

How're we doing CrossPoint? That was kind of weak. Can we try that one more time? I feel the love for you, I want to feel the love back. Here we go — how we doing CrossPoint? That's good that's good. I'm so glad you're here. Welcome to our end-of-summer kickoff for our end-of-summer series.

We are doing what might seem like a repeat but we started a series at the beginning of the year called, "Made Different to Make a Difference." Now I'll start it, you finish it. You should be practiced at this. Made Different to... (crowd: *"Make a Difference"*). You were made different to make a difference.

And that has been our theme all year — discipling, and making a difference, in changing ourselves, and changing the world around us, by life-to-life transition. And so, we decided at the end of summer we wanted to refresh that, so this is "Made Different to Make a Difference 2.0," and we're getting ready to kick off this series. It's going to be amazing. I'll explain it to you in just a moment.

This series also is a time in which we get to celebrate because I've got good news for everybody. CrossPoint is growing again. Isn't that an awesome thing? Yeah, yeah, yeah. CrossPoint is growing. Next week we're going to tell you a couple of exciting things that are happening but some of you who are on social media may have caught wind of this already — in October, we'll be launching our first-ever Spanish translation — Spanish campus, right here in Hutchinson and what a blessing that's going to be because if we get the model right and we can do this correctly, I don't know if you're aware of this, there are so many needs and communities to reach with a gospel work that is in Spanish. Because of that growing population, if we get this, we can literally reproduce that work at every existing CrossPoint location that there is. Is that exciting to anybody else?

So, we'll be welcoming, in October, Pastor Evie. Some of you may have already run into him and if you haven't, somewhere in the CrossPoint Network you will run into him and we are just excited about it. Be prepared to hear more and more about that. Can we give all those who are involved in that effort a hand? That's really exciting **crowd clapping**. We'll talk more and more about it. You'll hear about that. But that's just one way that we're growing. We've got a couple more announcements next week. But now let's talk about this series that we're getting into that's called "Made Different to Make a Difference 2.0."

We are going to be studying the Book of James and for you to get everything out of this series, there are some things that you can do that can make it absolutely... even more effective. Meaning we've got some plans for you to make this more than just a weekend. First of all, we'll be doing a weekend focus out of the book of James every weekend. We're also going to be offering weekly memory verses. And if you think you're too old to memorize then it's just a miracle of God that's going to work in your life. I just want you to know that. If we ask... If Scripture wouldn't give us the command, if it wasn't true, Psalm 119:11 — "I've hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." You can do this. Look at whoever you're sitting next to and say, "You can do this." And we're going to talk about that in a moment. The third thing that we're going to do is we have daily devotional readings and we've amped that up more than ever. We're going to create a CrossPoint extra podcast. And we have a living faith challenge.

So, let me quickly walk through what these are going to be, because we're going to do this every week. For instance, as we get through today's teaching, our memory verse comes from the passage that we're looking at in James chapter 1, verses 2 and 3 — "Count it all joy my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." Now, let me tell you, when you're going through a rough time wouldn't it be great to know that that was grounded into your heart? Wouldn't it be nice to know that when you hit that obstacle the first thing you do is not throw your hands up but we go "Wait, I can have joy in the middle of all this."? And that's what we're going to talk about. So, to memorize this verse. Next, our daily devotionals. You know that we have a weekly list of passages to read. Now that weekly list is going to mirror a gift that we have for every CrossPoint family.

We were blessed to be able to produce a Bible study. If you don't know how to study the Bible, Reading It Right is a method for learning how to be a self feeder and read God's Word. And by the way you should not depend on preachers to be your sole source of biblical information. You need to be able to let the Holy Spirit teach you and read

God's Word. He has more to say to you than he can say through the mouth of somebody else on stage. He wants to talk to you in your own heart. So, this book has a brief section on how to do Reading It Right Bible study. But even if you skip that, it is one page per day in which you can follow through the entire book of James. And our daily devotional readings, if you somehow misplaced this or don't have it, we'll follow along with that. We want everybody to go through the book of James as we walk through this series and we have one free copy of this for every family in the church. We want you to be able to take that home and also the daily readings are listed so that you have multiple places to get that.

