

When God Disappoints...

How to handle the times we don't get the answers we want

July 2015

by Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

Summary: We love it when Yahweh gives us powerful and swift answers to prayer. We love it when things go smoothly. But what about those times when we pray and pray – and the pain does not go away, the healings do not happen, loved ones suffer painful death, or times when we have disasters in our lives and our Father seems distant and uninvolved? When you start to wonder – “Where are you God, when I need you? Why didn’t you intervene? Why did you let that happen when you have all power?” This sermon is about such times.

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Welcome and shalom, everyone. I love hearing from you who take the time to email or contact me with encouragement, and so let me start by saying thank you. And I hope you will not just read the transcript on this sharing today – but hear the audio too. I’m speaking my heart even more than usual in this sermon today.

I’m asking a question today that will cause some of you to squirm, make you uncomfortable ... but many of you will be saying, “It’s about time someone mentions it”. I’m sure most of us have experienced great miracles, answered prayer, times we KNOW God miraculously stepped in our lives and protected us or helped us. We have all experienced those times and we LOVE those times.

But now the tough question: have you ever felt *disappointed* by Yahweh, or with Yahweh, Almighty God? Certainly when everything is going well, you might wonder how anyone could possibly be disappointed with God. It even sounds dangerous to voice the question, doesn’t it? How *dare* anyone ask, or say, he’s been disappointed at times – with GOD. But I ask again: whether you’ve ever *admitted* it to anyone or not, have you ever wondered where God was in a particular trial or hardship? What’s He doing? What’s taking him so long to answer? Have you not ever cried out – at least in your thoughts: “Where are you, Abba? I need you, I pray to you, I beg, I petition – but why don’t you respond? You have all power to do anything...absolutely anything, but sometimes I wonder why you seem to remain silent or why you didn’t ACT to prevent certain things.”

OK, are you willing to accept you’ve had thoughts like that, or prayers like that? Are you willing to admit you sometimes wonder why Yahweh isn’t doing *more* for you and his other children? And, if you think I’m overstepping my bounds, did you realize that many of the prophets also expressed those very same concerns, sentiments, doubts and thoughts? I mean David, Job, Jeremiah and so many others.

And if so, and I’ll show you some cases, how climbed out of those depths of depression when it seemed that Abba was not doing as much as they had hoped.

Here’s the point: Yahweh can do anything. He can work out the things we pray about – and then, *not* uncommonly, the person we are praying for – just gets worse and worse, and eventually dies. God could have healed that person. God could have prevented that accident. God could have made the ending a lot better. Yahweh could have kept that lightning strike from hitting your home –

and in your lower moments, you even wonder if that was truly a “sign”, an “act of God” as the insurance folks would call it. Or maybe was he trying to punish, or correct, or grab your attention? Sometimes it is that.

Even you children hearing this, think for a second: Your lovely pet dog has an accident and loses an eye. Are you not disappointed? Could God not have kept that from happening? Or your pet budgie flies out the door – never to return. Or worse yet, as I experienced as a teenager – seeing my beloved cat running out my bedroom door with my more beloved parakeet in her mouth! And the parakeet died... and I almost killed our cat!

Or perhaps you kids studied and studied in school for the big exam and you even *prayed* about it, hoping Abba would help you – but the teacher asked all the questions on the chapter you *didn’t* read or study. Hasn’t that ever happened? And you’re wondering “Father in heaven, why? Could you not have put it in my mind to study that chapter too?” So even kids can go through their version of this topic.

And so then depression sets in. *Haven’t most of you experienced that feeling of feeling let down, or disappointed with God himself?* Maybe you never voiced it. Maybe you were afraid to voice it. But have you never had those thoughts – that God *could have* done more, with all the power He has?

One lady even said “How could a loving father truly just stand by, assuring us he’ll never leave us, but essentially apparently doing little or nothing while your little boy suffers and suffers and finally dies – even as we’re all praying our hearts out for him and for God to intervene? How could an all-powerful loving Father in heaven let that happen?”

There is a purpose for everything that happens. I truly believe that. And we’re going to talk about some of those reasons and purposes as we go through this talk today. I hope it will mean something to you. *And I hope you’ll give me some feedback afterwards.* I really, really do appreciate those of you who take the 2 minutes to write me a quick email or contact us about how you like or don’t like, what you’re hearing and learning here. I’m hoping this will become a key talk for some of you.

