



Trials – May 2, 2019  
Chris Osborne

**Verses Covered**

*Genesis 15:18 – 21*  
*2 Corinthians 1:3 – 7*  
*Colossians 1:24*  
*Ephesians 2:4 – 7*  
*Ephesians 3:10 & 11*  
*Job 1:6 – 8*  
*James 1:2 – 4*  
*Genesis 15:13 -14*  
*Revelation 2:9 – 10*  
*Romans 8:26 – 28*  
*1 John 4:16 – 19*  
*Habakkuk 2:1 – 4, 13*

Today's going to be our last session. I think we've covered everything we need to cover. We are going to meet at my house May 13<sup>th</sup> assuming that the yard is not flooded which who knows what's going to happen. If we don't meet at my house, we're going to meet up here. So bring your wives. I hope we get to do it at the house.

The last thing we're going to talk about today is I think probably the most difficult thing you face. That is trials that you have to deal with in your life. You have two problems here in the world you live in and this is the key, at least one key, to understanding trials. God is sovereign in the universe. He has chosen not to exercise His sovereignty in this world yet. Satan is called the ruler of this world. Prince of the power of the air. He has a lot of control in this world. So you have this dynamic of God at times exerting His sovereignty and we'll look at this in the scripture, He exerts His sovereignty inside what Satan's doing in your life to turn it to God's benefit in your life. It is the difficult thing. For example, look at Genesis 50. Now it's the story of Joseph. You remember this guy. He does start out as a jerk. I mean, there's no question. He knows dad loves him more than anybody else. So he gets a coat, he lords it over his brothers, he makes them mad, as a matter of fact he even kind of lords it over his dad and his mom. There his dad kind of bad mouths, admonishes, him. So, the kid, they decide they're going to kill him which is what I would have thought too. So they decide, one brother says, "No, let's not kill him." He tries to save him. They put him in a pit. The kid's young, he's terrified. So they sell him to a caravan heading into Egypt

which doesn't sound like that big a deal. But you've got to remember, it's Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, right. So he's a fourth generation Jew. The only Jews are his family. There aren't any other Jews. There's nobody else that believes in Jehovah God. So this kid is completely alone. So when he's sold into this caravan, he doesn't understand the customs or the culture or the language and they do not know his God. So he winds up in Egypt completely alone. Situationally, emotionally, spiritually, he's got nothing. Zero. So he gets there and what happens to him is hope and then loss of hope. Hope and then loss of hope. He gets into Potiphar's house. He's doing really well. He's so gifted Potiphar puts him over everything in his house. Potiphar's got this cougar wife, she comes after him. It's interesting. He says to her, "No." And he says to her, no, because he says, I can't sin against my God. Now that's a staggering statement when he's totally alone in his church basically. He's the only one in his church. There isn't anybody else. So she blames him, he winds up in jail, things he's got a shot at getting out, he meets a couple guys. They say, "Yeah, we'll tell Pharaoh when we get out." They don't. Finally, he gets out. He's an older man now, probably in his 30's, but he winds up becoming the head of Israel. But he goes through all this turmoil. And even though he's number two in Egypt, sounds good, right. But the Bible says that the Egyptians hate shepherds. That the shepherds are loathsome to the Egyptians. He's known as that. So even though he's number two in Egypt and everybody bows down to him, it's not like he has a lot of good golfing friends. I mean this guy has a tough life. I want you to listen to Genesis 50:18 – 21. Listen to what he says about all his trials.

<sup>18</sup>His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." <sup>19</sup>But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today. <sup>21</sup>Do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." And thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

He says in these verses that everything he went through had nothing to do with him. All his trials all his struggles, nothing is about him. It's about his family getting into Egypt. That's all it is. None of the trials was about him. So sometimes when you go through trials, we what I call an American Christianity, everything's about us. And apparently it's not. He has put into one of the worst trials you can imagine in the scripture, totally alone, no one around, no comfort, no aid, no help, stands for God. And every bit of it had nothing to do with him. It had everything to do with his family and getting them into Egypt. So sometimes the trials you go through are not about you. They're about other people.

Now God's going to get you through those. Now look at 2 Corinthians 1. Here's one of the things that He's going to do. I want you to listen to verses 3 through 7. As a matter of fact, this is what's going to wind up in a lot of your lives because now He's going to use you again, look at what he says.

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup>who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup>Whereas we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

That's an interesting statement because he's going to pull that up in just a second.

<sup>6</sup>If we're afflicted, it's for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort. What you experience when you patiently endure, the same sufferings that we suffer; <sup>7</sup>our hope for you is unshaken for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you shall also share in our comfort.

Again, he says, 2 Corinthians 1, he says, "Look, we've had a lot of trials, but a lot of our trials, God's given us comfort, and that is so that we can comfort you." So, again, Paul says the trials not really about him, it's about God using him to comfort other people. Identical to Genesis 50. You have the same thing spiritually. Now I want you to look at a couple verse. Number one, we're going to look at three verses and I'm going to tie them together. So we'll just read them really quick. Look at Colossians 1:24. Weird statement. Listen to what he says.

