

**Jeremiah 12 – July 7, 2022**  
***Preparation for Tougher Trials Ahead***  
**J.D. Farag**

God bless you! Hey, if you haven't got the communion elements, you might want to come up at this time and grab them and then take them back to your seat. At the conclusion of the Bible study, we're going to partake together.

We want to welcome those of you that are joining us online. We're so glad that you are. This would also be a good time for you to get the elements as well if you want to partake with us at the end. Really looking forward to what the Lord has for us tonight.

Good to be back, by the way. I missed you.

[ Applause ]

Did you miss me?

[ Applause ]

Oh, you're just saying that!

All right. Jeremiah Chapter 12 tonight, making our way through the Bible book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse, taking our time, no hurry, no worry.

So why don't we pray? We'll ask God to bless our time together in His Word. If you would, please join with me.

Father in heaven, thank You so much! Lord, I really appreciated what Kapono prayed because it's not just that, but sometimes I think we just take so much for granted. And we take You for granted, Lord, we take Your goodness for granted.

You're so good, Lord, and You love us so much. Your love for us is just too high for our understanding. Lord, tonight we want to devote, commit our time to You.

We want to open our hearts to You. We want to give You our undivided attention. We treasure this time that we have on Thursday nights where we can come to this place and put everything aside, all the busyness, stress and pressure, and cares and affairs, Lord.

We just want to focus, but we need the Holy Spirit to help us focus. We want to concentrate and with our minds just be able to take in what it is that You have for us tonight, and not just our minds, but our hearts.

So Lord, would You bless our time together? We pray in Jesus' name, Amen and Amen.

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All right, well, I have to confess that this is yet another chapter that I've really been looking forward to. I know I say that about every chapter, but this one in particular because of how it speaks to and deals with the trials of life, specifically as it relates to how the Lord always prepares us ahead of time for tougher trials that He knows are coming our way.

And such is the case, as we're going to see with Jeremiah, who in the previous chapter had just learned of a threat on his life. And if this weren't bad enough, he learned that it came from his people, his home town of Anathoth, a priestly town. His hometown was a town where the priests were, and they had now this plot, this plan to take his life.

Now, this is going to be germane to our understanding of what we're going to see here in this chapter because it seems that these priests were making a lot of money, and Jeremiah prophesying was bad for business, and it was hurting their bottom line.

So they made it very clear to him in no uncertain terms that if he didn't stop prophesying, they were going to kill him. You stop doing what You're doing, or we're going to kill you.

Stop the prophecies. It's bad for business, all the doom and gloom because see, our business, our bottom line, our livelihood depends on speaking only smooth things. We're going to see that again tonight as well.

So we come sliding into this chapter with Jeremiah doubtless devastated, hearing that his hometown, his own people and it's actually going to even get worse, as we're going to see, now want to kill him and are threatening his life, and actually have hatched a plot, as they say, to do that very thing. So let's jump in. You're ready?

Verse - well, that wasn't very convincing at all.

[ Laughter ]

Now, verse 1, Jeremiah, and you got to really appreciate how he says what he says here to the Lord. He's going to ask the Lord a couple of questions.

But notice the preface, *verse 1*, "**Righteous are You, O Lord, when I plead with You.**"

In other words, Lord, I'm not questioning Your righteousness, Your fairness, Your goodness, no. I'm not questioning You, but I am pleading with You.

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And he says, **"Yet let me talk with You about Your judgments."** I'm not questioning; I just want to ask You about a couple of things here. **"Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously? You have planted them, [Verse 2] yes."**

In other words, instead of wiping them out, You've solidly grounded them and planted them. What's up with that?

**"You have planted them, yes, they have taken root. They grow, yes, they bear fruit. [And then he says this] You are near in their mouth but far from their mind."**

Okay, let's be patient with me because what Jeremiah is asking God about is the very thing that Asaph had a crisis of faith over in Psalm 73 concerning the prosperity of the wicked. In other words, these people that now want to kill him were making money hand over fist, as the saying goes.

