

Topical Message
My Wife Died, But I'm Not Asking God Why I'm Asking God "What"
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Would you join me as we pray? Lord, we praise Your name. We sing Your name. We say Your name, the only name, the name above all names. Lord, we thank You for this time that we can gather together, Lord. And Lord, we thank You for sustaining and giving our pastor strength. We ask that You will continue to do so, Lord, by the power of Your Holy Spirit. So thank You, Lord, that we get to be here with him this evening, Lord, and we're excited to hear Your word, Lord. So would You just calm our hearts and give us the focus that only You can, Lord, in the middle of this week when we're going through whatever we're going through, Lord? Would You just allow us to be here in this time and focus on Your word, Lord? So speak to us this evening, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. Welcome. Welcome.

[Applause]

Oh! We got a lot of people here.

[Laughter]

Why don't you take your seat? And thank you for that, by the way. I know you're not here to hear me. You're here to hear God speak through me. So I'll just yield to the Holy Spirit and let Him do that which only He can.

Hey, before we jump in, I want to express to all of you how thankful and grateful I am for just the love, man. I mean, the love you've shown my family and myself. You know, I've been putting off all the condolence cards from Saturday's celebration of life and of eternal life. And um... and I finally, this morning, I just carved out time I didn't really have. And I knew there were bags of hundreds of cards, and it was going to take me a while. So I finally just said, "Okay, Lord, help."

So I started to open them up. Thank God for envelope openers. You have one of those, right? If you don't, get one. So I started just opening them up. And you guys are just... I don't know what to say. I mean, just the love, the generosity, the kind words, the encouragement, the scriptures.

Oh, my goodness. And it would be literally impossible for me to thank every single one of you. I used to have Kellie for that. So that's — is that a good — can I use that one? I just

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did. You know, she'd make sure. Get the address. We got to send thank you cards. Well, this is it. So thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you.

[Applause]

Wow. Whew! What a relief. It would take me till the rapture to send you all thank you cards. So there you go. Another thing I want to do is thank you for being so patient with me, gracious to me, but infinitely more important you've been so faithful in praying for me, and not just me, my children with me. Please pray for them. I'm just going to be open. I mean, pssh...

Sometimes I know people are uncomfortable with how open I am, but it's just who I am and who God's called me to be. But God's been teaching this teacher some lessons. You know, as a teacher, you have to be a teachable. And oh, my... Too many to mention.

But I just want to share one of them. I am so privileged, and I am so spoiled. I'm not complaining. (Chuckling) You can still spoil me. I actually think and truly believe that I am, if not the most spoiled pastor, I'm at least one of the most spoiled pastors in the entire world. Again, I'm not complaining. You guys spoil me, man. I think you like me. Still.

Like I mentioned on Saturday, you know, it's a good sign when you come back, and they didn't change the locks. That's — that's... We're off to a good start. You know, most pastors — this is for real. They — they can't say what I said Saturday and am sharing with you tonight. They wouldn't even have a church to come back to. I've been gone for five months, man, caring for my dying wife. And you guys let me.

And I will never be — first, I will never forget it. Yeah. But I'll never be able to thank you enough for letting me be there for her till death did we part. All right. Well, we're off to a great start, aren't we? I have to take my glasses off, or I'll smudge them and have to clean them, and then I can never get them clean. And everything is blurry cause I have double vision anyway. By the way, both of you look marvelous.

[Laughter]

All right. Hey, real quick. Real quick. Yeah. I need to remove those two particular words from my vocabulary. I know. But as was announced, we are going to resume, Lord willing,

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the Prophecy Updates starting this Sunday, the 15th. But good news. You don't have to bring your pajamas and toothbrush, as I had mentioned in November. It won't be 12 hours long. It'll be eleven and a half. No, it won't. Actually, and perhaps surprisingly, it may not be very long, nor does it need to be very long. It's not the length but the strength.

And we are going to do that. We're going to tackle this tough topic concerning the increasing mocking and arguing within the church among Christians over Bible prophecy, which ironically in and of itself is Bible prophecy. How's that one? Then not to disappoint, I put together a list.

[Laughter]

Listen, five months. Let me have it. Now listen, it's a list of ten. It's — I'm painting the prophetic canvas with a very broad brush. And what I came up with was, and I'm going to call it an at-a-glance list of the swift and unprecedented prophetic developments of profound significance coming to pass as we speak.

Don't think for a second that the last five months I haven't been, out of the corner of my eye, going, oh, yeah... you know. And then my wife would ring the bell. I had to take it away from her. I mean, wow. And I know that it might seem strange that after my five-month absence I would do this, but I truly believe you'll see why on Sunday when we go through this.

Number 1 at the top of the list, and in a short second in terms of markers of Bible prophecy of how close we are to the pre-Tribulation rapture. Deception and mocking. And I don't know; it's like... (Flipping an invisible coin) I'm starting to inquire of the Lord concerning this because — and I'll talk more about — that's all you're getting out of me. So stop. Just stop. That's all you get. You have to come Sunday. Second Service.

Now watch this one. We'll finish — this is Second Service sermon — we'll finish the final four verses of our verse-by-verse study through the Book of Revelation, which only took us five months to get to. Well, Pastor, you got some explaining to do. Well, I already told you; we're saving the best wine for last.

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Now, you know, the end, or even really the beginning, of a book you kind of read past and fast. You know, "grace and peace." Yeah, yeah, yeah. Don't do that. Not so fast. I spend some time in these last four *verses, 18 through 21 of Revelation 22*, and there's so much there. And I'm going to talk openly and candidly about how God's word was my, key word, only lifeline while caring for my bride prior to her death. And so I'm hoping, Lord willing, to explain why it's everyone's only lifeline.