WHY this sermon

I thought of this topic because it was something I struggled with earlier this week. Our house was hit by lightning on Monday night July 6, 2015. It knocked out our power, our air conditioning, our phone lines, we had no water for 2-3 days, our TV/internet was blown out, and our irrigation/sprinkler system was shot to smithereens and the sprinkler wiring is still a mess. I don’t know how much it will cost to fix all this. We have insurance, but have to pay the first thousand and who knows how much insurance will actually pay. The real cost was in not being able to work for a few days and the stress and hassle of no water, no phones, and wondering where it all would end.

It was kinda a last straw – so far – in a difficult and trying last 3 years.

And yes, it left me initially wondering “where *were* you, Abba, in all of this?”

Let me give voice to what I know is the thinking of many believers, at various difficult times in their lives, when serious trials have come into our lives, and we’ve prayed and prayed – but nothing seems to get better for a while. And we read about all the miracles in the Bible and just want Abba to show himself strong for us – for you and for me – in this trial we’re having. OK, am I voicing what some of you have felt?

It was only when my thinking began to change and I began to praise God IN and FOR this trial – this lightning strike -- even though I still couldn’t understand *why* it had to be us and our house -- that things began to turn around in a dramatic way. But not until I began to say “I don’t understand, but I’m going to praise and thank you for this lightning strike”.

Instead of bemoaning the lightning strike, God himself led me to the thoughts of thanking Him for mercifully sparing my beloved wife who was just feet from the impact point; I praised God for sparing our house from greater damage than we had – which really was not that much compared to what I’ve seen on the news. And then some dramatic blessings began to happen. Dramatically. But only when I began to turn my disappointment to trust and praise – even IN, even FOR, the trial.

But I get ahead of myself. I’m just saying – disappointment has filled my life often, especially in the past 3 years and perhaps Abba is trying to get my attention. He’s trying to teach me: “Look to ME, ALWAYS”. Maybe God is showing me something so I can share it with all of you.

We’d best learn how to handle disappointment because the very end times are going to be very, very rough – and the people of God are going to be heavily persecuted and martyred. Look at Daniel 7:18-21, when the coming Beast power will “make war against the saints and shall prevail against them”.

So let’s cover:

- What causes disappointment generally, and with God specifically.
- Did People in the Bible experience and express their disappointment with God
- WHY we go through all this and why God doesn’t seem to do more than we know he can
- How to handle the disappointment.

I do know this: Abba has to test our faithfulness to him. Some very tough times are coming ahead for the saints (Daniel 7:18-21). He has to test whether we will trust him at ALL times or not. It’s easy to be upbeat and praising Him when life is easy and calm. It’s when things go haywire and trials are severe that we’ll find ourselves much more on our knees – as we submit to HIS will in our lives.

Be sure to hear my last sermon – Living in the Will of God.

So let’s continue.

What CAUSES Disappointment?

What causes us to feel disappointed with God, people or circumstances? What would you say?

I believe disappointment is caused by something very simple: when our hopes, dreams and expectations aren’t met – or our dreams and expectations aren’t met *when and how* we hoped they would be met. (Repeat) My wife and I spoke at length about this and this seems to be what causes disappointment.

Either *people* let us down. Or we let *ourselves* down. WE let others down. We let GOD down. Or we feel GOD let US down. Or *circumstances* let us down. All of those cause us to be disappointed. And sometimes, the disappointment is in the TIMING of things... things happen not at all, or too soon, or too late to be any good, at least as we see it. (Repeat).

In a nutshell, that’s what causes disappointments.

But I want to focus on when we feel disappointed with Yahweh, God Most High. Why does that happen? How do we handle it? What are the purposes for those times?

But there’s something else too: we get disappointed because we – in our pride – think WE know what’s best for us. And when God allows or sends something different, we are hurt, disappointed. I think this is a big point. In the last sermon I spoke about living in God’s will. Even the Son of God – Yeshua – prayed, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, but NOT my will – but yours be done, Abba.” (Matthew 26:39-42)

Sometimes we just frankly obsess on our assessment that something happening or something that just happened - -is either a good thing or a bad thing – apart from any revelation from God himself. We leave God out of the equation except that we become disappointed with HIM, for what He’s allowed to happen – or worse (we think), what He *might* have even sent into our lives!

I’ve been through a lot in life. The death and ill health of many of my loved ones, the death of my son, my parents, death and ill health with my siblings; I’ve struggled with my own health diagnoses at times – including cancer, and other issues; a struggle with my job earning enough to pay the bills. Plus a lot of things I don’t wish to discuss publicly right here... and it seems like life can become a series of one disappointment after another at times! And in all of that, we wonder out loud in prayer, “Father, are you doing everything you really can do in our lives? Are you?”