And Jeremiah's having a really hard time with this, as did Asaph. How is it, Lord, why is it, Lord, that You let them, the wicked, get away with this?

Well, think about it. They're prospering. They're making a lot of money. And probably Jeremiah is living by faith, hand-to-mouth again, as the saying goes, trusting God day-by-day, hour-by-hour, moment-by-moment.

And Lord, again, I'm not questioning You, I just want to ask You, I want to plead my cause, my case because this just does not make sense to me why it is that You're allowing them to sort of get away with it, get away with murder, literally. They want to murder me.

Why? Why do You let them continue to prosper? Why are they so happy when they deal so treacherously and murderously?

Now God's going to basically do what He did for Asaph in Psalm 73 because he's struggling like Jeremiah is here with why it is that the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer.

Why is it Lord? It doesn't make any sense. It doesn't reconcile, it doesn't compute. It's not fair. I mean, these people that are prospering, these wicked people that are prospering are the very people that want to kill me. So what's God going to do, and how's God going to answer?

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God's going to answer. We're going to take the scenic route to get to that answer. But in the end, it's going to be like in Psalms 73, which is the go-to Psalm for anyone who, like Jeremiah, struggles with this. And I don't think there's a one of us here that doesn't struggle with this.

It's when Asaph goes into the sanctuary of the Lord and the Lord allows him to see their end, and he goes from being envious of them to feeling sorry for them.

Oh! Oh, Lord, you're going to have the final word in the end. Oh, now I get it. He's going to do that for Jeremiah, and rightfully so. But it's about to get even worse. Now, Jeremiah continues, **"But You, O Lord, know me; You have seen me, and You have tested my heart toward You."**

Now this seems out of character because he says to the Lord of these wicked who are prospering, **"Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter. How long will the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither? The beasts and birds are consumed, for the wickedness of those who dwell there, because they said, 'He will not see our final end.'"**

Wow! Jeremiah, I mean, this is the weeping prophet. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter? Where did that come from?

Well, listen, in all fairness, you can't really blame him. All he's really asking God to do is expedite His judgment. He knows God's going to judge them, but it's almost like Jeremiah, in his pleading with the Lord, asking of the Lord, is saying, Lord, why are You not doing it now?

Oh, that's just like us, isn't it? We want the Lord to do what we want the Lord to do when we want the Lord to do it in the way that we want to do it. Lord, what are You waiting for? Lord, do this yesterday.

And the Lord's like, No, My timing is perfect. I know what I'm doing. You don't know what I'm doing. That's the problem, isn't it?

By the way, parenthetically, let me say it's a control thing. Oh, come on, we want to be in control.

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No, God's in control. I know what I'm doing. Well, God, what are you waiting for? You'll see. Just wait; you'll see.

Don't you hate those words, especially as a kid, when your parents would say something like that to you. Just wait. You'll see. I don't want to wait. I want to see. No, you'll see. You'll see what I'm going to do.

Now, *verse 5*, and I want to spend a little bit of time on this because really, to me, this is the takeaway. This is God's response to Jeremiah. **"If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?"**

Please, please, please don't see this as God rebuking Jeremiah because He's not. This is not God saying, "Buck up, buttercup, toughen up. Put your big boy pants on."

No, that's the world. That's not the Lord. The Lord's not saying that. Well, if that's not what He's saying, what is He saying? Here's what He's saying.

He's saying, Jeremiah, listen, you don't know what I'm doing. You don't know My ways. You don't know the ways and the whys of God. I'm allowing the footmen to prepare you for the horsemen that I know are coming. So actually, this is all a preparation for what's ahead.

Wait a minute. What's ahead? You mean it gets worse? Yeah. So I'm allowing the footmen to prepare you for the horsemen.

God will always prepare us for that which is prepared for us. We're going to actually on Sunday morning, Lord willing, be talking a little bit more about this. That's what He's doing here.

Jeremiah, I know you're struggling. I know you're weary. I know you're confused even. I know you're having a difficult time, and I don't blame you.

