

Broken Vessels

by Manley Beasley

The sermon explores the reasons why people get sick, including breaking natural laws, sin in their life, the devil's attack, and for the glory of God, and encourages listeners to seek help and trust in God's power to heal.

Duration: 1:05:05

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:5-11, 2 Corinthians 4:16, 2 Corinthians 4:18

Topics: "Vessels"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not preaching oneself, but rather preaching Christ Jesus as the Lord. He highlights that God has shined His light in our hearts to give us the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. The preacher acknowledges that as believers, we may face troubles, distress, and persecution, but we are not forsaken or destroyed because we carry the dying of the Lord Jesus in our bodies. He also mentions that the message is preached in the context of a pastor who has been diagnosed with a disease similar to what the preacher had in the past, and how they have been discussing the things of God. The preacher believes that this message will be meaningful to the listeners.

Transcript

It's my friend, it's such a joy and a privilege to be with you this month. In fact, I don't know when I've ever been more excited than I am right now. I have just come from the doctor's office and we've been dealing with my health problem for about six months now.

And today, you know, we got such a report. It's absolutely incredible. The medication that I've been on for 15 years seemingly became ineffective.

And we thought it had become ineffective because I needed some different kind, and, you know, more potent medication. But it seems that the Lord wanted to change the medication some, but to a less potent medication. And it's so unbelievable, the doctor can't believe it, and I'm having a difficult time myself believing it, but I'm just almost out of breath because of the fact of my schedule today, and the excitement in my heart because of what God is doing in my body.

But I'll try to share this with you. When you receive this tape, we will be in Europe, right in the midst of our Congress on Revival. And I trust that you will pray in a special way that God will get absolute glory to himself and protect us in such a way that the devil can't get in in any way, that we'll just see the glory of

God's presence on the people, and we'll see lives changed and hearts warmed, and we will see all of that turn to his glory.

Now, this particular tape, this month, is a message that if you've been with me for a long time, and like I saw some people the other day, been in my tape ministry for ten years, if you've been with me for a long time, I'm sure you have heard me talk about why people get sick. Now, I have written this somewhat in a book, and I have also thrown it in a few sermons here and there. And it's been a long time since I've just preached one sermon on why people get sick.

Now, this message that I'm sending you this month is not a message on why people get sick in one way, in another way it is. I'm using the outline of why people have sickness. But I'm really dwelling on one point.

So you'll have to hear the introduction, and if you're used to the material, it'll be sort of repeat, and that will be much from last month, because I didn't realize that in the introduction of last month, there was a story that was on the tape the month before. But a lot of places I go, I feel that a particular story is important. And when my tape brother that's doing the tapes heard it, he felt that it should stay because of its place in the message.

So I'm sorry for that, but this particular message does have some material about why people get sick in it. But when we come to the last point that we deal with about the cross, you will find in it some material that the Lord has really been dealing with me recently. In fact, I just really wish I could take you in and just really share with you how the Lord has opened this truth up to me and how he's brought the reality of himself in my heart over this truth.

Now, also you need to realize that this message is preached in the context of a church on Sunday night where the pastor has just learned that he has a disease similar to what I had that will affect his body the same way that the disease I had back in 1971 affected my body. And for about the last four weeks, I have been sharing with this pastor and he with me about the things of God. And it's incredible how God is blessing in his life.

Now, it's in this context that I bring this message. And you realize that I am dealing with his people and with him in this message. But I really believe that it will really mean something to you.

Now, tonight I feel that God wants me to bring this message in the revival that I'm in in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Grace Mountain Baptist Church. And I believe I'll be able to bring it more specifically in some areas, enlarge in some areas. And it may be that you know some sick folk across the country that may need this message.

And so we'll be glad to help you try to get them a message if you think it will help them. So I trust that you'll just write us and do whatever the Lord says do and we'll see God work this thing out to help some people. Now, I want you to know that we really appreciate the people that's helped us out in relationship to what we're doing all over the country.

And we thank you so much and we love you in the Lord. Continue to pray for our family. Continue to pray for me that God will get all the glory out of my life he wants.

I'll be looking forward to hearing from you and seeing how you respond to this particular message. May God bless you to meet with you again next month. Thank you so much.

2 Corinthians, the 4th chapter. And I'd like to begin reading, I believe, in the 5th verse. For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

For God who commended the light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. For we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of a power may be of God and not of us. We're troubled on every side yet not distressed.