So, from your daily reading list or *Count It All Joy*. We're also committing to teaching every verse of the book of James. And since you don't want to sit here for the six hours it takes to get through every chapter, every week, can I get an amen in the house, it wouldn't take six hours. But what we're going to do is what we don't cover on the weekend, we're going to get a team of teachers, and we're going to create a podcast in which you'll be able to hear the rest of the teaching and you'll continue to grow and we're going to be seriously invested in Bible study over the next five weeks. Now, this is a way for you to take it to the next level. For you to get there all you have to do is make sure that you have turned in a Connection Card so that we can connect you with that podcast. And of course, a great way to do this now is as of this series, you can use the Connect Card on the CrossPoint App and save a tree. Can I get an amen in the house? So, we have all kinds of ways for you to connect. If we know how to get in touch with you, we'll be able to share that with you.

And finally, every week, we're going to have a living faith challenge. You see the book of James is all about not having a dead faith but a living faith and in that we want to challenge you to be part of a Grow Group. And for every Grow Group to adopt some kind of mission. Many groups already have that. They're taking care of a school or they're working as gospel influence at a business or they're tied to an existing ministry and we want every Grow Group to adopt a mission. And then individually you're going to see where this comes about after the end of this teaching. We're going to ask everybody to share a testimony of a trial or tribulation that you've gone through and what God has taught you. And we've all been there let me just test really quick — I might be wrong. Anybody out there ever experienced a trial or tribulation in your life? Go ahead. Yeah see. We all have a story to tell. Look at somebody that you're sitting next to and say "Mine's better than yours." Go ahead and tell them.

We all have a story to tell so, as you can see we have all kinds of things that we're going to do. You have an opportunity to grow, to be invested in Bible study, to reach out in ministry but you have to take the challenge and you have to accept the opportunity to move forward in these things. So that's going to be my prayer for each and every one of us as we once again tackle the issue of... What is it? Now you finish the sentence... You were made different to... Make a difference. We're going to use James to teach us that.

Now before we get into this evening's Bible study I want to give you the title for what we're doing. "Razed to Be Raised." And we'll talk about that in just a minute. But the book of James is a significant book for several reasons. First of all, it's practical. The book was written in a way that should be applied in every believer's life. It's got tidbits of information and knowledge that you can take, whether your brand new in the faith or you've been in the faith a long time, it will kick your hiney every time you read it, no matter how long you've been a believer. Okay? So, we can use that but second, it's also controversial. As a matter of fact, Martin Luther, who of course sprang forth and gave us the Lutheran denomination, he said it was a straw-ie epistle and he didn't even know if it should be included in the Bible because it had so much to do with what we do. But understand — the book of James is not about getting saved. This is a book to the saved on how we act as disciples of Jesus Christ. That's what this is about.

Second, let me tell you this — the book of James was written by?... *crowd: "James."* Yeah very good. That's how they did that back then. The book of James written by James. His nickname, according to some of the early church fathers, was "Old camel knees." And they called him "old camel knees" because he was a praying madman. He was on his knees constantly.

There's an apologetic, meaning a defense of the gospel just in the book of James because James — his name in the Hebrew was actually Ya'akov or Jacob. He had a famous half-brother — it was Jesus. His mama was Mary and his

daddy was Joseph. Now what would it take for a little brother to admit that his big brother was God? There would have to be some serious evidence. Can I get an amen in the house? I mean 'cuz the last person in the world is going to admit that my brother is God, as a little brother, but that's who James was. His older brother was Jesus. And not only that, he was the pastor of the first mega church. He was the pastor of the church at Jerusalem — ground zero. So, his letter is pastoral in nature and even though he doesn't claim this for himself, in Galatians chapter one verse 19, The apostle Paul calls him another apostle. So, James is a praying madman who grew up in the house with Jesus and is the pastor of the largest church at the beginning of the faith. We have a lot to learn. Can I get an amen in the house?

And why do we begin here? Because the first few verses I call "Razed to Be Raised: Thriving in Trials," if you all don't know this word *razed* is the word that means to tear a building down. It's ironic that the second hominem or a homophone is *raised*, which means to build up. And so many times in our faith we have to be torn down because what we built was incorrect. And that's the only way we can be built back up. You all following me on this? Sometimes we have to go through hell before we can see heaven appropriately. Sometimes we have to see what it's like to live a nightmare before we understand the beauty of God's grace.

