

**“For WHEN I am weak, then I am strong...”**  
**2 Cor. 12:8-10 (my FOT 2019 sermon)**



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**Summary: This is a complete re-do edit of what I posted earlier. This is the sermon I gave at the Feast of Tabernacles 2019. PLEASE hear/read this one AGAIN, even if you heard the pre-feast version I posted.**

*What did Paul mean when he said, “When I’m weak, then I’m strong” in 2 Cor. 12:10? IF we can learn what Paul learned – and tried to teach us -- then in our times of distress, illness, pain, intense grief and suffering and worry -- we can experience the great peace of God instead. And not only that, then Yeshua will be far more evident in our lives. The points presented in this sermon are also the very points Yeshua went through to make him a complete and perfected High Priest. Those same points will help us be better priests and kings with him in the coming millennial reign. Learn how all your suffering and pain is actually being used by God to mold you into the exact person he wants for you and for your spectacular purpose for all eternity.*

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**Good morning, Jesus/Yeshua, children of the Highest, members of the Father’s House.** Good morning – especially to all of you who ever struggle dealing with setbacks with a joyful and peaceful spirit – and that’s probably most of us some time in our lives. But this will apply very well to anyone suffering in pain, or with cancer, MS, Parkinson’s, or **family** issues, physical-emotional pain...good morning especially to you.

Greetings especially to all you who pray for healing and deliverance and to see God’s answers for others – but they don’t seem to ever happen for YOU. I believe all of us would say that MANY of our prayers don’t seem to be answered, at least not in the way we hoped. *This message is for you.*

**I love spending time with our 7 grandchildren. How many of you have grandchildren?**

“First times” for small children can be either exciting or scary: the first dental visit, the first needle for blood draw – or finally swimming without you hanging on to them. **My daughter has 5 children** and she’s been real good at helping them learn to bike and to swim. I have been involved with that too, and at first – it’s scary to let go of Poppy or their mom and they experience they can FLOAT with the swimmies, even when Poppy or mom lets go.

I remember with more than one of them – though they all swim like fish now – but in the beginning I would hold the little grandson, look him in the **eye, and ask “Do you TRUST me?** Do you realize I’m right here and you’re NOT doing this all by yourself just yet...I’m right here. TRUST me; what you’re going to go through may be scary at first, but I’m right here. And eventually you’ll be a strong swimmer ... but today you have to do what I tell you to do, OK? .”

And as he did trust me, eventually he became a good swimmer too.

**Now - in your scary times, painful times, awful times of your life, do you hear your father** in heaven whispering calmly? Or do we get so frantic and busy – that we **can't** hear him?

### **DO YOU BELIEVE GOD'S PROMISES?**

Do you and I really **believe** certain often used scriptures – do we really believe these?

- God knows the very number of our hairs and everything about us. Our getting up in the morning and when we go back to bed. (Psalm 139:1-12; Luke 12:7)
- That ALL things that are happening, or have happened – even those caused by YOU – that ALL things work together for GOOD in the end, for those who are the called and who love God? (**Romans 8:28**).
- Do you really believe the LORD is your shepherd, and though he might make you walk through the valley of death – he is with you, but you are going to sometimes walk thru that valley, though you may not physically see him? **Psalm 23:4**
- **Hebrews 13:5** – he promises He will never leave us or forsake us – EVER.

**In scary times, do you still believe those promises?**

- You've just been told your company is moving to China and your job is going with it. What's your reaction: frantic, or TRUST?
- Your daughter wants nothing more to do with you...frantic or trust?
- You have been told you have that awful C word – cancer – frantic, or trust?
- You need cataracts removed. Are you frantic or do you trust?
- Something small by comparison: You're running late, and you face a red light that doesn't seem to ever turn green. Frantic – or trust?