We're perplexed but not in despair. Persecuted but not forsaken. Cast down but not destroyed.

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life also of Jesus might be made manifested in our mortal flesh. You might underline that, mortal flesh.

So then death worketh in you but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith according as it is written, I believe and therefore have I spoken. We also believe and therefore speak.

Now, this particular passage has a great deal of meaning to me for a number of reasons. Now, I want to just ask you a question tonight and you'll realize that I'm basically dealing with this passage of scripture. You may not realize that until it's over, but I think when it's over you'll realize that I've been dealing with this passage of scripture.

I want to talk on the subject, this is a question, why the people get sick. Now, I have volumes of things to say and I've just been praying this afternoon, tonight, that the Lord would let me just pick out what this church needed at this particular time. And I want to talk to this question, why people get sick.

Now, most of this is an outline because I'm only going to deal with one point in this outline in particular. But I think the outline of why people will get sick will lay a foundation that's broad enough and deep enough and so on that I think we can be helped tonight. So I want you to get the big picture so you can really get the fine line at this point.

Now, I'm not going in detail in this introduction, the matter of introducing what I'm going to say, because I think you're aware of the Bible enough to not have to, for me, not have to deal with some of the details. And so I'm just going to mention them and because there's so much here that I want to say, I don't want to get bogged down in the outline that's broad so you can understand more specifically what we're saying. For instance, one of the reasons people get sick is because they break natural laws.

They just literally break natural laws. And when you break natural laws, then my dear friends, you're going to end up sick. If you jump off of a tower over here, you're breaking a natural law, and you're going to end up in trouble.

The devil tried to get Jesus to do that, tried to get him to cast himself down and so on. And you're going to end up in trouble when you start breaking the natural laws. And I don't want to leave you in distress about the natural laws, but I'll tell you, when you've broken the natural laws, you better get back with somebody that's educated enough to try to help you get your life back in the realm of properly operating in the natural laws like a doctor.

Amen. Now, that doesn't mean you're not supposed to pray. That doesn't mean that you're not supposed to pray at all.

But doctors know enough about your body to help you get back in the realm of the natural laws, like if you don't sleep or don't eat right. You can end up sick just on the basis of breaking the natural laws. And you may not have, you may be like me, not have enough sense to know how to get back.

And so you better go find you a doctor. It's not having faith to go get a doctor. You see, there are some natural ways that God works.

There are some supernatural ways that God works. And then there is some supernatural natural ways that God works. Are you aware of that? I think a lot of folk have never realized that God supernaturally naturally works.

About Jesus Christ, if I said he was supernaturally born, you'd say yes. But that's not all the truth. He was supernaturally naturally born.

He was supernaturally conceived, but he lived in a womb for nine months just like any other child. I'll guarantee you, that's being supernaturally naturally born. And when you go to see a doctor, because you have some problem in your life, my dear friends, a doctor can be used of God and supernaturally work in your life to help you get back within the realms of the natural laws.

And God uses people supernaturally naturally. And it's not sin to seek out a doctor. Now, that's one reason people get sick, is because they make great natural laws.

Another reason they get sick is because they have sin in their life. Now, in what is it, 2 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 11, it says, Many are sick and many are asleep, dead, because they have sinned against God. The context of that is talking about taking the Lord's supper.

And they sinned against God, and they had sin in their life, and they had partaken of the Lord's table, the Lord's supper. And my dear friends, for that reason, some of them were weak, some of them were sick, and some of them were dead. So people get sick because they sin against God.

Now, if you are sick because you have sin against God, you get right with God, and very likely you'll get well. You just get right with God. Now, that's not the only reason people get sick.

Another reason they get sick is because the devil attacks them. You remember the boy in the Bible, in Matthew, where he was casting himself down and foaming at the mouth and going through different gyrations and so on? You remember that man and that little boy, and Jesus dealt with him? He had a demonic problem. And when he got dealt with about that matter, my dear friends, that boy was clothed in his right mind.

He was a normal person. And so the devil attacks some people, and they are sick because the devil has attacked them. And if that's the reason why you're sick, it might be wise for you to go seek some good counsel somewhere, somebody that knows the Word of God, knows their position in Christ, that's right with God, and get them to pray for you, and help you stand against the devil.