Now the good news is, if you grow up in the church and you learn the lessons and you're submissive and obedient to God's Word, sometimes you don't have to pay the dumb tax that other people paid before you. But very often even if you're told, "Don't touch it — it's hot." Most of us are still going to touch it. Isn't that right? And this is why we need to be razed. There are just moments in which trials and tribulations beat us down, but for the believer, they don't keep us down, in Jesus name.

We have been razed to be raised. How do we thrive in trials? Let me give you just a brief example. This past summer I've really dwindled my camp schedule down over the years. I'd gotten down... I used to do camp all summer long. I had gotten down to about two weeks of camp this past summer. I did six weeks. And part of it was because there was a scheduling faux pas on the part of one of the camps that we do here in our state convention and they just needed to somebody to fill in and I did that. And the other was because I was filling in for our student pastor at the Hutchinson campus, who had a baby that wasn't scheduled and he really needed to be home. And because all that took place, well this camp that I went to, Dave has spoken at for several years, and when I went to speak there, I was introduced as the camp Pastor and I was met by a group of sixth grade girls.

And that group of sixth grade girls looked right at me and goes, "Where's Dave?" I said, "Well Dave's not here." And they said "We want Dave." I said, "I can understand that but Dave can't be here and I'm filling in for him." The girls replied, "Why can't Dave be here?" "Well he's at home with his wife they're having a baby." The girls went on and I heard one of them whisper to the others, "That's right he's like 50." I don't know how that connected at first but let me tell you what happened.

First they tore me down. "We want Dave. We don't want your sorry self here." And then when I told them what was going on and they said, "He's having a baby because he's like 50." What they were doing was assuming I was his younger replacement. And I was built back up.

Now, that's not a perfect example of what we're talking about here but we've all walked through it before. We've gone through the fire. We've been through a trial. We've experienced the tribulation and we have been torn down. We've all been there. There is no one who's not been there. I take, I take that back — maybe I'm wrong but, here's what I would tell to you — if you're going to live to tomorrow it's common. This is the truth for everybody. We go through the fire because this world is broken. Now the choice is on the other side of the flames. Will we give ourselves to God in a way that he will raise us back up again? And in every trial, and in every circumstance, this is the hope in the promise of the living God.

Some of you are going through it right now. I can just tell in this room some of you are going through it right now. That this isn't fictitious about something to come, and it's not historic about what's been in the past. It is right now, this is

where we need to be in Jesus name. He has a word for us and all God's people said? Amen. So, let me pray for us and then we're going to jump in to this first lesson that you were razed to be raised.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for your grace and I thank you for your mercy and I thank you for all the incredible things that you have done and are doing and will do. And I pray in the name of Jesus that especially for those, who right now, are feeling the heat of the fire of trial and tribulation, that there would be a peace, not because circumstances change but because you have a word for us in the middle of this. God give us strength, give us encouragement, give us what Andy can't give us, what only you, your Spirit, and your Word can, give us hope in the midst of this mess. It's in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ that we pray and all God's people said amen.

Let me take us to the passage. I want to look at James 1, 1 through 8. It's got the introduction and the first lesson for our entire series and this is where we're going to talk about trials.

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings. 2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Now there's some wisdom here and there's some warning here for what happens when we walk through trials, and this is going to happen to everybody. So, let me give you four things that I see when you're going through it or when you're experiencing the difficulty or trials of life, when you're being razed to the ground so that you can be raised up, and here is the first one. Let's just fill in the blank.

Attitude determines outcome.

This is not a motivational speech I'm not talking about you just got to be happy and smile. I'm talking about your attitude towards the trial, your attitude towards the Father, your attitude towards faith, your attitude towards prayer, your attitude towards Scripture, your attitude towards church. Attitude determines outcome. As matter of fact, I like that phrase so much I want you to say it with me on the count of three. One two three, "Attitude determines outcome."

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes of the Dispersion..." And some older versions will say the Diaspora. The Dispersion means that the Jews and the church that had been scattered — and they were scattered because of persecution — they were literally running for their lives and having to take what only they could carry to see if they could survive and start over in a foreign place. These people knew what suffering was like. I mean he's writing specifically to those who were broke, destitute, who were oppressed, who are threatened.