Am I right?

So where does Yahweh come in? How could we possibly be disappointed with the Almighty? Simply because we now Yahweh IS Almighty, All-Knowing, All powerful, and nothing He decides can happen outside His willingness to let it happen. Nothing can be withheld from him. So we’re often left wondering why He didn’t use all that power and foreknowledge in your behalf, when He could have! Right? We’re left wondering -- does life really have to be this hard when our heavenly Daddy is King of the Universe?

Sometimes the disappointment with God is caused by TIMING. At least the way we see it. To us, God seems late sometimes.

I’m sure Adam and Eve were glad that Yahweh showed up and spoke to Cain about killing Abel. But humanly speaking, don't you think they were wondering – “Yahweh, why couldn’t you have shown up *5 minutes before Cain lost his temper* and killed Abel, my other son?”

And He could have! But chose not to, in his grand plan He arrived perfectly at the right time. And the good guy died. And the bad guy lived. God allowed it.

WHY is life so full of those kinds of disappointments? And *how* could we possibly ever be disappointed with God? And yet maybe have felt that at times – including LOTS of heroes and heroines in the Bible!

For those who have never been disappointed with God

My spirit senses that some of you are very uncomfortable with the things I’m saying. How could mere mortals speak of disappointment with Yahweh, you’re wondering.

Maybe some of you truly have never ever been disappointed with God. My congratulations to you. There are some people like that; people who can suffer for years with MS or being a quadriplegic – and not wonder why Abba doesn’t do something in your behalf (at least as you see it).

Many Bible heroes *DID* voice times of disappointment as we’ll see shortly. But since the goal is to learn to absolutely trust Yahweh, without doubt, it is conceivable that some of you have arrived at that point already. And you’re always 100% satisfied, at peace with, and content with whatever happens to you in life and you never ever feel disappointed with Yahweh.

If you have had serious trials like the death of a young child, loss of a job and facing unemployment for many years, or lost a limb or spouse prematurely, or live with constant severe, excruciating pain, or have dealt with a terminal disease that never ended until death-- in your life or a loved one’s life – and you never ever felt disappointed that God wasn’t doing more, then you’re indeed a remarkable person. And I’d love to hear from you – and tell me how you did it.

I suggest you keep this sermon handy, though, as you may wish to hear the points someday.

Examples from the Bible of people who became disappointed with Yahweh or Yeshua

Turn to John 11. One of the central female characters in the life of Yeshua (Jesus) expressed some disappointment. I had 10 pages of examples from the Bible, but for time’s sake I’ve cut them out except to give the hi-lights:

John 11:5-7

“Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, *He stayed two more days in the place where He was.* Then after this He said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”

John 11:17-22

“So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. **Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”**

Can you not hear a painful tinge of “Where *were* you? What took you *so long* to get here? You could have kept Lazarus from dying!” – disappointment. Unfulfilled expectations. Surely Yeshua would have dropped everything – she thought – to come and be with Lazarus and his sisters, whom Yeshua loved! Thankfully, this story ended with Lazarus’ resurrection and glory to God.

However, so many of you have experienced premature death of many of your loved ones – people you had prayed about, prayed for their protection and healing – and they still died prematurely.

We could recount one after prophet after the other. **Abraham** told Yahweh that he would be fine having ISHMAEL be the promised son (Genesis 17:15-18) but God had other plans. He wanted the

son born from faith, from a miracle, not from the works of man trying to figure things out themselves. Abraham loved Ishmael as well!

Do you think for a moment that JOSEPH, son of Jacob/Israel – didn’t ever feel let down when YHVH allowed his own brothers to SELL him as a common slave and then LIE about what happened to Jacob (**Genesis 37**)? When he was thrown into a rat-infested prison or dungeon for OBEYING God’s laws and not giving in to the seducing wife of Potiphar (**Genesis 39**)? Or when the chief butler forgot to remember Joseph and vouch for him in the courts of Pharaoh after all Joseph had done for him? (The story is in Genesis 40).

WHY did he have to go through all that? How would YOU have handled all that? Surely he was disappointed with circumstances, and with God’s apparent lack of intervention.

