

Fear of Failure

by Andy Brink

Andy Brink's sermon addresses the fear of failure by emphasizing the importance of trusting God's guidance and understanding His loving nature as a Father.

Duration: 49:58

Scripture: Matthew 7:7, Luke 19:20

Topics: "Failure"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses a parable about a man who did nothing with what he had because he was afraid of his master. The master in the parable is portrayed as an exacting and harsh figure. The preacher emphasizes the importance of waiting for God's guidance and not allowing others to control our decisions. He also encourages the audience to learn to distinguish God's voice among all others. The sermon includes personal anecdotes and references to Bible verses such as Luke 19:20 and James 4.

Transcript

...anywhere near that. He said, if you want to know the fast I want, stop pointing the finger. Stop being the one that's critical of everybody else.

You go about and do good. Give your life away. Serve the needs of those around you.

Set your heart to please me. Walk what you know to walk. Stop looking at everybody else.

Judge not, lest you be judged. Matthew chapter 7. We're going to start in the next portion of it. Starting in verse 7. Ask and it shall be given to you.

Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.

For what man is there among you when his son shall ask for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he will ask for a fish, he will give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father, who is in heaven, give what is good to those who ask him? Therefore however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the law and the prophets. So we come into this part, and you know what? If you've been around the church long enough, this area is quoted often. To get things that you want.

Ask and it shall be given. Knock and the door will be opened. Seek and you shall find.

Let me tell you guys, we're going to look at scripture. We're going to see. You better be careful what you ask for.

Now, before we do that, as he talks about asking, seeking, and knocking, he goes back to this one place that he mentions all the way through, Matthew 5, 6, and 7. And that's the heart of a father. He says, listen, if you then, being evil, that means born in sin, having a selfish heart, know how to give good gifts to your children. You want to do right toward them.

How much more will your heavenly Father give what is good? But a lot of us, our perspective of a father is difficult because of where we've grown up. Listen, a lot of people, their father has beat them, abused them. Their face is always angry and hard.

And so that becomes our perspective of God when we come to Him. That He's an angry God. That somehow if I just do one thing, I'm going to be disapproving.

If somehow I fail in an area, there's going to be this stick, this scrap, this discipline. And there's no understanding of this heart of God that's filled with love. And yet, it's not this mushy kind of love without discipline.

It's not this soft, sinful love. It's a righteous love. It's one that knows our best.

And it is always seeking that which is good. Look with me in 1 Kings chapter 22. It's right after Samuel, before Psalms, 1 Kings chapter 22.

Ask and it shall be given. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you.

How many of us have, looking back, you've asked for things and begged God for things. And then looking back years later, very grateful that He didn't give you what it was you thought you wanted. I know in my life, when I first got out of high school, I moved to Texas.

I'm from Texas, but my parents were divorced when I was four. My mom and I moved to Florida when I was five. And so I ended up moving back to Texas after high school.

And I met this young lady. And I mean, I tell you, it was bells and whistles. And everybody that knew me said, man, that girl, you need to go out with her.

And she's got a great family and all this kind of stuff. And so over a period, a couple of years, I finally had asked her to marry me. And man, we began to move forward.

And I can't even explain to you. It was one of those things where all of a sudden, it just starts falling apart. And you keep trying to fix it.

You keep trying to put it together. You keep trying to do all the things to make it all work. And every time you think you got it working, it falls apart again.

And there was a period of three years there after we talked about marriage, just this struggle, this falling apart and trying to come back. I can't tell you guys the prayers of my heart. God, write my name upon her heart.

I know this is the one for me. Man, everything about it just seems right. And I remember one day, we were supposed to do something and somehow she broke it all up again and did something.

And I just remember being brokenhearted. I got away from everybody when I was all by myself and you can just kind of be yourself and let those water streams just kind of fall that nobody else is allowed to see. And I remember thinking, I can't go on like this.

And there was this still small voice from deep within. And it said, Andy, when you're willing to say, not my will but yours be done, I'll help you pass this place. I'll help you get through this situation.

What he was saying is, Andy, when you're willing to let go of control, when you're willing to turn it loose. And see guys, I couldn't look from that point. I think I was about 20 years old.

I couldn't look 10 years into the future. All I knew is where I was at at that moment and this seemed perfect. This has to be it.

This is the right thing. And God knew it wasn't. And he wasn't letting it work.

And listen, I can't tell you how often I got mad at God about the whole situation. But I'm going to tell you what, 10 years down the road when I met my wife, Rebecca, and I can't explain it to you but it was like I knew the Lord said to me, this is your wife. And I'm going to tell you guys, it's not easy being married to me.