You and I if we could be really honest, the majority of the stuff that gets us down and we call *trials*, it just doesn't measure up. Now some of us walk through the fire and we can really say "Yes, my life is on the line. My kids' are on the line." And there are some real circumstances but can we just be honest? Can we just do this really quick? 9 out of 10 of our problems really aren't problems. They're first-world problems. Like, my water heater doesn't stay hot for more than 30 minutes. It's hard to take a long shower. That's not a problem. Can I get an amen?

But we do suffer and I want you to understand when we actually suffer that he's talking to the 12 tribes of the Dispersion, and all he says is greetings and then this incredible phrase — *count it all joy*. Notice that's what we labeled the devotional because that is the theme for this book. No matter what you're going through, count it all joy. Now the next part of it makes it difficult. "Count it all joy my brothers..." And by the way this phrase *my brothers* — he uses 14 times. he's speaking to the church. He's not talking to anyone outside the church. These are lessons that make zero sense to people who don't have the Holy Spirit of God in their life. These are lessons that should not be applied in the life of people who don't show... This is why people get frustrated because they don't have a relationship with Jesus but they want to claim one of these promises. But he's talking to the brothers. These are things that only

come... these are lessons that are only learned... this is strength that is only given if you have the God of the universe living in your heart. So this is for the believers.

"Count it all joy my brothers when you meet trials of various kinds." Now, let's be very quick to understand something because some of you would say, "There ain't no way I can be happy because of this trial." And I would agree, I would agree. He's not saying to be happy *because* of your trial. That's stupid. We agree like, "Oh I have a horrible disease, praise the Lord." That's not what he's saying. "Oh, my kids are in open rebellion, hallelujah. We just declared bankruptcy, let's do a little Holy Spirit dance move." That's not it. We're not happy *because* of the trials, but *in* them, *despite* the trial, he is commanding us to have joy, not in the circumstance but in the Lord over the circumstances — not in the situation, but in the relationship that we have with God in the midst of that difficulty, that trial, or that tribulation.

"Count it all joy." The word *count* is actually a word that means, it's *hégeomai*, which means to *consider* or to *regard* or to *view*. When you look at your trials you're not looking at your trials and go and thank God for the trial. I've known some believers like that. They're just crazy sauce — they want to suffer for Jesus. They want to go to places and "Man I hope I die a martyr's death." What is wrong with you? But in the midst of suffering, if God allows you to go through it, we begin to view and regard it and say "God thank you for considering me worthy to trust you in the middle of this mess. Thank you for giving me an experience that's going to cause me to look at you every day because I cannot do this on my own." And it's not that we are thankful for the trial. Don't ever get that wrong. You're not supposed to be thankful for the trouble; you're supposed to be thankful for the God who's going to walk with you through the trial.

And we count it all joy. We have to count it all joy and you see that is an issue of attitude because if you decided right now — pick whatever trial it is, whatever circumstance it is — we can pray about it, we can work on it and God sometimes shows up and does miraculous stuff. I love it when that happens. And sometimes we can work through some things and correct some stuff and sometimes the trials happened because we were stupid. Sometimes the trials happened because other people were stupid. It doesn't matter which way it comes. When the trial comes on you it's still a trial.

And we can do all that but here's the issue — if you started praying about that this weekend, there's probably a good chance that Monday morning you're still going to be in the same trial. You know what the difference could be? What your attitude is towards your God in the middle of that trial. What your hope is in the middle that, instead of "I can't pay for it, I can't do it, I can't endure it," it's standing on the rock memorizing God's Word — "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I have a God who now owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He is the rock and my Redeemer. In his name will I trust." And you see you can't change the world around you but you can change you right now. Attitude.

Now again I spent a lot of time at camp this last summer and I've noticed something... By the way, thank God for the women of the faith. If it wasn't for the women of the faith we would not have organized church meetings. Did you know that? It's the women of the faith who get it done. I mean I just say that but when I go to camp, let me tell you how I'm actually impressed when the men show up to children's camp and don't sit there with their arms crossed, mad about everything, but they get out there and do something. I love that. Can I be honest with you. I love seeing that. As a matter of fact I was at a camp earlier this summer and I was standing in the sound booth when they were playing, letting the kids play games, and had video dance and stuff going on and this so impressed me. I took a 30-second video. I want you to watch this and see if you see what I see. Check this out.

