

Session 5 The Perseverance of Jesus

Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah 49 is a very remarkable passage. It's a unique passage where the Lord pulls back the veil, so to speak, and gives us insight into how Jesus carried His heart in His humanity while He was on the earth: how He embraced perseverance.

In the prayer that Paul prayed in 2 Thessalonians 3:5, he actually references this truth. Let's read this prayer. "May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God"—session four—"and into the patience of Christ" (2 Thess. 3:5).

That's an important phrase: that Jesus had patience. The word *patience* should be understood not as His patience with people as He reigns over the earth. He certainly has longsuffering with people, but it's talking about His perseverance when He was on the earth, in His humanity: how He had to endure and not give up or give in. He actually had to do that. Paul says, "May the Holy Spirit direct your heart into the revelation of the love of God and into the revelation of the perseverance of Jesus."

One of the premier passages on His perseverance is Isaiah 49. This is a characteristic He needed in His humanity at His first coming, while He was on the earth. God doesn't need perseverance; man needs perseverance. Jesus as God didn't need it, because God has no obstacles. As a man, He had to endure the same resistance that we have to endure. When He was on the earth, there was much resistance against Him doing the will of God. We have this idea that He was just on automatic pilot. What the Scriptures teach us, one of the glorious facets of His humility, is that He actually walked out perseverance in fullness, perfectly, never wavering.

THE ESSENCE OF PERSEVERANCE: CONTINUALLY PRESSING INTO GOD

Paragraph B. The essence of perseverance in terms of our context. I mean, the ultimate is that He endured death. He embraced death. Perseverance isn't only about embracing persecution and even physical death; there's a whole lot before that. He embraced death at the end. For thirty-three years, He embraced another type of perseverance. Here's how I define the essence of perseverance: continuing to faithfully press into God; continuing to faithfully serve the Lord in small things, in the face of frustrating circumstances; in the face of people resisting us; in the face of lack of cooperation. There are many other annoying issues. That's the real word: *annoying*.

People say, "I would serve God more diligently, but the people resist me, no one cooperates, there isn't enough money, there isn't enough anointing, there isn't enough impact. It's so little, it seems so boring, it seems so weak, I don't think I want to keep doing it." Little by little they draw back and begin to give into lethargy and passivity.

The Scriptures teach us, "Don't do that. Stay 100 percent engaged with diligence." No matter how small the task is that God has assigned us to, no matter how much resistance, no matter how many believers shake their head at you and say, "You're really off the wall," even when the people on your team refuse to assist you, or even resist you—and every one of us understands that—here's the revelation: Jesus had that same opposition throughout His life.

I think of the worship leader. The drummer won't cooperate, the sound man is off, there isn't enough presence, the singers don't show up, you don't have enough money, your body is tired, you're in a bad mood, you're leading worship. That's the time to stay faithful. That's what I'm talking about: with perseverance. I'm not talking about just pressing into martyrdom; I'm talking about something that happens day by day by day, because the vast majority of our life is made up of small things.

NINETY-NINE PERCENT OF OUR LIFE IS SMALL THINGS THAT DON'T SEEM POWERFUL

There are only a few really big things we do in our entire life in our relationship with God. Ninety-nine percent of our life is small things that don't seem powerful, that most people don't appreciate, that seem a little boring to others. It's only by knowing His eyes are on us and that He's watching us; it's only by knowing He cares, that it matters to Him what we're doing. More than that, He's actually going to reward us for that simple, little act of obedience repeated over and over and over again throughout our life. That's perseverance.

FOREVER THE EARTH WILL BE FILLED WITH HUMBLE, LOVING PEOPLE

Paragraph C. There are several ways you could say this. God's goal with respect to perseverance and humility. The perseverance of Jesus is an expression of His humility. There are many expressions of it. This is one of them. God's goal is to fill the earth, in the age to come and forever, with people who embrace voluntary love and voluntary humility in a way that continues forever. God isn't going to put us on automatic pilot or give us a humility pill. We will actually engage with humility as part of our free will under the anointing of the Spirit. Forever He is going to fill the earth with people who choose love and humility. Even in our resurrected bodies, we will say yes to humility.

Jesus said, "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Mt. 23:11). That's not just in this age. It's the greatest virtue. It's those who will have the greatest authority, but also it's those who will have the greatest intimacy with God in the age to come. The greatest is related to humility or servanthood. They're all together.

THE SON OF MAN WILL RULE AS A SERVANT FOREVER

Paragraph D. Now in the famous Daniel 7 prophecy, the Messiah was identified as the Son of Man. This only happened once in the entire Old Testament. It's one of the most prominent prophecies about Jesus the Messiah. He was called the Son of Man. This happens to be the title of the Man described in this one passage from Daniel 7. It's the title that Jesus referred to most. He referred back to Daniel 7:13. The Son of Man prophecy was connected to Jesus having dominion over all the nations of the earth forever.

Here's what He says in Matthew 20:28. He's referring to this prophecy that He will have dominion over the whole earth. He says, "I will rule all the nations and the kings of the earth; they'll come under My authority, and I will operate in that prophecy now and forever with a servant spirit" (Mt. 20:28, paraphrased). What a huge statement Jesus was making!