I mean, after all, these are your people from your hometown. You went to school with them, you graduated with them. They wrote in your yearbook. That's the best I got, so you're going to have to take that one.

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So I know you're hurting Jeremiah, but I'm actually preparing you, and the footmen, the horsemen are coming. But when the horsemen do come, and they will come, you'll be ready because of the footmen.

Now, *verse 6*, hang on. This is crazy. The Lord continues now and He's going to break this news to Jeremiah. It's even worse than you think, Jeremiah. **"For even your brothers, the house of your father, even they have dealt treacherously with you; yes, they have called a multitude after you."**

No way. Way. Wait a minute. Lord, You mean my family is the one that hatched this plot to kill me?

Yeah.

Mom and Dad?

Yeah.

Brothers and sisters?

Yeah.

My family?

Yeah.

Wait, they're the ones that got the priests that called the multitude to kill me? Yeah. That makes absolutely no sense at all because I just talked to them the other day, and they were just so gracious and loving and hey, son, how you doing?

The Lord knows all about it because He says, **"Do not believe them, even though they speak [And here it is] Smooth words to you."**

Jeremiah, I am preparing you, I am readying you, I'm steadying you. The footmen are there not to weary you, but to prepare you. And I hate to break it to you, but this actually started with your own family. Can you imagine how absolutely crushed Jeremiah must have been to hear this from the Lord?

Now, if you remember, and I know it was a few weeks ago, but at the end of Chapter 11, we read that - we don't know how - but the Lord told Jeremiah about this death threat, this

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threat on his life, and He kind of gave him a heads up, I guess you could say, that hey your people from Anathoth want to kill you. I just want to let you know. Have a nice evening.

It wasn't like that.

But I just want to give you a heads up. And then He goes into detail, and He says, Now, don't worry, I'll take care of them because vengeance is Mine, and I will mete out just judgment. I just wanted to give you a heads up that there's a hit out, a contract on your life, and it just so happens to be from your hometown. And now He's filling in the blanks and saying that it actually started with your very own family.

How you doing? You okay so far?

*Verse 7*, He goes on and He says to Jeremiah, **"I have forsaken My house, I have left My heritage. I have given the dearly beloved of My soul [Don't miss that] into the hand of her enemies."**

Oh, God loves His people.

*Verse 8*, **"My heritage is to Me like a lion in the forest. It cries out against Me; therefore, I have hated it."**

Wait, what? God, You're likening Your people to a lion in the forest. You created this roaring lion, and it roars at you?

And notice what God doesn't say. He doesn't say I hate them. He says I hate it. Therefore, I have hated it.

**"My heritage [Verse 9] is to Me like a speckled vulture."** So now we're going to go from this lion, this roaring out against the very one who created him to this odd duckling, this speckled vulture.

**"The vultures all around are against her. Come, assemble all the beasts of the field, bring them to devour!"**

In other words, I have made you now like that speckled vulture, that bird, odd bird that everybody picks on. And I'm going to allow them to do that because of what you did. I have forsaken you.

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You know, the Lord will never forsake us. But if we forsake Him, He will forsake us. God will never force Himself on His people. Oh, God loves them, and He loves them so much, which is why He's going to have to discipline them and chastise them by delivering them into the hands of their enemies, the Babylonians, when they'll be taken into captivity.

God chastises those whom He loves. Don't despise it. Don't despise it when God chastises you. I mean, that's the evidence that you're His children because you don't discipline other people's children, right?

He chastises us because He loves us and He's going to chastise his people. He's going to teach them a lesson. Verse 10 is very interesting.

Now, this is, again, the New King James that renders it "many rulers." But if you have a King James, it doesn't say "rulers." It says "pastors."

Let's close in prayer right there. (Chuckling) Because what about the pastors, the rulers, the leaders, the shepherds?

Oh, **"They have destroyed My vineyard." They have trodden My portion underfoot. They have made My pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.**

**They [Verse 11] have made it desolate, desolate.**" Well, wait a minute. Isn't that - why repetitive? Why redundant? Why twice?