***IF we believe the scriptures that God knows our every thought, that he will NEVER leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5), that he knows every hair on our head, DO we BELIEVE those same scriptures even when it looks like he's nowhere to be found? Or when it appears he's not hearing your prayers? Or that He is going to make you go through a painful trial.***

**When we pray and pray but the problems don't go away – do you still TRUST?**

***I know - - there've been times in my life when I asked God where was he. I've even said "I know if this were MY son or daughter and I had the power YOU have, I'd be doing more than it seems you're doing!"***

***I know, what an awful thing to say to Almighty God. But I'm human too and repented.***

### **LISTEN FOR God's answers**

**But I also believe God does speak to us – but we get too busy to hear him sometimes, especially when it's just a still small voice, as when he spoke to Elijah in a stressful time (1 Kings 19:10-14).**

**Don't let your prayers be monologues. LET God speak to you.** I often stop while praying on my knees – and say, “OK, I've said plenty. I'll shut up and listen now. What do you have for me?”

Sometimes the answer doesn't come right then but often does in the next few days. We often miss the answers God is whispering – because we're too hectic, too frantic, too worried; so busy trying to figure out what we should do. We're trying so hard to work things out ourselves that we don't see what God is working out.

Or you could get a strong message: “Yes, I know what I'm making you go thru is scary and painful as can be. Remember I've promised to never leave you – even when you can't see me or hear me. This dark valley of the shadow of death you're going thru – I'm there with you. TRUST me, but I have my reasons for making you go through all this – and you will do it, you will die and not be healed, and it IS a valley of death – but I AM with you.”

**And many of us are seniors** – everything in our bodies begins to fall out, sag, not work, or work too much, or wrinkle, or to hurt, or get diseased or broken. It's like we're falling APART ... but we're being prepared for *eternity* BY these pains and human failures – EVEN WHEN IT *SEEMS* God is doing NOTHING to relieve the issues.

**My sermon title comes from 2 Cor. 12. Paul had been beseeching God to heal him of the “thorn in the flesh”, 3x he asked, and then he got this:**

**2 Cor. 12:9-10**

“And He said to me, ‘**My** grace is sufficient for you, **for MY strength is made PERFECT in weakness.**’

[Let that sink in. Let's read it again.]

“Therefore most **gladly** I will rather **boast in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me.**

**10 Therefore I take PLEASURE in infirmities,** in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.”**

Sure, we have to make our requests made known, and then accept God's will -... even as Yeshua did in the Garden of Tears (Gethsemane – means “Garden of the Olive Press”), but it goes beyond that.

**Hebrews 5:7-10**

who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, **and was heard** because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet **He learned obedience by the things which He SUFFERED.** 9 **And having been PERFECTED,** He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

This sermon is going to largely be about the times when God says we're going to have to go through the suffering and testing – as GOD apparently said to His own Son, Yeshua.

**The scriptures will tell us that – sure, we accept God's will – but we are to also praise and give thanks BEFORE we see the answer from God. We are to thank and praise and bless God in ALL circumstances and conditions.**

**This leads to a PEACE in our hearts that we can't explain.** We quit stewing and moping. Let's read a few scriptures – and then we'll understand how Paul is saying – “If my pain is creating spiritual muscle, making me strong by Jesus' strength, wow, I delight in my sufferings then!”

**In this sermon's message -- we have to go beyond accepting his will, no matter what -- but move on the next stage where we praise and thank him in all things and FOR all things -- always, all the time, no matter how terrible, gruesome, painful and stressful the trial is. Whether it's a health problem or pains or impending death—we are to THANK God, and even, as Paul says ---come to where we can “take PLEASURE in infirmities...”**

Once Paul “got it” – *he went beyond just enduring the pain* and suffering, to taking PLEASURE in them, knowing it was building great strength in him. And Paul did go through an awful lot, which you can **READ on your own – 2 Cor. 11:20-29. He was shipwrecked 3x, flogged 5 times with 39 lashes; 3x beaten with rods, in prison countless times, stoned and left for dead once.... And on and on.**

***Tell me: WHEN are you and I MOST URGENT with God, most FERVENT – in times when there's no pain, everyone's well, healthy, have ample money – OR....*** When YOU or a loved one is diagnosed with cancer, or that you're going to be laid off, or that there's terrible gossip about you on the internet?

**Some very, very tough times are coming, and we better learn how to get to Paul's place of peace and even rejoicing in his issues.**

**We're told to be glad, to rejoice, to give thanks in the rough times and FOR the rough times. Notice the connection between joy and perfection....**

**James 1:2-4**

“My brethren, **count it all JOY** when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing **that the testing of your faith** produces patience. 4 But LET patience have its **PERFECT work, that YOU may be PERFECT** and complete, lacking nothing.”

