

20b ACTS

We pick up our study in Acts chapter 8 with the consenting of Saul to Stephen's death and the instigation of persecution against the church, which was at Jerusalem. And we ask ourselves, why did God not stop this? Why did he let so many people suffer and so many people lose their property and so many people die? Because there were a lot. And this was a grievous state of affairs for which Saul became famous.

And we had a stimulating discussion on the break about the other illustrations of this that we mentioned in the first lesson, which is Lazarus. We talked about back in John chapter 11, verses 3 and 4, where the death of Lazarus is designed to promote the glory of God. But it doesn't seem so glorious when you're the one laying there dying.

And if you're Lazarus and you say the Lord wanders around healing, these people just walk up to the door, people drop them through the roof and he heals and he wanders into the pool of Bethesda and heal someone and they bring all who come. Here I am. I'm a confidant and a close friend of the Lord.

My sisters and I have hosted and had him at the house and he's eaten our food and slept under our roof. And if anybody is deserving of some special attention from the Lord, it's me. And here I am in a bad way.

And I don't hear from the man. He doesn't he doesn't show up. I sent a messenger, sent another messenger.

He's not coming. I'm feeling pretty poorly. And the sisters, what do you think they're thinking? Here's their breadwinner.

They're not married. Mary and Martha have no husbands in view. Lazarus is the breadwinner and Lazarus is in a bad way.

And they're going to be left destitute as widows in Israel, dependent upon the the. Kindness of others and Jesus is nowhere to be found, and I can imagine the consternation, to put it mildly, that they must have gone through. Well, it doesn't take a great stretch of imagination to see that in our circumstances, we are tempted to decide that God must have gotten busy elsewhere because we know his promises.

We know that we are trying to be faithful and trying to do what God says. And yet our burdens do not all seem to be lifted and our our difficulties seem to press us in sometimes. And where is God? Where is his deliverance? I'm tired of hearing about David and Goliath.

I'm tired of hearing about Joshua in the Valley of Eglon, all these other great victories in the word of God. Here I am. And it seems like being a Christian is a waste of time.

Well, this is why we're spending some time going through these 15 different reasons why God allows us to go through affliction. These Christians died. These Christians were imprisoned and beaten.

Men and women lost their goods, even if they did escape with their lives, their goods were held forfeit. Some of them had to flee into far countries and could never return. And God allowed this.

Why? Well, first of all, we saw that it promotes the glory of God. Secondly, God exhibits his power and faithfulness in these circumstances. Thirdly, it teaches us the will of God.

Fourthly, it can turn us to God and we say, wait a minute, I'm already turned to God. I'm sitting here listening to you. So what makes you think I need to turn? This is one of the things I did not immediately understand that has dawned on me in my middle age, that I used to think everything was sort of monolithic.

If one thing is good, everything is good. But there's nothing like thinking about human relationships and being married and so on to realize that things can be good in one area and really totally bad in another. You can get up in the morning, have a great conversation, have a cup of coffee and everything is fine.

And then one particular subject comes up and all of a sudden it all goes sour. And we were doing fine until that subject came up. But in that area, we still really have a strong, violent difference of view, difference of opinion.

And if we had just negotiated around that, why, the whole morning would have been great. But, and trust me on this, in my particular case, it is almost always my fault. And I am not just saying that to be nice or to give myself insurance when someone hears this tape.

I'm telling you, I'm telling you that because it is true. It is. It is.

There is a woman on this earth who is afflicted grievously and bears up wonderfully with it. But you know, this happens. All of us understand this principle, right? That you can't just say, oh, one thing is good, therefore it's all good.

You have to break it down into smaller pieces. Well, this part here is really good, but this part here, somebody needs a change of mind. This part over here, maybe the other person needs a change of mind.

And so if you start bringing up where I need to change my mind, I'll just go over here and bring up where you need a change of mind. And I'll beat you over the head with your change of mind. You beat me over my head with my change of mind.

But we realize this, that you can't just broadly characterize. And that's how it is in our

spiritual life. So what is the application of this knowledge? Yes, we come to Bible class.