JESUS WILL CONQUER THE EARTH IN HUMILITY AND LOVE

Paragraph E. We looked at this in one of the other sessions. The psalmist describes Jesus' victorious triumph over the nations at the time of His second coming. It says, "In Your majesty, when Your display of power is in fullness and You have victory over every opposing force, finally it will be openly displayed across the whole earth for all to see. And You'll do it all from the place of humility" (Ps. 45:4, paraphrased). There's not an ounce, a single trace of pride. When He's victorious at the highest level imaginable, He will do everything from

humility in His victory. Even defeating His enemies, He'll do it with a heart of humility and He'll do it to establish humility. He'll do it to establish humility in the nations.

IN THE AGE TO COME, WE WILL VOLUNTARILY REFRAIN FROM SINNING

Paragraph F. I don't fully understand all that I'm saying here in paragraph F, just so you know. Because there is mystery—I'll just say it that way—to how it all works in the age to come. I know this: in the age to come, the saints will never sin. When you have a resurrected body, you'll never sin. There's no thought that you'll compromise. Neither are we automatically programmed to respond robotically to love: "Now that I have a resurrected body, I can't think for myself!" No, you won't be a robot. You'll still engage your free will. Yes, we will have a resurrected body, filled with the Holy Spirit, with no sin nature, in the immediate presence of God. The devil is in prison and everything is going well. Somehow our free will doesn't disappear, though we will engage it in the right way. In other words, somewhere in the context of the revolution and everything involved in it, everyone will be empowered and convinced and enthusiastic about humility. It just won't be automatic. By definition, if you don't choose humility, it's not humility—just as with love.

THE GLORY OF JESUS WAS STRATEGICALLY VEILED AT HIS FIRST COMING

Top of page two. One of the most significant passages in the Bible that points to Jesus' humility related to His perseverance. Very strategically, the Father hid Him. Jesus walked through seasons of hiddenness. He's still in a season of hiddenness right now. In the nations, most of the people in the earth don't see who He is.

Isaiah 49 is a most remarkable passage. Isaiah reports on a dialogue between the Father and the Son. When you read Isaiah 49:1-12, the Father and the Son are talking. Isaiah is eavesdropping. He's reporting the conversation. Is that amazing? How would you like to have one of those experiences? In the age to come, you'll have a lot of them. This conversation gives us insight into Jesus' perseverance, which is the same thing as an expression of His humility, His perseverance as a man.

This is what was shocking to Isaiah, undoubtedly, and certainly to the people of Israel when this was announced. It's shocking to our natural mind that the Messiah would first come to the earth with an element, a significant element of hiddenness. His glory would be veiled and hidden. Who thought of that idea? The Father did. He could have come the first time in the clouds on a white horse, in flaming fire, but He came veiled. His glory was veiled strategically. This gives us a lot of insight into God's heart and also what is important to God in His leadership over the nations. Let's read it.

THE MOST NEGLECTED MESSAGE IN THE CHURCH

Isaiah 49:1 and 7. It starts off with Jesus talking. He has a message. He says in verse 1, "Listen to Me; take heed, all you peoples" (Isa. 49:1, paraphrased). That means all the nations—all the Gentile nations, everywhere, from far away in time and far away in distance. He says, "Everyone on the earth, listen to Me; I have a message." It's Jesus talking. We know the message is that He walks in humility and perseverance and hiddenness in His leadership on the earth at His first coming. That's the message: the value of humility and perseverance in hiddenness. That's part of the message He's giving.

That message is so foreign. As a matter of fact, it's not a coincidence that in Matthew 11:29, the only characteristic Jesus ever said about Himself is, "I'm humble" (Mt. 11:29, paraphrased). He said, "Learn from Me" (v. 29b, NKJV). He's actually referencing, in my opinion, this verse. He's telling the nations in Isaiah 49, "Listen, everyone in the nations." When He came in the flesh, He said, "Learn this message from Me." It's the

Isaiah 49 message. It's the most neglected message in the Church. I really believe that. Or certainly one of the most neglected messages in the Church is the one that Jesus is going to communicate here, that He cried out for us to heed. It's one that we want to really focus on, because it gives us insight into the splendor of who He is. It also gives us insight into how we can partner with Him, be close to His heart, and walk in intimacy with Him.

“HE HAS MADE MY MOUTH LIKE A SHARP SWORD”

Verse 2. “The Father has made My mouth like a sharp sword” (Isa. 49:2, paraphrased). This is Jesus still talking. When He says, “The Father has made My mouth like a sharp sword,” that's a promise of His triumph. All His enemies are going to be overcome. When He says, “My mouth is a sharp sword,” it's a warning to the rebels. He says, “When I come, I'll be hidden at first. Be warned: My mouth is like a sharp sword. Be warned, O nations. If you confuse My humility with My approval, it will lead you to compromise.”

His mouth like a sword is a pattern for our ministry. We want to believe God to have our words penetrate people's hearts by the power of the Spirit: to be anointed in a way to make a difference in people's lives in the way that He did.

“IN THE SHADOW OF HIS HAND HAS HE HIDDEN ME”

After He describes the power of His ministry, He goes on. Now He gives this new idea. He says, “In the shadow of the Father's hand He has hidden Me” (Isa. 49:2b, paraphrased).

Isaiah could have said, “What? Did I hear You correctly? You're hidden by God!” Not that this conversation really happened this way, of course. Why would the Messiah come and be hidden? That's one of the great offenses in history to God's leadership. He hides so much. “Why not unveil all Your glory all the time, like right now, particularly in my life? Why this strategic hiddenness? This restraint of Your glory? This hiding and veiling the full splendor of who You are? Why?”