[Video clip of adult volunteers dancing to music]

Real men dance goofy for Jesus. Was that impressive to anybody else? I thought that was. As a matter of fact, yes, the guy in the middle came up to me after as he goes, "Hey I saw you filming that. Do not post that online." And he's a big man so I said "Yes, sir." I didn't tell him I wouldn't show it at church, but I won't post it online.

But did you see that they were there. They could be stick-in-the-muds. They could be you know shaking their head and wagging their finger and be difficult but instead they changed their heart. They changed. And the kids loved them, and they made a difference in Jesus name because they put their heart in the right place. Everybody's going to struggle. Everybody is going to have trials but the first thing we see right here is that you have to count it all joy. Hégeomai. Which means I must view and consider this moment, this trial, this circumstance, not by the basis of what I'm in but by the God who's going to get me out of it — not by the circumstance that I'm enduring but by the future that I have. In the God of the universe who has promised that he will never leave me and never forsake me.

Attitude determines outcome. Here's the second thing. When it comes to being razed to be raised, from verses 3 and 4, fill in the blank here.

Difficulty develops maturity.

Difficulty develops maturity. If you don't go through some difficulty, you will never mature. You're just gonna be a grown up baby. How many of you know some of them? Don't look at 'em if they're here, but how many of you know some of them? I mean their body grew up but they never grew up. You want to know one of the troubles with helicopter over-protective parents? They produce children who have never had to escape the cocoon. You know a caterpillar becomes a butterfly right? And if you have great mercy upon a caterpillar becoming a butterfly and you hate that struggle and you cut open that chrysalis and you let them escape, you just killed them. It's only through the breaking out of that chrysalis and that struggle for them to do that, that they have enough strength to lift their own wings and fly. God has determined in our lives that he will use the difficulties that we walk through — in learning to make good choices, in following him, and obedience in trusting him that this is where we develop our maturity.

In fact, look at what it says. "For you know that the testing..." This is the most important word. We'll come back to it. "The testing of your faith produces steadfastness and let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete lacking in nothing." Now, there's so many words here that we need to look at but let's just do the Bible study real quick. First of all, this word testing is my favorite word in the process because it is a word about process. Matter of fact, the word was used — it's very rare in the New Testament you only see it in this one spot — but the word was used in the Greek language and it was a word for refining precious metals.

When you heat a precious metal up and the impurities come to the top and you scrape them off what you're left with is beautiful gold or precious silver. That is the testing of that metal. That's what that is. Now there's two options. When you heat something like that, you either get precious leftovers or you get ashes. There's only two options. When that kind of heat is exposed to something, it will either turn to ash or it will turn to something precious. God is giving us this blessing here for you know that when your faith is the thing that's being tested, when your belief, when your trust, when your obedience is the thing that's in the fire, that it is a refining process. What's gonna happen next? It will produce steadfastness.

Now we don't use that word a lot. You probably never complimented a kid on the soccer field saying, "Boy you were very steadfast out there." Right? We don't use that word very often. You probably haven't got that on your annual evaluation. "He's excelling at steadfastness." We don't use that word, but let me give you some more translations for the way you could use that word — fortitude, staying power, or heroic endurance. It is that, not just patience, but the ability to endure. When your faith is tested it produces this heroic endurance and look what happens next — "And let that steadfastness — that heroic endurance — have its full effect that you may be perfect..." Look at somebody next to you and say "There's still hope for you."

Now that's a scary word in it because they're like "Oh, so the Bible wants us to be perfect?" Understand, this word in the Greek is teleios and it is the word that Jesus spoke from the cross when he said, "It is finished." It doesn't mean perfect like blameless and spotless like so holy you couldn't touch it. It means perfected, finished, completed, done. Thank you, Jesus, it says that when we walk through this stuff he moves us closer and closer to being done — to growing and up, to being mature, to having some completion in our life. How many of you would just love it if you could get something done? I mean something finished. I mean we do different things but it seems like we never

finished anything. And it says this — that when we are now teleos and complete because God tests our faith, we'll be lacking in nothing. Man, that would be good news.