Yes, we hear and enjoy and appreciate the Word of God. And yes, it is benefiting us in area A, B and C. However, it may be that we are still going to be educated and firmed up and encouraged in area D, because that is an area where we still need change of mind. You see my point here? It is not a monolithic all good or all bad.

The judgment seat of Christ is not just going to be Jesus sitting there like Caesar saying thumbs up or thumbs down. Every word, every action, every area of life will come before the throne and get its grade. You did good in this area.

You totally cratered in this area. You get a C plus in this area and here's why and so on. So in turning us to God, you can't just be a Pharisee and say, I don't need to be turned to God.

What does the parable of the lost sheep tell us in Luke chapter 16? Thinking back to Luke volume one, remember, you got the lost coin, the lost sheep, the lost son in Luke 16, those great lost things. What is the parable of the lost sheep? Everybody on planet Earth seems to think that that's a salvation picture. They wrote a song about it, the ninety and nine safely lay in the shelter of the fold.

One was lost on the hills far away. Well, so then the shepherd goes out and gets the lost sheep, saves him, brings him back and now he's saved. It isn't it at all.

There were 100 sheep in the fold. That song ought to start out saying the 100 sheep that laid in the fold. Then one decided to walk away and he squeezes through and he left.

He has the same relationship to the shepherd and to the owner as the other ninety nine sheep. If he was going to have an evangelism picture, what would he do? The shepherd heard the bleating of some wild sheep that was astray and didn't belong to anybody. And he said, that poor sheep, it doesn't have a caretaker.

It needs a shepherd. It needs to be brought into my fold. It's going to can't survive on its own out there.

I'll go bring it in and add it to my flock. And that would be an evangelism picture. This is not evangelism.

This is us. Some area of our life, not not our whole life, but some area of life. Maybe it's just when we get on the Internet.

Maybe it's just when we rent a movie. Maybe it's just when we get in a conversation with certain people. Maybe it's just when a certain topic comes up.

Maybe it's just when you fill in the blank. Some certain area of life. All of a sudden we are the sheep that squeezed through the fence and is out hanging by a limb over the cliff.

Did you ever hear the whiff and poof song? Well, if you ever get a chance, you should hear it. The only reason I know that song is that our school song at Sequoia High School was to the tune of the whiff and poof song. And the whiff and poof song says, we are poor little sheep who have lost our way.

Bah, bah, bah. And it's it's a pathetic tune, but it was our school song tune. But this is what the sheep says.

When he's hanging out there, he's lost. He's helpless. Well, it's his own fault.

He's the one that squeezed through the fence, got out the gate, and the shepherd graciously goes out, puts him on his shoulders and brings him back in. What is the point of that parable? Jesus says there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who changes his mind than over ninety nine righteous who need no change of mind. Now, this was a real puzzle to me for years.

Should I go sin and be a prodigal son and waste my inheritance on righteous living and eat pig slop and then come back because God will like me better than if I just stay faithful the whole time? Should I just go live it up for a while and then come back and be the sinner that repented? Because the parable says there's more joy in heaven over one that repents than over ninety nine that never needed any repentance. So why should I be a straight arrow? Why don't I go sow some wild oats and get drunk and carouse and do a bunch of stuff and then come back? I'll have a good time and God will like me even better. Well, this is obviously seriously flawed logic.

A, you will not have a good time doing that. And B, it's not the point of the parable. The point of the parable is the ninety nine who need no repentance are not looking at themselves in their own judgment.

They say, hey, I believe I'll stand on the street corner, watch people nod and bow and scrape and acknowledge my righteousness because I don't need in other words, who of us needs no change of mind? Everyone who says every area of my life is completely squared away, I am mature, I am sin free, I make right decisions, I am a model. God is going to write a whole book with my name on it in the Third Testament about the way to live human life because I have got it all figured out. Well, it's ridiculous.

So guess what? All of us need change of mind. So there is more rejoicing in heaven over someone who recognizes that they need a change of mind and changes their mind than over ninety nine people who refuse to believe they need any change of mind. And walk on in their self-righteousness, there's no joy in heaven over that.