Let's read it again. “In the shadow of the Father's hand He is going to hide Him.” Then He says it again, but in a different way, communicating another message. He says, “Actually, the Father has made Me a polished shaft” (Isa. 49:2c, paraphrased)—or an arrow. It's the shaft of an arrow; that's the idea.

“The Father has made Me a polished arrow. In His quiver, back there in His quiver, He hid Me. First He hid Me in His hand. After He polished Me and prepared Me for battle, He hid Me again in His quiver.” Why would God hide Jesus, ever?

“TO HIM WHOM MAN DESPISES, TO HIM WHOM THE NATION ABHORS”

Then in verse 7, the Father calls Jesus, “Him whom the nation abhors” (Isa. 49:7). He said, “Jesus, My Beloved: I have hidden Your glory. The fruit of the nations is that they abhor You. They don't like You. They don't like Your leadership. They don't really know who You are.”

Then the Father goes on to give Jesus a title: “You're the Servant of the nations” (Isa. 49:7b, paraphrased). He's the Servant of the rulers of the nations. “At every level of leadership, You're their servant.”

What an amazing statement of the most powerful Man! This is talking about in the age to come, in the millennial kingdom, when Jesus is over all the kings of the earth, openly in the sight of all. He will operate as a servant, as He walks out His leadership over all the rulers of the earth. There will be no boasting; there will be no strutting; there will be no, “I told you so.” None of that. He will walk in perfect humility in the fullness of

His glory, as He walked when His glory was veiled. As a matter of fact, He'll have such victory that all the kings of the earth will worship Him. The most powerful leaders on earth will worship Him. They'll be awestruck by Him. That's how much glory is going to be revealed.

NO ONE COULD SEE THE FULLNESS OF HIS GLORY TILL THE FATHER UNVEILED IT

Paragraph B. Let's go back over it again. He starts off in verse 1: "Listen." This is one of the primary messages that Jesus wants to communicate throughout all of history to all His people. It's one of the most neglected messages. He cried out, "Listen to Me." Later He would come and with His own lips declare: "Learn humility from Me. I'll teach it to you."

We'll notice—paragraph C—He's hidden in two different ways, or in two different seasons: first, under the Father's hand; secondly, in the Father's quiver. To be hidden means that the fullness of His glory, the fullness of His power, His full destiny was veiled. It was hidden from men; no one could see it. He knew it, but no one else could see it until the Father's appointed time. Then the Father will reveal it all to the nations.

Here's the point. Number one: that's the glory of who He is in His heart. Number two: it's the same way He's relating to you. He has given you a destiny. He has appointed you to glory in this life, and even more so in the resurrection beyond anything we can imagine. Right now you can't see it. We might say, "Oh God, this is unfair!"

The Father would say, "This is exactly the kind of leadership I gave the Son.

He obeyed Me in this same kind of dynamic." He was hidden for thirty years. I mean, He was perfectly hidden. He was just that good kid down the road, Joseph's kid, who was a really upbeat, happy-spirited, humble Guy in the carpenter's shop who did good work. That was all they knew. Then for three and a half years, there was a little peak. He raised the dead, but beloved, He only did it here and there. As I've said before, if Jesus didn't say the word *Lazarus* when He said, "Come forth," all the graves would have been emptied! Raising the dead here and there was a very veiled, very measured display of His glory. Even in the last 2,000 years, His name is growing in prominence across the earth, but beloved, the earth doesn't know who He is. Even the Body of Christ doesn't get Him. He's still veiled.

THE FATHER WILL BE GLORIFIED GLOBALLY FOREVER THROUGH THIS MAN

Paragraph D. Verse 3. Jesus is still talking. Isaiah is reporting the conversation. He said, "Let Me tell you, the Father said this to Me." He's going to put three ideas together. Here's what the Father said to Me. "Son, You're My servant. I want You to operate in a servant spirit in everything that I give You to do. Number one: You're My servant. That's how I want You to operate. Number two: You're Israel." Now *Israel* was first the name of a man. When Jacob wrestled with God, his name was changed to *Israel*. An angel said, "You have a new name." *Israel* means, "Prince with God." Later it became the name of the nation. So God said, "You will walk in humility as My servant, but You're My Prince. You're the premier, ideal picture of what it means to rule with Me and under My leadership. You're the ultimate Prince."

Then, the Father gives Him the third point: "I'll be glorified through Your humility and walking out this destiny of being the Prince with God." The Father will be glorified on a worldwide level forever through this Man. What a statement! He'll be glorified forever through this Man. That's developed by Isaiah in verses 8-12. "I will be glorified. My name will fill the earth."

The Father would say: “because of Your labors, because of Your sevanthood, and because of Your nature and Your anointing to operate as the Prince with God.”

HE APPEARED TO HAVE WASTED HIS LIFE, BUT IT WAS GLORIOUS TO GOD

Paragraph E. Here’s the heart-transforming part of this passage. This is the one that really touches us in terms of transforming our hearts to say, “Yes, we will live like You lived. We will carry our heart in the way You carried Your heart.”

In verses 4 and 5, Jesus sets forth two different perspectives of His life. Perspective one is how men esteemed Him. They thought He wasted His life. The second perspective is that He was glorious in the eyes of God—though He seemed like a total waste of time and a failure in the eyes of men.

