll try to guide them in the right direction, nothing wrong with that, but the more important thing is, in verse, the second part of verse 21, is that, all right, so behold, I am about to die, but God, there it is, but God will be with you, we have to learn to take our kids, and this can actually expand into other people that we encounter, friends, co-workers that we talk to and stuff that are struggling with problems and stuff, that we've got to understand that we're dying, we don't have all the answers first of all, but we're dying, and we're not going to, the point is we're not going to be there forever, we're not going to be always, we're not always going to be there for our children, for our friends, for family, so what's the better thing?

But God will be with you, he's the same yesterday, today, tomorrow, right? We should be taking their hand and placing it in God's hand and saying this is where you go to when you have problems. But God, not but Mark, not but Sherry, not but Ann, not but on and on, we can go, not us, but God, he's the one who can take care of stuff, he is the one, direct them in the right path, he doesn't die, he's immutable, he's immovable, he's the rock of your salvation, he's the foundation of your life and family.

But God. Again, there's quite a few more but gods in there, like I said in the beginning, there's 45 of them, as far as I know, you can look up other ones and see how they relate to your life.

[53 : 13] After I had studied all this, I was thinking, there's got to be a condition here, doesn't there? It's got to be conditional. There's got to be an if in there or something, why?

Because why in some of these situations does God intervene and yet we know in our own life, we can attest to it, God hasn't intervened, not in these ways that we can see like this, and so we may walk away with the idea that apparently God loved these people more.

He doesn't love me, he doesn't care about me, he doesn't hear about my suffering, he doesn't hear about my problems, but God's not there, I need a but God moment.

Hopefully you're not thinking that, but if you do, because my mind went there, and I struggled with it, saying, there is no condition on these things, God chooses how he will, when and how he will intervene in situations, but this I do know, that when we are in situations, we should be finding ourselves praying, crying out to God to help us in these situations instead of trying to fix them on our own, oh yeah, we can try and fix them on our own, but we know what happens with that, we just make a bigger mess out of things, and so the smart thing to do is to cry out to pray to God.

How should we pray to God? James 1, I'm going to turn there, James 1 verse 5 through 8, and this has to do with prayer, I think.

[55 : 17] But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. That sound familiar about how we were in the world being tossed? Because we're double-minded, going back and forth also, don't know, I don't know that God is good, I hear that he is, but I doubt it at times.

Verse 7, for that man ought to not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. It starts out with, if any of you lacks wisdom, let he ask of God.

I think that that's what our prayer should be when facing these things, asking for wisdom, but it's not how you think, at least it wasn't how I thought of asking for wisdom was.

[56 : 24] Wisdom so I can figure, you know, give me wisdom so I can figure out how to make this right, how I can fix it. No. Wisdom to understand when but God gets involved, but God.

Because when God gets involved, what's really happening? He is, his will is being done, his will is being worked out in that situation.

We so often, when we are facing trials, tribulations, problems, struggles, that we go to God, we explain what the problem is, and as if he doesn't know, we explain it to him and then, worse yet, we explain or we give him the suggestions on how to fix it.

This is how you should fix it. This is how it will work out. If you do it like this, everything will be good. So, you know, like the, let me win, I'm financially strapped, let me win the lottery, I'll give, you know, a hundred million dollars to you, and then I'll keep the other billion.

[57 : 39] No, you guys get it. So, when we pray for wisdom, the wisdom that I, again, that I think is to know what his will is for your life, and the wisdom to trust him to work it out how he wants in your life.

If he took the time to, out of our depraved life, death, dead to ourselves, if he took the time to send Jesus to die on the cross for our sins, isn't he also interested in things that are happening in our life?

Of course he is. But sometimes he wants you to stay there. We don't understand it, but he does give that peace that passes understanding. And when you get that peace, hold on to it.

Accept that as God's answer and his will for your life. life, it makes it at least more bearable as you're going through it.

And then when you're talking to other people, when they ask you how you're doing, you just honestly say to them, God's working out his will in my life. I don't understand it.

[59 : 10] I'm not getting healed the way I expect it to. My finance is still going downhill. I just got fired, you know, on and on, all the scenarios that are out there.

But I don't understand, but the one thing I do understand is that God's will will not be thwarted and he loves me and whatever he's doing in my life, I'm okay with that.

I struggle with it at times, but I'm okay with it. It all goes back to the same thing that Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, take this cup from me, let it pass from me, but not my will, but your will be done.

Can we stay in that place so that we can trust the but gods that do happen? Because they do happen in our life. But God left you in your circumstance for a reason.

But God, it's okay. Rest in that. Let's pray. Father, we do thank you for your word.

[60 : 23] We thank you that you love us so much that you bestowed, you enacted with your great, your so great love for us that you made us alive in Christ.

You stepped in, you intervened in our life, you saved us, and how many times do you do it with so many different things and we don't even recognize it?

Father, how many times do we pray for telling you how to fix this or take care of that? And we're sorry for that because we're trying to be, take your place.

How many times do we do that with our children, our friends, and with our advice instead of pointing them to you, knowing that you have everything in control? We need to seek you, seek wisdom, because of wisdom being the fear of you is the beginning of wisdom.

Let us understand what that means in that it's more fear for our life of trying to direct it our self without you, the fear of not having you, that that's the beginning of wisdom.

[61 : 50] The fear of not trusting you, that is the beginning of wisdom. Because we truly will be wise when we see that you are involved in our life.

Thank you for this morning. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. toNINGNINGNINGNING