God delights in bringing us back to his own image, the image in which we were originally created before the fall. So point four, our afflictions are beneficial in turning us to God and giving us the opportunity to be the occasion for joy in heaven. Deuteronomy, you

wouldn't think this would come from Deuteronomy, would you? Deuteronomy, chapter four, verse 30 and 31.

When you are in distress and all these disciplinary measures have come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and listen to his voice. For the Lord your God is a compassionate God. He will not fail you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant with your fathers, which he swore to them.

So if you search for him, if you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you search for him with all your heart and all your soul. That's what it says in Deuteronomy 4, 29. So it turns us to God.

Nehemiah, you remember the story of Nehemiah coming back from the Babylonian captivity, Nehemiah, chapter one, verse eight and nine. Remember the word which you commanded your servant Moses saying, if you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples. But if you, this is Nehemiah praying to God, reminding God of his promise.

But God said, if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and I will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause my name to dwell. They are your servants and your people whom you redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand, O Lord, I beseech you, may your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant. So that was Nehemiah's desire to fulfill God's commission.

You have the same thing in Psalm 78, verse 34, when God killed them, then they sought him and they returned and searched diligently for God. And they remembered that God was their rock and the most high God, their redeemer. Sometimes God has to just practically kill us.

Do you ever have your parents tell you that when you were little? I'm going to kill you. Well, they don't mean that literally, but you can wish you were dead. When he killed them, then they sought him.

Obviously, the ones that actually died weren't able to seek him. But the idea is in the nation, when some of them were killed, the rest of the nation woke up and said, we better pay attention to our God if we don't want the ground opening and swallowing us up. Well, you can also find this in Isaiah, chapter 10, verse 20, and in Hosea, chapter 2, verses 6 and 7. Isaiah 10, 20 and Hosea 2, 6 and 7. We don't have time to turn there.

We'll never get through all of these. Now, of course, they tell you in seminary, never say that. We'll never get through all of these or next and go through this endless list because people just glaze over.

Well, don't glaze over because this is important. Can you let me ask you this? I've got 10

more points here on why suffering is beneficial. Can you think of any? Just give yourself a little mental test.

I'll give you a moment of silence here. Can you think of a way that suffering could be beneficial that we haven't covered in our first five points? We're already covered reflecting the glory of God. We covered showing the power and faithfulness of God.

We showed teaching us the will of God. We showed that it can turn us to God. So what else can it do? I ask you just mentally catalog a point or two there.

OK, time's up. Number five, it can keep us from again departing from God. Preventative, right? Once you get your knuckles wrapped, you say, I don't believe I will go down that road again.

This kind of goes without saying, but you'll find it in Job 34, verse 31 and 32. You find this also in Isaiah 10 and verse 20. And this time I will go there since it's sort of a double duty passage.

In that day, the remnant of Israel and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped will never again rely on the one who struck them. This is when they went to human resources for help and it failed them. Remember when they wanted to go down to Egypt for help? They will never again rely on the one who struck them, but they will truly rely on the Lord, the holy one of Israel.

A remnant will return. The remnant of Jacob to the almighty God. Though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, only a remnant within them will return.

This is an Old Testament expression of narrow is the way and straight is the gate that leads to life and few there be that find it. Big people of Israel, they're all redeemed. They're all the people of God, but only a remnant is going to enjoy the blessings of close relationship to God.

Because destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness. Isn't that an odd verse? That's Isaiah 10, verse 22. Though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, only a remnant within them will return.

A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness. You also had Ezekiel 14, verses 10 and 11 in this regard. Ezekiel 14, 10 says they will bear the punishment of their iniquity as the iniquity of the inquirer is.

So the iniquity of the prophet will be so that the house of Israel may no longer stray from me and no longer defile themselves with all their transgressions. So did you catch that? They will bear the punishment of their iniquity so that they will no longer stray from me. Preventative, thus they will be my people and I shall be their God declares the Lord God.

What else can our afflictions do for us? My hope is that sometime in the near future, in the next round of affliction, you'll think about coming back to this list and go down through and say, well, here are some things to give me hope. Here are some positive things that may come out of my current tribulation. The sixth one is it leads us to seek God in prayer.