Now, that's not necessary if you're a Christian. That is really not necessary if you know how to stand in the truth of God. You can resist the devil yourself.

And you need to learn how to resist the devil, because I'll tell you what, if you resisted it one time and got peace and victory about it, and you don't know how to continue to do it, he'll come back again and attack

you. And so you need to learn that. But there's another reason why people get ill, have sickness.

It's for the glory of God. You remember Jesus in 9th chapter of the book of John? That was a man that could not see. And the disciple said, is it because of his sin, his parents' sin? And Jesus said, no, but unto the glory of God.

John 11 chapter, they tell us it lies with the sick. Jesus said, no, it's under the glory of God. Now, what I'm trying to say to you here, is there's a time when God allows sickness, just because it's occasion for God to work and manifest his glory.

That's right. Now, I have an uncle that lives in Port Harper, Texas. When he was somewhere in his 70s, he went blind.

And he was in this very sophisticated church, and it was a sophisticated church. There's sophisticated people out there, and they need some kind of preaching. Amen.

And, I mean, folk, I don't get upset because there's some people more sophisticated than I am, more educated than I am, and I'm not going to make fun of them. I'm glad they got it, just as long as it doesn't stand between them and Christ. Amen.

And I'm not against that, but I'm not that sophisticated myself. But this uncle was in this church, and he fit there. And that church was dead.

It was a doornail. I mean, it was just dead and cold. And my uncle went blind.

And one day, in his big mansion, a deacon came by, and it was his wife who was with him, and my uncle, his wife. My aunt was there in the house. And they got to talking, and this deacon said, He said, Do you believe God can heal you? My uncle said to Mr. Manning, He said, Yes, I believe He can.

He said, Well, God sent me by here to pray for you. Well, my uncle said, Well, okay. He said, Well, how are we going to do this? They were both very dumb about the Word of God.

But they said, Well, let's read James, what it says about healing. And they read that passage over there. It said, Not withal, and they didn't know what they were doing.

And this big old mansion, honestly, it was worth about \$400,000, you know, back in those days. And they just, they looked everywhere for some oil, and the only thing they could find was some cooking oil. Those old sophisticated people, you know, running around sticking their finger in some cooking oil and anointing him and praying.

Now, he'd been to that big ophthalmologist in Houston, Texas, a woman ophthalmologist that's been world-renowned for many years. And, you know, she said, You're blind, you'll never see again. They got down on their knees, anointing him with oil, and prayed, and his eyesight came back.

And he went to that ophthalmologist and said, Would you check my eyes? She said, There's no reason for it. He said, I just want you to check. And so she said, Okay.

She checked those eyes, and I'll tell you, she said, You are still as blind as you ever were. He said, Hand me that book. And he started reading that book, and he could read it with 20-20 beads.

Now, there was no need whatsoever for that man to be healed. He could have hired maids to have kept him, led him around, drive him. He'd lived a good life.

He was over 70 years old. God didn't promise him any more than 70 years, and his life was complete. And, my dear friends, there's no reason whatsoever for that man to be healed except for the glory of God.

And you talking about something? He went back down there to that old dead church and got to magnifying the Lord, not his healing. But the Lord got to magnifying Jesus and got that bunch so upset they didn't know what to do, didn't know what to do with him. They couldn't do without him because of his money.

And I'll tell you, they just couldn't. It is beautiful how God healed that old boy. And that eyesight still good.

In fact, my son back there, Stephen, didn't you have Christmas dinner with him, Stephen? And he still see, can't he? He still can. That's right. I mean, it's incredible.

And there's no reason for that man's healing whatsoever except for the glory of God. And it was an instant healing, just like that. I mean, an instant miracle, just like that.

No friends attacked, everything else. I have a friend who lives in Memphis, Tennessee. When she's 13 years old, I was in my revival, Brother Bill.

And you know who was in that revival with me? Bill himself. You were? No. Holland, Michigan.

Oh, yeah. You remember that? Oh, yes, sir. Oh, Coffield.

Garland, Coffield. That's it. Right.

Yes, sir. And that's right. We were in that meeting and this little old girl sat there every night for two weeks.

It was a two-week meeting. She sat there every night, 13 years old. And I don't know if you were involved in this particular night or not, but we went out there on Lake Michigan and had a service out there by the lake.

And those kids would sign a piece of plank and sign their name to it indicating their surrender to God and throw it in that fire and they'd pray, Lord, whatever it takes in my life to be like Jesus. And out of that church came over 50 kids that went into full-time service. And one of those kids was this woman.

