

The Weapon of Rejoicing

by Otto Koning

The sermon emphasizes the power of rejoicing as a spiritual weapon in the face of adversity and the importance of obedience to God's will.

Duration: 56:04

Scripture: Matthew 25:1

Topics: "Rejoicing"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a group of people who were trying to break into a house but were unable to because of the nails in the wooden walls. The speaker emphasizes the power of God's protection and how He can use even the smallest things to thwart the plans of the enemy. The speaker also mentions a time when the villagers fought a fire by dismantling the house and carrying it away, showing their resourcefulness and determination. Throughout the sermon, the speaker highlights the importance of relying on God's strength and trusting in His provision.

Transcript

We had traveled all morning in this little boat, my little outboard motor boat, down this river, finally up a smaller side river in a dugout canoe, and it got too dry. We were on the log trail now through the swamp, and as usual they wanted me to walk first because I'm so slow and they say we go at your pace, but you get all the spider webs and you get everything that's on the trail and you never know what's going to happen. I never liked that, but there was no other way to do it, and so we came by this huge hornet's nest.

This tree had fallen over in the top of the tree, a huge nest, it must have been four feet, huge round nest with all these pretty hornets. They were black hornets with transparent blue wings. They were all over.

I'd never seen anything like it, and it just shocked me. It was so close, just behind this trail, beside this trail. Of course, when I look at something else, I lose my balance.

I have no coordination. I'm falling off the log just about now into the mud, and I said to the guy behind me, I said, JC, what is that? And he said, look out, Tuan. He just shouted, you know, and when he's yelling like that, I took off, you know, and those hornets were on me.

They were all over me and swarming. I had a long-sleeved shirt on, but that didn't help any, and I just took off down this trail now. My shoes are muddy, and I'm in the slippery logs, and I'm falling off, and I'm in the

mud fighting off.

I'm a real missionary. I have one of these pit helmets, and I'm waving that thing. Now, if I wave my hand like that, I can't balance at all, so I'm not on the trail anymore, and all those guys did was laugh.

Those rascals, they just, you know what they did? They just backed off real slow. They didn't attract one hornet. They just backed up on the logs.

Now, that's something, and I'm attracting, and they laugh, and it must have been a sight. I got all of them, and they were biting me, and I'm falling off, and getting on the log, and finally not even trying to get on the log, just trying to move through that mud, and I got my foot stuck between a couple of logs, and tore my running shoe off, and it's probably still there, but I never went back. I went on, and finally I got far enough away, and the hornets go back to their nest, and I'm hurting.

I'm telling you, I'm hurting my neck, and my shoulders, and my arms. They bit me, and I'm swelling up, and I'm standing on this log, and I said, oh God. See, the natives are gone.

I thought, boy, they've gone back home, and I'm on this side of the nest, and the wrong side of the nest, and I'm in a jungle that I've never been before, and I'm a long way from home, and I'm hurting, and I say, God, help me God. What am I going to do, and I'm in despair. I'm panicking, and God's there.

I've never been in one of those jungles, and didn't find his presence. He was there. I said, God, what do I do, and one clear voice in my mind, rejoice.

I said, no. You see, this was the problem. I'm a pessimist, and I need to learn to rejoice, and I had realized that need in my life, and I said, God, I really want to work on this.

There were so many negative things there that, you know, it was just a palace for a pessimist, and I knew I had, so I said, Lord, I need to learn to rejoice, and so God brought me up in heaven, saying, that's right. I'll give you some good opportunities, and so he puts, and now I'm hurting on this trail, and the last thing I want to do, I feel like doing, is rejoicing. I don't want to.

This is, I said, God, this is no time to teach me to rejoice. This, I mean, I'm, I need your help. I need help, and, but isn't that something? He always tells you these things when you at least feel you can do it, and all those natives went through the jungle, and came out ahead of me, and I said, oh, poor Thuan, poor Thuan.

Oh, Thuan, you're gonna die. Real encouraging, you know, you don't say that to a pessimist, and I fell. I think one guy had to pack, and I gave myself this shot right in my leg here, the Epsom salt solution, which is for snake bite, and after I'd given myself that shot, they said, ah, Thuan, now you're going to live.