Moses: there were times Moses complained about the children of Israel – and other times he put his own life on the line in defending them. But after everything Moses had gone through for Yahweh, how did his life end up? Not being able to go into the Promised Land or to experience the JOY of seeing the Land become their own! **Numbers 20:12-13.** God forbid him from entering in! Moses had struck the Rock the 2nd time, instead of speaking to it. God took his life, while Moses was still strong. (Deut. 34) Let’s read Moses’ own words of how he felt:

Deuteronomy 3:23-27

"Then I **pleaded** with YHVH at that time, saying: ‘YHVH Elohim, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god (Hebrew “el”) is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds? **I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan**, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.'

26 "But **YAHWEH was angry with me on your account**, and would not listen to me. So Yahweh said to me: Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter.”

Let’s be honest with ourselves: you and I would have felt very disappointed. Do you really think Moses didn’t struggle with that? (Full sermon on that incident “Strike the Rock, Speak to the Rock” – May 2014)

How about David? The PSALMS ARE FULL of David expressing his wonder, his disappointments. Let’s read a few. In the last half we’ll also read more psalms for tips on handling these disappointments. David was quite bold in his complaints! So one point early on – VOICE your concerns. Speak your heart. Bring your thoughts to God. He tells us to cast all our cares upon Him... even our complaints. He understands! Let’s read a few of the many, many psalms from David and others we could read.

Psalms 10:1 (Holman version)

“YHVH, why do You stand so far away? Why do You hide in times of trouble?”

Psalms 44:23-26

“Awake! Why do You sleep, YHVH? Arise! Do not cast us off forever. (David is saying “Wake up, Yahweh! Where are you?)

Why do You hide Your face, And forget our affliction and our oppression?
For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our body clings to the ground.

Arise for our help, and redeem us for Your mercies' sake.”

Psalms 27:8-10

When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, Lord, I will seek."

Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger;

You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.

When my father and my mother forsake me, Then YHVH will take care of me.

Psalms 13:1-2

“How long, YHVH? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?

How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart daily?....”

Psalms 69:1-3

“Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck.

I sink in deep mire, Where there is no standing;

I have come into deep waters, Where the floods overflow me.

I am weary with my crying; My throat is dry; My eyes fail while I wait for my God.”

But did you know, that in all of that, David’s first psalm begins with the word “BLESSED” -- and David’s last psalm, Psalm 150, begins with the word “PRAISE”. He knew how to begin and end at least. We end up PRAISING God for how he has blessed us, when it’s all said and done.

Let’s move on – but just let me say for now there are strong stories of disappointment, discouragement, and downright depression from many, many more people like **Elijah (1 Kings 19)**, **Job** – in Job 3 he says he wishes he had never been born, as he felt so abandoned, so bad. **Jeremiah** voiced the same things several times – in Jeremiah 15:10 and Jeremiah 20:14-18 where he wishes he had never even been born! Jer. 15:18 is almost unbelievably bold. And God’s assurance that follows.

Jeremiah 15:18

“Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable, Which refuses to be healed?

Will You surely be to me [“as a LIAR”—KJV) like an unreliable stream, As waters that fail?”

Jeremiah almost crossed the line here. He basically is telling God that His promises and what Jeremiah was experiencing seemed to be 2 very different things.

OK – so the point in this section we’ve just covered is this: it’s normal, it’s understandable if you feel disappointed that God didn’t act in your behalf the way you had hoped. But now let’s find some solutions and answers to this painful disappointment many of us sometimes feel.

So WHAT SHOULD WE DO WHEN WE FEEL DISAPPOINTED with YAHWEH?

1. TALK it out with God. Be open. Be like David, Moses, Elijah and others. Accept that it’s not abnormal. It’s OK to feel this way in the beginning. God’s big enough to cope with your complaints.

After the victory against the kings, God tells Abraham He will greatly bless and reward him. Abraham boldly says, in effect, “How can you bless me when I don’t even have a kid of my own yet?” (**Gen. 15:1-2**). We’ve already read a lot of King David’s pleas and prayers of frustration and pleading. Job even became despondent. I’ve been there at times. He deplored his life (Job 3) and Job 10:1 – “I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.”

Our Abba is big enough, wise and loving enough – to let you vent. Vent respectfully. But do vent. Jeremiah sure did.

Psalms 55:22

“*Cast your burden on Yahweh*, And He shall sustain you;
[then if you do that...] He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

My story – (hear the audio). I had had such a trying previous years: health issues, family issues, financial issues, and one thing after another. What I said to Yahweh the 2 nights after all the frustration in the aftermath of the lightning strike. And how I prayed... I bared my soul. I realized too that it could have been a whole lot worse. I did the same when my son David died in 1982. (I tell the story on audio...hear it there too painful to re-write here.) I started by thanking God in and for the death. But over the next weeks, the struggle was fierce.