This is for the perfecting of the saints. Are you seeing the connection between suffering and perfection? Being made complete. There's no promise here that the pain is removed every time, or that your illness is healed every time ... but you may have to go thru it, and God is building in us the qualities he wants to see.

**1 Peter 5:10**

“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, **AFTER you have SUFFERED a while, PERFECT, establish, STRENGTHEN, and settle you.**”

**So right there, the suffering perfects us, makes us stronger and settles us – helps us be more at peace in our hearts.**

Are we to thank and praise only for those BIG trials where God works out a fabulous miracle? Of course we should then – but, if we praise only for the big answered prayers, that's easy. But we're taught to praise and give thanks in everything, whether or not we get the answers we were hoping for.

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

“**Rejoice ALWAYS**, 17 pray without ceasing, **18 IN EVERYTHING** give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

When are we to rejoice? **ALWAYS**. For what things we're going thru? IN **EVERYTHING** give thanks. Give thanks in every frustrating circumstance. Again, for what things? Everything. But do you believe those clear statements?

So 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Paul says IN everything give thanks. He takes it a step further with the Ephesian brethren:

**Ephesians 5:20**

**"...giving thanks always FOR all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"**

Really? Give thanks FOR all things, and IN everything give thanks? Really?

**Let me caution you – when someone is going thru a rough spot, they won't be ready to hear you tell them to give thanks for it, and in it. But YOU AND I need to learn how to do this, so we can get to Paul's level of peace and even taking pleasure in infirmities and problems.**

**Start practicing this praising and blessing of God in and for ALL things – especially on the smaller issues of life—so when the big trials come, you know how to handle them.**

**Examples of "Small" trials: - traffic light won't turn green... and you're so behind**

- \*\* Cataract**                      **\*\* an argument with your spouse or children**
- \*\* Aches and pains you're going thru**
- \*\* Frustrations and things going wrong at home or at work**

**WHY would you thank God FOR your son who is dying? Because you're acknowledging God's awareness of it, that he's walking with you through it, that he knows every hair on your head and every thought you have and that he'll never forsake you or leave you and that ALL things work together for good (Romans 8:28).**

You also know all things are possible with God. Now we either believe all those scriptures and words from God -- or we don't. We're told to thank and give praise IN all things and FOR all things. ALL things. Will you believe that? And do you believe ALL things work together for good – or not? (Rom 8:28)

**RESULT? The PEACE that surpasses all explanation**

**Philippians 4:4, 6-7**

**"REJOICE in the Lord ALWAYS; again I say – REJOICE!**

**6 Be anxious for NOTHING, but *in EVERYTHING* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."**

***Look: stewing and worrying and being upset about things doesn't change anything anyway and it may even keep God's grace from you.***

V. 4 – Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say – REJOICE.

You've got to try this! It really works. If nothing else, it gives you peace.

**So what did Paul "get" or come to understand that allowed him to TAKE PLEASURE in infirmities (2 Cor. 12:9-10)? It was this:** That it is during stressful times, severe pain and hardship when we are more likely to earnestly seek God, and are being completed and perfected for all eternity by the suffering.

***So what's the path to peace in your heart when everything big or small seems to be going awry? Here it is: In big and small events going badly--***

After you let God know your requests and what you're asking for him to do for you – ask for God's will be done and then thank him and praise him **for everything** going on and in everything. Yep, even the "bad stuff". "All things" and "everything" mean everything! Be practicing that *now*.

But it's something we each have to do – and not something we try to impose on someone else not ready for it, who has had a terrible traumatic event. I know when our son died, it was a while before I even wanted to discuss Romans 8:28, etc. I came to it – but in the beginning it was just too raw.

**START WITH smaller issues first**

But we *are* learning to use this principle. What we're doing is trying it a lot on the smaller issues in life first.

**For example –on our way to the Feast, we wanted to stop in Tucson and spend the Sabbath with a dear believer friend and his wife.** So we were flying out of Orlando, had to switch planes in Houston, and should have arrived by 3:30 pm Friday afternoon Arizona time.

But due to bad weather in Houston TX, our Orlando flight was delayed 1 hr, then 2 hours, then 3 hours. So we knew we'd miss our connecting flight. We checked available flights but could only find one for late Saturday and we'd miss our friends. Then someone said the connecting flight was delayed too, so we should be alright – but that all the remaining Friday flights were booked solid.