The point of verses 4 and 5, as we will see in a moment, is that every servant of God must choose which perspective they will live by. In the eyes of God, though our work is small and weak and seemingly ineffective and powerless, it’s glorious to God. The full reward is down the road. Yes, we get a little reward in this life, but the full reward is in the age to come. Will we connect with God and carry our heart in that way? Or will we yield to the natural mindset, this little life of weak, small labor, that it’s not worth anything, that no one even knows or cares? “No one knows anything I’m doing. I’m wasting my life.” Those are the two contradicting opinions that Jesus sets forth.

“I HAVE SPENT MY STRENGTH FOR NOTHING AND IN VAIN”

In Isaiah 49:4-5, Jesus said, “I have labored in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and in vain” (Isa. 49:4). That’s the human point of view. Now He gives the contrast word: *however*, or *surely*. He says, “Yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, and my work with my God” (ibid).

He says, “But surely My reward is with God, and later He will give it to Me in fullness. My reward is delayed.” That’s the issue. “My full permission is delayed. I understand that,” Jesus would say. He went on to say, “It’s more than that. Yes, My reward or promotion is delayed.” He said, “Actually the way I’m living, though men think I’ve wasted My life, I’m glorious in God’s eyes—even now in My smallness.”

HOW DO YOU MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF A MAN?

Man looks at the outward accomplishment and achievements; God looks at the movements of the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). That’s how He measures the success of a man. You can have a really big ministry and have a small heart and be a failure in the kingdom of God. You could have a very small ministry and a very big heart response and be very successful in God’s eyes. That’s what Jesus is talking about here.

He said, “I have labored in vain.” Here He was: for the first thirty years of His life, He worked in a carpenter shop. He left this prospering business, the NazarethCarpenter.com operation. He was doing well: very skillful, very charming, very humble, total integrity, and people liked Him. He took off to Jerusalem to go preach. He had some big crowds. The crowds waned. The crowds were only there for a short while. They waned. He began to say some really radical statements about Himself. They killed Him. He had a power ministry, and the result was only 120 followers.

People said, “This Guy had such a great future. He could have had four or five carpenter shops if He had stayed with it! If He had only been less bold with the things He had said.”

As it is, they killed Him in His prime, at thirty-three years old, and only 120 people showed up in the prayer room six weeks later. Most everyone fell away. That doesn't sound very successful at all. Men said, "His strength was spent for nothing."

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE SIZE OF OUR MINISTRY, BUT THE SIZE OF OUR HEART

The enemy comes to us, even in our unrenewed thinking, and tells us our life and our energy, our strength, the effort we pour out, doesn't matter to anyone. "No one cares, it moves no one, it makes no difference." I have good news for you: it moves God. Really, it might not move anyone, but it moves God. It's glorious in His eyes because He has a heart of humility. He esteems humility in a way men do not. Humility moves God. Outward displays of power move men. Huge movements and great achievements move men, but humility moves God. It's glorious to Him.

I've used this analogy before: when Billy Graham stands before the Lord, Jesus isn't going to say, "Father, look! It's Billy Graham! Here he comes!" Because he filled so many stadiums. No man has filled more stadiums for the gospel than Billy Graham. God isn't going to measure Billy Graham by how big his stadium ministry was, but rather how big his heart response was in humility and love. That's how he'll be measured, and every one of us the same. He isn't going to say, "You filled stadiums! Wow!" He'll say, "Your heart moved toward Me; therefore My heart moved. I'm touched by the way you lived." I believe that's the essence of what God will say to him.

JESUS HAD CONFIDENCE BEFORE GOD EVEN IN OBSCURITY

Top of page three. Paragraph G. Jesus had confidence. Remember, men said, "You spent Your strength for nothing. You have one carpenter shop and You had a preaching ministry that swelled up for a short period of time. They all fell away." Even His most loyal men all denied Him. The only people who didn't deny Him was a small group of women. They stayed true all the way through.

Jesus had confidence about the first thirty years. He had confidence that He was glorious in God's eyes. He had never healed anyone; He had never raised the dead. He had never preached a sermon. He had just related to people in the neighborhood and was involved in a carpenter shop. That's all He did. He didn't have anything notable in His life.

Here's what the Father said, before He even began His ministry. He said, "My beloved Son, I'm so pleased with You" (Mt. 3:17, paraphrased).

Jesus said, "Oh Father, I haven't preached a sermon. I haven't healed one person. I haven't done anything."

"Yes, My Son. You've walked in love and humility for thirty years. I'm so moved by the way You've endured all the resistance." As a man, He had the same resistance we did. The lady didn't like the way He made the table. The table was perfect! Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. She didn't think so. She wanted the money back. He ordered the wood and it came three weeks late. The neighbors were mad at Him. The people who worked under Him didn't do the work right, or they broke something, and the insurance claim didn't pay it off. I guarantee you He had the same resistance we have. We have this idea that He waltzed through life and everything was perfect. No. He got tired, He got weary. He interacted with people. It says in John 7:5 that even under the anointing in His ministry, His four brothers still didn't believe in Him. They said, "You know, He's a

good guy, but He's really stepped over the line." His own brothers didn't believe in Him! There were family dynamics that He had to walk through. During these first thirty years He achieved nothing notable, nothing that drew anyone's attention.

The Father expressed His attention: "I'm so moved. You're glorious in My eyes, the way You've walked in love and humility."