Very encouraging, and I said, how far is it to this village of Yefu, and they said, oh, it's not very far, and I didn't want to go back that way, so I struggled on, and I was hurting. I said, God, I don't know if I'm going to make it. I'm so far from home.

You're going to have to help me, and finally, we did get to that village, and all my people told their people, why didn't you, you know, why didn't you get that nest out of there? Thuan got all bit by, he's probably gonna die. He's hurting, and they felt so bad, and they burned it that night, but that didn't do me any good at that, and so I said to Yesi, the little preacher boy, I said, you're going to do the preaching. He says, I

am? He says, what are you going to do? I said, I'm going to lay down in a corner and die.

And he says, no, Thuan, then I'm always going to have to do the preaching. He says, Thuan, what do I preach? I said, preach what you did last Sunday in Aboi village, and so they got a clean grass mat. Oh, it's so nice to get a clean one that nothing's alive in it, and I'm laying there.

Now, he's preaching. He's trying to preach to these people in this house, and they're watching me. They're watching me, and he wasn't getting it all right, so I encouraged, you know, these fellas can't read yet, so they don't always get these messages right.

I usually teach them on Saturday, and then I hope that they'll remember to Sunday what to preach in these villages. This fella here, his favorite message was ten virgins. He always, you know, they always go back to the same message, the one that they can remember, and can you imagine how boring that can get when you get the same one every Sunday, but this fella was preaching in my home village where my wife was, and he was preaching on ten virgins, and he said, now they had this great big wedding.

They had all these trumpets, and all these lights, and all these people came, and then Jesus, he came, and he got married to these ten virgins all in one day, and he had the application mixed up with the illustration, didn't he, and so my wife sat in that church, and she couldn't handle that, and she stood up, said, J.C. Tuan didn't tell you that? Jesus, he never did get married, and J.C. said, Nyonya, you sit down. Women are not to talk in this here church, and he, and see, when, when I, when I came home, my wife says, you better quit if you can. Well, this is J.C. Now, he was preaching, and I correct him, but they were watching me as I lay on that grass mat, and then J.C. got finished, and they sang to each other, Tuan, he's really hurting, he's really hurting, man, he's hurting because he wanted, and all of a sudden, they said, this message must be very important, because he, he chanced to go by that hornet's nest to bring us this message.

They didn't know that I would have never gone by that nest if I had known it was there. I didn't tell them that, so whatever they don't know, that's all right. So I, but all of a sudden, I got the parallel.

I said, I sat up on my mat, and I said, there's one that hurt far more to bring you this message, and that's Jesus that J.C. has been telling you about. He, I will never hurt like he has hurt for you and for me to take away our sins to give us this message, this gospel, and all of a sudden, as I thought about how Jesus had suffered for me, it helped me, but it also helped them to understand. Jesus suffered for us to bring us a message.

He would have gone by the hornet's nest to get it to us, and friends, that started that seed of the gospel in that village, in that tribe, and I said to the Lord afterwards, I said, God, if you're going to use me to reach any more people, please use another method next time. I mean, it was always these strange ways, and when the breakthrough in these jungle villages, God had to do something special in every way. Well, they carried me out of that jungle, and got me back to on that canoe, and I laid in that canoe, and then to my boat, and I was the only one that could run that little motorboat.

You know, the motor's on the back here, and I could hardly run that thing. After that, I taught natives to run it, but my wife nursed me back to health again, and you know, you know what happened on that trail? God said, rejoice, and I just said, I don't feel like it. This is the wrong, but you know, I had read this, and I realized that even if God tells me something, and I don't feel like doing it, there's a lot of things I don't feel like doing that He tells me.

How about you? But we do it because we want to be obedient. You do it because God says it, even though you don't understand it, and you don't feel like it, and you don't want to, and you're not, you do it because God says for you to do it, and you, and you obey Him. So, I did it.

I stood on those logs in that swamp, bitten up by the hornets, and I said, God, I praise you, and I thank you for these hornets, and I thank you for the predicament, for you can show yourself strong, and then it says somewhere else, in all things give thanks, and for all things give thanks, and rejoice always, and all these verses, and so I did it, not because my emotions didn't do it, my will did it. All right, that's how we start in obedience. You make up your mind, you're going to do it, whether you feel like it or not, and you, and you go ahead and obey, and friends, as we start rejoicing in the midst of tribulation, that's when God starts to move in our behalf.