And the way I'm going to do it is by posing three questions from the text that all of us, myself included, would do well to ask of ourselves and answer for ourselves. So that will be Second Service. And so after that, you're just stuck with me until the rapture.

So you ready to get to it? I am. Been looking forward to it. As you know, tonight's teaching is a topical one. We'll resume our verse-by-verse study through Zechariah, Lord willing, next Thursday. We're going to pick it up in *Chapter 10* next week.

But tonight's teaching is a topical one that the Lord had impressed heavily, very heavily on my heart to share with you with respect to my wife's death. And if you'll kindly allow me to, I want to talk with you about how in the midst of what was seemingly unbearable and unspeakable pain, and in large measure still is, I'm not asking God "why," but I am asking God "what."

But first, I think that it's incumbent upon me to expound on the title, and here's why. There are no right answers for a wrong question. Let me give you an example, actually, two, two wrong questions for which there are no right answers. The first: why do bad things happen to good people?

The question is wrong. No right answer. It must be made right in order for the answer to be right by getting it right. How do we get it right? Flip it right side up because it's upside down and ask instead this question. Why do good things happen to bad people? Now we got the question right. We can get the answer right. Scripture's clear that no one's good.

Oh, but they have a good heart. That's fine. Bless their heart. But not good enough. Only God is good. And every good and perfect gift comes from God, as James writes. And the Savior himself states in *John 1:5*, **"Apart from Me, you can do nothing."** Have a nice day.
"Apart from Me, you can do nothing." [No good thing if you will.]

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Have you ever thought about it like that? As one famously said, "you'll never know that Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have." And so when you get the question right, now, you can get the answer right.

This one's a biggie, the second one. If God is love and God is just and all powerful, then why does He allow evil and suffering to continue in the world? You heard this question? The question's wrong. I know I run the risk of an oversimplification, but the Devil is the god of this world. And there are three specific titles given to the Devil that are very telling. He's the father of lies, accuser of the brethren, and the author of confusion. Let's walk through that just real quick.

Real quick. I'm still working on trying to get real quick, "real quick" out of my vocabulary. I'll be real quick. In other words, he's fathered a lot of children. Their names? Lie. He's authored a lot of books. Their titles? Confusion. He's accused a lot of Christians. He's the accuser of the brethren.

So let's get un-accused and unconfused with the truth. Who's the truth? Jesus. God is love, and God is just, and God is all powerful. But He has given us free will to choose Him out of love, not by force. And if and when we do, He takes bad and makes good. I don't know how He does it. I'd like to know when He does it or the way He does it. I just know by faith that He does it.

How do I know? Because He has given me His word that He would. It's God's word. It's like if I say to you, "I give you my word." In the — back in my business days — "my word is my bond." Well, I'm surprised you're still in business then because your word is worth nothing. Yeah, I'm old school. I come from the day when you could shake hands on the deal. Oh, boy. Is that day long gone, or what?

One more thing, and we'll get into our text. Didn't Isaiah explicitly say, by the Holy Spirit, in no uncertain terms, that God's ways are unsearchable? That His ways are not our ways. No way. Way. Our thoughts are not His thoughts. Who knows the mind of the Lord? We will never, this side of heaven, know the ways or the whys of God.

And never think for a second that it's like God saying, "I'm not going to tell you." It's like a little child with a parent. "Why is the sky blue?" Parent: Because that's God's favorite color.

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Child: Why is that God's favorite color? Parent: Because He just likes that better than the other colors. Well, why does God like the color better? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Ay yi yi yi yi yi!

You're never going to satiate a child who cannot comprehend. So here's God: Infinite. His ways: Unsearchable. His mind: Unknowable. And here we are: Finite.

It's not like God — in fact, here's how I see it and say it. God says, "Oh my love, I so want to tell you My way and answer your "why." But I can't because you won't be able to comprehend it. It's not that He won't. It's that He can't because we can't. And once you can establish that, you're going to have an easier time understanding the word of God and the God of the word, which is what we're going to do right now.

Ezekiel, Chapter 24, verses 15 through 27. I know this might sound a little over dramatic. I hope it doesn't. It's not meant to because it is true. This is among the most curious, mysterious, disturbing, and distressing, yet comforting and calming passages in the entirety of the Bible.

Okay, Pastor, that's quite an intro. Well, I can back it up because as we'll see, the wife of the Prophet Ezekiel dies. And at first read, it's almost like God's cruelty when it's actually mercy and prophecy. So I want us to roll up our arm sleeves, so to speak, and just get into the Word and let the Word get into us.

And I hope and I pray that all of us, again, myself included, would, by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, see death differently through the lens of eternity vis-à-vis God's sovereignty because that's what's here in front of us in this passage in Ezekiel 24 tonight. You ready?

Beginning in *verse 15*, **"Also the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [Verse 16] "Son of man, [Look] behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes with one stroke."**

Stop. Pastor, you're stopping us in the middle of the verse? Don't look at your watches. How long is this? How long are we going to be here tonight? Maybe we should have brought a toothbrush and pajamas tonight.

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No, we're okay. But there's a couple of things that if we don't set right and understand, then what's coming next will really crash the hard drives of our brains and hearts, our minds, and hearts.

Let's start with this. **"I take away from you..."** Wow. The love of my life? The desire of my eyes? My wife, who I love more than my own life? You're going to take her away from me? What about me? We need to talk about that. Consider this. Any takers?

