

The Testing of Your Faith (Video)

by Jackie Pullinger

This sermon emphasizes the importance of running the race marked out for each individual, focusing on perseverance and fixing our eyes on Jesus. It encourages not competing with others but ensuring to start and finish the race set before us. The speaker shares stories of challenges faced, the need for patience, and the assurance that God's promises will be fulfilled. The sermon highlights the significance of enduring trials, rejoicing in sufferings, and trusting in God's timing for the harvest.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1, Hebrews 10:36, James 1:2, Romans 5:5, 2 Timothy 4:7, Jeremiah 12:5, John 14:12, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Luke 13:32, Joshua 14:7

Topics: "Perseverance", "Trusting God's Timing"

Description

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Transcript

So we're talking about the long haul. Hebrews 12 verse 1. Since we are surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders us and the sin that so easily entangles us and let us run with perseverance. The race marked out for us.

I think, I believe, that we all have a race which is different from some. We're not in competition with one another, so it's not that. It's have you begun your race and are you going to finish? It says here, run with perseverance.

And it goes on to talk about Jesus and his race, if you like, or his portion. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. Jesus saw what was before him, for the joy set before him, the joy set before him was you and me with him for eternity.

And because he saw the joy set before him, he could endure the cross and scorn its shame. In John 4, he talked about his work on earth. Verse 34, my food, said Jesus, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

Jesus finished and said as he was about to die, it is finished. When his disciples tried to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem, because there are always those that want to dissuade us. For some reason, we have a phrase which has appeared amongst Christians, but it can't be a Christian term, burn out.

It's the wrong words. You cannot burn out if you are running your race with his fuel. You can burn out if you are trying to run someone else's race and doing it without his fuel.

That means that for whichever purpose he has created us, for whatever race it is you are to run and I am to run, we can endure and we can finish. This is what it says in Luke 13. If you've got Bibles, I'm very pleased to see some of you actually got books here.

It's awfully encouraging, because I'm never quite sure if people are messaging when they've got those other things. Luke 13, 32. His disciples are trying to, sorry, the Pharisees say, leave this place and go somewhere else.

Herod wants to kill you and he replied, go tell that fox I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow and on the third day I will reach my goal. He knew what his goal was, it was to die. In any case I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem.

This is on another subject, but there's a difference between vision and goals. You know we live in an age where some people preach you can have what you want, absolutely rubbish. That's called ambition, very dangerous.

Vision comes from the Lord, it's not something that you make up and it's given by him and it means that it will come about, maybe not in your lifetime, but it will come about. The vision Jesus had was us with him in eternity. His goal on earth was to die, different.

And of course it didn't look awfully good when he died. His score was low, 12 disarrayed men and some faithful women. After all the miracles, he hadn't even multiplied his cell group once.

And we live in an age, and I'm so sorry if you're young because it's harder for you, where you think, we think we've got to come up with something to prove our calling. We don't have to come up with anything at all except to run our race and be obedient and love people and heal them and cast out demons along the way. That's it, that's all.

It's very simple. Joshua 14. This is a story about an old man and I thought I would talk about an old man because Mike told me that this morning there are some less young people.

Joshua 14. This is when the people of Israel are finally going to cross over and take the land, the promised land, which has been promised, which they could have entered 40 years previously, but they got stuck because of unbelief. And Joshua, who was with Caleb when the 12 spies had gone out to wreck the land.

Verse 7 of chapter 14. I was 40 years old when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh Baniya to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions.

But my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly. So on that day, Moses swore to me, the land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever.

Because you followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly. One of the things I'm not good at is the immigration queues. And at airports, I have a happy knack of picking the wrong queue.

It's one of my most unhealed areas. I get very annoyed when I've queued and it's not yet me. And they've changed the man.

He's gone off for lunch or something. And my worst of all one was LA airport one day. This was, I got through immigration the quickest, you know, I mean, they have improved in LA.

They no longer look surprised that a plane has arrived. And so, or annoyed, you know, but they're very, they're very not, not, not, not, not welcoming, even though the signs say they are. So I, this was, this was a couple of years back.

I thought I'd done awfully well because I made it to the desk in two minutes. And then this man, he, he insisted on talking to me for a long time. And, and he said, did you know that Prince, uh, uh, Harry's brother, who's Harry's brother? William.