So that gave us some hope. **I whispered in Carole's ear in Orlando airport: "Praise you Father.** For you know every hair on our head and every need we have. And we know you promise to never ever leave us or forsake us. We want to go see and encourage some old friends. Now it's up to you."

Much delayed, we finally took off from Orlando. But when we arrived in Houston, our connecting flight had already gone. So we went to find out what our options were, knowing all Friday flights were already booked up. The lady behind the United Airlines desk said, "The flights are full... but WAIT. You both are booked on the next flight out coming up in a couple hours."

Neither my wife nor I had booked it! And there was no record of who had booked it. But we were on the next flight and we would be able to visit our friends and encourage them. All I know is, this time, we did it right as we praised God in and for the ruined schedule – but then HE corrected it somehow. And truly this time, we felt great peace.

**SO whether it's a small issue going on – or if you've been told you have 3 months to live with aggressive cancer ...** IN all things and FOR everything, give thanks and praise, even as you tell God what you're hoping for, but you also say "Your ways are best and therefore I ask you to please get involved in this, to please HEAL this, to please rebuke the cancer (or whatever)...*and we thank and praise you again knowing you're there beside us.*"

You may or may not get the answer you want but at least you'll experience the peace. And again: do this as your trial unfolds, before you see any answers from God.

**Yeshua said – don't worry about "stuff" in this life. His life is NOT about this life. It's hard to fully accept that. Matthew 6:25-33.**

**And here's Paul again:**

**2 Cor. 12:9-10**

“And He said to me, ‘**My** grace is sufficient for you, **for MY strength is made PERFECT in weakness.**’

Therefore most **gladly** I will rather **boast** in my infirmities, **that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

**10 Therefore I take PLEASURE in infirmities,** in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.”**

**Scripture does NOT promise us a life devoid of any hassles, pain, illness or death of loved ones or our own death. It just does not.**

**Sometimes I feel we're coddled.**

**Hebrews 10:34** --JOYFULLY accepted plundering of their goods.

Are you noticing how often we read the words like: joyfully, rejoice, take pleasure in, giving thanks – all combined with pain and suffering and trials we're going through?

***But my point is, even if God's will is NOT to relieve the pain, NOT to heal – we STILL PRAISE and give thanks in and for the trial. We still rebuke the pain in Jesus' name; we STILL command the hurricane in Yeshua's name to break off. And then we joyfully accept and praise God for whatever He decides to do.***

**Isaiah 26:3-4**

“You will keep him *in perfect peace*, whose mind is stayed on You,

**Because he TRUSTS in You.**

Trust in the Lord forever, For in Yah, YHVH, is everlasting strength”.

Paul's preaching in Philippians 4:6-7 about giving thanks IN ALL Things, with thanksgiving – and the peace of God would come upon us - was to the Philippians. **But could Paul LIVE what he was teaching? IT WAS IN PHILIPPI where Paul was BEATEN with RODS and thrown in jail. NO DOUBT** he was also praying for protection and relief. But look at what happened.

### **Paul AND SILAS in PHILIPPI JAIL**

Paul and Silas lived out his teaching beautifully in **Acts 16**. (Recount story) You'll see that what Paul taught in Philippians 4 is what Paul and Silas so perfectly practiced in that very city. There's a great song based on this very story (“I Bless your Name” – by Selah and also Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. I hope you'll hear it on YouTube.)

**Acts 16:22-28**

Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had **laid many stripes on them (severely flogged)**, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them **into the inner** prison and fastened their feet in the stocks

Now honestly, what would you and I have been thinking? Abandoned by God? Where is God?

**25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God,** and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the

foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do you no harm, for we are all here."

*Praying and singing – while they had bleeding stripes, probable broken ribs and infections setting in – plus their feet were in stocks!*

In your midnight hour of pain and suffering, with your emotional bleeding stripes, you and I should also sing out and praise and pray.... and God hears. But when Paul and Silas started praising, their backs were still very sore and bleeding. But they sang anyway. Eternal life is not about this life. Paul continued to have trials – and then he was beheaded – while praising and singing to God all the way, I would expect.