God says I'll take her, and I'll take good care of her. That changes the complexion of it, doesn't it? I've always — I've shared this before, just again, openly, candidly. I've always kind of wrestled with this: Well, the Lord took her home. He took her? Why? No, no. This isn't a "why." We'll see a "why," but it's not what you think.

No. Let me explain this. And please stay with me, because I — believe you me — the enemy does not want you to hear what I'm about to say because it is a life-freeing truth that has changed my prayer life, my marriage life, my family life, my church life, my all-of-the-above life. I wish I would have understood this sooner. Listen, if you hear nothing else I say tonight, hear this. God will do the same exact thing you would do if you knew what He knew and loved as He loves.

Let that — just kind of let the Holy Spirit kind of work that into your heart. Do you hear what I just said? And it's evidenced replete throughout the pages of Holy Writ. Everything was perfect even though on the outside looking in, you're thinking, yeah, no. Uh-uh. I don't see it. I just don't see it. Oh, we're walking by sight now, are we? Because sight is the antithesis of faith. You can even go as far as saying sight is the enemy of faith.

See, the world says, "seeing is believing." That's upside down too. I think that's in the same camp with the other upside-down people with upside-down questions. No. It's not believing is — seeing is believing. Jesus said, **"Believe. And you'll see."**

I just don't see it. Well, just trust Me. Put your faith in Me. Believe Me. I know what I'm doing. I know you don't know what I'm doing. And there's a reason for that, by the way. Because if I told you what I was doing — I know you better than you — and you'd try to help Me, and you'd make a major mess out of the whole thing.

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You know, when your kids are young. It's adorable. "Baba, can I help you?" Oh, how do you say no? And you say, "Okay, Habibi." And they help you. And then you're going, "It's going to take me eight hours to do what I could have done without their help in 20 minutes." But it's so adorable.

So sometimes God will just withhold His plan from you, not let you in on it if for no other reason, because He knows that you're going to try to help Him. It's that: you want to help Me? Don't help Me. That'll help Me. So, are we good, okay on this "I take away" misnomer? See, we're not our own. We're bought with a price paid in full by the blood of Christ.

So He'll take her and take good care of her. Never see it as "I'm going to rip out of your life. You've had her for decades, and you're going to hurt like you've never heard before." No. God is omniscient, right? You know what that means. He's all-knowing. He knows the end from the beginning. He knows everything. There's nothing you could tell God that He doesn't already know. He's the true know-it-all.

Next time you meet a know-it-all tell him, "You're not the know-it-all. I know someone who is. Let me introduce you to Him." So if that's true, and it absolutely is unquestionably is, then wouldn't it stand to reason that God already knew ahead of time, foreknew in His omniscience, all-knowing, that Ezekiel's wife was going to die?

See, the day of our birth and the day of our death, even before, when we were formed fearfully and wonderfully made in our mother's womb, the day of our birth and the day of our death are in the hand of the Lord. And you and I will not die one second earlier or one second later till that appointed time of which only God knows.

This is sort of my way of saying is: God's not killing her. God already knows she's going to die. And we don't know if it's with — if it was a stroke, that'll do it. Now, keep in mind, and this is going to come into play in a moment, Ezekiel is in Babylon. Jeremiah? In Jerusalem. He's prophesying — Ezekiel, in Babylon — to the captives and Jeremiah in Jerusalem to those — warning them about what's about to happen. And it did, exactly as God said it would. For them it was prophecy. For us it's history. Just look at your history. You'll see exactly. When God says it, that settles it.

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And they wouldn't believe him. Jeremiah — for those of you that joined us through our verse-by-verse study through Ezekiel and Jeremiah, by the way — we've been through these books, verse-by-verse, line-upon-line.

Jeremiah would have never been invited to speak at a pastor's conference. He didn't win anybody to the true and living God. I don't think Jonah would be either, even though the entire city of Nineveh repented and came to Christ, much to his disappointment, I might add. So this is God letting Ezekiel know what He foreknows and sort of steadying him and readying him for what he's going — what he's going to do. Not, "Why are You doing this?" No. "What are You going to do in and through this."

Are we good? Is it — is this connecting? Can somebody just humor me, so I can move on? You're saying, "Yes. So move on." Let's finish the rest of the verse, *verse 16*. This is where you need to buckle up. He just got done telling Ezekiel that your wife is going to die, the love of your life. **"Yet you shall neither mourn nor weep, nor shall your tears run down."**

Stop. You have to understand something about the culture in that day, even in modern day in the Middle East. And remember *Mark 5*? I was here for just one night, on Thursday night, like tonight, and we were in *Mark 5*. The daughter of Jarius. When Jesus finally, you know, after the woman is healed, finally makes it to the house.

And here's all these mourners and wailers and flute players, and I mean the commotion, and what does Jesus do? Kicks them out. Get out of here. What are you...? Oh, no. We're getting paid to do this. That's the problem. Did you know they paid professional mourners? These guys were pros at morning, wailing. (Wailing) When do I get my paycheck? So this was the custom, too, at that time.

See, delineate, please. This is important. Delineate between grief, grieving and mourning. Grieving is inward. Mourning is outward. So they were — he was told you shall not mourn, outwardly weep, outwardly. Have your tears run down outwardly.

Verse 17, [Do it silently, privately sigh, cry] "...in silence, make no mourning for the dead; bind your turban on your head, and put your [Aloha shirt. Oh, no. I'm sorry. That's the JDV.] your sandals on your feet; do not cover your lips, [Which is, again, an outward thing

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they would do.] and do not eat [The meals that are brought to you because you're mourning.] [You know how they do that.] eat man's bread of sorrow."