Yeah. Prince, Prince William is going to change his son's name because there've been too many Georges. So they get to call him Ludwig.

And, and I said, really, sorry, this is really off the point. Really? Yeah. And he said, yeah, he was just joking with me, you know, funny.

Anyway. So, you know, after five minutes of this joke, I joined the, the, the, the security queue and I was, you know, I lost all the gain I'd made in the immigration queue. I said, I just never got there.

You know, I don't, I don't know why I just, after half an hour, I got to the immigration queue. I got to the man and he said, he was sending me to the penalty area. So I went into the penalty area and they purposely have nobody, nobody dealing with the penalty people.

I didn't know why it was a penalty people. So, uh, it's on purpose. Eventually I saw some people being looked after.

They'd got huge, huge luggage. You know, I got tiny. I only ever travel with hand baggage and didn't know why I was penalized.

And, and after another, you know, I got to change planes. I was going to miss the next one. You know, finally, after about three quarters of an hour, I got to the man, it was my turn to, to, for him to look at my penalty case.

And he said, oh, you can go. And I said, excuse me, but what was that all about? And he said, oh, your immigration officer forgot to make a tick on your form. So there you are.

I'm not good at picking queues. And I think that there are many of us that think I'm going to miss out on what God's got for me. Someone else is going to get my portion.

You know, just like some people think if I don't go for this man, someone else is going to get him. I mean, that's terrible. What, why would we think we have to lay hold of what God may not have planned for us, though we hope so? This is what the Lord says about Caleb in verse 10.

He has kept me alive for 45 years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the desert. So here I am, 85 years old. No, he didn't speak like that because he said I'm still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out.

I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. Whatever the Lord has made you for, he's not going to give it to somebody else.

It is kept for you, and if you will not do it, I don't believe he hands it round. I believe it is kept for you because you are so important to his plan, and no one else can bring the kingdom in that place for those people except you who are created for that race, that goal, that land, that inheritance, those people. And we're going to pray later for the old that you will be reassured if you thought you'd missed it, that it's kept for you, and you can claim it, and you must.

And I'm going to pray for the young. This is what it says in Jeremiah 12 5. I love this scripture. If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how will you compete with horses? If you have stumbled in safe country, how will you manage by the thickets in the Jordan? It's a great verse.

Look it up. He's actually saying you need training for your race. If you give up because you're worn out, it's Jeremiah 12 5, then you may never get to see all that he's prepared for you.

You may never learn all of the heart that he wants to share with you because you have given up out of weariness, or disappointment. Hebrews 10 36 says, you need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he's promised. Perseverance, very good word.

It's not a word for this generation. And it's hard for this generation because they have a bad time at school or their boyfriend doesn't give them flowers and they send a sad face. Everybody is stroking them instantly.

When people come to join us in Hong Kong, their parents are mad with us if they haven't texted within 10 seconds of landing. It was much easier for me. I made my first phone call home after one year.

I had to book it and take a bus to the telephone station and I could just afford two minutes. My family, they're hopeless on the phone because we had a money box by ours and it was in a cold place deliberately. So I'd say, I said, oh, happy Christmas, daddy.

Oh, happy Christmas, Jackie. I'll give you to mommy. Happy Christmas, Jackie.

I'll give you to Nikki. Happy Christmas, Jackie. I'll give you to Julie.

You know, that was how it went. They all, I'll give you to someone, you know, that was, so it was much easier for me, you see. So much easier because when I left, I left.

And the, when we are to go and preach the gospel, we are to leave. Abraham was to leave. And today it's so hard for young people because they take all their friends with them.

We, we had a, we had a young lady, she won't mind me telling you this story, but she, she was, came from a very well-known Christian family, very famous in, from England. And she arrived and it was everything that she decided was extremely subjective. What is the Lord saying to me? Now I'm the opposite.

I'm objective. What does the Lord say in his word? And then how does this work out for me? Okay. Not yet.

So she had to, you know, do I leave this Wednesday or do I leave in two weeks time? I must pray, you know, and I said, there's a job to do. Could you please decide to do the job and then leave? You know, but anyway, I must pray about it. And I knew what she was doing.

She was checking with her friends on the, on the machine, you know, friends, see how many likeys she got, you know, and I, to myself, I, I said, she's got a Greek chorus. You probably didn't understand that, do you? It's classical, you know, in classical Greek plays, they had a Greek chorus that were always, you know, wailing on the side. And oh, she's gone for the Greek chorus again.