We've got six children. I travel Tuesday, Wednesday, go on Thursday. I travel during the weekends.

I do all kinds of stuff. But I've got a wife that supports me. That's there for me.

God knew I didn't. And many times the things that we fuss and fight and get offended at God about, he says if you just trust me, I'm trying to lead you in the right direction. Anybody got offended at God? Maybe you didn't make parole.

And you thought, God, I've done everything I'm supposed to do. I've showed up at church service. I've been a part of Bible studies.

I've got seven certificates on the wall about all the Bible things I've passed. Surely if you were real, I should have gone out at this moment. But God knows.

And if you'll trust him, there will be that time. And when you look back from that moment, he will say, you'll be able to say with him, God, now I can see that I'm ready. I couldn't see the things that were necessary that had to be worked into my life.

First Kings chapter 22. We're gonna start in verse 5. Now let me tell you what's happening before we start. King Asa was going into battle against this foreign nation.

And he comes alongside. King Asa is over Israel and he comes to the king of Judah, King Jehoshaphat. And he wants him to join with him in this battle to fight against this foreign country.

We come to verse 5 and it says, Moreover Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, Please inquire first of the word of the Lord. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together and 400 men and said to them, Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to battle or shall I refrain? And they said, Go up, for the Lord will give it

into your hands, O king. But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not yet a prophet of the Lord here that we may inquire of him? And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.

He is Micaiah, the son of Imlah. But Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. All right, so here's the story that begins to take place.

All of a sudden, King Jehoshaphat, they're about to go into battle, and he said, Let us stop, and as good as this may seem, let's ask for a word from God. Let's seek his direction. How many of us have gotten in a situation where everything seems right, let's just move forward, and all of a sudden there's that, All right, maybe we should just pray about this first, you know.

You've got the plan all figured out, and then all of a sudden somebody says, Well, maybe we should give that little token prayer. Maybe we should ask God. And so they begin to stop for a moment.

And this King Asa, and it says, Jehoshaphat was asking for a word from the Lord. So he calls all these prophets, 400 men, and they're supposed to give forth a word from the Lord, and they're all saying the same thing. Go forward, go forward, you can do it, you can do it.

And Jehoshaphat had this uneasy feeling. Something didn't seem right. I'm going to tell you, just because a lot of good people say something doesn't necessarily make it right.

And God wants you to learn to distinguish His voice amongst all others. I'm going to tell you, I've been in situations like that. How many of you remember, I remember, listen, just after I had first come to the Lord, I was just in high school, and there was a TV show on at the time called, I think it was called Praise the Lord or something, but it was with Jim and Tammy Baker.

She was one of the first ones with the big style and all of that. Listen, I used to sit in front of that and watch that. And you know what, they had good speakers on there and I would pick up things, I'd learn through it.

But then there came a point somewhere in the middle, listen, I didn't know a second from come here. I was new in my walk with the Lord. I was just young, I hadn't been anywhere.

But I remember they came up with these bumper stickers called, Enough is Enough. See, basically the IRS was beginning to press on them because they were living this incredible lifestyle off the backs of people. And they were saying, we're not going to take this anymore.

Everybody rise up with us. And a lot of people I knew were all into that. Yeah, they shouldn't be doing this.

They shouldn't be doing that. There's nothing wrong. I couldn't explain it and I didn't stand up on any soap boxes.

I just remember my heart, because I remember just as a kid thinking, if everything's right, it ought to be out in the light. What do we have to fight about if everything's being done right? And I just kept my mouth shut, but I walked away from it. I just stopped listening.

I didn't know the Lord was trying to tell me something. He was giving me discernment. He was showing me something.

And then all of a sudden when everything came out to light and everybody just went, oh my goodness. And I'm going to tell you, sometimes you can have 400 people stand up and say, thus saith the Lord, and that does not necessarily mean that's what God's saying. That does not necessarily mean God's condoning something.

Jehoshaphat said in his heart, there's something that doesn't seem right about this. Is there anybody else that speaks for God? Do you remember, and again, I'm not, I really am not, I'm not throwing stones. I'm just using an example that was public.

I can remember another teacher I used to really listen to for a season, Jimmy Swagger. I remember him walking back and forth, and man, he'd say things and you'd just go, wow, how does he get away with saying that? Man, yeah, go for it. And then I remember there came a time where I couldn't explain it as a kid.

Now I was in my 20s. But something in my heart just seemed arrogant. It went from learning things to all of a sudden I said, something doesn't seem right about this.