In other words, Ezekiel, your wife's going to die. I'm telling you beforehand because I foreknow everything, and I'm up to something, and I don't want you mourning in the traditional way. So instead of sackcloth and ashes, you're going to put on your turban and your sandals.

So verse 18, we're told, **"I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died. And the next morning I did as I was commanded."**

Wow, Ezekiel, where's the love? This is — this is what I love about God's word. Because when you, as I mentioned earlier, get into the word of God, the word of God gets into you. And you're able to see, by the Holy Spirit, putting light and opening up a passage, a text, to you and to your understanding. He is doing what God told him to do, trusting in what God, what God was going to do in and through the death of his wife.

Don't ever think for a second that he's not devastated. I mean, this sounds like my wife died the next morning. I spoke to the people in the morning, and that evening my wife died. Next morning I got dressed, went to work. Wow. That's kind of stoic, you know, stiff upper lip, no emotion. No, no, no, no, no, no.

I can say with all my heart that for God to say, "the desire of your life," that's an idiom, a Hebrew idiom for the apple of your eye, the love of your life. He loved his wife and his wife loved him. And you can be rest assured that even though he obeyed God, he grieved hard.

Now, verse 19 is the "it worked" verse. Can I say like that? Listen to this. Now they're watching. By the way, people are watching our Christian life, you know. The Apostle Paul says we're living epistles, living letters. People are reading the letter of our Christian lives.

What are they reading? I know what they're asking. Is it real, and does it work? And they want it to be real, and they want it to work. Because if it's not real and it doesn't work, then they have no hope. But if it is real, and you're the real deal, as advertised, and it does work, then that means there's hope for them. They're going to want what you have.

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So they're watching him. And they're baffled, to say the least. And it prompts this question in verse 19. **"And the people said to me, [Dude. No, it's not in the original.] [I just thought I'd make sure you're still with me.] "Will you not tell us WHAT [There's no "why" here.] [Conspicuously absent from their question is the word "why."] [No. It's the word "what."] [And then they're going to get more specific what their "what" question.] will you not tell us what these things signify [Their significance, sign] to us, that you behave so?"**

Translated: What in the world are you doing? What is it that is causing you to behave so strangely? I mean, we knew you were strange anyway, but this is like over-the-top strange. What's going on? Not "why." What? And what is the significance of this, and to us?

Your behavior? Odd, strange, un-traditional, unorthodox. Never seen this before. Your wife just died, man. And here you are. You're — you got your turban on your head. You're supposed to be laying in sackcloth and ashes, wailing and mourning and grieving, and you're not. You got your sandals on too. Nice sandals, by the way. Where'd you get those? Amazon.

It worked. I can almost hear God saying to Ezekiel, "Told you so." I want them, My people, to ask you, paraphrased, "What in the world, WHAT in the world is going on with you?" He answers that, verse 20. **"The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Speak to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I will profane My sanctuary, your arrogant boast, [Listen to this.] the desire of your eyes, the delight of your soul; and your sons and daughters whom you left behind shall fall by the sword."**

They're there in Babylon. Their sons and daughters still in Jerusalem. Oh, interesting. Here's that desire of your eyes again. The delight of your soul. For Ezekiel, it was his wife. For Judah, it was Jerusalem and the temple.

And He goes on, and He says, verse 22, **"And you shall do as I have done; you shall not cover your lips nor eat man's bread of sorrow. Your turbans [Verse 23] shall be on your heads and your sandals on your feet; you shall neither mourn nor weep, [Hey, at least I got to weep privately.] [You can't even do that.] but you shall pine away in your iniquities and mourn with one another."**

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And I want you to pay particular attention to *verse 24*. I'm going to call this the mic-drop verse. You know what I mean by that? This is the whole "what answer." God, okay, I won't ask You why. Your ways and whys are unsearchable. But I do want to ask You "what." Like they just asked Ezekiel: "What?" Well, here's what I'm going to do and I'm trying to do. I want My people to come back to Me through you.

And that's what *verse 24* says. **"Thus Ezekiel [Listen] is a sign to you..."**

We're going to see this again. Why is this important? Because what's a sign do? It points you to. Who does it point you to? The Lord. Ezekiel is the prophetic sign, the road sign, if you prefer, to you, **"...according to all that he has done you shall do; and when this comes, [Not if, when] you shall — shall know that I am the Lord."**

Wow! That's the whole point of it? That's the "what" of it, is so that this would be a sign to point me to the Lord so that I'll know the Lord and come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? Yes. Mic drop. I won't drop the mic, Mike. Don't worry. I think he's getting really nervous back there.

Now, this is interesting in *verse 25* because so the dialog shifts now. It's Ezekiel speaking to the people what God commands him to speak, and now He turns His attention back to Ezekiel and says, **"And you, son of man—will it not be in the day when I take from them [I want you to notice this.] their stronghold, their joy, and their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that on which they set their minds, their sons and their daughters."**

A lot of "theirs" there. See, that was the love of their life. And when Ezekiel is commanded by the Lord to speak to the people and say, "your arrogant boasts" that's exactly what they were doing. They were boasting and bragging. We're God's people. This is God's land. That's God's temple. There's no way the Babylonians are going to besiege this city and destroy the temple. Get out of here.

That's what Jeremiah heard for 40-plus years. No wonder he was affectionately referred to as the weeping prophet. And by the way, he was forbidden from taking a wife. Why, God? God is being Mean. No. God is being merciful. We'll talk about that more in a moment. But hang onto that.