That's when, remember how Paul and Silas in Philippi, think of yourself in that, they were in that dungeon, their backs were bleeding, they were going to die from infection in a dirty dungeon, in a heathen city, with no converts, no friends, nobody there to bail them out, and they're there at midnight with no hope, or did they have hope, and then they start to sing. Now, that's rejoicing, and I believe when, when God sees His children hurting, and in, in problems, deep problems, and He sees His children rejoicing in the midst of that, that's when God loses it, that's when He can't handle it anymore. He says, I can't, I can't, this is too much, it's like your child saying in the midst of the tears, Mommy, I love you, or I'm going to obey you.

I mean, you'll bend over backwards for Him then, and I think God almost reaches a breaking point, and says, all right, I'm going to send the biggest earthquake that I can muster up, and have a dead center on that prison, and I'm going to have those chains off of them in no time, and I'm going to have the doors open up, and not a brick will fall on them, and they'll walk out with all the blessing of the whole city, and isn't that just about, it was praise, and I noticed in the story of Jonah, you know, he's in the belly of the fish, and he's hurting, and he's, and he's crying out, and he's doing this, and praying, and so on, and finally, when all hope seems to be gone, he starts to praise God, and that's when he ends up on the beach real quick, and you check that out, and friends, rejoicing is a powerful thing. We get much more done rejoicing and surrendering than begging and pleading, so substitute some of that begging, and pleading, and praying for rejoicing, and surrendering to God. You'll find that he's there, and he'll say, hey, you've learned a lesson.

That's what I'm waiting for. So friends, it worked. I started to rejoice, and I saw that that's a powerful weapon of our spiritual warfare, and so I can just imagine God in heaven saying, hey, that was great.

That worked real good. I'm going to send him another problem, because it seems like he's, you know, he works best under pressure. This guy learns.

That's the only time some people grow is when they're, I got here plan A, obedience, but plan B is experience. That's when God puts on the pressure, and, and we go through an experience, and everything I've ever told you people, or preached, it's all been plan B stuff, but it's a hard way to go. Are any of you in plan B now? You're going through an experience, and you're learning, but you're going to learn.

It's a hard way. It's the way you heard. It's good.

Plan C is learning from the experiences of others, and I would tell every child, and every young person here, get to plan A. You obey your father and mother. Obey your parents. You might not agree.

You might say, why, why did they ask me to do it? You don't have to know why. Just obey, and you'll save yourself so much trouble that us older folks have had to learn, and you'll, because you're going to learn it one way or another. If you don't do it through obedience, you're going to learn it through experience, plan B, and I tell you, it hurts.

So here God had taught me this, and he says, I'm sending this guy another problem, and oh, it was bad. It was worse than the hornets. There was a war in our area, and there were our people who were starting to listen, and this was going to be my future church, and so these people, I'm ashamed, had, and there was a war with them.

This other tribe from another river, the U River, had shot some of their boys. One was shot through the neck. They had never died.

I came by the river. I said, bring them to our clinic. They said, no, we want them to die, and when they die, we're going to wipe out every man over there, and we're going to take all their women, and so on, and I thought, oh man, then all these my people over here will end up in jail.

The Indonesians will make, put them in war camps, and the men over there will be dead, and my whole ministry will come to a halt, and I said, oh, I said, come bring them. We'll try to save their lives, and they said, no, and don't you go home and pray to your God that they'll get well. We want them to die so we can have revenge, and there was the parents of these three sons saying that to me.

Well, we didn't obey that. My wife and I went to prayer, and we start praying, oh God, don't let it happen. Don't let these boys die, because the whole thing will be war, and they didn't die.

None of the three of them, the guy that was shot with the arrow right through his neck didn't die. Out there on the muddy riverbank, didn't he? They all lived. Oh, were they angry.

They came. You prayed to your God, didn't you? I said, sure did. He said, well, we're, we're gonna, we're gonna kill them anyway, because they would have died if you hadn't interfered, and I thought, oh brother, and so this, that's the whole place was tense, and then this government official from the west of us had captured the men who had shot these boys, and he was going to bring them to the KP prison, which is east of us, and they had arranged to meet at the missionary post where we lived, and that group was going to come, and so early one morning, I was just came into my office there, and started to pray, and there was this knock on the door, and this was this government official, and he had three guys, prisoners, and he said, have the KP police come here, and I said, no, I didn't know they were coming, and he said, oh, and man, I said to the guys in all your language, I said, did our, did the Widahot people see you when you crossed the river? Yes, he said, they know we're here.