You know, it's very hard when you are, when you are living with the poor. One of the first things the poor always say to visitors is, when are you leaving? In case they're disappointed. One more person has come to look at us and say they've helped us for three weeks or three months or six months.

And you know what? Most of the people who live with us, they, they've been, they've been beaten, they've been sold, they've been raped, they've been abandoned, and they just want family. They want people who will love them and stay with them and not add them to their missionary tally and trips I have made. They, they really, that's, that's what they want to know.

How are you staying? Eventually, this wonderful girl, she, she married one of our men, who was also from Britain. He was helping. And I discovered that, as I was saying to myself, the Greek chorus, there was a Greek chorus.

She and her friends had made a pact that they would consult themselves on everything in Greece, where, where they had villas and things like that, because that's the family they came from. But it's so hard for young people, is it not? When you have to check with your friends, the will of God, likey, not likey, and be prepared perhaps to miss all their weddings. I missed most of my family's weddings.

I, I missed, I missed my mother dying. I missed my father dying. I just wasn't there.

I couldn't, couldn't get back in time. But you think I missed anything? Just a little bit on this earth. But as, as both of them had come to the Lord before they died, what have I missed? I will be with them for eternity.

I don't have to have it all here. You need to persevere. I came up with this little phrase, patience we need.

What's the opposite of patience? You think it's impatience. It's not. The opposite of patience is unbelief.

When I first went to Hong Kong and got, got involved with, well, it's a very long story, but I was, I was in this walled city, and if you think it is brave, it wasn't brave. I really loved it. It was quite easy for me to be there.

So Mike got it wrong. It wasn't 10 acres. It was about six acres with 100,000 people and no electricity when I first got there.

Just later on, they stole electricity from outside. It was left out of the treaty between Britain and China. That's why there was no law.

And although you, there wasn't any law there, there were a lot of corrupt policemen who knew what was going on and used it and got a huge amount of bribe money from the drug dens, which were just outside walled city, where you could see 100 people at a time chasing the dragon, which is a method of inhaling heroin. And it was at that time that they would pile the bodies up of the addicts who died in the night by the only toilet, which was just outside the walled city, no water. You know, so it was one of those awful toilets.

You've got to see if you can go in one breath. But I saw this walled city and the old people, old ladies with needle marks in the back of their hands. That's because the veins in the other places have been used up.

And those old ladies sat on boxes in the street and they were guarding the young girls who were prisoners, the young prostitutes. That's what you must do. If you've been a young prostitute, you don't have insurance plan and you end up guarding when you're older.

But they were all heroin addicts. And then the opium dens and the gambling dens, and then the girls themselves and the boys who joined the gangs. There was no compulsory school in those days, and it wasn't free.

And I looked at all the men just outside the walled city, because it was a squatter area, just as dark, lining up after they'd taken their drugs. And I knew that most of them would be dead within a year. And I remember saying, Dear Lord, it would be worth my whole life if you'd use me to save just one.

And by the way, Lord, I don't need to know who, I'm just asking you if I can be in it. So it wasn't hard for me. I was really happy to be there forever and not see anything.

I didn't understand. I met a lot of depressed missionaries. I didn't write about the depressed missionaries, because I don't want to write negative things.

But they'd mostly just come out of China, because I was there in the 60s. And they'd mostly come out of China. And they said, Oh, there's a dark spiritual cloud over Hong Kong, nobody gets saved.

And they didn't see anything happen. I didn't understand why they would be depressed. Because it says in 1 Corinthians 15:58, I have to look it up.

Oh, yeah, not therefore be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that nothing you do in the Lord's name is in vain. So I was thinking, oh, it doesn't matter. If I never see anything happen, it won't be wasted.

Now you have to believe this. This is what he said. Nothing you do in the name of the Lord is in vain.

And it's hard. If we're growing up in an age which counts, where if somebody's apparently led 1000 people to the Lord, you think they've done better than you. It's not true.

We are only to be obedient to what he's called us to, to heal the sick, to love the poor, to share our food, to open our home to cast out demons along the way, the results are up to him. One sows and one reaps. And he says, I sent you to reap what you have not worked for.

Others have done the hard work and you have reaped the benefits of their labor. There are so many scriptures that teaches that one sows and one reaps them. The one who reaps is not better than the one who sows.