And some of you would say, "I like what it says but how can I believe it Andy?" I can't seem to make any progress in my life. I can't seem to get my family together." I want you to hold on to this one thing — sometimes progress isn't about moving forward it's about getting up. Sometimes progress isn't about taking new ground it's about taking a stand. And sometimes progress isn't about achieving something new; it's about enduring the night and still being there when the dawn comes because there are seasons in our life when we just can't — it's hard to push forward but it's not always what you can put on the scoreboard that means progress. Sometimes that progress happens right in here and right in here in Jesus name.

As we grow up, don't you love those moments when you see your kids actually do something and you're like "They are growing up. I can't believe they said that. I can't believe they did that." That's what God is looking for in his children. Those moments in which even in a difficult situation, he sees them respond in the right way.

I love watching that show on TV, *Forged in Fire*. As a matter of fact, you could just turn on the History Channel and rip off the knob if TVs had knobs anymore. You could do that. I just love all that stuff. But one of the things I've learned — I have no desire to ever forge anything, I just like watching guys and gals who can do that — and as I'm watching, I've noticed a principle, that whenever something becomes non-pliable and won't move, it has to be put in the fire again. Let me try this one more time on this side of the room and see if we get this. Whenever something becomes so set in its ways and no longer malleable to the master craftsman who's working it, it has to be put back in the fire again. Because only when it's heated up is it able to move the way it needs to move. As a matter of fact, you could move it without heating it, but you would break it. You all following me on this?

We count it all joy because the God of the universe will sometimes allow us, sometimes even push us, through a fire or circumstance because he's helping us to grow up. He's helping to mature us. He wants to get us to the place of completion and lacking in nothing and all God's people said? Amen.

Now, interesting. Here's one of the things you need to look for as you read the Book of James — where he says you'll be "lacking in nothing," look at the next verse. "If any of you lacks wisdom." You see what he's doing there? He's saying "Okay we're all growing up and you're doing well, but you're not there yet." This is obviously something for all of us. "If any of you lacks wisdom let him ask God who gives generously to all without reproach and it will be given him." Here's the third thing to remember when you're razed to be raised.

God grants wisdom.

God grants wisdom. Can I tell you one of the places you can find joy in your trials is in this promise right here. He's talking about going through it and he says and if you're going through it ask God. Well you know what that means — that means that you have fellowship with the God of the universe. He is with you in the middle of the trial. You may feel alone, you may feel distant but, this is a promise right here that when you're going through that mess, ask him because here's what's going to happen, if you need wisdom, if you need direction, let him ask God who gives generously.

Now we like this phrase *generously* but it is one of the most difficult phrases to interpret in the New Testament because of the word that's being used. So, let me just throw this at you *generous* really means — now, God is being generous, He'll give it to you — but what it means is not just like a whole bunch. It means *undivided* and *unwavering*. In other words, it's not that God wants to give you lots of wisdom it's that God has committed to giving you exactly what you need.

Now that's good news and some of you would say, "But listen I pray all the time. I'm going through this mess I'm praying all the time. I'm struggling with this addiction, and I'm praying all the time. I've got these kids and they've got

horns and tails..." I'm going to challenge you. I don't know but this is between you and the Lord — are you actually seeking God's wisdom or are you giving God instruction?

As you pray, are you sitting at his feet to take direction or are you giving him assignments as to how he needs to fix your life? There's a huge difference between seeking wisdom and giving wisdom. Can I get an amen in the house? And this is the reality for most of us that we try and instruct God. "God I'm in the middle of all this. I trust you, I believe in you and here's what I need you to do." When actually in the middle of that trial and struggle here's what God wants from you — "God help, speak, lead, show. I got nothing." And then wait for him to show up. Does that make sense to everybody else? God wants to give. He is unwavering in his commitment to give you wisdom but the truth is we don't get much wisdom because most of us don't usually ask. We're usually trying to tell God what he needs to do.

Now maybe that's not true for you but I think it is for most of us. Here's how I know most of us need wisdom because we say stupid stuff. Let's just take a survey really quick — anybody said something stupid in the last week? Yeah, you don't even know what it is you're like, "But I know I did that's right."