I said, oh, official, we're in big trouble. You brought them right into in the area of the territory of the enemies here, there, and they already were in trouble. Why did you ever bring them here? And as, as I said this to him outside my office door, my wife came through the house, says, Otto, be careful, all the, there's warriors coming down the airstrip running, and I said, official, you come in, come into my office.

Well, what I, I didn't invite those three prisoners in, but they got in under my desk. They knew they were in trouble, and here I'm talking to this official, all these warriors, they had carved, carved arrows all night. They were all around the building, around our house, and around our office, all dancing.

They had their war paint on. They had bunches of arrows and spears, and I, I don't know why I did this. I opened the door to see what they wanted, and there they were getting in, and they were pushing on the door, and I'm trying to push it shut, and they're pushing, and there were so many of them, and I thought, oh, man, they're going to kill them right inside my house, and I let out the loudest yell.

I just screamed, yeah, and they just backed off in surprise, and I got the door locked, but now that didn't help any, because the wind, there was no windows, just mosquito screens there, and they could have just cut the screens. I mean, we were up on post. They could have made a fire underneath.

They would have got us all out, and, but there they started dancing around this house. The most weird thing, when they have their feathers on, their war paint on, they get real close together in single file. They have their spears and arrows, and they move them up and down, and with the feathers on them, and so on, and then they move right around your house in a circle, single file, and then the second group in a single file goes the other way, right close to them, and they start going the other way, and then the next group around them goes around the other way again, and next, and it's just weird.

It's just, you can't even look at it, or you get all mixed up. I mean, and the noise, the shouting, and the movement, and all them circling everywhere around the house, and that's, and it was unreal, and this government official who was a Javanese, a man that was of the Muslim faith, he was from Java, an Oriental man, and he was there, and he was scared, you know. He was turning so pale.

He was turning paler than we are, and now, all of a sudden, I realized that these prisoners weren't under my desk anymore. I wondered where they'd gone. They'd followed my wife into the main part of the house, but they got into our storage room, and got into those metal barrels, and that's where they were, and I didn't know that, but here stood this official, and he tries to get those people quiet, but they won't listen to him.

Every time he puts up his hands, and they yell louder than ever. There was some right around our house there, just yelling at us, trying to get us to let them out, and then the others were all doing the dancing, and this man said, Mr. Tuan, I will, he got his revolver out his belt, I will shoot some of them, and then they'll back off. I said, no, no, you don't shoot anyone.

He says, well, we'll pay for your screen. I wasn't worried about the screen. I said, look, these people are possessed.

They've asked the demons to come into them. Look at their eyes. They're wild men.

You shed blood. That's all they have to see is blood, and then we'll all be gone. Don't, don't put that revolver.

I mean, he looks at me. Now, he's always told me what to do. He always told me, Tuan, I want you to do this, this, and we had to obey them, and, and now I'm telling him, put that revolver.

Don't you shoot one bullet at this crowd, and finally I persuaded him. He put his gun back in his holster, and he stood there, and these people yelling, and he puts the Indonesian flag up there, and they spat at the flag, and they yell at the flag, and oh, it was bad, and I didn't know what to do, and I walked into the other part of the house where my wife and my two little girls were, and I, and strangely enough, my wife doesn't get afraid. She can devastate them with her smile, but I'm, I'm more, I'm, I'm scared that I wondered what to do.

I, I go out the front door and try to get through this throng to the guys at the door. I said, what do you guys want to do? There was two guys I'd sent to Bible school, and, and they were there. I said, what are you guys doing? You're supposed to be Christians.

Well, they weren't yet. They just said they were, and they said, Tuan, if you don't let them out, we're going to kill you instead, and I backed out of there. I said, oh no, and I somehow got through these lines, and I got away from them.

I had to think. I said, God, and I walked the airstrip away from my, I shouldn't have done that. My wife was in there with the, with the two little girls, and these, these warriors were in there, and the official was in there, and I was out in the airstrip.