And I can remember people being at people's houses. They'd flip it on. Oh, let's watch him.

And I just knew something's not right. I didn't know anything. But just like Jehoshaphat, there was something in my heart that said, something doesn't feel right about this.

Guys, you ever been in a situation where you've been sitting in church and somebody's up there teaching and something goes, something just doesn't seem right about this. What they're saying doesn't sound, I don't know anything. Listen, I don't have a theology degree, but something doesn't sound right.

Listen, guys, that's God trying to say things to you. And if you don't get it, and if you're not sure what somebody's, listen, if you're listening to me and something just doesn't seem right, and you might say in your head, well, you know what, I've been, Andy's been coming in this place for 18 years. Surely he couldn't be wrong.

You better take it and set it on a shelf. And you better say, God, I'm going to wait until you confirm that to my heart. I'm not going to believe it just because he said it.

And I'm going to tell you what, this is what we don't believe. God is for you. And if you'll listen to him, he'll talk to you.

And you may not know it, you may not be able to define it like that at the moment, but there's not a big Jesus and a little Jesus. There's not a Jesus that comes out and hangs up with me because I'm teaching the Word and one that's a little bit more distant from you because you're down there. No, he'll talk to you if you listen to him.

He'll put that uneasy feeling in there. Jehoshaphat had an uneasy feeling. Listen, Jehoshaphat was king over a smaller portion.

Asa was king over a bigger portion. But Jehoshaphat said, I'm not going forward yet. It doesn't matter to me what these 400 men have said.

Something's not right. Now I'm going to tell you one other thing. Sometimes God will cause the people that you respect in regard to the things of the Lord, not to hear what it is he's speaking to your life in order to

test you to see whether you're following man or God.

Now listen, the scripture says there's wisdom, there's safety in an abundance of counselors. Let me tell you what I'm not saying. I'm not talking about the rebel of heart that's just going to do what he wants to do.

God says the rebel of heart, there's going to be a tormentor that follows him. And I'll tell you what, if we look back, all of us, at the rebellion of our life, there's been a tormentor that has followed us all the days of our life, that's destroyed us. God will not bless rebellion.

But I'm going to tell you guys, listen, it doesn't mean just because you disagree with somebody it's rebellion. And I can remember Joyce Green. Many of y'all remember her.

She used to run Be Fruitful Multiply before she passed away about five years ago. When my wife and I got married, she let us live in her cottage for free. That's how we got started.

Listen, I didn't have two nickels to rub together. And I'd just get out there and mow her yard and do all the things I could think of just to show my gratitude. She was a very important part of my life.

She was a mentor in my life. She was one of the few people that invited me into things and let me be a part of what it was she was doing. But I can remember we had our first child and then we had our second child and we lived in this little 700 foot cottage and our bedroom was now in the living room and the kitchen.

It was all there together. It was time to move on. It was getting too tight in there.

And so I started looking for a house and we had this place. We looked at 11 different places and there was this one house I wanted to see. It was on the bottom.

And we'd seen 10 different places and I can remember the realtor said, we were all exhausted and he said, there's one more house that y'all have down here and it's 15 miles outside of town. He said, do y'all really want to go see that? And my wife said, well, I'm kind of tired and I said, yes, I want to see that. That was the only one I picked out.

And I remember we drove all the way out here and I had to hear about how tired everybody was. And I remember, guys, the moment we got into that driveway, I knew this was our house. And I said to my wife, I said, this is it.

She said, be quiet. Be quiet. You're not supposed to be that easy.

Just don't say anything. And that was the house we ended up getting but I remember I went to Joyce and I showed her this house. We took her out there and I was ready for her to give her a little stamp of approval.

You know what she said? She said, you're missing God. I said, why's that? She said, and she went through the whole thing with it. She said, you're 15 miles outside of town.

You're going to be going into the prisons. You're going to be at church in Palestine and your family's going to be all the way out there. You're going to get tired of driving back and forth.

It's going to become a weight to you, a yoke to you. You're never going to want to be out there. You're going to be sorry you did this.

This is somebody who represents the Lord to me. Somebody I respected. Somebody that's been a part of my life.

Now listen guys, I wrestled with it and I took it to my wife and I said, well this is what she says and everything she said made sense but I knew this. I can't explain it to you. I knew in my heart this is the place I'm supposed to live and I'm going to tell you, listen guys, I know this about me.

I want to listen to the instruction of others. If somebody's got something to say to me, I want to listen and I tried to hear her out. Every problem she had with it and I tried to really think about it but I also know this.