<sup>24</sup>Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's affliction for the sake of His body that is the church of which I became a minister.

Sufferings for him? No. Exactly what Joseph said. Now hold there. Go to Ephesians 2:4 – 7. Listen to what he says:

<sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness toward us in Jesus Christ.

Look at Ephesians 3, we looked at this a couple weeks ago, verses 10 & 11.

<sup>10</sup>So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. <sup>11</sup>This was realized according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Now then go to Job 1. Nobody has a worse day than Job. Maybe the new coach that just got Kyler Murray, he's going to have a worse day if he thinks that guy can compete in the NFL. So Job has this godly life. Look at what's said in verse 6.

<sup>6</sup>There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. <sup>7</sup>The Lord said to Satan, "Where did you come from?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around it." <sup>8</sup>The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? That there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil." <sup>9</sup>Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? <sup>10</sup>Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands and his possession have increased in the land. <sup>11</sup>Stretch out your hand and touch all that he has; he will curse You to Your face." <sup>12</sup>The Lord said to

Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only against him do not stretch out your hands.” So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

So you have this unique structure in each one of these deals. Paul says I’m filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. Paul says in two different places, God will take us and use us to show off who He is. That is precisely what He winds up doing in Job 1. Satan comes and He says, “You notice Job? Well here’s the deal. You can do whatever you want, but He’s going to stay in there with me. I know him. You don’t.” Now I don’t understand all this. I particularly don’t understand this or this. Because he talks about the fact that in 3, remember we looked at it, that he shows now, right now, what we are to certain beings in heaven. Somehow, what we go through, particularly when we’re filling up the afflictions of Christ, the trials we go through, our response to the trial allows God to use us to show off who He is up there. Now I don’t understand that. I don’t have any idea. All I know is, there are beings probably that we know nothing about that God’s created. We know there are cherubs, seraphs, angels. We know in Revelation there are four living beings, literally it’s a weird word, it’s just four and then you have this participle being. So you have four living ones that surround the throne in Revelation. So obviously there are probably beings we don’t understand. And somehow in the course of that, when I go through a trial, it’s not always about me. God uses it to showcase who I am. So when I fail Him in the trial, and I’m angry at Him because things have not gone my way, He can’t show me off. We are so focused in this world that we do not get what the Bible is saying. That there is a world beyond us that is eternal. And even in that world right now, God is showing off who we are to being up there that we do not see and we do not understand. I don’t grasp all that. It does put, though, an eternal visible praise-worthy significance to my life here whether I see it or don’t see it. That there’s something immense about who I am in the trial that God’s using there and I need to pay attention to that. We’re so focused on the trial about ourselves and what we face that we don’t get it.

So let me show you how we deal with this. Now go to James 1. One of the classic verses about how to handle what you face. Because how you handle what you face is not about what you endure here. It’s about what God is showing off in your life there and what he does here. So listen to this. I’m going to read the whole thing and we’ll go back.

<sup>2</sup>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>Let steadfastness have its full effect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

So if you start from the back and I am perfect and complete. Now if the trial does that, that shows who I am and that perfection and completeness brings honor to the Father where He is demonstrating His greatness through me. So James 1:2 – 4 actually fits all the rest of this. Now here’s what he says. He says count it joy. Now what’s the clear statement there? That a trial is not joy. The essence of a trial is it removes happiness and pleasure. We’ll just say happiness. It takes that from your life. That is the definition of the trial. As a matter of fact, the Greek word for trial here that’s used throughout most of the New Testament is *thlipsis*. It’s actually a Greek word that was used when they would put grapes in a tub and they would pressure them into wine. And so the idea of a trial is it is going to remove happiness. If you have a wife and you guys go to the doctor and the doctor says, “Look, I’m sorry, you have....” And you hear the word cancer.

Whether she's actually going to die or not, that word in and of itself will strip every bit of that out of your life. When you get the call, I mean I've gone through this a thousand times. I remember I'd been here about two years and I get a call from a family in the church. Their 25-year-old daughter was driving to work doing just everything's fine, and some idiot drunk driving hit her car and killed her. Of course the drunk driver was perfectly fine. I have to do the funeral. Now if you're the family, your happiness is gone. We have a guy in our church, this is why I hate the Eagle, we asked them to come out here to the ground breaking for our children's building. KBTX came out. The Eagle didn't even respond to us. So I get a call from a family in the church and their 4 ½ year old daughter drowned in Orlando near the Disney Resort. So what does Eagle do? They immediately call me over Christmas. "Oh, we care about that child. We just want to interview you about it." I said, "You're not interviewing me at all." If you're that family and they told you that the door was safe so you let your kid go and then the word comes back to you that your daughter's laying at the bottom of the pool, she's 4 ½ years old, buddy it's going to rip every bit of happiness out. So understand, a trial does this. That is the definition. He says, count it joy. Act like, believe it, this is actually the Greek word to logically deduce. Think to yourself logically that what has removed my happiness, I'm going to treat it like it's joy. What is the difference between joy and happiness? Happiness is good circumstances in your life. Joy is reflecting the glory of God in your life. That's the distinction. Joy's a reflection of God's glory. Happiness is good circumstances. You find out your 4 ½ year old girl is dead, your circumstances are now gone. But you can still consider it joy because there is still a possibility out of this to render glory to God if these things now become real in your life. If God looks somewhere in heaven, and I don't know how He does it, but He looks at these people and says, "See this couple, they are devastated. Notice they're still in church. They still love Me. They still care about Me." One of the coolest things I did last year in Israel, they went with me, and if you know anything about losing a child, first thing it does is devastate your home. Most couples divorce after the death of a child. I renewed their vows in Golgotha. You don't think God looks down at that and uses that to say to people up here, "See, I make a difference. What I did through Jesus Christ in the indwelling of the Spirit makes a difference in people's lives." So we have that opportunity and that's our response. We're to count it joy. Why?