I said, God, what am I to do? God, help me. It's all over. The, it's, war is going to break out, and you know what he said? Rejoice.

I said, God, look at it. Listen to him. I said, God, this is no time for me to have a lesson on rejoicing, and I, and immediately I learned about, I remembered the hornets, and I thought, it worked.

Well, if God can do it once, he can do it twice, and he opened up that village to the gospel when I rejoiced, and, and that, and so I said, praise you, God. Just go ahead. I think, I think we've got to learn to say that, folks.

God, just go ahead. You know what you're doing. I trust you.

It helps in our praying, and so I said, God, just go ahead. Do it again, whatever it takes, but please help my family in there, and, and I start rejoicing, and then I said, God, it's all right. I give you my family, and the whole, and the church.

Maybe you don't even want a church in this place. I could hardly believe that, but I said, God, it's your church. What am I worried about it for? And I started rejoicing and praising him, and again, this came to this place where God seemed to hit a breaking point, and what he did was so amazing.

I can't hardly believe it until this day. I walked back to the house. I got into the kitchen.

I said to my wife, I said, let's have some breakfast. She says, you eat? I said, yeah. I can't get any work done in my office just now, and so we might as well.

They seem to have all kinds of time, and so I ate breakfast, and he said, what did you do? I said, this is the second lesson on rejoicing, and I went to the, back to the office, and I offered him some rice, and he said, I can't eat too much, and I offered him a tall glass of cool water, and he drank that, and then he said to him, what am I going to do? I better shoot him. This isn't going. I said, hey, as long as they don't know that they can cut their way into these screens, they, you know what the people later told me? I said, didn't you see those screens? You could have taken your knife, just cut your way in.

He said to him, we never saw any screens. Maybe I should have never told him, you know, there might be an accident. We never saw screens.

I said, didn't you think of making a fire underneath? No, we never thought of that. I said, what were you thinking? All we could see was the nailed heads of the nails, and we stood there with our knives, and we couldn't cut those nail heads. We couldn't get in.

See, when they, I remember one time there was a fire, and all our literacy class ran to fight the fire. You know how they fight the fire? They never got any water. The house was on fire.

They all had their knife, and they, they cut the vines holding the sections of wall, and they cut the vines that hold the floor, and the floor dropped out, and others were up on the roof where it wasn't burning, and they took the roof matting off. They dismantled the house, carried it away, and there was nothing left to burn. Amazing way of fighting a fire, and at the end of the day, the man stood there, and he says, well, I got so many posts.

I got so much roof matting left, and they put whatever he had together. It was a much smaller house, as you can well believe, and, but he slept there tonight, and he was in business again, and so they were going to cut the vines wherever these guys were, and come in, but they said all we could see was the nails, and that's all God had them see, the nails in the wooden walls, which they couldn't cut with their knives, and so we, this dragged on. Friends, it started at 5 30 in the morning.

This dragged on. They danced, and they danced, and God gave us a scorcher of a day. It was so hot, and that was God's mercy.

There wasn't a cloud in the sky, and these guys just, by noon, they were starting to wilt. They hadn't eaten that morning. They had started out at the crack of dawn from their village.

They were worn out. They hadn't slept that night because they were carving arrows, and, and working themselves up to kill in the demonic frenzy, and so they, by noon, they were wearing out, and they were starting to wilt, and they by, they put their arrows down around my coconut trees till you couldn't even see the trees anymore, so many arrows. They went out in the swamp, and they poured that dirty water.

They drank that dirty water, and just to revive, and by one o'clock, they were all hoarse. They could not shout anymore. You know, I found out this out.

The best time to preach in a new village is after they've had a feast, when they're all hoarse, and then they, then it's not noisy in the churches, and then they can hear you, but this, by one o'clock, they were wilting, and they had no strength, and some of them are sitting, and some of them are laying down, and finally, the government official made a deal with him. He says, I have a right to take you all to the work camps in Kepi. You have desecrated the flag of Indonesia.

You, you've cussed at an official of the government. I can tell, turn you in. All you men would never see your wives and children again, and you'd be working in the work camps, but he says, I'm going to give you one break.

I will not report what you've done to my, my, my seniors. If you go now, and walk back to your village in single file, and nobody look back, I'm going to take these men to prison myself. I'm going to Kepi, but if I see you looking back, and making one move towards one of the men, you will all work in the work camps.