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No way a wife married to Jeremiah could have survived that. And for those of you that were with us in our study, verse-by-verse through Jeremiah, you know. Man, he earned that title, Weeping Prophet, and then some. No wife of a husband called to be a prophet of God at that time in that place would have survived. He was sparing her and him.

Now, *verse 26*. So "their, their, their, their, their" over there in Jerusalem; that's theirs. That's their love. That's their desire. That's their basically idol and boast.

Now *verse 26*, **"...on that day one who escapes [From Jerusalem] will come to you to let you hear it [In Babylon] with your ears. On that day [Verse 27, lastly] your mouth will be opened to him who has escaped; you shall speak and no longer be mute."**

Because you see, heretofore, he was only prophesying visually, not oratory prophecies. And then here it is again, and it's another mic-drop verse. Here's the "what." Ezekiel, Judah, you want to know what I'm doing in and through all of this? I want Ezekiel to be a sign that points you to Me, back to Me, whatever it takes. I miss you. We once had intimacy together, and you left, not lost, your first love. Come back. **"...and they shall know that I am the LORD."**

I mean, it's kind of simple, but I have the gift of complication. My wife used to always tell me, "Honey, you have the gift of complication." And I would take her and would show her that's not in the Bible. That's not one of the gifts. I looked; I tried. I looked in my, you know, concordance and did searches. And I have, you know, all my translations. I mean, she said, "I don't care. You still have the gift of complication, which means you can take something so simple and complicate it unnecessarily," which I do every Thursday, every Sunday, and...

It's so simple, childlike, simple, really. God may allow the unthinkable in your life. And at first you're looking at it like, "Why, God?" But upon closer examination and better understanding, you realize it's not "why, God." It's "what, God." What is the purpose of this? What are You wanting me to do in this?

And what are You going to do in and through this? Oh, Habibi. "My love" in Arabic. I'm so glad you asked. Here's what [*What*]. I know your wife died. What? I'm going to use the death of your wife to bring people to Me. You're the sign pointing them to Me. You're just the vessel, the instrument, so that they can know Me, come to a saving knowledge of Me.

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Well, Lord, is there another option? Do we have, like, multiple choice here? Because... No. I'm going to do this as only I can, in My way, in My time, and for My glory. And they're good. And actually, you're good too.

I have to include a summary of the account in *2 Samuel 12, verses 15 through 23*, where King David's son, from his adultery with Bathsheba, dies. And one of the reasons is that it speaks to how we grieve differently than those with no hope. And I — even that word — it is not like, “oh, I sure hope.” No. Better understood as “assurance.” We have an earnest money down payment. Our blessed assurance.

We grieve differently than those without the blessed assurance, as Paul writes in *1 Thessalonians, 4:13*. So here's how it goes down. David grieves by fasting and praying as he's lying on the ground for seven days, seven, the number of completion.

This, after his son born to Uriah's wife. Why are you calling the son born to Uriah's wife? Because that's what the Bible calls it. Uriah was married to Bathsheba. She was his wife. But the son had become deathly ill. And here's David mourning, praying, fasting, pleading, begging God, seven days. Then his son dies. I love the detail in the Scripture, by the way.

You've heard that saying, and I got to be careful here. “The devil's in the details.” I disagree. God is in the details. So there's a lot of details because, you know, David's men loyal; don't mess with these guys. This is the security details. You know what I mean? I mean, they're watching David.

People are watching our Christian lives, you know. And they're watching him grieving and mourning and fasting and praying for seven days. And then the son dies. And they're terrified. Man, how are we going to tell him his son died? I mean, look how he's behaving before he knows his son died. What's he going to do when he finds out that the son died? They are actually afraid. I mean, what are we going to do?

And much to the consternation and trepidation of David's servants, here's what he does. He gets up, he washes up, and he eats up. What? What? Are you and Ezekiel related? Well, actually, we're not blood relatives, but the blood of Christ.

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I mean, think about it. Like with Ezekiel after his wife's death, they're just as confounded and even dumbfounded by his very odd and strange and unorthodox behavior. What in the world? What? What are you doing? And you know what? What? I'm going to tell you what. Another "what" question ensued. This time the "what" question is: What are you doing? What is the reason you're behaving this way? And what does this mean? Just like with Ezekiel.

We have it recorded, *Chapter 12, verse 21, 2 Samuel*. **"Then his servants said to him, [Look at this word.] "WHAT..."** Again, conspicuously absent from the text is the word "why." Nowhere to be found. **"WHAT is this that you have done?" [I love this.]** This could be better understood as what in the world are you doing? This is not what normal human beings do. **"You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food."**

What is up with you? No "why." "What." What? David's answer to their "what" question is in the following *verses, 22 and 23*. **"He answered, [Their "what" question.] "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.' But now that he is dead, [Here's a rhetorical "why" question.] why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? [Again, rhetorical. No.] I will go to him, but he will not return to me."**

Here's where I'm going with all this. Well, finally, Pastor JD. Forty-five minutes. Don't look at your watches. Forty-five minutes in. We're getting there. We're almost done. There's hope. Ezekiel and David, along with the many like them, understood the "what" concerning death. The late Larry Burkett of Christian Financial Concepts said it this way: Do your giving while you're living. So you're knowing where it's going.

That's good. So I borrowed it. Okay, I stole it, but I sanctified it in Jesus' name, and I revised it in the context of death and grief. And here's what I came up with. Start your grieving while they're leaving, knowing where they're going.