Nobody else is going to stand before God in relationship to me but me. Listen, I'm not going to stand before God with you and I'm going to tell you what, every day of, every one of us is going to have a day of reckoning. We are all going to meet our creator and you can't say, well, you know, Joyce told me this and she said that and he's going to say, I was trying to talk to you.

Now sometimes God, listen, I'm going to tell you, our neighbors got saved and it ended up being the focal point. People all came out to our house. I knew it was the Lord.

I'm going to tell you guys, listen, I could get offended at Joyce and I could say, she doesn't hear. No, God caused her to not be able to see or hear what it was I was seeing and hearing for this reason. Andy, you've got to follow me.

You can respect people and what I mean by respect, that means genuinely listen to their concerns. Why do you feel this way? Why do you think I'm making a mistake? And take it to heart. Listen to what they're saying.

But if God doesn't confirm that to your heart, you keep going. But if he does, then you need to stop. He's sending that person into your life to be a check against you.

Do you want to hear? Now here's the other side of it. King Asa, he didn't want to hear. That's the other side of it.

That's that heart of a rebel. King Asa didn't want anybody in his face saying you're going the wrong way. He didn't want any accountability in his life.

That's why he hated this man. And all of a sudden, listen now, here's the story as you read on further. So they send for this guy, Michaela.

I think it's Michaela or Mich... I can't remember everybody's names. Michaela. They send for this guy.

And he comes and he says, King Asa, go into battle. Go do what's in your heart. And he's looking at him and he says, I know you better than that.

I can tell you're not being honest. And he says, you want the truth? He said, before y'all came and got me, I saw a vision. And in this vision, God said, who will go and deceive King Asa? And all of a sudden, this spirit rose up and said, I'll deceive him.

And he went down into the 400 prophets and began to prophesy, go forward. And he said, King Asa, you go forward, it's going to cost you your life. That's what Michaela said.

And you know what King Asa did? He went on forward. Did what he wanted to do. Heard what he wanted to hear.

How many of us have been like that bull moving forward? And you can look back and there were people in your life trying to help you. Trying to say, don't go that direction. Don't spend time with that group.

You need to stay here. Stay the course. There were those involved in your life trying to communicate, trying to speak, but you didn't want to hear.

You didn't want to listen. And that was the heart of King Asa. Look with me in Isaiah chapter 50.

Now, I'm going to tell you, if you can, I mean, if you got your Bible, if there's one passage I'd like you to look at, it's this one, Isaiah 50. Now, there's a handful of scriptures in my life. Now, all of it's important and all of it's a part of my life, but there's certain ones that have checks and stars and underlined and they're colored and they're circled and they're, you can hardly read them.

This is one of them. It's how much this verse has meant to me personally. Isaiah 50, starting at verse 10.

Who is among you that fears the Lord that obeys the voice of his servant that walks in darkness and has no light? Now, stop there. It's got a question mark. Now, think about that for a moment.

Who is among you that fears the Lord that obeys the voice of his servant and yet walks in darkness and has no light? I mean, here he is. There's talking about a man that fears God, that wants to live for him and yet he's walking in a place of darkness. It means there's no instruction.

There's no light. There's no word for him. Everything's dry.

It seems like the heavens are shut. And immediately we always seem to think in our life that must mean somehow I've sinned or God hates me or he doesn't want me or somehow I've done something. And I'm going to tell you guys sometimes that's the truth that in my life when I'm walking through periods of darkness where it seems like there's no word from the Lord, no instruction, I don't have any decisions, the first place I look is my own heart.

God, have I said something? Have I walked contrary to your word? And most of the time we don't have to ask very far. We know. Our conscience knows.

But I'm going to tell you just because you're walking through a valley of deep darkness does not necessarily mean there's sin in your life. And one of the stories God gave us, it's one of the first books written in the Bible, is the book of Job. Remember the story of Job? Satan stood up and said he only follows you and blesses you because you bless him.

And God allowed Satan to test, to sanctify, to purge Job. And all of a sudden Job's family was touched. The loss of his children.

All of a sudden his finances were touched. All of a sudden his health was touched. His wife rose up and said, listen, here you are blessing God and all these things of heaven, just curse him and die.

Does that sound like darkness? But you know the greatest struggle of Job's life was not the loss of his children or his finances or his health. The greatest struggle in Job's life, and this is what the whole book of Job is about, it was the fact that God was silent. Listen, if you were going through great struggle and all of

a sudden you come to church and somebody speaks a word and it says, have hope in God and someone in your heart says, alright God, you're telling me to hold on.