Her name is Marilyn Ford, has a book out, These Blind Eyes Can See, I believe is the title of it. And she was in that meeting in Holland. And you know, I saw her some years after that and she was blind and could not see anything.

And one day, she and her husband were driving down the road. She married a man she'd never seen in her life. And of course, she knew him, but I mean, she'd never seen him.

And they were driving down the road and her eyesight came back. And just about six months ago, she had her eyes checked again and they said, you still cannot see and she can see with 20-20 degrees. Nothing in the world but for the glory of God.

God does it, folks. Yes, He does. Yes, He does.

That's it. In fact, I went blind. I didn't tell you everything this morning.

You'd have been here all day. I went blind, 65% in the right eye, 45% in the left eye. Ophthalmologist in San Antonio, Texas, told me the condition.

And I got on a plane and flew to Denver, Colorado, started a revival meeting that night, a big Bible conference. And as we, when it came time for me to preach, I was in such pain. And of course, my eyes had been dilated and I was in such pain that I was crying when I went to the pulpit and I asked the pastor there to read the Bible for me and I read it.

He read it. And while I preached that night, the Holy Ghost came and just literally touched my body. And I'll tell you, I went back to the doctor and the scars on my eyes were not even there.

How God had healed those eyes. And I picked up an \$8 pair of glasses here about five years ago and had to start using them to read. But God just touched them.

But it was for the glory of God. Now what I'm trying to tell you, there's reasons why people get sick. And sometimes it's just for the reason for God to have occasion to get glory to himself.

But there's another reason that people get sick. And that is, that is one of God's appointed means to get people out of this world into heaven. Or hell.

Amen. Now I realize that a lot of these doctors will say, that person died of natural causes. But you've been around as many doctors as I have and know as many as I know.

I tell you, friends, everyone I've ever talked to, I've asked them this question, how many people die of natural causes as you know? And everyone of them will say, I don't know of any. I say, then you are telling me that they die of some kind of sickness. And they say, yes.

They die of some kind of sickness. Usually, that's it. And so God uses death, my friends, to get us to heaven.

Now if I started preaching on the second coming tonight, you'd probably climb the fuse and walk the fuse. And I'll tell you because you'd want him to come. But I don't know, I don't understand why a person can't shout when you start talking about death.

The second best thing that could ever happen to you is Jesus, the first thing would be Jesus coming in the air, but the second best thing is he send the death angel to get you. And when I was able to look death in the face, folks, I found out something. You only go through the shadow.

And if a car comes down the road and hits you, it'll hurt you. But if a car comes down the road that throws a shadow and passes you by and the shadow touches you, you don't feel it. And I'm going to tell you something.

The Bible says we go through the shadow of death. I don't want them coming for me in no black hearse. I'll tell you, folks, the only thing that'd be better than dying would be being taken up in the rapture.

Amen? You might have to face that. So you need to get settled. Amen? Now, there's another reason why people get sick.

And I have sort of moved it around to last because that's where I want to camp. Now, the reason people get sick is another reason. That is this.

This is the last reason. And that is because it is a cross. Now, some of you might say, well, what's the difference between a cross and God getting glory to himself? Well, when I talk about God getting glory to himself, I talk about God just instantly healing you after getting glory for himself.

But a cross is something that must be carried out daily. Daily. So it differs a little bit than just getting glory for himself.

Now, this passage I read you talks about you and I having this heavenly treasure in this earthen vessel. Amen? We're having this heavenly treasure in this earthen vessel. Now, I'm not getting my watch off to check on how long I'm to preach.

I'm just checking on how much I ought to preach. Because I can go a long time, probably to my own damage. But nevertheless, this passage, I tell you, you need to look at this passage.

He talks about this heavenly treasure, heavenly treasure, and we know that treasure is the Lord. We know that when a man gets saved by the grace of God, our spirit and God's spirit becomes one spirit. He that is drawn unto the Lord is one spirit.

Folks, I mean, we become the dwelling place of the very life of God, himself. I mean the life of God, himself. The glory of God, himself.

The ability of God, himself. The very essence of God, himself. I mean, we become the very, very containers of everything that God has ever been and is and will ever be.

You do not segment God. I mean, your spirit and his spirit is one spirit, and I'll tell you, that's a settled fact forever. It's all settled.