It's the Lord who brings the harvest. So I was happy, you see, to be there and see nothing happen because I knew there'd be a harvest. He said, faint not, there will be a harvest if you faint not.

At the proper time, we will reap a harvest. The problem is we're expecting to reap the harvest of what we've sown, when most of the time we're going to reap the harvest of what someone else has sown. And I find that people get stuck in positions.

I'm just sowing. I'm just sowing. Or nothing's happening here.

I'm going to go to where the harvest is. So they take planes to wherever revival happens to be happening. And I tell you, the poor cannot take planes.

And over the years, I've seen so many people rush off to the latest move of God while people are starving. I tell you, there will be a move of God if you will stay and feed the starving. You take a plane to where revival is happening.

You take a plane and you say, if we pray enough, it'll get to the ends of the earth. It will not get to the ends of the earth until you leg it. That is how the gospel came.

The gospel came, not with a message from heaven, but with a son who came in flesh. There is not a substitute for going and legging it physically and going and serving with your hands physically, because that's what Jesus did for us. And that's what John, that's what Peter, he said, our eyes have seen, our hands have touched.

He dwelt amongst us. That's what they were so excited about, the incarnation of the love of God demonstrated in the person of Jesus Christ, who touched, who healed, who loved, who lifted up those who were cast down. I'm back to Hong Kong saying, dear Lord, if nothing, if I never ever see anything happen, it's fine, because I know there will be a harvest if I faint not.

But at the same time, that was patience. You need to have patience. At the same time, I was impatient.

Now, impatient is quite right, because the promise is from Jesus in John 14, 12, in my name you will do what I have been doing, and even greater. And I said, now, Jesus, I'm not seeing this. I'm happy to live here for the rest of my life and see nothing on one hand, because I know there'll be fruit, even if somebody else gets to see it.

However, dear Lord, I'm impatient to see what you've promised, because if I don't see what you've promised, the people I love now are going to die before they've lived. For their sake, come quickly. Now, this is a good word.

It's called quickening. We hasten the kingdom of God. We hasten the return of the Lord by loving those that have not yet lived, by preaching the gospel with our lives, by feeding them, by sharing our homes with them, by holding them in our arms.

We hasten the coming of the kingdom of God. So I prayed for the power of the Holy Spirit. I spoke in tongues and was unimpressed.

I mean, I was impressed with the miracle, but not impressed with my emotions. I've learned quite a lot about emotions, because we have some Americans living with us. No, no, I'm really not joking.

Where I grew up, we had them, but we didn't know we had them. And we sure didn't know how to explain them. So when I spoke in tongues, my first reaction was, I mean, I was in a terrible place.

I was in a couple's home in Hong Kong, because they told me I needed the Holy Spirit, which I said I'd got already. Anyway, they put their hand on my head, and I was sitting on a plastic black sofa and sweating, because it's very humid country. And I think, oh, God, you know, this is terrible.

I'm never going to speak. And they've got two plates on the table to celebrate when I received. One was oranges, and the other was handkerchiefs for me to cry into.

And I thought, oh, God, we're not going to need either plate. Nothing's happening. And eventually, I spoke in tongues.

And I'm an oboe player, if you know what that is. So I knew this was the Lord, because my tongue went really quick, and that's quite a hard thing to do if you're an oboe player. And but I was embarrassed.

And my reaction was, oh, thank you, Lord, that they were Chinese. I couldn't have done this with the Brits. And anyway, speaking in tongues didn't do anything for me.

And it was a whole year later that I met some Americans who said, Jackie, do you pray in tongues? And I said, no. And they said, why not? And I said, well, I thought everything was going to change. And I just feel silly praying in tongues.

And they said, you're very rude. The scripture says you're going to be built up spiritually. It doesn't say you're going to feel built up spiritually.

So get with it, girl. So I did start to pray in tongues. And this time, it was the first time I prayed differently.

I said, dear Lord, there are these people dying. And I want to speak to this one, and this one, and this one, and this one. That's how I used to pray.

Will you help me? When I was praying in tongues, I did the other way around. I said, dear Lord, you know who you want me to speak to. You know who you've got ready.

Please lead me to the people that you've got ready. And he did. After about six weeks of daily praying in tongues for half an hour, still feeling nothing, I started to meet these gangsters.

Because I'd had a youth club, so I knew them all. And tell them about Jesus, and fall down in the streets weeping. And it was amazing.