Job had nothing. It seemed like God was quiet during the time of his greatest trial, his greatest sorrow, his greatest stress. God wasn't saying anything.

And then he had three friends that came alongside him and said, Job, it's got to be your fault. You've got to have a problem. You've got to have said something, done something.

And then when Job said, listen, there's nothing in my heart. Guys, God loves you enough that if you ask him, God, is there anything between me and you? Is there a reason? I'm going to tell you what, God's not going to leave you sitting there going, oh, I can't figure it out. If you really want to know, God will say, he'll remind you, the Holy Spirit, your conscience will begin to come up and you'll know if he's not saying anything then you're going to have to trust him.

And see, in Job's life, there were people pointing the finger at him, but he just knew. And if you read the whole book of Job, there's one point where he says, God, let us stand before the court bar of heaven and you argue your case and let me argue my case. Just say something.

Just say something during this time of struggle. Silence. But you know what? Job gave the greatest testament of faith when he said these words.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust him. You know what that means? Though it looks as if God is my adversary, though it seems as if God in all creation has set itself against me to destroy me, yet in this place I'm going to trust you, God. Let's look what he says in Isaiah 50, verse 10.

Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of his servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon his God. Wait. Stay upon God.

Hold fast to him when you feel like everything is falling apart. But then it says in verse 11, Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who encircle yourselves with firebrands, walk in the light of your fire and among the brands that you have set ablaze. This you will have from my hand and you will lie down in torment or sorrow.

What does that mean? Have any of us ever walked through periods of darkness where there seems to be no instruction and you just felt like, you know what, I'm just going to make something happen. I'm just going to move right forward. I'm just going to do what I want to do.

And you look back years later and you thought, I wish I hadn't done that. I wish I hadn't pushed forward. Listen, relationships.

Do you know in that relationship, there was another another relationship I was in before I met Rebecca. I went through ten years of just lonely. Nothing seemed to be happening.

And there was a girl who loved the Lord. And her and I began to spend time together and everybody knew me. They said, Andy, you don't love her.

I can tell it. I can see it. And I remember I was almost 30 and I said, listen, I don't think it works that way.

I think you just pick somebody out and learn to, learn how to love them. They said, oh, please don't do that, Andy. I mean, across the board, every friend in my life said, listen, she's not for you.

Joyce Green, she got involved in that one and she said, Andy, you're going to meet the girl you were supposed to marry and you're going to throw up right there on the spot. And I left that meeting with her and I was talking to somebody else and I said, she just wants me to be single all my life. And I went to go buy a wedding ring and I kept thinking about what she said.

And I remember I sat there and I couldn't do it. Guys, how many times have we just pressed forward? I got to have a woman. It doesn't matter whether she walks with the Lord.

It doesn't matter whether she has some of the same desires and hopes and dreams. And I'm going to tell you what, it's harder to live together when you're not supposed to be together than it is to live by yourself with God. Sometimes a job opportunity, you get out of here and listen, it's across the board.

I see this across the board. You can be walking with God in a year and boy, you're part of Bible study and this and that and then you get out and the first thing you think, I've been in prison 20 years, I got to make money. And you start going getting jobs.

I can get three jobs in one day. I can do this and I can do that. And you start neglecting church.

You start neglecting fellowship. You start neglecting accountability. You're just going to make something happen.

You're going to get out and make money. You're going to fix the world. You're going to fix your family.

And then you look back years later and you realize what you got away from if I just waited, if I'd just been patient. Now, let me tell you, when I say that, guys, you got to hear this. If you can't hear this, then every time you hear something that seems convicting, all you're going to hear is guilt, regret, and shame.

God is not looking over one of our lives saying shame on you. We have all made these same mistakes. The key is learning from them.

Listen, I have been in many positions where I look back and think if I just waited, I wouldn't have to deal with this. And there's nobody, I think, that's more, I don't know if you'd call it bullheaded, but I just move forward. And that's why there's been a lot of areas in my life I've had to look back and say, God, I wish I had waited.

But because of that, I've learned to wait. Somebody wrote me yesterday, a missionary, and they said, this person has told me I've got to make a decision about next year. And if they don't, they're going to fill that place with somebody else.

But I'm really contemplating going to this other spot. And I said, you don't have to make an answer. See, other people want to control because it makes them feel like they get their eggs all in one basket.

You wait till God tells you. And if that job gets filled by somebody else, that's one way of God saying that wasn't where you're supposed to be. If you're supposed to be there, it'll be open.

You wait for Him. You be patient. Guys, we all face these situations, these kind of circumstances.