Testing of your faith produces steadfastness. The Greek word for testing is the Greek word for proving out metals. I'm certainly not scientific, but we all know metals melt at different temperatures. So if you want to get a certain metal out of a rock, you heat it to a certain temperature. That comes out. That's the Greek word here that God is going to test you. And what He does is He either pushes yourself out or Jesus comes out of the pressure that you're under. So he says, count it all joy, the testing of your faith is going to produce steadfastness. That's endurance. And then endurance is going to make you perfect and complete. Can't get here actually without the trial. If all you ever do, and this is why college students are never here. Because you've got to go through some trials to reach depth of completeness in your life. Now I don't think that means you have to lose a child or your wife dies. I don't mean that. But I think you've got to go through enough trials that stretch you that you rely on the Father in a way that He completes who you are.

Now let me show you something. Go to Genesis 15:13 – 14. And then we'll go to Revelation. Opposite ends of the land. Listen to Genesis 15:13 – 14.

<sup>13</sup>Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, they will be servants there and they will be afflicted for 400 years. <sup>14</sup>But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve and afterward they shall come out with great possession.

Now from there, go to Revelation 2:9 – 10. Listen to what he says:

<sup>9</sup>I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup>Do not fear what you’re about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you in prison, that you may be tested, and for 10 days you will have tribulation. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

In both of these, who controls the time of your trial? God does. So even though Satan rules this world, His sovereignty controls how far Satan is allowed to work on you through trials and how far the world seeps through his hands to hurt you. That is precisely the statement in Job. So even though it looks like at times, man, my world is shot. The Jews are going to be in Egypt for 400 years. Why? Because he’s growing a million and a half people. And He wants them enslaved so they’ll want to come out. Even when they get out, they’re still whiney. I mean, I’m telling you, the Jews, they’re just strange.

Now, how do you get through this? Number one, you figure God’s got this somewhere. And that even if you can’t see it here, He’s showing you off somewhere. But look at Roman 8. We’ve looked at this before. But look at Romans 8:26 – 28. This is only applicable to those of us that are believers. So listen to what it says:

<sup>26</sup>Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; we do not know what to pray for as we ought,

That’s absolutely true when you’ve just buried a 4 ½ year old daughter.

but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

Now does say I’m praying? No. What does it say? Who’s praying? The Spirit. So it’s not a heavenly prayer language. It’s not that. He prays. There’s an emotion to His prayer. Now watch this:

He intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; <sup>27</sup>He who searches hearts (God the Father) knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

So we have this emotional Spirit praying for us. God do what is best for You in their life. What happens?

<sup>28</sup>We know that for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose.

The one way we get through these moments by having faith that God is honoring who we are and what we're going through somewhere, even if not here, and that the Holy Spirit is right now praying for us, and His prayer is, bring something good out of the mess. Now slide over to 1 John and I won't go to the passage in Ephesians, we've looked at that. 1 John 4:16 – 19. This is key. These two verses are key to being able to count it all joy. Actually three things. There are three things that let you do this. The way you put your faith is, listen to this:

<sup>16</sup>So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. <sup>17</sup>By this, is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment; because as He is, so also we are in the world.

Now I have three things I need to concentrate on when I face a trial. Holy Spirit's praying for me. Something good is going to come out. God's love hasn't altered because of the trial and somewhere He is taking what I'm going through and using it for His glory; hence, counting it joy. You've got to walk through those three things and implementing those three things is hard. We're not going to turn there, but in Habakkuk 2:1 – 4 and verse 13, he asks God a question about why He's letting all Israel be horrible. God answers the question. Then he asks Him another question. God doesn't answer the question. The reason I bring this up is in the middle of a trial, you have the right to ask God anything you want. He may answer you, 2:1 – 4, He may not, verse 13. You're going to face some hard times. You live long enough; you're going to face some difficult times. Whatever you face, the trial by definition, if it doesn't remove your happiness, it's not a trial. But if it removes your happiness, you're going to count it joy because you know the Spirit's praying for you and something good is coming out of it. You know He loves you. And you know He's getting glory somewhere whether it's here or there through what you're going through. It's the only way to handle it. Trials are difficult by definition. They are not fun. They are not pleasurable. But they do alter who you are.