### **JEHOSHAPHAT – SUMMARIZE 2 CHRON 20**

Familiarize yourself with this story by reading 2 Chronicles 20 before going on. I'll pick up with part of King Jehoshaphat's prayer in Jerusalem.

#### **2 Chronicles 20:12-23**

**"O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."**

13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord.

**Summarize 14-19 – Jahaziel ("God sees") tells everyone not to be afraid.** He tells them all that they need to leave the protection of the city, face their enemies, and believe the prophets and that they'll see God fight for them.

**V 18-19- they all worshipped. The choir sang in praises. . . while the hordes were still out there.**

19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of **the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.**

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

21 And when he had consulted with the people, **he appointed those who should sing to YHVH, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army** and were saying

"Praise YHVH, for His mercy endures forever."

**But their problem of the enemy hordes was still there! They sang anyway! Notice what happens next:**

**22 Now WHEN THEY BEGAN TO SING AND TO PRAISE, Yehovah set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.**

The enemies all killed each other in a confusion God brought on. But how and when? Only when they began to sing and praise before seeing any solution.



**Are you seeing a pattern here?** I preach to myself too. Paul, Jehoshaphat, James, Peter and Christ – all thanked God during the trial, while the problem was still there; *before* seeing any answers.

**Look at how God calls it in Heb 13:15.**

**Hebrews 13:15**

“Therefore by Him let us **continually** offer **the sacrifice of praise to God**, that is, the fruit of our lips, **giving thanks to His name.**”

A continual sacrifice. That's what it says. A sacrifice costs. A sacrifice hurts. But in our pain, we somehow still bless and present the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name – that means to everything He is.

After hearing all of his kids had been killed, Job blessed (praised) God.

**Job 1:20-21**

Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there.

YHVH gave, and YHVH has taken away;

**Blessed be the name of YHVH"**

When God told KING DAVID he would lose his first son born from the adultery with Bathsheba – once the son died, David got up and quit fasting, worshipped God - - and resumed normal life. **2 Samuel 12:13-23** (you can read this on your own)

Remember – IN all things, FOR all things we give thanks. (**Phil 4:6-7; Eph 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**).

**I'm saying some of us are real good at expecting the best** – in faith, and we keep proclaiming how this or that trial will end up just fine. And when a great miracle occurs we're satisfied; our faith in God did it. *But a point in this sermon is to ask you, "but what about the times when healing doesn't happen, when your father or son or wife does die, or when a believer IS burned at the stake, or torn apart by lions?"*

Answer: even in our darkest valley of death, we will praise him, and praise him and praise him. I'm trying to learn that perfectly still, but it's slowly coming.

- When did Yeshua thank God for having heard him at Lazarus' resurrection? While his friend was still a dead man. We praise *before* we see the answer.

**John 11:40-44**

Jesus said to Martha, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" **41 Then they took away the stone from the place where *the dead man was lying*. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "**Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.**" 42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."**

43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

*We've sung lots of songs of praise here in services – that in our pain we will praise him... now let's be doing this for REAL – continually.*

***DON'T MISS how God speaks to you***

**MISSING His speaking to us:** Sometimes so many of us pray for help, pray for deliverance, healing, pray for God's help in our painful times – but then we say “amen” but then get so busy with our worries that.... **We don't HEAR him, we don't HEAR his answers.**

**Family of God – we have to be more QUIET more often or we'll miss God talking to us.** Turn off the dumb phones. Go for “**walk and talks**” with God, quietly. You'll be amazed how much you hear his voice – when you tune in, and be quiet. Look for the messages that are just popping out in front.

When we're done for the day, Carole and I will often just go sit out on our LANAI and just be quiet and tune in. So many times God seems to speak in those quiet times...

*On the audio, I describe a walk with my good friend who just lost his wife a year ago. Seemed to have perfect marriage. (Hear that on audio) My friend Dave W, outside the HIKE SHACK – just had had lunch, going over lessons from trials we've each had, then suddenly Dave noticed a sign 4-5 feet from us, outside a hiking shop: here's what the sign said:*

“May your trails be crooked, **winding, lonesome, DANGEROUS** – leading to *the most amazing view*. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds.”

Doesn't that sound like our lives sometimes? As we learn to trust, we get stronger in our faith. My grandsons all swim well now and working on the youngest. Now it's *our* turn to trust our Father.