The key is learning to walk with God in the midst of it. All right, look with me back in Matthew. I'll tell you, look with me.

Time went by quickly. Let's see. Look with me in James chapter 4. Ask and it shall be given.

Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. The first point is sometimes God withholds from us.

He doesn't give us what we're asking for. Not because He hates us, because it's best for us. I know that doesn't fit into the prosperity message real well, but it's the truth.

Verse 1. What is the source of quarrels and conflicts amongst you? Is not the source your pleasures which wage war in your members? I'm gonna tell you guys, every time there's conflict, the problem's not the other person. Why is there quarrels and conflicts in my heart? Usually because I want my way. That's my own pleasures.

Verse 2. You lust and do not have, so you commit murder and you envious and cannot obtain because you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask with the wrong motives that you may spend it on your own pleasures.

Do you know, as a father with my children, I just went and picked up my son. He worked for a week with his grandfather working the rice harvest. Normally, for the last three years, he's been on top of a truck with a shovel in his hand out in the heat, which I'm grateful for.

Boy, he's learned how to work. As that rice is being poured in, I did it for a couple of years, and he puts that rice in that truck with that shovel and smooths everything out. Well, this year, his grandpa had him on a tractor.

It wasn't just a tractor tractor. It was all closed in, had air conditioning and radio. I remember pulling up.

I was going to ride with him. It looked like a grown man in that thing. I remember that little baby.

I'm going to tell you what. Three years ago, he wasn't ready to ride a tractor. Emotionally, experientially, he wasn't ready for that.

He needed to be on top of the truck. And sometimes, guys, your no for right now does not necessarily mean no forever. Listen, ministry.

Some of you God changed my life. I want to be involved with kids. I want to do youth, this, this, that.

God may be saying, okay, but not right now. You've got to walk through some fires. You're going to have to walk through some trials.

You're going to have to be prepared. You're going to have to grow up. That time will come.

Just because it's no now doesn't mean it's not no later. Listen, all this comes back to trust, and this is the main thing, guys. It's becoming convinced of the fact that God is good as a Father.

If you don't believe God's good and that He cares about you, you're going to question everything that happens in your life. I can tell you, in my life, I'm coming more and more to a place where I'm convinced of it, that nothing can come into my life that hasn't been filtered through the hands of a God who loves me,

even suffering. So suffering in my life has a divine purpose.

I may not understand it at the moment, but I know it's working good for me and for those around me. Trust. Look with me in Luke 19.

Now, this is a parable that Jesus is giving, and we're going to look at one particular point of it in verse 20, but basically he says, this master was going on a journey, and he gives each one a certain allotment. He gives to one ten mina, and when he comes back, he requires that ten from him, and the one who had ten made ten more. He gives to one five, and the one who had five, when he came back, had five more.

Well, then we come to this other man who was given one. Luke chapter 19, verse 20. And another came saying, master, behold your mina, which I have given to my cat, put away in a handkerchief, for I was afraid of you because you are an exacting man, you take up what you did not lay down, you reap what you did not sow.

He said to him, by your own words, I will judge you, you worthless slave. Do you know that I am an exacting man taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? Then, why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come back, I would have collected the interest. And he said to the bystanders, take the money and give it to the one who had 10.

Now, right there, I remember hearing a man, he's passed away now, died in a car accident. Anybody ever heard of a preacher named Dave Wilkerson? Dave Wilkerson was, he started Teen Challenge, which has been an outreach to a lot of people trying to get away from drugs and stuff. But I'm going to tell you, Dave Wilkerson was a fiery preacher.

He preached the judgment of God and held fire and brimstone, repent and turn and put the flesh to death and walk with God in sanctification and holiness. But then I remember him sharing a message on the love of God, and he came to this passage. And he said, the Lord told him, David, if all you do is preach the judgment of God, you're giving people a wrong perspective of who I am.

Yes, there is a day of judgment. And yes, everything done in the darkness will be revealed in the light, and those things whispered in the secret place will be one day proclaimed upon the housetop. But he said, the nature of God and everything is born in this heart of love.

This particular man right here in this parable, it says he did nothing with what he had because he was afraid of his master. He had a perception of this master who was out to hit him, one that was against him. If he made one wrong mistake, somehow this master was going to discipline him.

So he did nothing with what it was he had. And guys, some of us in this place are afraid of failing because you're afraid of disappointing people in your life so you don't do anything with what it is God's given you. And some of us, our perspective of God is, what if I do it the wrong way? What if I say the wrong thing? Listen, I'm grateful for ones that when they come in, they say, can I sing a song or can I share testimony? I'll tell you, it takes a lot of courage to get up in front of a lot of people.