We suddenly become very motivated to pray when the chips are down, don't we? I remember once when we had some kind of a problem with a car. It was at night. Patty was there and we had Elizabeth as a baby, just a few months old, and it was a dead dark middle of the night on an abandoned stretch of, I mean, a uninhabited stretch of highway.

It wasn't abandoned. There were cars whizzing by, big trucks every few seconds going by, and I had to get out and try to do something to her Nissan pickup. And it was a situation where I had to leave and get a tire, get gas.

I don't remember now what it was, but I had to leave Patty and the baby in the truck on the side of the road while I went for help. This was before cell phones. Well, you go to the Lord in prayer.

You say, Lord, please don't let some half sleepy truck driver plow into that little pickup truck and send my family into the next life before I get back. And she's praying the same thing, that I won't get hit as a pedestrian on this, you know, who's expecting somebody out in that part of that. We all have this.

We're motivated to pray in times of stress. Judges chapter four and verse three, Jeremiah 31, 18. Jeremiah 31, 18 says, I have surely heard Ephraim grieving, saying, You have chastised me and I was chastised like an untrained calf.

Bring me back that I may be restored for you are the Lord my God. For after I turned back, I repented. And after I was instructed, I smote on my thigh.

You know, we smite ourselves in the forehead, which basically means the same thing. You've ever seen somebody smack their leg and say, so stupid. We it's like I could have had a V8.

That's what we do. I smote on my thigh. I was ashamed and also humiliated because I bore the reproach of my youth.

I made the kind of mistake that people make when they're young and foolish. Other passages you can look at when you get a chance are Lamentations 2, 17 through 19. Hosea 5, 14 and 15.

Let me give you the Hosea 5 right quick. That's a good one. I will be like a lion to Ephraim and like a young lion to the house of Judah.

Is this a good thing? If somebody is a lion to you, well, I even I will tear to pieces and go away. I will carry away and there will be none to deliver. This would have been a good scripture for old Roy out there in Las Vegas when his little white tiger dragged him off.

I will carry away and there will be none to deliver. I will go away and return to my place until verse 15, they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face in their affliction. They will earnestly seek me.

So it motivates us to return to God, to seek him in prayer. And you can also put Jonah chapter two in verse one. This is, of course, Jonah in the belly of the fish saying, Lord, here I am.

I've got seaweed wrapped around my head down at the gates of Sheol. Sure would be nice if you had it in your heart to spare me. Number seven, it convinces us of sin.

If there is sin, again, we don't always suffer for sin, but if there is sin in our life, it brings it to our attention. Job chapter 36, verse eight and nine, Psalm 119, 67, Psalm 119, 67 says, Before I was afflicted, I went astray. But now I keep your word.

I have been afflicted, I don't go astray anymore. Convinces us of sin and, of course, Luke 15, verses 16 through 18. Luke 15, 16 says he would have gladly filled his stomach.

This is the prodigal son with the pods that the swine were eating and no one was giving anything to him. When he came to his senses, he said, How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread? I am dying here with hunger. I will get up and go to my father and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight.

Sometimes we have to hit bottom and hit it hard before we recognize that we are in a situation of our own making. It is sin and we need to change our mind. Well, number eight, affliction will lead us not only to be convinced of our sin, but to acknowledge it before God, to confess it.

Numbers chapter 21 and verse seven, the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned because we have spoken against the Lord and you intercede with the Lord that he may remove the serpents from us. Remember this story, Psalm 32 5, I acknowledge my sin to you and my iniquity, I did not hide. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to you any time when you may be found. Surely in a flood of great waters, they will not reach him. You are my hiding place.

You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go.

I will counsel you with my eye upon you. It's a great passage also with that Psalm 51

verses three through five. Number nine, affliction tests and brings forth our genuine motivation.

Everybody's motivated when things are easy. Who is still motivated when things are hard? Who has a sincere faith? Who has an enduring faith that survives opposition, that survives resistance? Job 23, find a lot of these in Job, Job 23 verse 10. He knows the way I take when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

My foot has held fast to his path. I have kept his way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the command of his lips.