Oh, we're going to see it two more times I think, maybe more. In the original language of the Hebrew Old Testament, you can't even begin to capture the intensity of what God is saying here. Utterly desolate. You have devastated, desolated, decimated, completely, and utterly.

**"And it mourns to Me, [That which you've made desolate] The whole land is made desolate, because no one takes it to heart. The plunderers [Verse 12] have come on all the [Here it is again] desolate heights in the wilderness, [And here's why]**

**for the sword of the Lord shall devour from one end of the land to the other end of the land; no flesh shall have peace. They have sown wheat [Verse 13] but reaped thorns. They have put themselves to pain but do not profit. But be ashamed of your harvest because of the fierce anger of the Lord.**



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**[Verse 14] Thus says the Lord: 'Against all My evil neighbors who touch the inheritance which I have caused My people Israel to inherit -- behold, I will pluck them out of their land and pluck out the house of Judah from among them.**

**Then [Verse 15] it shall be, after I have plucked them out, [Ah!] that I will return and have compassion on them and bring them back, everyone to his heritage and everyone to his land.'"**

Stop right there. God, of himself, says I am compassionate, I am longsuffering, I am slow to anger, I am full of mercy. I know we've talked about it before.

Perhaps it would be appropriate to mention it again tonight in the context of this chapter, but we have to; it is imperative. I think we do err greatly when we don't read a chapter and study a portion in God's Word like this through the lens of God's love.

Because if you don't see God as a God of love, then this seems utterly cruel for God to say this, this way, at this time. Listen, after I've taught them, My beloved, a lesson and chastised them because I chastise those whom I love, I'm going to restore them because I'm a compassionate God.

In preparation for teaching this chapter, which again, I was really looking forward to tonight, I was just inquiring of the Lord concerning His compassion for His people. And this is what I mean when I pray or say, Lord, you know, we take You for granted. I think we take the compassion that God has for us for granted.

I was thinking about Psalm 139, and I spent some time in Psalm 139 today. The Lord knows, the Lord knows. He's so full of compassion. He knows our rising up and our laying down. He knows everything.

We don't have to tell Him what's going on. We do that, right, when we pray? Lord, did you - Lord, you know - and we kind of like apprise the Lord of what happened.

And God's like, I'm all-knowing. Not only did I know that was going to happen, I actually allowed it to happen.

So we're like, you know, informing God about what happened, and no, God knows and God has compassion. He sees, He hears, He cares, He knows, and He will act.

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Yeah, but what's taking Him so long?

Oh, His timing is always perfect. He's never late. He's never early either. And truth be made known, we don't want Him to be early. His timing is perfect because He is perfect.

Jeremiah, JD, put your name, insert your name, please. I know you don't know why, what, but I do. I know. I'm going to deal with this in My way and in My time and for My glory.

And make no mistake about it, God knows how sensitive Jeremiah's heart is. And we're getting to know him, aren't we? We're getting to know his personality. I see Jeremiah as a sensitive man, man of God, a godly man, a humble man.

I also see him as a very passionate man, especially when you start asking the Lord to pull the sheep off for the slaughter and slaughter them. That's another side of this guy, yeah?

But he's also a compassionate man, and that's why he's affectionately referred to as the weeping prophet. It almost makes you want to weep for the weeping prophet because he is so hurt by what God has just revealed to him.

And now God is trying to prepare him and steady him, encourage him and strengthen him. And He's telling Jeremiah, I'm going to take care of this. Stay out of My way. Let Me do it My way. Let Me have My way. I know what I'm doing.

I'm going to have compassion on them. I'm going to bring them back after they've learned their lesson. And I'm going to do that because I love them. They are My people, and I'm going to restore them.

Can I say it like this? God is a restoring God. God is a restoring God. Now we're going to see this in these last two verses. This is just how much of a restoring and compassionate god, God is. You ready for it?