They had no strength to fight, and they single file, filed out of that place, and they were gone. I found out where the prisoners were. I knocked on those barrels, said, you guys can come out now.

They said, come on. I mean, they'll be back, and they sat in there another hour for good measure, and we had to wash all the clothes, whatever was in those barrels, because they had messed it up so bad, and now the official sits at my table. My wife had cooked some rice, and I said to him, I said, before we eat, sir,

we always pray to our God, and thank Him, and we should really thank Him for keeping us today, and so he, he said, well, I believe in the same God you do.

I said, all right, then would you bow your head with me, as I thank God, and he says, just a minute, sir, one thing before you pray. He says, sir, Duan, I want to thank you for saving my life today. I said, do you believe I saved your life? He says, oh yes.

He says, I almost didn't obey you. I was going to shoot them, and I realized now that if I had shot them, we would have all been dead, and I want to thank you for saving my life, because if you hadn't so insistently told me not to do it, I would have done it, and then I said, and sir, if you had died at 5 30 this morning, where would you be now? Would you be in heaven with God, or would you be in hell with Satan? And he said, Duan, I don't know. I don't know, and then he asked me what I wanted him to ask me.

Where would you be if you had died with me this morning at 5 30? Oh, I said, sir, I'm no better than you. I too am a sinner, but Jesus has forgiven me, and he is alive, and he will welcome me into heaven, but you're Mohammed. He's buried.

He cannot help you. You have no way to get rid of your sin, sir. You would have died in your sin, and I would have died forgiven from my sin, and I said, you can be like me, and you can accept Jesus, and been ready to die, and this thing had so moved on him, and he was so fearful, and that he said, oh, I wish I could believe that, and I'm sorry to say I didn't lead him to Christ, not that morning, and then we prayed and ate the rice, and then he said, Duan, what can I do for you? I said, look, I've asked for many times from your office to have permits to go into the river valley, which is where people come from to start schools and churches.

He said, permission is granted just like that. I said, wow, maybe something good is coming out of this thing, and I had permission. Friends, it was so hard for us to get permission to go and start preaching those areas, and the whole areas opened.

This became a blessing to Don Richardson, the writer of Peace Child, who was also in that area, and other missionaries, several missionaries, whole areas were open to the gospel because of this thing. He said, I will put it in writing when I get back home, and he did, and then he went on to KP, and the next day I went to that village where these warriors had come from, and I forgot what I preached this morning, but they were all there. They were afraid not to come to church because one guy, one of the first church services in that village, he had not come to church, and he got bitten by a snake on the way out, and they found him three days later, and he died that Sunday morning, still on the way out when we were in church, so nobody would miss church.

Isn't that neat? All I had to say is the name of that man, and well, you pastors, don't you wish you had one of them on your people? They never miss. So now here's all these people that were ready to kill me, and the rest of them the day before on Saturday are sitting there with their heads hung low on the men's side, and here's the women on the outside, and this long church of Hashima, and I preached the gospel, then I said, some of you turned your lives over to Satan yesterday. See, there was about 20 people in that village that said, we want to be Christians, and they wanted to come to baptismal class, and come to a believer's class, and I didn't know whether they were real.

I thought, I don't know whether these guys mean it. They want things from my store. They want free medicine, and I said, God, I want to so much start a good church, a pure church, and I think they're fakes.

I'm not so sure. How can I find out? And here I said, some of you guys are wanting to follow Jesus. That's what you say, and yesterday you were controlled by the demons again, and you don't want to follow Jesus.

Why do you go back? If you want Jesus, why do you go back and take Satan's hand? Why do you go? And I preached and played with them, and there stood, the first guy came forward was Katawe Efele. He says, Tuan, I came yesterday, but I will never do that again. I realized, shouldn't that let Satan take over my life again, like he did yesterday? I want to follow Jesus.

I said, Katawe, turn around. Tell the people that, and he stood up there, and he says, you men can laugh at me. You men can scold me.

You can call me a coward. You women can laugh at me. I don't care what you do.

From now on, I'm going to follow Jesus, and he turns around again, takes my hand again, and stands to hold my hand. He says, I'm going to follow Jesus. I'm not going along with this anymore.