And you know, I thought, oh, my Chinese got so good. But I was actually saying the same thing that I'd said before. It's just this time, I'm saying it to the right person.

That's what evangelism is. Do you get it? You can't persuade anybody. The whole job's done by him.

He leads you to somebody he's got ready. You can say tomato ketchup, and they believe in Jesus. And then you cannot be proud.

You just know God did the whole job, and the Holy Spirit led you to the right person. Jesus came and presented himself, and you got your finger on it. I mean, that's what it is.

And by the way, because last night we prayed for the, and we blessed the praying grannies, especially from the black community, the African American community, the faithful prayers. And I found that of all these people that were coming to the Lord, in every single instance that I could trace, there'd been someone else before me. A grandfather, or a grandmother, or a teacher, or someone.

And I was simply, as the scripture says, reaping what someone else had sown. I couldn't be proud, but I was delighted. And then came the Holy Spirit to bring people off drugs.

Miraculously, the first one was somebody who'd been sent to guard me, because my youth club got smashed up. And I won't tell you that long story, but he was sent to guard me after it had been smashed up. It's a very small room, just big enough for a ping pong table.

And they'd painted sewage on the walls and broken the windows. And these were the people that I loved. I'd spent by this time, six years with them.

And I'd got their sisters into schools. I'd paid their gambling debts. I'd looked after their grandmothers, doing what I call normal gospel.

That's what you do anyway. And then they smashed the place up. Anyway, there was a man sent to guard me on that first night after I'd cleaned up.

And he didn't come into the room. The street is just two or three feet wide, you understand. It's dark.

And he stood there and he said, you got any problems? And I said, yeah, I'm fine, thanks. Who are you? And he said, well, Gogo has sent me. And Gogo was the name of the gang leader of the... There were two main gangs in Wall City, 14K and another one called Gengi.

And so he was in charge of about 20,000 people who opium dens and gambling dens and women and protection rackets, not just in Wall City, outside as well. But they could hide in there because they couldn't be arrested. And so he said, Gogo sent me.

And Gogo says, if anyone touches you or touches your place, we're going to do them. And I said, thank you. That's very kind of you.

But please, will you go back to Gogo and tell him I don't accept his offer? Because Jesus is looking after me. And he said, teasing, she's cracked. Because his job in the gang was to fix fights.

And he chose whether it was knives or choppers or bottles or whatever. So anyway, although I refused his offer, I got his protection anyway. And every time I came in or out of the Wall City, there were about 16 entrances.

You wouldn't know it was the entrance to a city. It just looked like a little passage you had to squeeze into. Because they wouldn't let outsiders or people they didn't want inside.

So every time I came in, I got this man's protection. And I knew he was an opium addict. But he didn't know I knew.

And he started to tell me about his friend. And could I help his friend get off opium? And I said, oh, that's really easy. We'll just find a house in the countryside where nobody will hear him screaming.

And preferably, we'll pad it so he won't kill himself when he goes crazy. We'll lock him in. And after three days, we'll let him out.

Because after three days, he'll be off drugs. It just takes 72 hours for the stuff to get out of the bloodstream. Of course, the problem is once you've opened the door, his legs will go straight back to drugs.

Because drugs is not a problem of the body. It's a problem of the heart. So I only know one person who can fix hearts, and that's Jesus.

So I told him about Jesus. And he didn't want to hear. But he was under orders from Gogo.

So he had to take it. So this went on for a few weeks. And then one day, he never came into the youth club.

Then one day, he stood outside. And I said, why don't you come in and praise God? And he said, oh, OK. And he came in, and he started to sing the only song that he knew, Christian song.

Because I used to have meetings, you see, inside. I was the only one that went to the meetings, me and the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. But he'd heard me singing this song, which goes, it's a very old song.

Some of you might know if you're very old. Give me oil in my lamp to keep me burning, which is very good for opium addicts. So he started to sing this song.

Then he started to pray, like I've never heard anyone pray. The Holy Spirit came upon him. He spoke in tongues for half an hour.

And I knew he was off drugs. And I thought, oh, good. That's the end.

Now, all I have to do is go into the drug dens, put my hands on people. You know, the Holy Spirit will come, and they'll be delivered. It doesn't actually work like that.

But I said to him, well, praise God, you know, born again. Keep away from the bad guys, and keep with the good guys. And I'll see you at the Sunday meeting.