**Let's learn to go beyond just praying for God's will to be done. That's a great starting point but it's not far enough. Now we also praise, give thanks and sing out to God in, during and FOR every single bad moment we have in life** – big ones and little ones. This includes thanking God for your spouse, for your trying boss, for the constant arthritic aches and pains, for persecution, for bad health news, and on and on. Everything means everything.

Remember, this is for eternity. We have to learn to trust God implicitly – and HE has to know he can trust each of us also implicitly. It's all about faith, isn't it?

**When God can do HIS best work**

**GOD DOES HIS BEST WORK when we:**

- **Realize the battle is HIS, not ours. We're done.** We've given it all we've got – and so now finally God can do HIS work. When we are WEAK, then HIS POWER can go to work – IF, AND WHEN, we praise and give thanks IN and for, the trial – for the pain – *before* we see the answer! And ... for *whatever* His answer will end up being.

But most of the time, most of us probably don't do that. We wrack our brains, worry, and stay up all night trying to figure out the next step, what WE can do. When we say “I've given it all I've got. I've got nothing left. I'm empty inside. My heart is shattered into a million pieces. I gave it all I've got, and the situation has just gotten worse, so I give up!”

That's a far cry from Paul and others' teachings to praise and give thanks in all things, but maybe finally we might be ready to hand things over to God.

**“NOW Christ's POWER can come into my life”, Paul said.** Paul got almost GIDDY about what a revelation that was to him. NOW, he said – “I revel and take pleasure in distress, in pain, in persecutions for Christ's sake.’

Tough times are coming. We may do this praising and thanking even before we see the answer on SOME things, but **we get selective. Do I thank him in my failing marriage, or for the weird boss, or family issues? Yes, we should.** Remember be thank God IN and FOR everything, in ALL things, always. We either believe those scriptures or not.

Before I've begun to finally learn all this, I often asked my God why He wasn't doing more. I said I would sure being more if the afflicted one was MY child. (And yes, I've repented for challenging God.). When nothing much seems to be happening, we forget “I'll never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb 13:5). And we're not ready to apply “all things work together for good...” (Romans 8:28).

**Our first son died when I was 29. I knew about Job's story,** so as my wife sped off to the hospital in an ambulance with our very dead baby, I stayed home with our 2 girls who were asleep in bed. *I knelt and prayed, “I'm supposed to praise you, thank you and bless your name in ALL things, so thank you for the short time you gave me with our beautiful little boy.”*

*But our child David, remained dead – blue-faced, on our bed. There had been so many things I was looking forward to doing with him – but now he was lifeless. There was not going to be a resurrection. It took me two years before I could hold a baby boy at the Blessing of the children service.*

At a small feast site in Colorado some years ago, God heard my prayer for a man and his wife who were both healed dramatically; He of his major stroke and its effects on his mobility, speech and mental acuity – and she for her serious back pain. Five others were not healed...at least not at that time.

Encouraged by that, I prayed for my brother and sister who also had had TWO major strokes each. *But my siblings were not healed of their strokes though. I still had to praise and thank God in and for their strokes. WHY? Because God was still there with them and even in the troubles, we experienced some peace. So we praise for whatever answer we receive.*  
*(More on the audio on what I believe was an angel sent to encourage my brother in Ventura, CA).*

**I've been told 2x that I had late stage cancer.** In my case, I was healed of it, both times. Another time – several major organs were all enlarged (spleen, liver, heart, pancreas). That was healed too. But my diabetes, sleep apnea and other issues have not been healed. So I still praise and sing to my God. In the end, we all die, awaiting the resurrection.

### **Hebrews 11:39-40**

“And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should **not be made perfect apart from us.**”

All this pain we go through has to do with being made **perfect**. The Greek “teleioo” means “to be made complete, to mature, to reach the end or aim or end goal.” I still struggle with this concept myself of praising and thanking in and for all things -- but it works: it gives you peace and joy at least. At least that. And more miracles from God.

**Paul could revel IN suffering, pain and persecution and beatings** – because he believed and trusted God and knew what it was producing.

**It was LATER in this same chapter where Paul says – I can be content** in any situation. Read this next scripture thoughtfully, slowly, several times.