I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. How many of us can say that? I have treasured his word more than my necessary food. Psalm 66 and verse 10, Psalm 66, 10.

You have tried us, oh God, you have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net. You laid an oppressive burden upon our loins.

You made men ride over our heads. We went through fire and through water, yet you brought us out into a place of abundance. I shall come into your house with burnt offerings.

I shall pay you my vows, which my lips uttered and that my mouth spoke when I was in distress. I will offer you burnt offerings of fat beasts with the smoke of rams. I shall make an offering of bulls with male goats.

We appreciate the Lord God because of his faithful mercies to us in times of trial. You can also put Proverbs 17 3 with that number 10 afflictions. Try our faith and our obedience.

It's not just our motivation, but also will we be faithful? Will we be obedient? Genesis 22, a very well remembered passage with God testing Abram by saying, take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, go to the land of Moriah. Offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you. Hebrews chapter 11, verse 17, Hebrews 11, of course, being the great faith chapter by faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son.

He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which also he received him back by way of a of a type of an example. You can put Exodus 15, 23 through 25, we just went through that in our Sunday studies, Deuteronomy 8, verse 2 and 16, first Peter chapter one and verse seven. First Peter, of course, is the great suffering treatise.

Peter says so that the proof of your faith being much more precious than gold, which is

perishable, even though tested by fire may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. It may be invisible now, but it will be revealed then. And then Revelation chapter two and verse 10, letters to the seven churches.

We also did that recently. Number 11, affliction humbles us. Probably the most easily remembered example of that is Paul in second Corinthians 12 and verse seven, Deuteronomy 8, 3 through 16, second Chronicles 7, 13 and 14, Lamentations 3, 19 and 20.

Do we really need documentation for this? Affliction takes the wind out of our sails, doesn't it? It lets the air out of our overinflated balloon. And it is a necessary balance for times of blessing, times of prosperity, times of success to remember that we have been humbled. We have been bowed down.

The Lord Jesus himself learned obedience through suffering and he is able to relate to us. We do not have a high priest who is unable to understand what we're going through. He has gone through it.

He was humbled. And because of that, he is uniquely qualified to be our mediator. Point 12, 12th benefit of affliction.

It purifies us. We've already seen these refining passages such as Jeremiah chapter nine, verses six and seven. You can put with that Malachi 3, 2 and 3, Zechariah 13, 9, Isaiah 1, 25 and 26, Ecclesiastes 7, 2 and 3. 13th reason, it exercises our patience.

We have need of patience so that we can inherit the promises. Romans chapter five, verse three, we exult in our tribulations knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance. Perseverance, proven character and proven character, hope and hope does not disappoint because the love of God is poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has given to us.

You can put with that Psalm 40 and verse one, James chapter one and verse three. We've visited James chapter one many times, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have its perfect result so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. In order to be mature and complete and lack nothing, we need to endure the testing of our faith.

It is worth it. And then finally, first Peter chapter two and verse 20. First Peter 2, 20 says, what credit is there if when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it and patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

That's what we have exemplified in Stephen. 14, it renders us fruitful in good works. Hebrews chapter 12, verses 10 and 11, they disciplined us, our earthly fathers, for a short time as it seemed best to them.

But God disciplines us for our good so that we may share his holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful. Yet to those who have been trained by it, notice whom the Lord loves he chastens and he scourges every son that he receives.

But not every son is trained by it. Some don't benefit from the discipline, but to those who are trained by it, afterward, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the feeble knees, make straight paths for your feet so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

We pick our paths. If you've got a weak knee, don't walk crooked paths. If you know you have an area of weakness and slipping into gossip and conversation, then stay out of conversations and stay out of groups and stay out of situations where that tends to happen.

Men in the ministry, it's an astonishing thing. I've told you this before. The statistics are shocking of men in ministry who have a pornography problem.

Well, if you have a pornography problem, then don't let yourself get in situations where you're going to be tempted by pornography. There was a guy who gave his testimony down at Chapel at Seminary one time talking about the fact that he had a pornography problem. He used to go to adult bookstores and things, and he was taking away home that took him by one of these stores.