What if you say it the wrong way or you don't do it the way everybody wants it? But you know what, the only way you can really move forward in life is when you're not afraid of failing. And I'm going to tell you this, I know this about, I'll give you this one last story in relation to me. I remember when I left high school.

My first semester I went to college. Now guys, when I was in high school, I didn't go to a big school, but I was one of the ones that was chosen as most likely to succeed simply because my dad was an attorney in Houston and everybody knew it. Alright? So I went to college and everybody expected me to do what everybody does, go to college, graduate, go on, get whatever and do whatever and probably be like my dad.

But I went one semester to college and I remember about halfway through it, I just struggled, I wrestled, something didn't seem right about where I was at. And I'm telling you, it was one of those other times, clearly as I'm talking to you, I knew God said it's time for me to leave. And I started telling everybody, I'm leaving school and people say, well where are you going? I say, I didn't know.

And across the board, I can't think of one person that supported me in that. Everybody said, you're making a mistake. And then I got home after the fall break and I was telling everybody, listen, I feel like I'm supposed to come home.

Pastor, Sunday school, everybody that was a part of my life told me I was making a mistake. And one of the people closest to me said, Andy, if you don't go back to school, statistics show that most people will never go back and you won't have a degree and you will become like a bum at a road stop with a squeegee washing windows. I'm going to tell you, at 18 years old, that threw me in a tailspin.

And I remember going into my room, and again it was one of those other times when I got away from people, and those little tears started coming down the side of my eye. And I thought, God, I don't want to make a mistake. It just seems like all the world is hanging on this decision and I don't want to miss it.

I don't want to make a mistake. I don't want to be foolish. And then there was this still small voice once again that came up.

And here's what I heard personally. Andy, if you make a mistake coming after me with all of your heart, I'm not going to do it. I'll get you back on the right path.

If you make a mistake coming after me with all of your heart, I'll get you on the right path. Trust me. Move forward.

Now, guys, what if God's trying to say that to you? He would much rather you take a step, even that place we read in Isaiah 50. If you're trying to please Him, even though you may not do it the right way, you might have zeal in your heart and all those things, you're never going to change if you don't try. Get up and begin to trust Him.

Begin to believe Him. Believe Him for things. He'll teach you.

Don't be afraid of failing. There's not this God in heaven that says, I'm going to crush you if you make a mistake. It's just the opposite.

He said, listen, if you come after me and there's going to be times you step to the right or the left, I'll get you back where you need to be. Trust me. Trust me.

The last passage. Let's look in 2 Corinthians chapter 12. That's where we'll finish.

Ask and ye shall receive. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and ye shall be opened.

Now, one thing I want to mention is that that word ask, seek, and knock, the word actually is a continuation. It means if you will keep asking, keep knocking, keep seeking. Let me ask you this.

If God is a loving God, then why would He ask us to keep seeking, asking, and knocking? If He loves me, if I ask for it, why didn't He just give it to me or say no? Why is there this continuation? Why do I have to keep knocking on the door? One of the reasons is because, guys, our hearts change in the process of the continuing seeking and asking as we walk through things. Back to Sam. There's coming.

Listen. My younger boys, Lord willing, they'll get a chance to work on the rice farm. But you know what? They're not ready to drive a tractor right now.

And over the period of time, even though we may be asking for the same thing. Sometimes I'm trying to find that illustration to make sure I'm making sense. When I first started going to the WIN unit, there was a man that started coming to the Bible study.

His name was Dennis. And he had told me at the very beginning, he said, when I came into prison, my wife left me, divorced me. She took my two girls and they moved to Nebraska.

And he said, I have an address that I'm allowed to write to, but they don't write back. And he wrote, if not every week, every other week, to these two little girls. Ten years later, he would say, God doesn't hear me.

And he would stop coming to Bible study and then he would start coming back. And then he would stop coming sometimes. He would just get so discouraged, but he kept writing.

And I can remember, have you ever been to the WIN unit? It's like a gigantic sanctuary. It's bigger than most churches. I mean, it's got huge ceilings and stuff.

And I can remember, he came through that back door. And I didn't know what, but I knew something was different. And he said, I'm going to read you a letter.

And he walked up to me. This is after a period of ten years. And he had big, watery eyes.

And he handed me this letter. And he didn't even say it. I just knew I was supposed to read it.

And I opened it up in front of him. His daughter now had turned 18. She was about to go to college and she went to a youth camp for the first time.