**Philippians 4:11-13**

“Not that I speak in regard to need, *for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:* 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. **Everywhere and in all things I have learned** both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**”

I'm not there yet, and I'm not the only one who's struggled with this... but learning.

**OTHERS STRUGGLED WITH GOD'S SEEMING INACTION**

We're not the only ones struggling with this. Hear the audio for more details on this section. Sometimes wondering where God is, or when He'll take action, is not unique to us. **Abraham** and Sarah tried to figure out the promised son themselves when God seemed to take too long. **Ezekiel** lost the light of his eyes (his wife). **Jeremiah** came close to calling God a liar for not “being there” more for his needs (Jer. 15:18).

**John the Baptist**, whom Jesus called the greatest born from women – who early on spoke of Yeshua being the LAMB OF GOD, who takes away the sin of the world.

He said Christ was before John, greater than John, and that Yeshua had to increase and he had to decrease.

Then Herod's wife threw him into prison when he denounced Herod Antipas for taking his brother's wife (Herodias). Initially this great prophet John the Baptist is OK with that. After all, his cousin is the Messiah with great miracle working power and surely Yeshua would save him.

But Jesus did nothing about John's imprisonment. He could have worked a miracle, but did not. John seemed to get upset that Yeshua wouldn't act in his behalf – when He had the power to, but did nothing. You feel that same way at times, right?

So John the Baptist asked Jesus -- “ARE you the one who is coming or should we look for someone else?”

**Luke 7:18-21, 22-23**

**18 Then John's disciples told him about all these things. So John summoned two of his disciples 19 and sent them to the Lord, asking, “Are You the One who is to come, or should we look for someone else?”**

20 When the men reached Him, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to ask You, ‘Are You the One who is to come, or should we look for someone else?’”

21 At that time Jesus healed many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and He granted sight to many blind people.

**22 Jesus answered and said** to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.

**23 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.**"

*Yeshua warns us all, and please hear this: "Just because things aren't happening the way or as fast as YOU thought they SHOULD, or the way YOU would handle it, and it looks like things aren't moving or that God is even aware of you...BLESSED is he who is NOT offended because of me!"*

Remember that lesson from John. Don't be offended with God when he doesn't SEEM to be working on your case or even to know you have a problem.

### **EVEN JESUS AND PROPHETS AND APOSTLES ...**

So we're suffering so we can be perfected. Even the Son of God had to go through that. This was so he could EMPATHIZE. He had never been fully human before. Now he could relate to your hurting and your pain. We've already read Hebrews 5:6-7.

#### **Isaiah 53:3**

"He is despised and rejected by men,  
**A Man of SORROWS and acquainted with grief.**"

And because of the rejection, suffering, false accusations, physical excruciating pain he went through and anguish – when you weep and are at a loss for words, our High Priest in heaven, Jesus the son of God – understands. He CAN understand.

#### **Hebrews 4:15-16 HOLMAN**

**"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,** but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. 16 *Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness,* so that we may receive **mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time.** ("in time of need" – KJV)

We're going through the very same steps! GOD IS SHAPING us during our pain too.

### **BEING MOLDED IN THE IMAGE OF Christ**

***We too, are being prepared to be priests and helpers of those*** who will have come through the worst time of trouble the world will have ever seen! HOW will we be empathetic to someone who lost his family in the hurricane, or lost the love of his life to cancer? By having gone through it. Like Christ, we will understand. In the Millennial reign there will be lots of people who will have just gone through literal hell on earth. They're going to need priests, servant rulers and counselors who can relate:

#### **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 **who comforts us in all our tribulation (affliction, trials), that WE may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble,** with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

**Eternal life is NOT ABOUT THIS LIFE, or physical things we have or not. What God is preparing you for will make you SO GLAD you went thru what you went thru – when you fully see it and understand.**

**So just like Jesus is now a more complete high priest, you- as a priest working** with him – molded in HIS image – are going through suffering so YOU can also be a better priest to help those people who live on into the Millennial reign on the earth.

- Because your wife or child or husband died – you understand better...
  - I couldn't hold a boy baby for 2 years!
- When I was a child – I went through typhoons in Philippines. So I wept for the children and families of Abaco Island, Bahamas with their Cat 5 Hurricane for 36 hours! I was deeply moved to tears and action for them.
- Because of your painful Rheumatoid arthritis, kidney stones, can empathize.
- And I look at Paul Gibson and wonder what I'm EVER complaining about.