Now let’s go back and read Elijah’s story in 1 Kings 19. Right after that powerful miracle we read about in 1 Kings 18 – the fire from heaven on Mt. Carmel and the destruction of **450** (not 4,000 as I say on audio) priests of Baal (1 Kings 18:22, 40)—he gets a message from one woman, who happens to be the queen, who is threatening his life. THAT part of the story is in 1 Kings 19.

1 Kings 19:1-18 (I’ll summarize in the audio)

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." 3 And when he saw that, **he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba**, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself **went a day's journey into the wilderness**, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! **Now, Yahweh, take my life**, for I am no better than my fathers!"

(NOW NOTICE GOD’S TENDERNESS WHEN WE’RE DEPRESSED.)

5 Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, **suddenly an angel touched him**, and said to him, "**Arise and eat.**" 6 Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. 7 And the angel of YHVH came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." 8 So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as **Horeb, the mountain of God**.

9 And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the Word of YHVH came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for YHVH Elohim of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

11 Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before YHVH." And behold, YHVH passed by, and a great and strong **wind** tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before YHVH, but YHVH was not in the wind; and after the wind an **earthquake**, but YHVH was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a **fire**, but YHVH was not in the fire; and after the fire a still **small voice**.

13 So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

14 And he said, "I have been very zealous for YHVH God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

15 Then YHVH said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. 16 Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. 17 It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. 18 Yet I **have reserved seven thousand in Israel**, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Why didn't the 7,000 contact Elijah to encourage him? But he apparently knew nothing of them. But, YAHWEH gave Elijah rest, food, he touched him, he comforted him, he did not correct or humiliate Elijah – but gave him some errands to do and let him semi-retire or retire at this point too... and assured him he was not alone. Yes, our spiritual state can be shaken. God knows that.

We read no condemnation from Yahweh for Elijah's despondency, depression, near-suicidal thoughts, and apparent lack of faith – even though just days before he had shown awesome faith in the calling down of fire from heaven at Mt. Carmel! Yes, our spiritual state can vary and be shaken from time to time. God knows that. He understands our frame that we are but dust (Psalm 103:14).

2. Now let's be frank: If we're honest with ourselves, we must also admit there have been lots of times we are thankful God didn't answer our prayers in the way we asked.

God always answers prayers. So many times, His answer is just different than what we want. Sometimes his answer is "no" or "not yet" or "not this way"... *But those are still answers.* Paul asked God 3x to heal his "thorn in flesh" and 3x God said "NO, Paul..." And God had a reason for not answering. Sometimes He lets us in on the reason – and sometimes He doesn't.

You might have prayed that a particular girl could be your wife someday – and it didn't happen, but later you found out things that made you thank God He didn't answer that prayer. God has a far better overall picture of things than we do. But it's still hard to get around the fact that when things end up really bad – someone not healed, and who dies, for example – that it's hard to see why God didn't answer those prayers.

But other times, we may not be getting the answers we want because God is working out something even BETTER. Where we get disappointed is that He seems to take so long to show us His answer.

Abraham had to wait 25 years from the time God called Abraham to the time He finally got around to giving Abraham the promised Son, when Abraham was now 100 years old and Sarah was 90.... So much so that Sarah decided long before that, that they should try something on their own. And what a mess that caused!

But we so often feel we know better than God, and we get upset when He doesn’t give us what we want.

We get disappointed because what we hoped for doesn’t materialize in this life when we want them to. In fact, Paul often speaks of how hope and faith are for things *not yet seen*. If we already experience the promises, what’s the need for hope and faith? And guess what: ***ALL the great prophets and women of the Bible – ALL of them – died without having received the promises!***

Hebrews 11:13

These all died in faith, ***not having received the promises***, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Hebrews 11:39-40

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

And before those last 2 verses, the writer of Hebrews explains how our forefathers wandered around in goatskins, were tortured, were sawn in two, etc. etc. – that they might obtain the better resurrection. Our spiritual forefathers were NOT always delivered like Daniel and the lions, or like his 3 friends in the fire. MOST died for their faith. The very SON of God also suffered and died without deliverance.