And at this youth camp, she came to the Lord and got saved. And she wrote her dad. So I was reading that and then I got to the ballpark and she said, Daddy, I want you to know I've received every letter you ever wrote.

And I read every one of them. She said, but I hated you because you weren't there for me. Because you were in prison.

And she said, but Daddy, I want to thank you for writing me. And from this point, I want us to begin to build a relationship. I'm going to tell you, that was ten years of silence and darkness.

There wasn't a grandmother on the scene that said, listen, they're getting it. You just try. No, there was no word at all.

What he thought was no was, trust me, it's not happening right now, but it is happening. There are things going on that you don't know anything about. Trust me.

Second Corinthians, chapter 12, yes, verse 7. And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelation for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in my side. Now, guys, think about that for a moment. Three times.

Acts 31, you've got to visit. Three times. He asked God to remove something from his life.

Sounds like the continuation. Knocking, seeking, asking. And God's word to him was no.

Now, guys, I don't know what that thorn in the flesh, there's a lot of people that debate, maybe it was sickness, maybe it was this, maybe it was that. But my own personal belief is it was temptation. There was an area of his life that reminded him he needed God.

There was an area of his life that brought continual humility to his life. Now, I'm not saying that as he walked in sin. I'm saying there was a place in his life that he wished would go from him.

How many of you have things in your life, guys, or God, how come I'm not past this yet? Andy, why do I keep struggling with this? That temptation may never be something that you do without. It might be the very thing that God uses to keep driving you to the grace of God, to keep in you a humility. I remember telling you all about the monster in my life that brought me to the Lord was the imagination of my mind, the perversion of my thoughts, and the passage that I walked through for years for God renewing and cleansing.

And as I would counsel other people that got to a place where I forgot that I once, too, had fallen and gotten up and fallen and gotten up and fallen and gotten up, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And when I would start counseling other people, I'd say, Jesus, you need to get over this. You do it because you love it.

If you really wanted change, you'd stop it. The only reason you do it is because you want to. And you know what happened in my life? God started letting that wall come down.

Andy, you don't overcome because of you. You overcome because of me. And I've been merciful to all of your fallings, and I've caused you to be able to stand.

Listen, sometimes it's that very temptation that you struggle with that keeps you humble, that keeps you relating. Listen, other people may not have the same struggle you do, but it keeps you relating to other people with mercy and with kindness. And if you don't realize it, you'll become proud.

You'll become arrogant. Ask, and it shall be given. Seek, and ye shall find.

Knock, and it shall be open to you. I hope I've given you a little different perspective. A lot of times we hear that passage, and it just means ask whatever you want, and take it, and get it, and pour it on yourself.

There's a lot more to those passages than just that. Let's pray. Father, we give thanks for this day.

I thank you for how you orchestrated this morning. I thank you for your word, that it brings light to our path. Lord, I pray that if there are men here who are like King Asa, that have just learned, they just move forward.

They don't want to hear the word of the Lord. I pray that you'd just grab a hold of their heart and cause them to listen. Lord, I pray for those that may be in a situation today where it seems like everybody is telling them to go a certain direction, but like Jehoshaphat, there's this uneasiness, this unsurety.

And I just pray you'd cause them to wait upon you, until you speak to their life before they move. Lord, I pray for those that are like that son of Israel, that parable. They perceive you to be harsh and a mean task master.

And they're afraid to move forward in their life. They have nothing to offer, because they won't step out onto the water, out of the boat, and trust you. Lord, I thank you that even though Peter seems like such a failure at times, he was the only one that got picked up.

He was the only one that sank, but he was the only one that walked on the water. He was the only one that got carried back to the boat. Lord, I pray that there are some of those in this room that are like Paul.

They've been asking you and asking you and asking you to remove a certain temptation, a certain struggle from their life, and it doesn't seem like it has gone yet. And yet, that's the very thing that keeps them humble, that keeps them seeking you. Lord, I pray that you'd encourage your people today.

I pray that you'd feed their faith, cause them to grow. I pray that you'd I pray for the families represented in this room today, mothers and fathers and children and girlfriend and relatives and friends. You know the ones that are on the heart of these men.

I pray that today, that those ones that they love would have a sense of your presence, that they would know that somewhere there's somebody praying for them. We thank you for your mercies, your grace, and your provisions. Help us to walk with you with a sensitive heart today.

In Jesus' name, amen. Uncle John will be coming in on Monday, so he'll probably be on the unit this week, and he and Randy Skiles will be with us next Sunday, and Bobby Carson's coming also, so if y'all see him walk in the halls, holler at him. Love y'all.

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