Oh, my goodness. I tell you; for five months I was sitting there with the love of my life, the desire of my eyes, the woman I love more than even my own life. Now, we're having this conversation. I know where she's going. She knows where she's going.

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In fact, she wanted to expedite it and take an earlier flight. I'm like, "Thanks a lot." That's how excited she was to go be with Jesus. I'll share more on Sunday. I told you you're not going to get you more out of me. So stop it. Why are you trying to...

Now, by ushering home — listen, please — I implore you — by ushering home the prophet's wife, God, in His love and mercy, spared her from an unspeakable life of pain and suffering, witnessing the fierce opposition to and vicious attacks on the love of her life because of God's prophetic call on her husband's life.

You know, my Kellie, my wife made a commitment to me early. She never signed up to be a pastor's wife. In fact, truth be made known, she didn't even what a pastor's wife was. She didn't know that was a thing.

And I had my business at the time, and that's — that's what she signed up for. And then God ruined me for Him, called me into ministry, to the pastorate. And she was thrust into this arena for which she was not well acquainted and even, you could say, ill-prepared. And she took a lot of hits.

You know who the unsung heroes are in any ministry? Not the pastor, the pastor's wife. The world hijacks it. I know Arabs shouldn't use words like hijack. But I just did. Build a bridge. Get over it. The world hijacks it. Behind every great man is a greater woman. Can you just get your material? It's right here in the Word. Help meet. Genesis. All the way through. It's not just the pastor's wife. It's the pastor's kids, which, by the way, they take this, and Satan knows how to get to the pastor. Attack his wife and his family.

I remember — I've shared this before. Sabia was — oh, she couldn't have been maybe six or seven, coming home from school, which is why we started homeschooling her, crying, I'm like, "Sabia, what happened?" She said, "This boy was really mean to me. He's said really mean things to me." Here's Baba. "What is his name? Where does he live?"

Oh, I mean, we're ferociously protective of our children and our wives; aren't we, husbands? You know what Jesus said? When you do this to the least of these, My brethren, it's like you're doing it to Me.

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Well, that goes both ways. When you talk to stink or spread rumors about my wife — I'm not talking about you. I better not point or look at anybody. I'm sorry. That... This was on the mainland. I'm talking about the mainland. I never talk about you. You guys are amazing.

But Satan knows that's the Achilles heel for that pastor. And that's what he does. He attacks. He hurts. And it's taken down many a pastor; I tell you. Some statistics I've heard that are even outdated are just too unbelievable to be believable. But some 2000 pastors leave the ministry every month. Every month. What is that, 24,000 a year?

That's like going into some establishments in town on the windward side, and there's nobody working there. Why? They left. They don't work there anymore. They got seven available windows, and there's only one person working. It's hard to find good help these days, especially when you pay them abject poverty, minimum wage, you know.

Do you see God's mercy here? When you peel the layers back, He's sparing her. He's showing mercy to her and to Ezekiel as well. And the same thing with David. Watch this. By ushering home the son born to Uriah's wife, God, in His love and mercy, spared all three of them, if you think about it, from an unspeakable life of pain and suffering as recipients of the same fierce opposition to and vicious attacks on the son's illegitimate life and the calling on David's life. This was God's mercy. Oh, God would give David and Bathsheba another son. His name? Solomon, the succeeding king of Israel, who would build the temple, by the way. God knows what He's doing.

There's something else here that I think I would be grossly remiss were I not to point it out, having to do with Bible prophecy. You didn't think you were going to get away without... Just that. I can't help myself. Is that — that's my story and I'm sticking with it. This has got Bible prophecy all over it.

Ezekiel's bride being taken prior to the coming destruction is a type of the bride of Christ being taken prior to the seven-year Tribulation. This is replete in typology throughout the Old Testament. Joseph took a Gentile bride before the seven-year famine. And David, so too is this true, such that the seven days — which I find interesting — it's not eight, six, five.

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No. Seven, the number of completion. What a coincidence. No, no. It's not a coincidence. Seven days is a scripture picture of sorts of God taking him out prior to coming tribulation.

Remember going through *1 and 2 Samuel*, the life of David? Talk about a dysfunctional family from which all of us came from, by the way. I came from a dysfunctional family. I have yet to meet somebody that's come up to me and said, "I came from a family that was not dysfunctional."

Are you kidding? Can I have your autograph? Can I meet them? I've never met anyone like you. Everybody I met: yeah, I came from a dysfunctional — can I just fill you in on something? We're all sinners, slash dysfunctional people and parents and children. And by the way, you were complicit in that dysfunctional family. Did they teach you to lie? No. That came quite easily, thank you very much, because of your sin nature. We're all dysfunctional. That's the way Jesus came, by the way. We're all sinful and dysfunctional.

Man, you read the story about Absalom. That was tough stuff, man. When I think about it, I still have the taste in my mouth teaching through *1 and 2 Samuel*, the life of David. There were some tough passages in there, man. But he had — wasn't supposed to — many wives, half-brother, half-sister. You talk about dysfunctional. You take a picture: dysfunctional family. It would have King David's family underneath it. It was... Anyway....

Okay, I'll begin. Don't look at your clocks yet. I'll begin, underline, highlight, bold, italics, key word, to bring this in for a landing, begin. This will be the beginning of my closing. I'll go fast. Don't... Come on, man. You've haven't had to put up with me for five months. And five is the number of grace, you know.

So I have five additional "whats." So where's the grace? Five additional "whats" the Lord, as only He can, has already been ministering to me personally, not to mention the numerous and voluminous "whats" He's faithful to continue revealing in and through His everlasting word of life. **"Faithful is He who began that work to complete it."** He's not going to leave it unfinished. We're His workmanship, poema in the original Greek New Testament, where we get our English word "poem." We're His work of art, man.