And one more thing: many of our forefathers, even those with the gift of healing, had to endure suffering or execution. Paul never was healed of his thorn in the flesh and was eventually beheaded. David could not stay warm at the end of his life. Isaac was blind. Elisha – who healed and resurrected so many others – Elisha himself died from a disease! In other words God didn’t heal Isaac, David and Elisha and Paul – EITHER, ALL of them men of great faith. We need faith to be healed, but even WITH faith, apparently, there’s no promise that we will ALWAYS receive healing.

But we MUST remain faithful, regardless. God has his reasons. We have to trust Him in that.

3. GOD NEVER PROMISED US AN EASY LIFE. No- scripture is full:

- The righteous will suffer persecution and enter the kingdom through many troubles.
Acts 14:21-22; 2 Timothy 3:12.
- Yeshua assured us - the way to eternal life is the narrow and difficult road. Broad and easy is the road that leads to destruction.
- We are refined and perfected only after having been through the fire of trials and testing of our faith as we’ll see in Peter and Paul’s writings.
- **Men and women of the Bible were not spared serious trials!** Nor was the very son of God! ***Hebrews 5:7-10 says the Christ was perfected/completed BY the things which he suffered.*** If that’s true of the very son of God, can we expect anything less?
- All the apostles apparently died violent deaths except perhaps John. Isaac was blind in his last years. David could not stay warm. Elisha – whom God used to heal so many – died of an

illness himself! Paul – has a long list of painful trials he went through, ending in his beheading in Rome. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and so many others were seriously tested. God took away the love of Ezekiel’s life – his wonderful wife. Jeremiah was forbidden to marry. Hosea had to marry a whore. Ezekiel had to watch his awesome wife, the love of his life, die. Abraham had to be willing to sacrifice his beloved Isaac... and was spared at the last second. Are we getting the point? You’re not alone! God is working with you and me.

That’s what life is ALL ABOUT: getting us to surrender ourselves, submit to Him, to truly accept God as your God no matter what; and to accept Yeshua as your Savior and believe he came from God and died for you and loves you and rose again to become king – no matter what. All of life is about making Yeshua our LORD and Master and to teach us to trust, obey, follow and submit to God in every facet of our lives. All the time. No matter what. That’s where all this is headed.

Or are we fair-weather friends of God only – or will we be faithful even when we hurt all over inside and out and things are tough and only seeming to be getting tougher?

1 Peter 1:6-9

“In this you greatly *rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved* by various trials, **7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory** at the revelation of Jesus Christ, **8** whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, **9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.**”

And He DOES promise us that He’ll never test us beyond that which we’re able to endure or get through (1 Cor. 10:13).

1 Corinthians 10:13

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who **will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

- 4. BEFORE we even understand WHY all this is happening to us, we must--TRUST. Thank. Praise. We are to praise him and thank him IN all things and FOR all things – even before we see some positive answers.**

Ephesians 5:18-21

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, **20 giving thanks always FOR ALL THINGS to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**, submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

Philippians 4:6-7

“**Be anxious for *nothing*, but IN everything by prayer and supplication, *with thanksgiving***, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

One of my favorite teachings on this website is the sermon I gave on praising and thanking God before you see His answers. **(See/hear my sermon given in MARCH 2014).**

As I began to do that, and just started saying, “Thank you for the lightning strike. You have a purpose for it and in it. I trust you, and I thank you for the strike and IN the strike. And I thank you that nobody got hurt and the house was mostly spared. Thank you. Praise you, even though I have no idea how we’re going to pay for it all and the lost income from having no phones or power for a few days – thank you”.

After that prayer, I had my most productive week in many, many months in my sales job, though I could only work productively 2-1/2 days. The following 2 weeks continued to be strong. That’s after months of poor sales performance.

When we praise and thank, even before we see “answers” – our Abba is able to do so much more than we might have hoped for. Example: David and Bathsheba. Once God killed the illegitimately-born son of that adulterous union, David accepted it and went on to worship Yah (2 Samuel 12:20). David fasted 7 days while the son was sick, then he moved on and accepted Yah’s will and worshiped!

I think largely *because* of the way David handled it, **God used the next son, the legitimate son of that union with Bathsheba now as a married couple, Solomon – to be the next king. This was the only son of David where the Bible clearly says “Yahweh loved him”.**

2 Samuel 12:24-25

“Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. **Now YHVH loved him,** 25 and He sent word by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So he called his name *Jedidiah* [*“beloved of Yah”*], *because of Yahweh.*”

Solomon became, after David, the next king in the Messianic line!! Who would have ever anticipated such a glorious ending to the David-Bathsheba-Uriah debacle during all the pain everyone was going through!?