**"And it shall be, [Verse 16] if they will learn carefully the ways of My people... [Now He's talking about Babylonians and the other nations] If they will learn carefully the ways of My people [Judah], to swear by My name, 'As the Lord lives,' as they taught My people [Listen to this] to swear to Baal, then they shall be established in the midst of My people."**

Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Let me see if I got this straight. You mean to tell me that God is offering and inviting these Baal-worshiping nations to come to Him?

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Yeah. If they learn carefully the ways of My people and instead of swearing by Baal, they swear by My name, 'As the Lord lives,' I'll bless them. I'll let them be established in the midst of My people.

**"But [Verse 17] if they do not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation," says the Lord.**

Spoiler alert! He ends up destroying that nation because they didn't swear by the name of the Lord, 'As the Lord lives.'

And here's the other thing too, and we'll see this. But they actually took great delight.

Now they're just the instrument, speaking of the Babylonians, in the hand of God to chastise and discipline and teach His people a lesson.

He's using the Babylonians, like He did with the Assyrians, to invade and take captive God's people to teach them a lesson. But they enjoyed it too much, and God said that's not okay.

I have an offer for you, Babylon. I have an offer for you, Baal worshiper. I have an offer for you, Gentile nation. I have an offer for you, enemies of My people, that I'm going to let take captive, My people.

I have an offer for you. If you come to Me, swear by My name, I'll bless you as I bless My people. I'll restore you; I'll establish you, and you will be in the midst of My people. I mean, to me, you would think this would be a no-brainer.

Okay, so A) Blessing, prosperity, establishing.

B) Destruction, death.

Hmm. (Humming "Jeopardy" theme song) I think I'll take blessing. I'll take blessing.

But they didn't do that.

Oh, God will restore them once the lesson is learned, and it's so cyclical. And I know we've talked about this. Maybe it warrants a little bit of time talking about it again. but it is so cyclical in the sense that - and we're so hard on the Israelites, right? Like we would never do that.

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I mean, it's cyclical in that they would turn away from the Lord, forsake the Lord, worship Baal, and then God would have to discipline them. They would be taken captive, and they would cry out to the Lord, deliver us, Lord, and the Lord shows compassion on them, hearkens under the voice of their cry, restores them, establishes them, blesses them.

And it's not long before they've started worshiping Baal again, and then they have to be taken into captivity again, and they have to be disciplined again, and they cry out again, and then God restores them again, and then they end up going...

The reason why I was so looking forward to this chapter is because it ends with this grand and glorious promise of restoration.

And it's not just for Judah. It's for any nation. This is who God is. He's a compassionate God. He's a merciful God. He's a loving God. He's a forgiving God. He's a gracious God.

Well, how does it apply to me in what I'm going through because I'm really going through it, and You just got done telling me that you ain't seen nothing yet. You're go through this trial. That's just the footmen. And you're telling me that there's tougher trials ahead that God is preparing me for? Yay! How's that supposed to encourage me?

I don't think we have any idea. Let me say it like this. Have you ever gone through a fiery trial, and on the tail end of it said something to the Lord to this effect?

Lord, I don't know how You did that. I don't know how You got me through that. Listen, I would never want to go through that again, but I would never trade what You did in my life in that trial for anything.

The lessons I learned! You did a work in me that You could not do in any other way had I not gone through that. Thank You for the footman, Lord, because when the horseman showed up, I was ready.

Do you think for a second that God will allow us to be ill-prepared for that which He knows is coming? That's not a loving God. That's not a compassionate God. That's not a restoring God. God always has our best interests at heart. It's always for our good and His glory in the end. Yeah, this is hard.

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Yeah, I'm wearied by the footmen, and now You're telling me horsemen are coming and You're actually - You're not saying toughen up. You're toughening me up because I need to be toughened up for the tougher trials that are ahead. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you for ready-ing me and steadying me because You promised me. And the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians: We paraphrase it. You've probably heard it said this way. God will never give you more than you can handle.