It's going to be five of us. And so he came to the Sunday meeting. This was a few days later.

And he said, I really want to praise God, because I was in the opium den the other night, and they offered me free opium. Now, opium den is, they're very small, maybe 100 square feet, with a platform where everything is slimy, because the men lie there, and stuff comes out from every opening in their body, every. And so he said, they offered me free opium, and I really wanted to take it.

And then I remembered, oh, wait a minute. I can't do this. I believe in Jesus now.

So I knelt on the platform, and I sang to them. Give me oil in my lamp to keep me burning. So praise God.

I didn't take, and I said, no, you know, you can't praise God. You're just tempting the Lord. You cannot go into opium den and pray for strength not to take opium.

And he said, I live there. So when he needed a clean shirt, he would put his shirt into the laundry and take one out. There I was saying, just like it says in James, be fed, be clothed, be warmed, go your way.

How can you start a new life with Jesus when your home is an opium den? I tried to find a home for him and could not. All the Christian hostels wanted a month's rent, which neither of us had, and testimony from a pastor and a job. So he didn't have any of that.

So eventually I took him to the place I was living. And then all his friends knocked on the door and said, that's my name. If Jesus got him, his name was a cunning guy.

Now renamed Winston. If Jesus got him off drugs, then I will believe in Jesus. And I will come and live in your house.

Because they all always thought that believing in Jesus and living in my house went together, which I think is true. You understand this is why they come to Jesus, don't you? Because we don't say, we love you. We mean it.

And they know that. This is why the fame of Jesus has gone abroad. And we saw the same miracle, except this time, instead of waiting for the sovereign Holy Spirit to land on someone, we encouraged them to invite Jesus and receive the gift of tongues.

And they would all do that, of course, and then pray in that language to get off drugs. But we would sit with them. We do this for 10 days, every hour of the day.

So that's one man, 60 prayer shifts. And if we take four people off drugs, that's 240. I know you understand numbers here, because you have prayer shifts.

Ours are with people. So there we were, people coming to the Lord and growing up and doing rather well, and then leaving, doing rather well, and then leaving. Yes, it is like that with the poor.

One thing you must never do is to try to identify leaders too soon. It's killing. Cannot.

They're not there for you to shape your future ministry, or run it, or inherit it. They're there to be loved and cared for, and allowed to fail, because they're worth it. Because he died for them, and he died for me, and thought apparently I was.

So it didn't look that good. It didn't look that good, because they came and they went. There was one called Achau.

Oh, I loved Achau. I'd met him and told him about Jesus, and he had received Jesus. He was a gangster from another gang.

I'd met him again in court. It's a long story. When he saw me in court, he had decided to plead guilty, instead of not guilty, which he was going to plead, because he saw me out of the corner of his eye.

It's a long story. Eventually, Achau says he really wants to get off drugs, and he comes to live with us. On day two, he changed his mind.

Now, people do. It's called the old man and the new man. We've learned to listen to the new man, and not to talk to the old man.

Don't expect you to understand this, but he said, now I've decided I don't want to follow Jesus after all. I think I need to leave. So I said, you cannot leave.

We're going to pray in tongues, and you'll be fine. He said, I will not. I'm leaving.

You cannot stop me. I said, I will. You see, I believe when you said you wanted to follow Jesus, that's what I believe.

I don't believe what you're saying now. He said, I will jump. Well, we were living on the seventh floor at that time.

I've rented or borrowed over 300 places over the years to pray people off drugs. This one was on the seventh floor. He said, I'm going to jump.

I'm terrified of heights, so I turned my back and said, okay. He disappeared. Later on, I looked, and I couldn't see a puddle at the bottom, so I went to the lady in the apartment next door.

The balcony is a long way apart, but I thought he might have done it, so she was an Indian. I said, would you mind if I looked on your balcony? I've lost a boy. She said, oh yes, I am having a difficult son, so I understand, so I looked on her balcony.

I couldn't see anything, and I came back. I think I'll look again. You know, drug addicts, very clever, very clever.

He was hiding in a corner. I don't know how he could have hidden, but there he was. She said, oh, you are having a good time with your son.

So anyway, he refused to go into the apartment where we were praying him off drugs. Who was helping me? At that time, no one, but over the years, we've had lots of people who've come for a while, and some people who've come here today with me who've stayed many years, and he said, I'm not going in. I'm leaving, and I said, I'm not going to let you leave, and he said, so I held on to the stair banisters, and he said, I'll scream.