What’s the debacle in your life? What sins are causing you horrors today? **TURN THEM OVER** to Yahweh, accept what is, accept the consequences – go **WORSHIP** and praise in and even for what’s happened – and then watch Our Creator’s incredible mercy.

It would have appeared to most that God had disappeared from David’s life for a while. But He had not. He was working something out. And when David repented and turned everything over to Yahweh, God made all things work together for good for those who love God and are the called according to His purpose - - even in that miserably horrible sin.

5. ASK for help in seeing His BIGGER SPIRITUAL purpose – the Eternal unseen forces at work that are molding and preparing us for eternity. And pray if you’re not shown the bigger purpose for your pain, that God help you believe and trust Him.

Yahweh declares and sees the end from the beginning (**Isaiah 46:10**). Remember the BIG PICTURE: look to the final goal of being part of God’s kingdom and spreading the gospel around the world. It’s a most amazing future.

2 Corinthians 4:6-9, 16-18 Paul says it so well here....

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness [Genesis 1:4b], who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, *that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us*. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — (skip to v 16 now...)

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Father wants us trusting him and wants us to stop worrying and being fretful and anxious.

Worrying is slapping God in the face. We’re basically saying we’re scared He isn’t watching, or able to manage. “It’s all in God’s hands now” – we say as a last resort, when it should be our first response.

I really don’t think God wants us fixating on this life. Most of the “things” we seek are mere dust in his eyes. Temporal, not eternal. Our bodies are dust. Mortal. They’ll age. They’ll hurt. They’ll break. They’ll get sick. THIS life is not the purpose of our lives. This life is to teach us to TRUST him, to believe He is working with us in all the “bad stuff” going on too to prepare us, to toughen us up where needed, to tenderize us where needed, until we come to the fullness of the stature of Christ, and look more and more like him...until Christ is formed in us as Galatians says.

Trials are sent to help us overcome our weaknesses by looking to the real source of STRENGTH. Remember the Hebrew word “El” or “Elohim” – where we get “God” literally means “Strong one”. In severe trials we tend much more to go seek Yahweh on our knees. We pray much more in tough times than in easy times. The things that go beyond death – are the character we build as we abide in Him, trust in Him and love him *no matter what*... THAT surpasses time. That does, and the relationships we build with God and others also last forever.

It’s really about living in the power of our Master/Lord in our lives – not in our own strength.

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 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.*

What a great example. Paul is saying he is perishing, is weak – but is strong in Christ.

Go back and hear my last sermon on Living in God’s will. He has a plan for you. He’s a Grand Weaver of a heavenly tapestry that will someday include billions of lives and when He is all done

with how we all interact and interweave with each other – under his loving hand – we’ll understand more fully what he’s doing. Man can’t possibly “see” all that He sees.

When Peter wrote the book of 1 Peter, the new body of believers were under hard trials.

1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again **to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ** from the dead, 4 to an **inheritance incorruptible** and undefiled and that does not fade away, **reserved in heaven** for you, 5 who are **kept by the power of God through faith for salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.

When we’re tempted to be disappointed with God we gotta come back to this! My view is of eternity, is what Peter and Paul are teaching us! We’ve got to learn this so we are ready for the tough times coming.

Let’s read an often read passage, but this time within the context of having been disappointed with Abba’s perceived lack of responsiveness to our plight.

Romans 8:18-39 (plus commentary on the audio version)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

(God wants us looking to the future, to the unseen)

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. **22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.** 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even **we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.** 24 **For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope;** for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

26 *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* 27 *Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. (WOW!)*

28 *And we know that ALL things work together for GOOD to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.* 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not **with Him also freely give us ALL things?** [BUT NOT YET. “These all died NOT having seen the promises” – Hebrews 11] 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. **35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?** 36 As it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long;

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

(Don't let anything separate you from God or his life!)

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God often allows events to happen to make a Spiritual POINT – a TYPE of what He's teaching us. There are LESSONS God is teaching us. In the same way that Joseph went through all he went through – and only LATER understood – so we have to also TRUST.

- **God had to get Joseph into Egypt – and frankly HUMBLE him a lot first. He was a spoiled “favorite son” prior to that.** And Yahweh used that to save millions of people alive, and to bring about his plan to bring Israel into Egypt. Who could have known all that during all the pain that Jacob went through? Joseph says GOD caused all that – **Genesis 50:19-21.**
- **In the same way, someday you'll understand why you or loved ones had to go through so much pain.** Even all that trouble Satan caused Job – ultimately it was GOD who sent the trials. **It says so in Job 42:11—“all the adversity Yahweh had brought upon him...”**

So either way, God either allows, causes or even sends the troubles we experience.