And it's a settled issue forever, when you get saved by the grace of God. Now, one of the things that you and I need to see is this, that if the spirit of God is in us, we not only have the wealth of God, the health of God, the wisdom of God, but the reality of God in our lives. When our spirit and God's spirit becomes one spirit.

Now, what I want you to see is that heavenly treasure is in this earthen body. That actually means a earthen vessel. A vessel of clay.

Amen. There that heavenly treasure is in that vessel of clay. Now, Paul put it this way.

He said, I must decrease that Christ might increase. John said that, didn't he? And Paul said, Death in me, but life in you. In other words, the cross is that instrument of God, of death.

That's what the cross means, folk, is death. So for the resurrected life of Christ to be manifested in your life, there always has to be the cross. So God allows sickness to come upon you as a cross.

Why? Because this body is dead because of sin. And God allows the cross to come upon your life, sickness to come in your life, to bring you to death, that the resurrected life of Christ might work in this mortal flesh. That mortal flesh is not talking about flesh after death or the rapture.

Mortal flesh means the flesh you've got right there in your body tonight. You can feel it. Amen.

So that cross brings us to the end of ourselves. For me to live, then, is Christ. Now, naturally, Christ gets glory out of that kind of life because the only explanation for your life, then, is what? The Lord.

Amen. Now, I had to face this one time. I believe, and you may not be able to handle this, but I'll give it to you and let you worry about it.

Back several years ago, after I got out of the hospital after four and a half months, several months up the road, a couple of years up the road, I had the flu. And back in those days, something like that would so affect me that I'd have to go to the hospital and usually spend about four weeks. And I went to the hospital, and in that time in the hospital, the Lord spoke to me very plainly.

And he said, You know, I can heal you instantly. Right now, I can heal you. And I said, Yes, Lord, I know you can.

I think the Lord asked me, Would you like to be healed, or would you rather be in such a life that the only explanation for your life would be God? And it wouldn't be a healing, it would be a life. And God, by his grace, gave me the grace and the understanding to say that day, Lord, I can't handle the healing because if you heal me, I'd go off like the rest of this bunch, go to seed on healing, and that'd be all I had to say. But I said, Lord, if I stay like I am, every day I will have to have you to live.

And I'd rather take you. And, folk, I'm going to tell you something. So be it.

I thought that wanting a healing was very selfish, very essential, when I could have the life of Jesus every day. Sufficient. Adequate.

Under all circumstances. And, folk, I'll tell you what. I turned it to him, and he became my life.

When I read Romans 8, 11, where his spirit dwells in you, that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, that same spirit shall quicken your mortal flesh. And I got on my knees, and I said, God, my kidneys are damaged. They are 35% functional.

And I said, you're going to have to become my life. And those kidneys leveled out, and for 15 years never fluctuated. If you don't believe it, go up here and ask Jack Bryce.

And this nephrologist that I'm going to, right over here on Motley. I asked her the other day, I said, how is it that I've been able to, why didn't this disease destroy my kidneys over 15 years ago? She said, medical science has no answer for that. I said, well, how is it then that I haven't died in these over 15 years? She said, medical science doesn't have any answer for that.

But I did have an answer. And you know what that answer was? My dear friends, not that I'd prayed a lot, not that I was good enough to receive that, but one day by the grace of God, God let me see that this old earthen vessel had to be brought to the end of itself where the only explanation for my life would be the living Lord. And folk, he became the living Lord.

And the disease that caused all of this has never been found in my body since that day. Amen. I just went right through Baylor a few weeks ago, and they took all the tests they could take.

Fine. And I'll guarantee you, there's no ANA factor, no difficulty, no sign of the disease that destroyed that much of my kidneys. Amen.

And the doctors have no explanation for it. That's right. I'll tell you, I have discovered that he is my life.

And he said that he's all sufficient in all things, under all circumstances, unto every good work. And when it's over, folk, it's over. Amen.

But he'll keep me unto that day if I'll stay right with him. I don't believe I can get out and sin. See, I've seen a lot of these people getting supernaturally healed and turn around five years later, they're living in sin.

But you see, folk, if I start living in sin, that life stops. Amen. How much one would you rather have? A healing or the life of Jesus? But you see, what happened on up the road when God got me to the place that he thought I could handle the situation, you know what he did? He took the disease away.