Well, inevitably, he would pull in the parking lot, go in and get magazines and various things, and it wasn't even the most direct way home. He was not making a straight path for his feet. Don't let the situation arise that is going to put stress on your weak knee.

Make straight paths for your feet so that the limb which is lame will not be put out of joint. If you find that you have an area of weakness, and this is usually mental attitude sin or sin of the tongue, then stay out of those places. Don't go down a crooked path and then wonder why your knee gives out.

Finally, the good news is furthered. It is the occasion for testimony to others. Acts chapter eight, verses three and four.

Come back now to our passage. You can put with this, by the way, Acts 11, 19 through 21. Philippians chapter one, verse 12, 2 Timothy 2, 9 and 10 and 2 Timothy 4, 16 and 17.

Normally we would look all these up, but I am anxious to finish. So return to the first of those passages for point 15, which is Acts chapter eight, which is our passage. And what is the result of the persecution that Saul inflicts on the church? People are scattered.

And what do they do once they're scattered? They went about preaching the word. A whole new audience beyond Jerusalem, throughout Samaria and beyond, starts to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. This is exactly like going out in your lawn and seeing that

a half a dozen dandelions have sprung up overnight and they got those little white fuzzy, float in the air seeds.

So what do you do? Blast the dandelions and you whack them and you say, get out of here. And you, and what do you do? You start knocking those down and the little seeds just float everywhere. I had my lawn completely free of dandelions and my neighbor had them over there and went and mowed his lawn and all of the little white things descended upon my lawn and I had to do the whole thing over again.

Well, this is what God does. God, it was an unhandy situation for people that had to leave Jerusalem under duress and lost their goods and were oppressed and it was an affliction. But wherever God scattered them, that is a point of contact for a whole new group of people to hear about Jesus Christ and hear about the truth of God.

And as Saul and these others try to stamp out Christianity and they mash and everybody spreads, that spreads Christianity. It spreads the good news of Jesus Christ and it works out to the glory of God. So this is what we're going to see in the remaining chapters of Acts is that this persecution is used by God to work a great work.

Fifteen different benefits that we have listed here for affliction and yet the first time we feel the pinch and the sting of affliction, we immediately want to stop it. We want it to go away. As we grow and as we get a little bit further along in the faith, our first reaction will not be, you know how a little child is, any pain, any discomfort and there's an immediate, well, we must stop this right away.

I'm hungry. I'm going to wail and scream and holler. I can't take this discomfort.

My diaper is wet. I'm going to scream and wail. I can't take this discomfort.

I'm bored. I'm going to scream and wail. I can't take this discomfort.

Babies will cry about any little thing, any discomfort. As we grow and mature, we learn that some discomfort is actually good. Yes, I have to cram myself in a car for half an hour, but I get to go home from work.

So even though I have to fight through traffic and it's frustrating, it's worth it because I accomplish a great goal in getting back with my family. Thousands of examples you can think of. We need this viewpoint in our spiritual life.

Yes, there is pressure. Yes, there is affliction. No, it's not pleasant.

But as we grow, we will begin to look beyond that affliction to these 15 different areas of benefit. We will say God is using this. God designed this.

God allowed this. God programmed this into the path of my life before Adam was created, before the foundation of the world. He looked down the corridors of time and he

said, in this year and in this city and in this family and in this circumstance, I'm going to put my son, my daughter, and I'm going to use this for these 15 different reasons in the life of this individual.

If they will just trust me and recognize that I have destined this for a good purpose, if they'll be patient. Look at Job. You know, he's the truism.

He's the first example everyone thinks of. But you look at Lazarus, you look at Job, you look at others. Joseph suffered and are forever recorded in Scripture.

We can be the same. We can reflect an equal amount of God's glory in our normal everyday life. Well, we must stop here.

We'll pick up in Chapter 8 and see the ministry of Philip next time. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for demonstrating and illustrating and teaching in so many different ways the truth of your love and your watch care over us and your desire for us to grow and be conformed to the image of your dear son.

We pray that our study tonight will contribute toward that taking place in each one of our lives. We pray that as a result, we will grow in grace and knowledge and we will be fruitful in your plan and in your purpose. We pray it in Jesus name.

Amen.