I think it's a kind of a loose paraphrase of *1 Corinthians 10:13*, where Paul says that **"There is no trial [*Temptations, same word in the original*] that has overtaken you, but such as is common to men."**

The God, with the trial - I wish it didn't say that - with the trial will provide a way of escape so that you can bear up under it.

Now we've really dumbbed it down. I'm sorry; you'll forgive Me for saying it like that, but when we take that packed-full verse and simplify it as God won't give you more than you can handle, hey, when you're going through a trial and some well-intentioned brother or sister in Christ, says that to you, do you warm up to that?

God will never give you more than you can handle. Never mind, I'm going to be real careful because I can go there, and you know that I can, and I won't. I almost did. I'm not. I don't want to hear that because I know that.

But when you're in the midst of the trial of your life, what you need to know is that God is going to see you through it. No matter how bad it seems, no matter how hard it is, no matter how weary you are, God is using that trial to give you what you need in order to get through that trial.

Oh, I wish there was another way. James: you know, we've talked about it in James that that's how we can consider it pure joy when you encounter trials of various kinds.

Really, how?

Because you know that the trial is where you get the endurance.

Wait, so, Lord, I need endurance.

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Okay, here's a trial.

No, no, no, I didn't ask for a trial. I asked for endurance.

Well, here's the thing. I can't give you the endurance without the trial.

You mean to tell me that the endurance I need to get through the trial is by getting through the trial? That's how I get the endurance?

Yeah.

Could you have just said that earlier on and saved us all of the - I told you we were taking the scenic route. We're almost there to our final destination, just bear with me.

There will come a point, and I hope this doesn't come off wrong, right?

The Lord knows my heart. But there will come a point in our walk with Jesus where we actually thank God for those trials.

You know what a life without trials is? You know what a smooth sailing, no storms brings?

A barren desert where nothing grows.

God's growing me, God's maturing me, and oh, by the way, that trial, the footman, the horsemen are coming, just... they'll be there. You don't have to worry about the horsemen. They'll be there when the time comes.

But let's just deal with the footman right now. I know you're struggling. I know you're hurting. I know this is a difficult and painful trial that you're going through, but oh, you're going to taste from a cup that few do when you see what I do in and through this trial that you're going through. And you come out on the other side of it, you're going all right!

See you later, footman. Where's the horseman?

Again, I hope that doesn't come off wrong, and the Lord knows my heart. And that's what the Lord is saying to Jeremiah. I'm not going to allow - you know, what's coming for him, right?

For those of you that read ahead and stay ahead, oh, pssh, his own family wants to kill him. Oh, it gets much worse, if you can imagine.

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So Jeremiah is getting readied in and through this suffering that He's going through so that when the time comes, when the horseman come, he will make it through. And he will because God will see to it that he does.

Again, we're going to be talking a little bit about this on Sunday morning, actually in the Prophecy Update concerning trials and the Apostle Peter and the promise that God has made to us that are born-again Christians, that He will strengthen us until the very end. He will strengthen us. He will steady us. He will protect us.

It's very interesting. In the original, it carries with it the idea of a military garrison, a guard. I'm going to guard you through this until the very end, the last hour. I'm going to see you through.

What, God's going to just say, Hey, I did My part; you take it from here.

No, no, no. Faithful is He who began that good work in us to complete it. He's going to see us through. That trial you're in....

Watch what God's going to do. Watch what God's going to do.

You know - one last thing and then we'll partake together of communion.

But I was thinking about when I was a little boy and my father, man, he spanked hard. I mean, my mom - I loved it actually when my mom spanked me.

She'd be like, you know... (pretend crying) and I would just start screaming. She hadn't even started spanking me yet and I'm screaming. And she lets up a little bit.

But boy, when my dad would spank me, I would scream and yell. And I mean, it was just, you know, awful, right? And I was thinking about how we still do that when God gives us a spanking. We make it worse than it really is.

Oh, come on. Why do you think there's so much padding down in that particular area of our anatomy?

[ Laughter ]

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I want to encourage you, those of you that are going through a very difficult trial, God's going to see you through. God will see to it. He has to be true to His name, His character, His nature.