But here the last year, you know, I got to doing so good that he let something sort of shake things up a little bit. Amen. I put trust in him every day because I got in the land and I got houses.

God gave me houses that I did not build. Let me eat the milk and the honey and got the inheritance of his glory and got, my dear friends, fat, satisfied, and independent of God. So God let a few things happen and let me see that if he wasn't my life, I wouldn't make it.

Amen. So I came back to him. And if you don't think God has ordered the steps of a righteous man, I only mention this because you are aware of what happened.

I was out here in this little hospital in room 220, in tomb 220. Jack Rice came by to see me. He asked me if I'd talk to your pastor.

Here's what he was saying to me. He said, Brother Manley, I have chosen you in the life of suffering that you might just minister through your life. I've never accepted that.

And I never accepted that. But I got willing to just continue to suffer every day. That's what Jesus wanted.

And I'm going to tell you something, friend. It didn't come in no ten minutes. But this particular day, Jack Rice said, Would you see this pastor? And I said, You know, a man's already come in here to me and mentioned him to me.

And he said, Well, his disease, if it runs its course, will affect him just like yours has affected you. And I think you ought to talk to him. He said, But I don't want to impose on you.

I said, No, you're not imposing on me. And did you know a couple of days before your pastor showed up in my room, which was the same room he stayed in for a couple of weeks, very same room, did you know that the nurses over there at this hospital messed up? And it cost me another day in that hospital. And my doctor, I'd never seen her mad, but she was so mad at the incompetence of professional people that she didn't know what to do.

And because we have such a relationship, she and I have such a relationship, that she just was so embarrassed by them doing that, it cost me another day. She wasn't embarrassed about the money. She was just embarrassed that she was consuming my time because of the incompetence of some professional people.

And she had every right to be embarrassed. And I mean she was mad. And I told her, I said, Now listen.

I said, Christians believe that God is in control of this business. And I said, There's some reason for this delay. And do you know when Jack Rice left my office, he went home, I went to his office up here and started trying to get in touch with your pastor.

And I'm sure he's told you about it. But, he and his wife driving home from Houston on Friday, mentioned the fact that they needed to talk to me. Jack Rice tried to get in touch with him, couldn't reach him.

When he got home that afternoon, he called Jack Rice and Jack got on the telephone and asked him if he'd come visit me. At first, he didn't tell him who it was, just make a visit for him. And then he told her who it was and he came over.

And then, my dear friends, I knew why that delay one day, one day, delay, one day delay, folks. I'll tell you, he thought he came over there to get blessed that night, but I got blessed. Not only was he and his wife and their tender heart towards God, I got blessed by that.

But, folks, I got blessed because I could see a mighty God, a mighty God that's so big he could create this whole business and this whole body and he'd take a few minutes to delay some nurses and mess some things up, so I'd be delayed, so I'd be right on time and he would be right on time and God would work just through that simple contact. Boy, I'm glad I have a God like that. Oh, my friend, what a Savior.

Amen. What a Savior. This old earthen vessel, folks, must come to the end of itself that the light of glory might shine through.

That what is done is of him and not of you. Amen. Let me give you one more illustration and, boy, I'll tell you, I've seen this since I saw you last.

I mean, this will blow your head off. You remember the angel of the Lord came to Joshua, not Joshua, Gideon, and Gideon, he said, Gideon, thou great man of valor, and old Gideon said, who, me? He said, man, I'm nothing but a weakling and God was seeing Gideon as one way and he was seeing himself in another way and you remember how he prepared Gideon, what was it, twenty thousand at first, then ten thousand, finally got down to three hundred. And he said, boys, here's how we're going to do this thing.

He said, we're going to take three sides. He said, we're going to take three, get on each side of this bunch, and he said, we're going to take the front and then he said, we're going to put a light in a earthen vessel. And he said, when you blow that trumpet, break the vessel, and the light broke out.

And since that bunch in such array, they killed each other and they fled for their lives. But when did it happen? When the earthen vessel was broken. I love it.

I love it, brother. Yes, sir. Death in me, but life in you.

Amen. I had people go out of here this morning and they say, you know, brother Manley, I've gone through a lot of suffering and you know what? Most of the time, you have endured it and your life was not changed. For the better and no one else was and you've missed the whole purpose of it.

You have wasted your time, God's time, and everybody you could have had time. God did not come, folks, to enchant us or entertain us. He came to change us.