JESUS WAS CALLED TO BRING THE NATIONS BACK TO GOD

Paragraph H. Let's go on to verses 4-5. Jesus knew the scope of His calling, but He knew the scope of His calling and destiny and ministry was in God's time. Look at the scope of His ministry impact. Verses 5-6. He knew it all the time, even in the carpenter shop. Verse 5. Here's what Jesus says. Again, Isaiah picks up on the conversation. "The Lord formed Me from the womb and the Father made it clear"—just as in verse 1—"Son, I want You to operate in a servant spirit all Your days" (Isa. 49:5, paraphrased). That's Jesus' nature, so that's not a problem, but the point is that the Father and the Son were in perfect agreement that everything He would do in His triumph would be done with a servant spirit.

He says, "Here is what I want You to do. I want You to bring Israel back to God" (Isa. 49:5b, paraphrased). Jesus came to the earth to bring Israel back to God—to turn a whole nation to God.

But then the Father said, "Son, it's not enough that You turn Israel back to God" (Isa. 49:6, paraphrased). I mean, that's the Elijah calling. "Yes, You have the Elijah calling." Elijah was called to turn Israel back to God. "You have the Elijah anointing and then some—and then some a whole lot! You will go far beyond the Elijah anointing to turn Israel back to God. It's too small of a thing that You turn just one nation. The quality of Man that You are, the humility You walk in, the nearness You have with Me—here's what I'm saying to You. I want You to turn all the nations of the earth back to Me. Not just Israel, but every nation. Every king of the earth. Every single person on the earth. They'll come to Me through Your amazing leadership and the way You live under My authority."

JESUS' FIRST CALLING WAS TO WALK IN HUMILITY ALL HIS DAYS

Now Jesus has this mandate in His mind. He's sanding the wood at that table and that lady is complaining and that guy doesn't show up at work. He breaks the table and the wood shows up late. He didn't say, "You know what, I'm out of here. I'm not only turning Israel to God, I'm turning the whole earth to God! Why am I messing with this guy showing up late, and My brothers wagging their head at Me, and this lady complaining at Me, and I'm tired anyway. I stayed up all night in prayer last night." He had a physical body and was tired. "Why not just forget the whole thing? Why don't I plug into that calling?" Because His first calling was to express humility. He was to walk in perseverance in the face of the resistance.

Paragraph I. Now let's read verse 7, which we referenced just a moment ago. Here's what the Father says: "OK, Jesus, You have this amazing global calling. You will bring My glory to all the earth. The earth will be filled with My glory because of Your ministry." But the Father says to the Son, "Son, You understand that the people will despise You? You get it. Friends and foes, they'll despise You. They'll wag their heads at You" (Isa. 49:7, paraphrased)—several verses say. "You understand that even with Your great calling, You'll have to endure people next to You despising You, as well as the leaders of the nation. People who don't even know You will be against You. They've never met You and they'll already be against You, saying the most terrible things about You and they've never, ever met you."

Some of you say, “Man, that sounds like my experience.”

Let me tell you, there’s One who went ahead of you. He knows everything about these emotions. He didn’t say, “You know, I’m tired of it. I’m out of here. I don’t need this!”

No. He said, “I’m doing it for the sake of love and I’m doing it in humility. No matter how anyone responds, I’m glorious in My Father’s eyes.”

JESUS HAS ENDURED THE HATRED OF THE NATIONS FOR 2,000 YEARS

He went on to say, “Not only do they despise You”—meaning the nation of Israel. Some translations have it plural, not singular, but in that case it would be the Gentiles. “Not only do they despise You; they abhor You. They hate You perfectly. They’ve hated You for 2000 years. They abhor You.” In this case, the singular would indicate Israel. For 2,000 years, the nation He came to win abhors Him. They still don’t know who He is. Despite being despised and abhorred, He is going to operate as a servant when He restores them. There will be no offense in His heart at all. One day at the time of the second coming, throughout the millennial kingdom, all the kings will see and worship.

“Why is this going to happen? Because the Father has chosen You and the calling He gave You will surely come to pass, but in His timing, in His way, and it’s not for now. You have to endure and persevere against the smallness, the resistance, the opposition, the fatigue, and all the other elements: You must resist it in Your humility and stay faithful to be diligent in small things for now. One day You’ll see the choice I’ve given You will be openly displayed for the whole earth to see.”

Roman numeral III. I have a number of verses here in paragraph A. You can read them on your own, in Hebrews particularly. Jesus endured everything we endured, from soft resistance to really aggressive resistance, to people just not caring at all what He was doing. No one cooperated with Him. These are all the things that we experience.

JESUS WAS HATED FOR NO REASON AT ALL

Paragraph B. Loss of reputation. We say, “He’s Jesus.” I tell you, in the church, we get one or two people sitting in the room here saying, “You’re kind of off the wall”; it hurts our feelings so badly we want to quit the kingdom. Beloved, there are going to be godly people who write you off. Not just evil people; godly people will write you off. So what? Honestly, so what? You’re glorious in the Father’s eyes. Though you look like you’re wasting your life in the eyes of men, stay steady. They hated Jesus without a cause (Jn. 15:25). There isn’t a more difficult type of rejection than to be hated for no reason. He wasn’t just ignored; they hated Him and they had no reason. At least when I do something foolish and people are annoyed, it does make sense. I like them to give me some grace, but it makes sense. They didn’t just resist Him a little; they hated Him for no reason at all. It sounds like the sort of thing that some of you have walked in recently.