I said, okay, scream, but I'm not letting you go, so he screamed. He really screamed, and the neighbors started walking down the stairs, and I said, it's a difficult son, you know. Then the screaming didn't work, and he said, I'm going to strip, so I said, okay, strip.

Well, he did, but he only down to the underpants, and I wondered why he went only that far, you know, so eventually he got exhausted. I outlasted him, and the brothers who were in the apartment saw that he was trying to say, come and take a bath, come and take a bath, and so we took him into the apartment, and he had a bath. Then they discovered why he'd left the underpants on, because he'd got six watches secreted down his underpants, which he was going to pawn when he ran away, so yeah, very smart.

Anyway, there was nothing for it. After the bath, he started reluctantly to pray in tongues, and of course, after that, he went straight to sleep. The Lord is so kind, and the next day, day three, I remember him coming into the sitting room and saying, I have so much to learn.

We had started. The miracle is one thing. The growing up is another.

We've seen them come. We've seen them go, and sometimes we've had nothing apparently to show, and I read about my friends in other countries running their groups and multiplying their cells and having civilized alpha dinners. You don't have alpha here.

It's very civilized, and we were losing them as fast as we were gaining them. Persevere, says the Lord. One day, it somehow seemed to turn around.

We kept four. Then there were five. We lost three, and so on and so on, and I don't know where it happened.

It doesn't matter where it happened. You see, for me, I would stay anyway. You understand I'd lost my ministry.

I was no longer a street evangelist. I was a reluctant house mother, trapped, looking after these men who didn't seem to be changing awfully quickly, and then one day, somehow, there we were. The government lent us some tin huts, and believers from all over Hong Kong used to come and worship with us.

It got to be quite well known. This was the only place in Hong Kong where the gifts of the Spirit were being used, and this is where I told some stories last night that some of the visitors came along, and they were quite upset with what was going on. They said, because it was a huge number suddenly.

We'd grown into hundreds. They said, how did you do this? I said, I don't know. We sort of grew.

Where did you get all these people? Do you call yourself a pastor? Are you a fellowship? Do you think women should be? I don't know. It just sort of happened. The Lord is so sweet, but you see, showing all that fruit didn't mean we were successful.

What is successful is doing the will of God, and therefore, consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know the testing of your faith produces perseverance. This is James 1, 2 to 4, and Romans 5. Rejoice in your sufferings. What is sufferings? I think Naomi put it so well yesterday.

Sufferings is really understanding and sharing the heart of the Lord Jesus for us. You have to get over your own sufferings, okay? We're not counting that. We're counting sharing his.

Rejoice, therefore, in sufferings, because they will produce perseverance, and perseverance will produce character, and character will produce hope. Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which he has given us. You see, just at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly, and he given me the privilege of loving the ungodly, and living with the ungodly who've just become a bit godly, and need loving and growing up.

So I want to bless some of you, encourage some of you, and ask you to stand so we can pray for you. Have you started your race, and will you finish? 2 Timothy 4.7, Paul says, I've finished the race, marked out. The enemies are the ones you're competing against.

Sexual temptation, needing all your friends' approval, not going somewhere because by staying behind you might find a good marriage partner. They're all enemies. You think the Lord is going to withhold any good thing from you if you do his will.

He will not. Are you going to miss out on what your friends get? Yes, you have the better part. You have the better part.

You have eternity, the joy in heaven, all those people that you've touched along the way, like Jesus, for the joy set before him. He endured the cross and scorned its shame. So I want to ask you, have you started your race, and will you run it with perseverance? Let me bless you all, and then I especially want to pray for the Calibs.

Max, my friend. I thought you were telling me to start the worship, but I was just about to start. Do you want to close your eyes and open your hands and receive this? I bless you to run the race marked out for you.

I bless you to go for the portion which has been reserved for you, because you were made for it. You were made by a creator who made you so carefully and specially that only through you could his love and his heart be displayed to certain people. I bless you to be free from needing to look successful or counting numbers.

I bless you not to be jealous of those of your friends who seem to have what's called a ministry. Never mind that stuff. Never mind that stuff.

We're not here on earth to start ministries. We're here on earth to love our neighbors, to love the poor. A ministry might come out of it.