Well, I'm not done with them yet. Well, you better get going. I'll finish it. He's just a little tougher case than — a little more work than I originally... We say, "I gave my life to Christ."

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Praise the Lord. You know what an even greater miracle? Is that He accepted it. Because if I was in the Heavenly Host and here I am, "Lord, I give my life to You," I'd be going, "Not that one. That — that not a good deal. No."

He will in nowise cast out anyone. You come just as you are. Yeah, but I've got to clean up my act first. Well, that's as absurd as taking a shower before you take a bath. No, He cleans you from the inside out. How? By the Holy Spirit. "Well, man" — you invite somebody to church — "Man, if I walk into that church, the walls will cave in." "Oh, you must be a sinner too then, huh?" "Well, the church is full of hypocrites." To which I always like to say, "Hey, we could always use a few more."

Okay. I'll go through fast. Number 1: The more you allow yourself to feel the pain, the healthier you will find yourself heal the pain. Conversely, the more you try to numb the pain today, the more you defer and deepen the pain, which will inevitably grow bigger and hit harder tomorrow. Guaranteed or your money back.

Number 2: The more pain you feel is evidence of the more love you feel, and more importantly, the more of God's love you feel. I got to share this. Real quick. I'm not doing too good on the "real quick," am I? Pray for me. It was about two weeks ago. I'm just... man, I'm just laying in bed, crying out to Lord. We're past liquid tears. You know what I'm talking about? I mean, I'm not praying word prayers. I'm — no, the tear ducts dried up, so they're not liquid prayers anymore. It was just a cry from the heart, like a moan and a tone.

And I'm just...and the Holy Spirit's interceding. And Jesus is praying at the right hand of the Father. And I'm just, wow... God, this is so painful. I loved her so much. And I know this is shocking. But she kind of loved me, too. And she kind of liked me too, a little bit. And you know what the Lord did? He just rushed in and flooded me with His love. I had never experienced the love of God like I did in that moment.

And I was only able to feel His love. It was like His arms wrapping around me and giving me a Velcro hug. I got you, son. I know this hurts so bad, but I love you. And by the way, the reason why it hurts so bad is because you loved her and Me so much.

I mean, think about it. You hear somebody dies. You didn't even know them. Are you going to hurt? No. You might express your condolences. Proportionate to the pain is the love and

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vice versa. And conversely, the more pain you don't allow yourself to feel, the more of God's love you rob yourself of to feel.

Number 3: The more you — not bad, huh? Number 3: The more you feel the pain on this earth, the more you feel the glory of heaven. And conversely, the more pain you don't allow yourself to feel the reality of in this world, temporally, the less you'll feel the reality of heaven eternally. You know one thing — I have a — I have four children. Our daughter, Noelle, now my wife; they're waiting. I hope they're not messing up my mansion up there.

[Laughter]

But you're — when you suffer in this life temporally, it endears you more to heaven eternally. I love what Pastor Ken said on Saturday. It's not just relocation, death. It's reunion. Oh, I can't wait, man. Oh, what a reunion that's going to be!

Number 4: The more pain you feel releases your ever-tightening grip on this world and the things of this world. Conversely, the more pain you don't allow yourself to feel in this fallen world, again, temporally, the less heaven becomes a destination, even a motivation, eternally.

Just think about that for a second. I've got so many loved ones and now the love of my life in heaven. You don't think I want to go there? Paul even would struggle with this. I would rather just go be with the Lord. But because of you!

[Laughter]

No... I — emphasis added. No, because you still need me, I can't go yet. Thanks a lot. But if I had my choice, I'd be out of here like yesterday. But because of you, it's your fault. You still need me. I'm stuck down here. By the way, just so you know; Kellie did not in any way ever say that to me, nor would I ever. You know, I never said one unkind word to her in almost 40 years together, not one. I just — I couldn't.

Number 5: Grace. The more grief you feel inwardly and mourn outwardly becomes a much-needed reminder of Jesus, the Son of God, and God the Son. Again, the author and finisher of our faith, who, by the way, we're told, was well-acquainted with grief and sorrow. The writer of Hebrews tells us that He endured the cross, despised the shame.

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Why? How? Because of the joy that was set before Him. Eyes on the prize. You know, He could have just (snapped fingers) He wouldn't even need to snap His fingers. He wouldn't even need to, like we do it, like the locals, you know, raise the eyebrow. Did I do that okay? Probably not. You mainland, go to bed. It's late. I'm sorry. We're done.

But — almost. But just — I'm sorry. He could have removed himself from that cross at any time. But He didn't. What kept Him there? Love. **"Greater love hath no man that he would lay down his life for another."**

Now, this was a set up for the closing verse in *Romans 8, verse 18*. Don't you love that word "closing"? The Apostle Paul — the whole chapter, by the way — but the Apostle Paul, Romans, Chapter 8, is just a "Wow!" "Pow!" chapter. *Verse 18*. He says, **"I consider..."** Some of your translations are from the South. I reckon.

[Laughter]

It's really reconciled. I've come to terms. I pondered it. The jury is no longer out. The verdict is absolutely in. **"...that our present sufferings are not even [I mean, they're not even on the same level.] worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."**

That's a "what" right there. Is it not? Not "why" God is... Why does evil prosper? You can ask Asaph in *Psalms 73*. He came to his senses. He had to wrestle with it, and he finally reconciled it, and he realized, wait a minute. I know how this ends for them. And I also know how ends for me. And he snapped out of it.