He was reviled (1 Pet. 2:23). They said bad things about Him—to His face, behind His face, things that were wrong. What did He do? He committed Himself to God’s eyes. He said, “Father, I commit Myself to You. You answer in Your timing. You judge.”

The Lord says, “I will, but not until the age to come. It will be delayed judgment.”

“Well, it’s before Your eyes. I can live with that. As long as You see, You care, and You remember that I’ve loved You, that’s all I care about.”

The Lord says, “I’ll answer it fully, in My timing—just not until the age to come.”

PERSEVERANCE: BEING DILIGENT NO MATTER THE RESPONSE

Paragraph C. We’ll talk again about perseverance. I’ll say it again, and I’ll put it in the notes a few times to let us know what we’re looking at here. The primary issue in perseverance is continually being diligent. Not passive; not thinking, “I’m tired of this! No one is cooperating.” It’s called being diligent no matter what anyone does. No matter the money; no matter how many good people write you off; no matter how many good people won’t respond to you; no matter how much they ignore you; it doesn’t matter. We’re going hard after the Lord until the end. Not for a good ten-year run, but until the last breath.

We will be 100 percent diligent until the end. We won’t wind down in our last five years. A lot of people, honestly, start winding down around age thirty. In my years of ministry, they go hard in their twenties. Already in their thirties, they’ve concocted some imaginary version of the grace of God that makes them feel good about living passive with God and blaming the Bible for it.

“CONSIDER HIM WHO ENDURED SUCH HOSTILITY FROM SINNERS”

Well, here’s what the writer of Hebrews says: “Run with endurance” (Heb. 12:1). It’s the concept of perseverance: “Run, persevere. Don’t let up. Not until the very last day of your life. Go hard. Seek Him. Serve, unrelated to how anyone responds and how many people ignore you. No matter how many times you’re passed up for promotions and they give them to other people. It doesn’t matter. God is watching you.”

I love verse 3: “Consider Him who endured” (Heb. 12:3). That’s what this message is about. We’re considering the Isaiah 49 Messiah. We’re considering Him.

Top of page four. Matthew 25:21. Jesus is talking about what it means to be faithful for years—not for a summer, not for a decade, but until the end. It’s called being faithful in few things. Luke 19 calls it being faithful in small things: He tells them, “If you’ve been faithful with very small things, I’ll make you a ruler” (Lk. 19:17, paraphrased). Why is it that Jesus is going to reward us for such small things? I’ll tell you why: He sees their value. Why? He did so many small things in His life that no one else appreciated or even saw. He says, “I did it. I know about small things. I did it for years. No one paid attention, but My Father did. That was good enough for Me. That’s why I see the value of it. I will reward you. I get it.”

THE NUMBER ONE TEMPTATION ON THE PLANET

Paragraph E. This is really significant. Perseverance, the perseverance of Christ, isn’t just the daily pressures and temptations. It does mean that: not folding under the daily routine of smallness, mundanity, being ignored, no one cooperating, the assault of temptation. But it means more than that. Perseverance means finishing our work—which means not quitting until the end in full diligence. The point is that we don’t quit. I believe the number one temptation on the planet that every human being faces is the temptation to quit. I believe that’s the one temptation every single human being faces multitudes of times in his or her life. Some are more tempted by this, that, and the other. Everyone is tempted with quitting.

DON'T BECOME COMFORTABLE AND SELF-CENTERED AS YOU GROW OLDER

Jesus made a point out of this. He says, "I finished the work. I didn't quit. I went to the very end, to My last breath" (Jn. 17:4, paraphrased).

Paul said it in Acts: "I finished and I finished with a good spirit" (Acts 20:24). A lot of people turned on Paul. Even in the household of faith, they turned on Paul. Even at the end of his life, he said, "All of Asia has left me. The believers throughout Turkey have turned their back on me. I'm going hard; I'm not drawing back. I'm not taking my cues by how people are responding or resisting me. I'm going 100 percent until the end."

Many people wind down in their last few years instead of staying diligent. As you grow older and you lose energy, you can still keep diligence according to your strength. Don't become comfortable and self-centered as you grow older. Again, the problem isn't just the old people—my people. The problem is the thirty-year olds. There's a problem in the Church. They're quitting their diligence and drawing back, all over the nation, in massive numbers. And again, they're calling it "the grace of God."

I'm going to finish, in the face of weakness and smallness. IHOP-KC may get really big; it may get really small. It may break, we may have no money, we may have all the money. We may have total this and total that from each end. This is my assignment; I'm sticking with it until the end. I don't care what anyone does related to me staying faithful to it by the grace of God. I'm not excited because people are responding; I'm excited because the Lord says, "This is the assignment. You do it."

People show up. That's cool. If they don't show up, I promise the pay is the same where I'm going. It's the same. He isn't going to talk to me about how big my conferences were; He's going to talk about how I responded to Him until the last day of my life. That's what He's going to ask you about. Look at this famous prayer of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1:11. I won't develop it, but he prays that they would fulfill all the good pleasure of God's goodness. That means they wouldn't quit; they would fulfill everything God had in His heart. No matter how small it is, no matter how remote it is, no matter how unanointed it seems; no matter how other people write it off. Or worse, they don't even pay attention. We will fulfill it all. We won't quit because of discouragement or frustration. We won't be disqualified because of compromise. Even though it might be really small, we will fulfill it all until the end. That's what Paul prayed for them.