So we also can get to the point where Paul was – when we're OK with whatever is happening, knowing Christ's strength is being made perfect in our weaknesses.

**Are we connecting the dots now to 2 Cor 12:9-10—“HE said, ‘MY favor is sufficient for you, for MY strength is made perfect in weakness.”**

When you can't stand it anymore, can't do anymore – we trust our God absolutely. His strength comes through in our weakness.

### **THE END STORY**

When it's all said and done and the last trumpet sounds, and our bodies are being changed to spirit faster than we can blink, those who died ahead of us will be watching us go thru what they must went through – the resurrection of the just!

Nothing we have gone through will seem all that important at that time. The pain and suffering will have served its purpose, and we'll be completed in Christ, made perfect through God's indwelling Spirit. In our weakness, He has been shown strong.

This life is not what's important. Only what it produces in us for all eternity is what counts. We will by then be completely in the image of the Son of God, who is a perfect likeness and image of His Father.

And if you're feeling down from a health issue that just doesn't go away – or trials and tests that make you almost question God's concern or involvement -- as John the Baptist did, as Jeremiah did, and so many did.... remember, God even understands that. But don't be offended at God, as Christ told John the Baptist. Get up. Put on the armor of God. Get back in the fight and praise him, love him, thank him – no matter what! And experience peace as you've never known it before – regardless of what's happening.

When that last trump sounds, we'll be totally brand new. We'll have new spirit bodies. Angels will be zooming down to pick us up and take us meet our Beloved Yeshua in the clouds. We'll see perfectly. No more pain, no more suffering, no more cancer, no more arthritis, no more Parkinson's... but total power and it will be spectacular.

**While we wait for the 7 last plagues to be completed, I believe those in that first resurrection are taken to God's kingdom of heaven, Jerusalem above.** There we will meet the millions of angels, the 24 elders, the 4 living Creatures around the throne, the seraphim and

cherubim winged angels. And most of all—we will meet our Beloved, our King of kings and our husband Yeshua. We also all will bow down and worship God Most High, our Abba, our Father.

**I do believe all his takes place in heaven, as Revelation 14, 15, 19 and others seem to tell us.** We'll be home. We'll be in our city, whose maker and builder is God. And looking back, we will be so THANKFUL for everything God has put us through. SO thankful . . . because those were the very things and times when God could grow in your life, when Christ's grace and strength were evident.

We learned to TRUST GOD.... All the time, even when we HURT, even when his answer was that we had to go through the trial, but that he'd be there with us.

And God learned to have faith in you too, to trust you... and he KNOWS you'll always be faithful.

**WHO WILL BE WITH CHRIST when he returns to the Mt of Olives and to begin his millennial rule?**

**Revelation 17:14**

These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and **those who are with Him are called, chosen, and FAITHFUL."**

We'll be home. At that time we'll be all we truly can be – by God's grace, by God's power, by Jesus' LIFE living strongly in us – and WE'RE out of the way now.

*We've learned to thank God IN all things, all the time, and FOR all things, in that moment BEFORE we even have seen him act yet – because we trust him and love him.*

*We've learned to do that whether He responds with healing and great miracles – or if he walks with us through the darkest valleys of death in this life. It doesn't matter. Because we have learned to TRUST him and because we know it's not about this life anyway. And we know He always will work everything out for the good in the end. Always. And we know HE IS there with us, and our "spirit eyes" see and feel His presence and love.*

*So IN all things and FOR all things – we praise him, we trust him, we love him and we thank him...even BEFORE we see any answered prayers happening. That in turn gives us GREAT peace and comfort.*

Because – when I am WEAK, then I am strong by His power and might. So in your painful times – thank God IN and FOR this trial and ask him to help you hear HIS voice, his reasons, his growth for you... and watch for more miracles too. And listen – quietly.

**2 Cor. 12:9-10** –

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, **for MY strength is made perfect in weakness.**

Therefore most **gladly** I will rather **boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

**10 Therefore I take PLEASURE in infirmities,** in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.”**

We praise you Father. We praise and love you Jesus.

Closing prayer.