

# From Beginning to End: Part 6

## In the Midst of Suffering

### Pastor James Bell

Philippians 1:6 NLT

6 And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

God doesn't do anything partially so this requires that we remain surrendered to His plan. And within the flesh that is hard because we are faced with circumstances and decisions that does not go with the flow. This is where we must push beyond the flesh and allow the Spirit of God to rise within us and believe Him for the impossible. Some would say that is easier said than done. But I would respond in the same way that Jesus responded to His disciples, You of little faith or no faith. Faith is a requirement if we are to please God. Begin to believe Him for the impossible and bring your thought into alignment with His word.

Last week we spoke about the principle of accepted God appointed suffer but this week we will dive deeper and address being in the midst of suffering.

When we are not seeing the manifestation of His word the first question we need to address is: Did you consider the cost? Look at what Jesus said:

Luke 14:27–30 NLT

27 And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. 28 “But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? 29 Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. 30 They would say, ‘There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!’

The very first thing Jesus address was carrying your cross. The cross speaks of suffering and as we states last week that there is nothing comfortable about carrying your cross. Jesus brings to our attention the fact of suffering but went deep and said that we must consider the cost of building his kingdom. How many times have we started a project and not complete it because we ran out of funds. Would you start building a house and leave it unfinished? Then why are we not considering what it is going to cost? Could it be that this is too much to ask for? This is a common setback for so many Christians. They want what God wants for them but they don't want to pay the price. And the only price is surrender. And full surrender is too high of a price that many are not willing to give.

The next question is have you lost faith? Giving up cannot be optional or part of the equation. The testing of our faith proves the genuineness of faith. Is our faith really faith if it is not tested. When it feels like the whole world is collapsing around you. When everything seems to be against you and it looks like you are taking one step forward and two steps back. Going nowhere quickly. But Jesus assures us in John 16:33

John 16:33 NLT

33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

You will have many trials and sorrows. What part of “many trials and sorrows” do we not understand? The greek translates this as tribulations. Its meaning is to crush, press, compress, squeeze, to break.

I know we spoke about accepting suffering last week but we must understand that the accepting part is the knowing that suffering is apart of the process but when we are in the midst of tribulation. This is feeling the full brunt of the crushing. This is when it is at its hardest. This is when our flesh will manifest in its fullest or we lean fully into God. This is the cross road where many fold.

Matthew 13:5–7 NLT

5 Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. 6 But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants.

Matthew 13:20–22 NLT

20 The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. 21 But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. 22 The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced.

As we refer back to part 2 and 3, we should be seeing this in a new light. This is the importance of growing roots and developing deep roots. God appointed suffering is inevitable and deep roots holds us stable in the midst of these storm. Being rooted in fellowship with God and His word is our anchor in the midst of suffering. We become unshakable.

Hebrews 12:26–28 NLT

26 When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise: “Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also.” 27 This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain. 28 Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe.

Simon Peter was told in Luke 22 that Satan has asked for you that he may sift you like wheat. And what is sifting? It is the same thing as shaking.

Shaking takes place for a few reasons. Let's look at a few of them.

1. Shaking brings us closer to the foundation
2. To remove what is dead
3. To harvest what is ripe
4. To awaken
5. To unify or mix together so that it is no longer separated

God's Kingdom is unshakable and what remains of us after we are shaken is so that true stands the test of time. Being shaken is not a bad thing because it either removes what is not God or what we are producing for His name sake.

Look at the revelation that Paul received and conveyed to the church of Corinth.

2 Corinthians 4:8–12 NLT

8 We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. 9 We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. 10 Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies. 11 Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. 12 So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you.

Let's break down what Paul was saying here. We are pressed, perplexed, hunted, knocked down but we are not crushed, despaired, abandoned, or destroyed. We are victorious despite what we face. Just because we face these adversities does not mean that we are subject to the status quo. If we are rooted in God's word and His character then God is bound to uphold His truth.

What comes to mind when we think about pressure treated lumber? It's resistance to insects and rot. But how does it resist these things? Chemicals are pressurized into the wood. Normal wood becomes extraordinary only because it faced pressure. This pressure installed a chemical that would cause it to be resilient to insect infestation and rot. The wood faced pressure in a season that help it stand the test of time in another season and environment.

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 NLT

16 That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. 17 For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! 18 So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

In the midst of God appointed suffering our mindset has to be centered on the cross. What Jesus suffered and died for was not to benefit him. It was to benefit the Kingdom of God. What we are suffering and died for is not to edify us but to bring God glory. I know this is not what the

world teaches us. I know this doesn't make sense to our understanding. This means we must change our way of thinking.

Isaiah 55:8–9 NLT

8 “My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. 9 For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Our ways and our thoughts cannot be of this world. They must be higher meaning that our ways and our thought must come up to His ways and thoughts.

In Closing:

Acts 27:13–15 NLT

13 When a light wind began blowing from the south, the sailors thought they could make it. So they pulled up anchor and sailed close to the shore of Crete. 14 But the weather changed abruptly, and a wind of typhoon strength (called a “northeaster”) burst across the island and blew us out to sea. 15 The sailors couldn't turn the ship into the wind, so they gave up and let it run before the gale.

The sooner we realize that we are not the one in control the matter the sooner we can get to the meat of what God wants to produce. How often do we try to hold the reins? Letting go of what is purposed to be inevitable will open our eyes to see God in a way that we have never seen Him before.

Acts 27:18–26 NLT

18 The next day, as gale-force winds continued to batter the ship, the crew began throwing the cargo overboard. 19 The following day they even took some of the ship's gear and threw it overboard. 20 The terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the sun and the stars, until at last all hope was gone. 21 No one had eaten for a long time. Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, “Men, you should have listened to me in the first place and not left Crete. You would have avoided all this damage and loss. 22 But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down. 23 For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, 24 and he said, ‘Don't be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What's more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.’ 25 So take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as he said. 26 But we will be shipwrecked on an island.”

Even when letting go we witness that the storm continues to rage. We are not in charge of how long the storm last but we are responsible for how we respond while we are in the storm. The storm removes visibility and confuses our sense of direction. But even still God assures us that He will bring us through. Although it may not work out the way we envision it...His outcome is concrete. We just have to keep our focus on the one that is the author and perfecter of our faith.

Acts 27:30–31 NLT

30 Then the sailors tried to abandon the ship; they lowered the lifeboat as though they were going to put out anchors from the front of the ship. 31 But Paul said to the commanding officer and the soldiers, "You will all die unless the sailors stay aboard."

How many times have we tried to take shortcuts? But what about that time when the shortcut cost you more time than waiting it out? God did not call us to abandon ship. He called us to persevere. Remember Isaiah 54:17 that no weapon formed against you shall prosper. This doesn't mean that weapons will not be used against us...but that they will not prosper.

Philippians 3:12-14 NLT

12 I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.

13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

Despite opposition we have been called to press forward. Moving forward is not looking beyond our past. We must not let our past dictate our future. Paul said I press on to reach the end of the race. From Beginning to End. We all have a beginning and we all have an ending. What are we doing to secure the heavenly prize that God is calling us to?

Let me pray with you today!

Exported from Logos Bible Study, 5:10 PM March 21, 2026.