IT TAKES THE POWER OF GOD TO LIVE A LIFE OF PERSEVERANCE

Paragraph F. People talk about the power of God, and mostly we talk about the power of God to make an impact on people. That's good; that's very biblical. Colossians 1 talks about the power of God on your heart so you don't quit or draw back in your diligence: that you would have strength with divine might so that you would persevere at the heart level, no matter how hard, how remote, or how small your assignment is, or who's ignoring you (Col. 1:11). You will stay steady until the end. That will take the power of God. Yes, it takes the power of God to raise someone from the dead, but beloved, it takes the power of God to live a life of perseverance like Jesus did.

THE GLORY OF YOUR LIFE IS HIDDEN WITH JESUS

Roman numeral IV. The glory of your life is hidden with Jesus (Col. 3:10).

Beloved, catch this. This is about your destiny and the truth about your love and the truth of your humility and how God is moved by it, even though our love and humility is so weak, but God is so kind. He is moved by it.

My love and humility is so weak, but the Lord says, “If you keep giving yourself to Me like that, it will move Me.”

The glory of it won't be revealed to you or anyone else until the age to come. Your glory is hidden until Jesus' glory is manifest on a global level. In other words, your humility and your love, as fragile as it is, is glorious to God. God says, “I will show you how much it has moved Me on the last day when I show the nations the glory of My Son. I will show you who you are.”

The person who doesn't get you the most is you. Some of you have written yourselves off. God is moved by the way you've said yes. You think it's stupid: “I'm not even going to do it! Forget it.” The Lord says, “Don't. Because I haven't forgotten it.” The glory of your life will be shown even to you on that day.

“HE IS A REWARDER OF THOSE WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM”

Hebrews 11:6. This is a very powerful verse. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Heb. 11:6). Here's the essence of faith: you have to believe He is, and you have to believe He rewards. It's confidence that God is watching you, even when no one else is. He is. It moves Him and He'll respond in a way beyond anything you can imagine. That's what faith is.

Here we are in our little life, hardly impacting anyone. We're reaching hard for God, but we don't feel the anointing. The prayer time is boring. The Bible is confusing. There's no manifest presence on what we're doing. The money isn't there. No one will show up. People won't cooperate. Your body is tired. Your family is wagging their heads at you, but you're doing the will of God because you believe He's watching. You believe He is. You believe it moves Him. You believe He'll respond in His timing, which is a little in this age, fully in the age to come. That's the way Jesus did it. It's not asking us to do that which He didn't do. He did it perfectly.

Top of page five. I'll just say this about Roman numeral V, here in the next sixty seconds, and you can go and read it on your own if you want. It's the weakness of God, the so-called “weakness” of living in humility. It's faithfulness when things are small, but we know they move God. Then we settle our heart to carry our heart in the things that God values: humility and love. When we do that, it's superior to everything else.

Look at Roman numeral VI. Jesus is the arrow; what about you? Because that which God the Father did with Jesus, He's also doing with us. That's why it's in the Bible, so that we're inspired and have understanding about what's happening.

EACH ONE OF US IS BEING PREPARED LIKE AN ARROW

“He has made my mouth like a sharp sword” (Isa. 49:2). The Lord's plan is to give you such an authority that, when you speak, when you whisper the world, it will touch others. Even if it's one on one; even if it's the guy down on Skid Row, the homeless man, it will pierce his heart and touch him. You may never have a platform ministry. It's about our words piercing darkness in people's hearts. He will give you a lot more of that in the age to come. We have an anointing for that, even one on one. You pray for someone's back, and it's healed—maybe just a little, but it still got healed a little! Our word has some power in it. Even though it's little, it's real.

Here's what Jesus said: “I'm in the shadow of God's hand. He's making Me a polished arrow. He's hidden Me in His hand, in His quiver.”

Each one of us is being prepared like an arrow. Every one of you in this room that loves God, He's preparing you like a polished arrow right now, just as He did Jesus.

THE EARLY DAYS OF AN ARROW ARE THE BRANCH OF A TREE

Paragraph B. The arrow starts as a piece of wood in a branch on a tree. That's where an arrow starts. The early days of an arrow are the branch of a tree. The archer says, "Ah, I like that branch. I see an arrow there."

The Lord says of you, "Ah, I choose this one! I see an arrow there." He has to polish it. So the grueling process begins. The branch is cut from the tree and stripped of leaves; the bark is torn off, the fruit's torn off, it's immersed in hot water. They put that branch in hot water—a gnarly, bent-up branch. It's not straight yet. They have to straighten the branch by putting pegs on each side of it in hot water and putting pressure on it. Over time, because of the hot water, it's like braces on someone's teeth: little by little the branch straightens. It's grueling. It took a lot of time to make an arrow.

Paragraph D. There are three parts of an arrow. There's the shaft: that's the part you have to make straight and polish. There's the arrowhead at the top. There are the feathers on the end. Every believer has to go through all the stages to be a polished arrow, just as Jesus did.

IT'S HARD WORK, BEING POLISHED TO FLY STRAIGHT

Paragraph E. The shaft, the branch has to be straightened. A crooked arrow won't hit the mark. There are crooked areas in our lives, and the Lord says, "I'm straightening those areas." If you shoot a crooked area, it doesn't hit the mark. God has ordained you to hit a mark. It may not be big in the eyes of men, but it's big to His heart. It's dear to Him. A crooked shaft is useless. A polished shaft speaks of godly character. There's purging, sanding, polishing: ah! That arrow says, "Ouch!"