I was running into a Walmart in Texas this last week or two and I was running in... I just got to be straight up with you. I wasn't trying to get anything we were there for somebody else at the camp but I was running into Walmart because I needed to use the restroom and I was doing the little quick walk 'cuz you got to use the restroom. I'll just be transparent with you. That was going on in my life. And as I'm walking in I go straight past the cash registers. I know they always keep them right up front and about halfway down that little opening foyer area, trying to find the restroom, a very nicely dressed girl who was apparently working at the bank that's at the front of that particular Walmart... she stopped me. Got right in my way and says "How are you today, sir?" I said, Fine. I'm fine." And she goes "Are you here to cash a check today?" And I didn't have time to come up with a good answer so I said, "Nope just got to go the bathroom." To which her response was, "Awesome!"

Let's try it over here. I told the woman I had to pee and she was heroic about it. And do you want to know why? She wasn't really processing. She wasn't really thinking. She had a script she was going through. And it didn't matter what I said. I could have come in like, "I'm just here to kill a few cats." "Great!" Because she wasn't really listening to have a conversation. I could have walked in there and said "Give me all your money." She'd go, "We're a bank. That'll work great!"

We've got a guy in the church. I don't have permission to give you his name but I thought this is one of the greatest phrases I've ever heard — part of being smart is knowing what you're dumb at. Could I just share that with you? That's not out of the Bible but you could write it in the back. Part of being smart is knowing what you are dumb at. And the reality is that for us to seek God's wisdom means that we actually seek God's wisdom — we listen and we respond and we don't give God directions and we don't have a script that we're trying to play out in our own mind. We understand that I'm going through this and God can lead me out of it but I need to know what he has to say. And all God's people said? Amen.

Last one. The last element of razed to be raised is simply this.

Faith produces stability.

You see at the end of this road, as we continue to move and he grows us into maturity and he offers wisdom to us... I mean we're walking through this. We can count it all joy. We have a good attitude because we know God's going to do something. What's he going to do? He is going to test us, and he's going to grow us, and he's going to change us, and he's going to give us wisdom, and at the end of it, stability.

And I don't know if you're excited enough about stability but, stability is what this world needs more than anything else right now. The stability of a God that does not change. The same yesterday, today, and forever — the Alpha of the Omega, the beginning the end the first and the last the King of Kings the Lord of lords. He is the one that was and is

and is to come. There is no change in him. There is no shadow, no change at all. We need that stability and we can start to become that stability.

Now, where does this come from, "But let him ask in faith with no doubting." And I want to take some of the pressure off here. Everybody doubts. Everybody has periods of doubt. Everybody has moments of difficulty. That's just a given. But there are some times when we have to steal our nerves, when we have to hit our knees and we have to pray. Do you remember the prayer of the father, from I believe Mark chapter 9 verse 24, he says "If you can heal my son..." Jesus says. "If you can? If you can?" And he goes, "I believe, help my unbelief." That's a great prayer. "I believe, help my unbelief."

There are times we have to steal ourselves and begin to pray without doubting. Why? Because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed. Now the reason it says both of those is driven and tossed together mean that it is not waves crashing into the shore. It is like being out in the middle of the ocean in which its 3-D being tossed — it's up and down and side to side and front to back — it is the same as we see in the book of Hebrews. It is an anchorless soul. And when we ask God and we say, "God please do this," but we don't really believe it and we don't expect it and we're not waiting for it and we're not watching for it and we really don't believe that God's going to answer. Why would we ever get that prayer answered? Now, everybody's going to experience some doubt but you've got to anchor your prayers and anchor your faith and anchor your life and say, "God when I struggle, and when I don't believe, help my unbelief."

But the second part of that passage says this — "For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. For he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." This word *double minded* literally means two-soal'd. It's like he has two people. The word in Greek, let me pronounce it for you. Dipsycho. It means you have two psyches in you and when you pray say, "God do this," but then on the inside you're also going, "He'll never do it." "God please, I give this to you," and then you take it back and do it for yourself. You have spiritual, multiple personality disorder. And that has to be corrected before anything else gets fixed. Can I get an amen in the house?

And so, what we have is this promise that God says he wants to give wisdom — he wants to anchor your soul, but you have to take some steps and start praying and thinking and seeking and moving in faith and believing in faith. And where you lack that, that's where you need to seek Him.