I bless you to run with patience, and if you don't see what the Lord has envisioned you with, not to be disappointed, but to know that whatever you do in the Lord's name is not in vain and there will be a harvest. Someone else may reap it. There will be a harvest.

For those of you who've started, who've got stuck, I'm just sowing. I'm just sowing. I'm just sowing.

I bless you to know there's always a harvest, always, somewhere, always. Don't say four more months and then the harvest. There's a harvest everywhere.

So for those of you who only sow, I bless you to do some reaping because there's a harvest around everywhere, somewhere, everywhere. In this city, in the place you live, there's a harvest waiting. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for.

Others have done the hard work and you will reap the benefits of their labor. So those of you who've got stuck into, I just do little, little sowings. Go and do some reaping and know that you are called to reap what others have sown and you won't be proud but you must do some reaping because there's always a harvest somewhere.

For those of you that think you've got to spend your life reaping, I bless you to sow with the heart of the Lord Jesus, patiently, loving the unlovely and when they don't change as quickly as you think they should, that the Holy Spirit will show you your own self and how patient he's been with you to allow you to make mistakes and still love you, to have seen your weaknesses and still love you, to have used you. I bless you who are young to start training. Some of my friends have started training their teenagers.

They're actually having a month without cell phones. That's tough because some of you are going to spend your lives in a place where there will be no cell phones and you really will have to leave your

father's household to go to the land where he sends you without instant communication or gratification or approval or comfort except from the God of all comforts and to know his approval. I bless you young people.

If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how will you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage by the thickets in the Jordan? Therefore, everyone who competes for the race goes into strict training and you do this to get a crown that will last forever. So I bless you young people to be very patient and to be very impatient and believe. For those of you who've labored a long time and seen not what you hoped for, I'd like you to come forward.

Those of you who are disappointed, you've done the maths and it wasn't what you hoped for, we're really asking you forward to congratulate you. I also want to invite some older people who are afraid that you missed it. You know that there was a call on your life.

Here's the good news, it's not too late. I've got some friends in Britain who started at the age of 65, just the right age. I mean they finished having their kids and grandkids, of course they've got time.

Great to look after the poor in their city. Marvelous. Not too late at all.

Not too late at all Caleb. I'm just as young, I'm just as vigorous as I was. The Lord has kept you alive all this time so you can claim your inheritance.

So open your hands. We say, for all of you who've not seen what you hoped, there will be a loss. So faint not, faint not, faint not, faint not.

Someone else may reap it, they may even put it in a magazine and claim it as theirs and you will love them. It wasn't yours either. It was just the work of the Lord and he let them be in it and he let you be in it and the glory goes to him.

No we don't need that on earth. We don't need that. We can live without it.

Actually it's a bit distracting isn't it? So I bless you to live a bit quietly. For those of you who are disappointed, this is what perseverance will produce. Character.

So go on. If you stopped, if the poor have robbed you of your hope, if the one you prayed for has disappointed you, well done, well done, well done. This is just a few steps.

You have to go on. It doesn't mean to say your ministry failed. So much better is it not to have started and end up with bloody knees than not to have run.

And the church is full of people with clean knees. So if you messed up, great, he's so pleased, you ran. If you lost your goods, if you trusted somebody who turned out to cheat you, well done, well done, well done.

Love covers a multitude of sins. You did well. That's all that counts is love.

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself in love. And if you messed up and trusted the wrong person, other people can be cynical, but I'm not. You did good.

You did good. You did good. You may learn to grow in wisdom.

You may learn to find people who help you through these ways, but don't become cynical or hard-hearted. We don't need that. And by the way, those of you who minister with the poor, never take advice from pastors that haven't lived it.

It's not right. They don't know what they're talking about. Only those who've physically been on the floor with the poor have a right and those people will never offer you advice.

I don't. They'll just say, well done. We understand.

That's it. So if your pastor has given you advice and he doesn't do this stuff, say thank you very much. Pray for him.

He just doesn't know that's all. He just doesn't know. And I can see because I can see.

I can see because I can see. I can see because I can see. In the distance, millions of people praising the Lord because you people here are going to go on running your race.

And you don't have to write Facebook or newsletters with all your successes. You don't need to make up great stories so you get financial support. That's stupid.

It's tempting. The Lord will provide for you. You haven't got to impress with the miracles.

So bless you. Thank you, Jackie. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Brilliant. Thank you.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Bb7qKQuiYdA.mp4>

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