Paragraph F. Now the arrow is straight. It's gone through quite a season to get straight. "Whew, I'm glad that's over!"

Now they put an arrowhead on it. An arrowhead is what gives the arrow power to penetrate the armor of darkness. You need that arrowhead. That speaks of the Holy Spirit's anointing on the Word, where it penetrates. There's an anointing on the Word.

Paragraph G. Well, you can have a straight arrow with an arrowhead that can break through the armor, but it has to have feathers. If it doesn't have feathers, it won't fly in the right direction. It won't be stable in flight. I believe that speaks of having our lives grounded in the Word: that our life is committed to the Word of God—not just to our few favorite concepts, but to being grounded in the Word of God.

WE'RE HIDDEN EVEN AFTER WE'RE PREPARED IN THE WISDOM OF GOD

Paragraph I. Jesus was hidden in two different ways. First He was hidden under the Father's hand while He was being polished. We can appreciate that. We don't like that, but the second hiding is the one that really troubles us. Now that He's polished, now that He has the arrowhead, He's hidden in the quiver. "Wait, I thought I was already hidden! I'm ready. I'm ready to shoot! Why am I in the quiver?"

Well, there's hiding while we're being prepared, and then there's hiding after we're prepared because of the perfect wisdom of God. Jesus is still in hiding. I tell you, He was really anointed when He walked the streets of Galilee. He was still in the nations, and the nations didn't understand who He was.

Paragraph J. The quiver goes on the back of the arrow. To an arrow, it looks like a big, dark, empty shaft: "Lord, I'm prepared, I'm ready, I'm polished, I'm straight, I'm ready to be shot. I've even been used before. I'm accustomed to operating in the favor of God, the anointing of God, even a little, but it's lifted. Wait! I thought once I get used a little, it only gets better and better. I'm used a little: there's some favor, some anointing, some doors opening. It lifts. Wait! That's not biblical! In the name of Jesus, I rebuke you!"

Jesus says, "I was hidden in the quiver too after I was polished and ready."

"Really?"

Yes, it's the Father's perfect wisdom. Trust His leadership. It takes humility. Persevere when it's small and hard. No matter if you're accustomed to being anointed, you're accustomed to people relating to you in the favor of God.

Don't live there. Get accustomed to looking at God's eyes on you. Live there. Live internally, an internal life with Him. Don't be focused on what people think about your life in God. It really tests us to be hidden in the quiver after we're ready.

THE ANOINTED THROUGHOUT HISTORY ENDURED YEARS OF HIDDENNESS

Paragraph K. I have encouraging news. The anointed throughout history were prepared in the polished, hidden season, and they were even hidden after they were anointed in various times. Think about Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David. David was anointed, defeated Goliath, was a national hero, and then ran around in caves for some years. Joseph was anointed and went to prison twice.

Paragraph L. He went twice. After he had favor on his life, he went into two seasons of imprisonment. Suddenly God shot Joseph like an arrow. He shot him! Because when you're in the quiver, though you're still hidden, the suddenly of God can come tomorrow. Being shot isn't the goal; the goal is being obedient. We want to be shot as an arrow from God. That's not the highest goal; that's the second thing. We want to walk in full obedience.

Even Jesus, when He was fully anointed, skipped opportunities, I assure you. All Israel wanted to make Him a king (Jn. 6:15). He passed up their opportunity. "I'll be King later, but first I will have to die."

"Well, You're anointed!"

They wanted to make Him a king. He refused that opportunity. He was already anointed. He was a polished arrow. He said, "No, I'm still hiding in the quiver related to My Kingship." You don't get any more anointed than Jesus was. He still has an element of being hidden in the quiver.

JOSEPH ENDURED THE FERRIS WHEEL OF FAVOR

Last point. The end of paragraph L. Here's what Joseph teaches us—because he had favor, lost favor, had favor, lost favor. Julie Meyer calls it the "Ferris wheel of favor." In this season everything is working; then in the next

season, “Whoa, everyone forgot me!” Then, in the next season, “Whoa, everyone likes me!” Six, twelve, eighteen months go by: “Everyone forgot me again...”

I love that. It just goes around. We live before His eyes.

What Joseph teaches us is that he couldn't be successfully prepared when he was preoccupied by how his brothers were treating him. Joseph said, “I'm not going to take my read by how I'm being treated. No. I will anchor my soul in the fact God's eyes are on me.”

I don't have this on the notes, but Joseph was tested by the word of God (Ps. 105:19). He was in prison and being tested by the word of God. In other words, “I'm counting on Your eyes being on me while I'm being mistreated.” As it turned out, he was right!

MINISTRY TIME

Amen. Let's have a bunch of arrows stand up. I'm going to ask the Lord to strengthen you in the perseverance of Christ. If it was wise and glorious for Jesus, how much more for us? If the most humble Man ever walked in this kind of humility, why not you and me? He was to fill the earth with humility. That's what He's after.

I'm saying yes. We lock into His eyes being on us. That's where we get our measurement. We're all in one of those seasons. Some of you say, “I'm still that branch on the tree that's being sawed on right now. I'm not even at the polished level.”

OK. That sawing will be over in a minute. That hot water and sanding is coming next. Don't worry; you'll be fine. You'll be a good arrow.