Well, *Luke's Gospel Chapter 22* has the account of what we affectionately refer to as the Last Supper, The Lord's Supper. And Luke writes, *verse 14*, "**When the hour had come, He [Speaking of Jesus] sat down and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'**

**Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; [And He says it now a second time] for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'**

**And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'"**

So for those of you that are here, if you'll take and just peel back the top part, you'll have the bread, and just hold on to it for a moment.

We hold in our hands a symbol of the body of Jesus that was broken for us instead of us. And the emphasis on this communion celebration is the word "remember."

Remember: I want you, as often as you do what we're doing here tonight, I want you to do so in remembrance of Me and what I did for you.

Because when you do, when you remember and are mindful of what I did, it recalibrates you. It gives you a much-needed perspective on those trials in your life, because see, I died for you, and I'm coming for you, and I'm going to take you to the place that I prepared for you.

And when you have that to look forward to, it'll make whatever you're going through easier to get through. I want you to remember that.

Sometimes when you're in the heat of the battle, certainly the spiritual battle and the spiritual warfare as it intensifies in this last hour, and it is, I think we would do well to remember: Wait a minute, I'm saved. This is as bad as it gets! Because soon and very soon



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that trumpet's going to sound because of what Jesus did for me, and in the twinkling of an eye, I'm going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

So okay, I got my much-needed perspective now. That's right, I remember, kind of forgot. Started living like I'm going to be here for a while.

Nah, I'm coming for you, and I want you to remember that because I died for you, and this is My body, a symbol of My body broken for you.

So would you partake of the bread with me?

Thank You, Lord. Lord, thank You for this remembrance. Thank You for Your body that was broken for us. Thank You for the bread that symbolizes Your body broken for us to remind us, to refocus us on eternity and not our lives in this world.

Lord, thank You. I cannot thank You enough, Lord. Thank You, Lord. Luke goes on to write, **"Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.'"**

Again, for those of you that are here, if you'll peel back the remainder of the packaging, you'll have the cup. And again, just hold on to it for a moment. You know, I struggle every time we partake together and celebrate communion because I don't know if it's possible to adequately communicate the importance of the symbol of His blood that we hold in our hands.

I mean, we sing it, we say it, "There's power in the blood." But this is the blood of the New Covenant that was shed in our stead.

And if you're here tonight or online watching this, before we partake together of this cup, I want you to remember this one thing. That no matter how bad the sin that you sinned was, it's taken care of because with His blood, there's the remission of sin, forgiveness for sin, cleansing from sin. That's how powerful the blood is.

But see, the devil doesn't want us to remember that because he wants to continue condemning us, building, as one said, that infrastructure of guilt around our lives, guilt and condemnation. He wants to keep rubbing our nose in it.

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All we have to do is remember that that's already been paid for in full. And it's finished. And that's what we're celebrating tonight and that's what we're remembering tonight, His blood shed in our stead for the forgiveness of all of our sins.

Would you partake with me?

Thank You, Lord Jesus. Kaponono, why don't you come on up? Please stand; we'll close in prayer and close in song.

Lord, again, it's one of those times where there's just no way, it's impossible this side of glory to ever be able to express how grateful we are to You. Just saying thank You just seems so hollow.

But it's going to have to do for now because we too, like You, eagerly await and fervently desire when what we just did here tonight in remembrance of You, will find its ultimate fulfillment, when we will actually, and it's so hard to get our finite, fallen minds around this truth that what we just did here tonight we're going to do with You at the wedding feast of the Lamb when this finds its ultimate fulfillment.

Oh, Lord, thank You, thank You, thank You, thank You! We can't wait, Lord! Lord, for those that are hurting and struggling and suffering and just really downcast and discouraged, and that's giving way to despair, even hopelessness, I pray, Lord, that You'll renew hope because You're a restoring God. You're a compassionate God.

Lord, thank You for the promise, the truth that You will see us through to the very end. We can't wait, Lord. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, we pray. Maranatha, in Jesus' name. Amen.