Sometimes we cause them (as David/Uriah/Bathsheba). Sometimes GOD sends the test. But either way, we can work all things to end in good if we commit everything to Him in praise and thanksgiving. Yes, even the “bad stuff.

So in **Ephesians 1:11** it says He “**works ALL things according to the counsel of his will.**” So in that we should have peace.

- 6. With all that said, ask him to help you TRUST him, and to relax especially when we don't understand what the purpose of the trial is all about. See last sermon. The just shall live by faith.**

The frustrating part to us is trying to find meaning in what is happening – when it hurts, when people are unable to cope, when some are dying, many are in pain. But trust we must. We can't put our human viewpoints on to God. He sees so much more. WE say – and I've said – “I can't imagine

myself just doing nothing if I had the power to prevent and stop such suffering going on with this little child...” (or whatever the circumstance was).

But just as little children have to come to trust their mom and dad – even when they don’t understand why they can’t stay up 2 more hours, or eat more ice cream ---we also have to trust our spiritual heavenly Daddy. And sometimes there are some tough, tough times he puts us through!

James 5:10-11

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord — that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

I don’t need to understand what’s going on – except to trust God who is wiser and more loving than I can imagine.

When Judah was about to go into captivity – and talk about a tough, tough time... this is the message Jeremiah had for them, from Yahweh:

Jeremiah 29:11-13

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you”, says YHVH, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” (as Daniel did in Daniel 9).

But I’ve got to TRUST him. No matter what. And so do you. He can take all the time He wants. He knows best. He knows best. He’s my loving father. I love him. I trust Him. Even in the suffering He is allowing, he knows what I need. He is making me strong in him. We don’t need to understand all the reasons why he isn’t moving quickly to heal or solve the issues we want him to. We just need to trust.

Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in Yahweh with all your heart, and *lean not on your own understanding.*”

That’s the hard part. We want God to answer our prayers OUR way, the way WE see things. That’s leaning on your own understanding! So here we are trying to advise the Almighty, when HE knows best. TRUST him. Trust him.

Now here’s a hard statement to accept, but I think very true: **When we are disappointed with God, it’s because we didn’t get our way.** (Repeat).

Once I came to see that, it led to profound repentance for saying to him – 2 nights in a row earlier – that I was disappointed that He didn’t do more to protect our home. On Monday night that’s how I thought. Tuesday night – I was still depressed. Wednesday night, I was repenting in tears for questioning God, and blessings started flowing Thurs and Friday to more than pay our bills.

We cannot, must not, lean to our own understanding but trust in Him WITH ALL OUR HEART. We’re being taught to TRUST God. ***We can’t be taught to trust, unless we have some tough tests we have to go through, when we have to put our very lives into his hands.***

From the bottom of my heart, I speak this sermon: TRUST HIM. Praise him even in your pain. Thank him even in your horrors you’re living through –and ask him to bless those who have cursed you. Thank him for those who have hated you. Ask him to watch over them too... just as Yeshua orders us to do at the end of Matthew 5, as our heavenly father sends rain and sunshine on the just and the unjust.

That’s what life is ALL ABOUT: getting us to surrender ourselves, submit to, accept God as your God and Yeshua as your Savior and believe he came from God and died for you and loves you and rose again to become king. All of life is about making Yeshua our LORD and Master, trust, obey, follow and submit to God in every facet of our lives. All the time. That’s where all this is headed.

So in **Ephesians 1:11** it says He “**works ALL things according to the counsel of his will.**” So in that we should have peace.

When we know that He’s working His plan – and we trust him.... And we back off the criticism and depression... we start experiencing his love and his blessings. And over time, we become stronger. In our tests we’re saying “Praise you, praise you, praise you”. All of life is geared to bringing us to that point to trust him all the time, no matter what.

I look back now at the lightning strike and realize that my trust needing strengthening. So now I praise and thank him for the lightning strike. That will be almost nothing compared to the setbacks and trials still ahead of me – and you. But it’s for an eternal purpose. Trust him. No matter what. All the time.

I pray Yahweh will bless you and keep you and that we learn to live by faith, all the time – even though at times we feel Abba is disappointing us. He really isn’t. He’s building in you something that will last forever.

We love you, dear Abba, and trust you. In Yeshua’s mighty name, Amen.