And, folks, when we discover why the sickness, the adversity, that, it may be just adversity. It may not be sickness. It may be some kind of problem.

But when you do not find out why and how to respond to God in that situation where the earthen vessel is broken and the light shines forth, you will not see victory in your life. Amen. It's a cross.

That sickness is a cross that God uses to bring us to ourselves, end of ourselves, to ourselves first and then to the end of ourselves. So, the weight of glory might weigh, just literally work out to our eternal salvation. My, what a blessing.

Not for salvation, but because we have it. Yes, sir. Yes, my friend, it's something.

You see, not one thing is happening to you that God doesn't know about, God hasn't allowed, God hasn't permitted, and, thank God, also limited. Not one thing. Back when I was dying, I was taken to an Englishman that was in America at that time, and I went to him and I asked him.

I was stretched out on a bed, a couch, at Mealdale. And I asked this preacher, I said, how far can the devil go to a man who's as right with God as I know how to be? He said, have you ever considered the story of Joseph? I said, yes, sir. I have considered the story of Joseph so much that it's lost its cutting edge.

You know what I'm talking about? How Joseph was stripped of his clothes, so, and passed into a ravine or whatever, or a pit, and then sold into slavery. Remember that story? And Joseph, 20 years later, 20 years later, folks, it's amazing. Those brothers' evil act was also their redemption.

20 years later, Joseph is in charge down in Egypt. That's their redemption, folks. If God hadn't had Joseph down there, that bunch would starve to death.

Joseph realized, recognized his brothers, asked a few questions, and when the right time came, he let himself be known as their brother. He said this. I love it.

He said, you did an evil thing. See, there's the devil working. But what else did he say? He said, but for me, God was in it all the time.

See, here was a man that saw that adversity in his life that, my dear friends, literally, literally, passed from God even though the devil delivered it. Folks, you better wake up and interpret what's happened to you. I said, that story has lost its cutting edge to me.

Then he asked me another question. Don't talk out loud. You might miss this.

And I'm warning you because I don't want to embarrass you because I'll have to tell the truth if you misinterpret it. He said, Brother Manley, have you ever considered Job? I said, yes, but I don't understand. What do you mean? He said, Brother Manley, who brought Job's name up first? Be careful now.

Who brought Job's name up first? And I almost said, the devil. But I knew he had something to say so I just simply backed up. And I said, what do you mean? He said, God brought Job's name up first.

And when he said it, folks, the scales fell from my eyes. You see, I thought that no one was involved in my adversity and sickness but the devil. But then I saw my father in charge.

See, I saw my father in charge. I saw my father as Lord of the whole bed. And yes, the devil was the delivery boy of my adversity.

But God knew about it first. He was allowing it. He was permitting it.

And thank God, he said, you can just go so far. Amen. And folks, I saw him as my father.

And it was in his hands. And I had a meeting that day with God. I had a meeting that day with God on that couch.

I could not get up. I could not even raise my hand and wave to glory. I couldn't say anything.

I couldn't talk very little. I was gone. But that day, folks, I saw my father in charge of this whole matter.

And he did not have any anxiety. He wasn't even upset. He wasn't even disturbed.

He was in charge. And even though he was letting the devil afflict me, I want you to know, folks, he was still in charge. And if I could see that and respond to him properly, my friends, when I'd come out, I would be the better and he would get the glory.

Yes, sir. And that's the way it happened, folks. That's the way it happened.

Yes, sir. Who am I? Who in the world am I to choose my way when his is so much better? Oh, my. Yes, sir.

I made that decision that night when I got saved. Lord, whatever it takes to make me the saint you want me to be, here is my life. And one day it came that when the vessel had to be broken.

Back there in those days when Bill and I was all over this country in meetings, how this whole vessel was not broken. I didn't have to have God. I could do it myself.

Now, I didn't try to do it myself. I always asked God to help me. But I never was saying, God, if you don't do it, it won't get done.

Now, I might mention that phrase to God a few times, but it wouldn't work. Amen. Tonight, I don't know what you're allowing the circumstances in your life to do for you, but they claim they came to bless you.

They came to change you. Be stepping stones to glory. But my friends, they may be manifestations to destroy you if you do not learn how to deal with them.

How to let Jesus have them. How to respond to Jesus in them. How to break.

How to let that old vessel of clay be broken so the light

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