By the way, nobody has faith unless God gave you faith. And if you don't feel like you have enough faith, you need to seek Him and he'll give you more faith. This is exactly what Scripture teaches. It's not, "Well if I just believe more God would show up." You've got it backwards. You couldn't even believe. You wouldn't even know he was out there if he didn't make himself known to you. Everything was on him. He's asking you to respond.

Some of you say, "Well I believe in God. I do. I believe." I want to challenge you again. I'm not saying this is true for you but I want to challenge you. Do you believe in God or do you wish in God? I mean to believe in God is to say, "This is true and even if I don't see it and even if I don't feel it, I'm going to step out in it." Now that's faith, or do we wish? "Man, I wish God would do this and I wish God would do that." And we claim that's belief. Let me tell you belief is different. Belief takes steps even when it's difficult, scary, and you can't see the end. Belief take steps.

Let me give you an example. Kathy and I several years ago, invested in a vacation strategy for us. We bought a travel trailer and have been pulling it around all over the country for a few years now. We love it. We had it out this last summer and it's difficult because, have you ever noticed this — when people get behind the wheel of a car they become rude monsters? They don't care about anybody else, just themselves. It's like their little bubble — their little car, and everything else is all just a video game to them right? And so, I try not to be that guy but when you're driving a 30-foot trailer on your bumper behind a truck in downtown Dallas or downtown Wichita or downtown Kansas City, when you gotta get over, you gotta get over, right? And people get rude.

I'm going to just confess this right now — I was driving. I was having trouble getting over and I'm looking at my rear-view mirror and thought, "Haha, he will move." And you want to know why? Because he was driving a Tesla. He

was riding right in that spot. I put my blinker on he didn't move so I went one two three and I just start coming over. The dude slammed on the brakes, came around me and waved at me on the way by. But you know why I did that? Because I was *anchored*. I wasn't driving something little. I mean I was I was hauling 10,000 pounds in my 1500-pound truck and I'm just coming over.

Wouldn't it be great to spiritually have the confidence to say, "I got all kinds of obstacles. I got all kinds of difficulties. But I'm riding with the God of the universe. So, I'm coming over. You can lead follow or get out of the way but I'm coming over."

And I'm not telling you to be a bully on the road. Take your CrossPoint sticker off your car. What I am saying though is it's possible that in the midst of the deepest, darkest trials, to count it all joy because God is with you. And to move in such a way that you will understand that difficulty is maturing you and that God will give you wisdom. And at the end of all that, he's going to anchor your soul. While the rest of the world is washing this way and washing that way and the storms are blowing them up and down, you can stay the course because God has done something, not *around* you but *in* you in Jesus name. And that's the best place because the world will always change but God will stay the same. He can give you that stability as well.

Now, remember for you to get the most out of this series, we are doing this on the weekends but memorize verses two and three. I want you to commit those to memory. We will test each other next weekend. Next don't forget to do your daily readings. You'll read all of the book of James with us and we're going to do this together. Every family gets a copy of this but the daily reading list is available to everybody. Also we're going to be covering this teaching. You're going to hear my voice and other Pastors' voices on every verse of the book of James. Fill out a Connection Card so that we can get you that podcast throughout the course of the week. And this week in your Grow Group, adopt a mission. You have gone through a trial. You have gone through a tribulation and God has done something in you. Maybe he hasn't perfected it. Maybe you haven't come all the way through it but he's been with you. I want you to share your story. I want you to tell somebody if you go online and post it, great. if you ask somebody out to coffee and tell them, but here's what I want you to do — I want you to *count it all joy* and I want you to take that story and give God glory.

God's going to do amazing things, let's pray. Father, I thank you for the opportunity to be in your Word and I thank you for the teaching that you've allowed us to experience out of this book. I pray that we would begin to be transformed. There's so much that we need to grow up into. And to be honest with you, we don't want to go through every fiery trial to get there, so what we can learn before we have to endure, give us that grace. I pray right now for those who are going through something and they want this to be true but the pain in their heart and the circumstances of their life make it hard to even hear these words, I pray in the name of Jesus that you would begin to soothe them, that you would begin to give them hope and that you would give them a joy in Jesus name. And that by this time even tomorrow we would begin walking in hope for its in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ that we pray, and all God's people said, amen.