Think about this, and I'll close. Final closing. Not too bad. Let's say we live absent the pre-Tribulation rapture, which this would be a great time, especially for them, their sake, I would say. Let's say we live to 80. I used to say 70, but I'm really kind of close to 70, so I've upped it.

[Laughter]

Oh, I had to, man. I mean, that's a little chilling. And so I can do that. I'm the pastor. I can modify my illustrations. So I upped it to 80. Let's say you live 80 years, not three score and ten, which is 70. So no. 80. 80. 80. I get a little — not — if the Lord doesn't rapture us first, I'm going to up it to 90 so... It's 80 right now, currently, presently. Eighty years.

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Now let's take the — all the sufferings 80 — well the first five years you don't have a clue. Those people that I talked to that say their earliest memory was at three; it's kind of like; did you grow up in a functional family?

Anyway... So 80 years full of suffering, riddled with hardship, trial after trial, back-to-back, no respite, 80 years. Let's put that on the scale right over here. Now let's put glory on the other end of the scale. No more death, no more tears. No more death. Did you hear that? No more death, no more sorrow, no more suffering, no more pain, no more tears, nor more rent, no more cockroaches and termites, for that matter. And flashlights too and all the "ites."

Streets of gold. I'm with my savior. Reunited — this grand and glorious eternal reunion with all the loved ones and the multitudes of people. Hey, Adam. I'll speak for myself. I can't wait to meet guys like Noah You're not gonna have name tags. Hi, my name is Noah. We're just going to know, huh? Anyway, we're going to know, and we're going to meet, and I just — Noah! Wow!

We're told — John tells us we'll know no man after the flesh. It doesn't mean we're not going to know what — people ask: Will we know each other in heaven? I like how — this is not me, so don't look at me. Don't give me stink eye when I give this answer. Will we know each other in heaven? The answer from this pastor was — not me — another pastor. Of course, we're not going to be more stupid in heaven.

[Laughter]

But I don't know if he's pastoring that church anymore, or if he is, they're not attending anymore. But he's right. He's right. So can you just begin to wrap your mind around this? Because if you do, it will put it in its proper eternal perspective. Hey, my wife is not dead. She's more alive than she's ever been.

And one of the — last thing you're getting out of me for Sunday. And then I'm done. And Kapono, you better come up now because then I have to be done. Why don't you stand up? I'm going — I'm just... This is eternity we're talking about. You know how long that is? To quote the great theologians in that classic film 'Sandlot' For-E-Ver. No clocks in heaven. No need! Am I, right?

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A thousand years. Wow. We just had breakfast. Oh, there's food in heaven. You know that, right? Another 10,000 years go by. I haven't even met Paul yet. Another thousand years go by. I finally got to meet Peter. You see — you see how I'm wanting to close?

Don't leave this church tonight. And by the way, thank you for being here tonight. It's good to be back, by the way, tonight. I missed you guys. I really did. I really missed you guys. And besides, my wife said, "You better get back in the pulpit as soon as you're able, or you're going to die of broken heart syndrome."

So basically, I'm here because my wife told me to. No, that's not why. But she was right. She was always right. But I don't want you leaving this church tonight the same way you came to this church tonight — I'm going to use the word "oblivious," for lack of a better one, to the reality of eternity in comparison to this life, a vapor.

James said (Poof) our life is a mist. It's a vapor. I had a brother on the mainland come up to me one day. Hey, how's your vapor going for you so far? I was like...

[Laughter]

I had to think about it. He got me good. Delayed reaction. Oh! Ha-ha! You! Oh, you make joke! You make joke.

[Laughter]

He's right. It's a vapor in comparison to eternity. Are you kidding me? Not worth comparing. Get an eternal perspective on whatever problem it is or problems there are that you brought with you to this God's church tonight. Look at it through the lens of eternity. And it reminds me of that hymn.

Okay. Kapono's like you told me to come up. I'm gonna be doing some instrumentals for a while. You can keep going. I didn't mean stop. You know, one of — the things the earth grows strangely dim when your eyes are on Jesus. Keep your eyes on Jesus. And I mean, I think it's Isaiah who said — I can't give you chapter and verse because grief brain fog is a real thing, by the way; I'm here to tell you. He says, **"He will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."**

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The peace of God from the God of peace. If it weren't for Jesus, there is no way I would be standing here tonight in this pulpit, which again, is my profound privilege to do. Yeah, I've been through a lot, but God. But God. On the grand scheme of things, pssh! Man, I can't wait. I can't wait. You thought I was excited about the pre-Tribulation rapture before? Oh, look out, man!

[Laughter]

Enter at your own risk for the Prophecy Updates. That's all I'm going to say. Okay, I'm done. Don't you love the smooth closes? Would you pray with me?

Lord, we are just in awe of You. Who is like unto You, O Lord? Yes, life is hard, but You are good only, always good. No matter how bad it gets, it cannot and will not change how good You are. It's impossible.

Lord, I pray for anybody that might be really going through it, watching online or here in the church. I pray that they'll leave here and like it was said of Mary, ponder these things in their heart — her heart. Meditate on and apply, put into practice. Be a doer of the word, not a hearer. Really take to heart that yeah, this is awful, horrible. It's so painful.

But Jesus, You hung on a cross, experiencing more physical pain than could ever be imagined by any human, for us, so that You could defeat death, rise again from the grave on that third day, and ascend to the right hand of the Father. Lord, I don't think we're too far behind. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, we pray. And it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.