Wow, and then another guy sit there, and there was 15 guys standing there that said that, and then others came that had also come in this war, and friends, I was amazed. Now I knew who to put in baptismal class and church believers class, the guys that had repented and that stood, and I thank God for that. So I got a pure church started out of that whole deal.

Those two guys that I'd sent to Bible school, they just wanted education. I found that out later. They wouldn't repent.

I said, Thurmanus, where are you? Kustan. They wouldn't budge, and it wasn't but a few weeks later that I was in their village again that Thurmanus lay dying on this grass mat, and I said, Thurmanus, confess your sin. He says, get out of here, Thurmanus.

I don't want you, and he dies. Well, that made more effect that he didn't repent. So the next service, the rest of them started to repent, and the church is born, and I said, oh God, what a mess.

I'm going to lose everything when they're fighting around our house, and here I found, you know what happened? That government official went to Cape. He came back three weeks later, visited Don Richardson at his mission post, which was in another, in the Savi tribe, and he called me one morning. He said, Brother Aldridge, a man visited you in quite some circumstances about three weeks ago, a government official.

I said, yes. He said, I want you to know that his heart has changed, and that's all he could say over the radio. That man, he let, Richard had led him to Christ three weeks later.

That's how, so friends, here, here in this struggle, when I said, oh God, why do you allow it to happen? Did you ever say, why do you allow it to happen? What is this? And, and in the midst of this struggle, God does these marvelous things. You know, I had respect from that Hashemite village, because I faced them the next day after they threatened me, and I faced them. I was scared.

My wife, I said, I should go. My wife says, maybe, but you shouldn't. I said, I think I shouldn't face them, and she prayed at home while I went, and you know, God answered that.

We had a pure church born out of that. We had an official saved. We had a whole area opened up to the gospel with his permits and letters, and I had more respect from the people than ever before, so that they would do everything I'd say, and God can get a lot of mileage out of a thing when we start rejoicing.

Friends, when has God done the last miracle for you? Have you seen any miracles in your, you know what, if you start rejoicing at the times of tribulation, you will see miracles. You will see God move in your behalf. You'll see God do a special thing for you.

Well, I can imagine God up in heaven saying, hey, great, second lesson. He made it again. He rejoiced, so God is anxious to really seal this thing, and until I get the point, you see, and I'm slow, and so my best preacher boy, I had 10 preacher boys that I was teaching.

The best one of the whole bunch dies, Lockjaw. He was dead so fast. I said, why didn't you, why didn't he come, Otto, and he died so fast.

He was, I'd seen him at noon, and by six o'clock that evening, he was dead, and I said, oh God, he was my best man. I've invested so much time in this man trying to teach him and encourage him, and so on. Isaiah was my best man.

I said, oh God, why didn't you take the guy, the 10th one? I was ready to kick him out of class anyway. You know, what, God, you took the wrong one. Have you ever said it? And so I said to them, all right, tomorrow morning, I will come to your village, and we'll have the first Christian funeral, and I prepared how I would handle this.

I said, make a casket and put them in, and then we'll bring them in front of the church, and my village of Aboy heard about it, and they were all going to come with me in the village of Hashima, and then the unsaved peoples wanted to see what a Christian funeral was all about, because there's all so much superstition during their funerals. I said, I want no wailing. I want, no, I want to be quiet, because this man is a Christian, and so early the next morning, we start out, and all the Aboy people followed behind me, and a guy from Amenda came and said, Tuan, God sure judged him for his sin, didn't He? I said, what, what are you saying, man? And when he realized, I didn't know, he quick got out there, got in, followed him behind me, and I thought, what in the world did he? The next guy comes out to me, God, God's sure angry with his sin, wasn't He, Tuan? He died so fast, you couldn't even get medicine to him.

I said, what do you mean? What are you saying? And friends, there's something about this best preacher of mine that everybody knew but me, and I thought, the third guy came out to meet me, and I said, God sure judged him for sin, didn't He? Wow, he said, sure did, Tuan, he shouldn't have done it, and he says, then I knew something was wrong, and I got to that village, and all these strong people were there, and I said, we're not going to bring this casket into the church. No, Tuan, you shouldn't, and I didn't know what this guy had done, or what was the matter, but I start preaching to all these people, if you live like Uzziah lived, you will be punished like Uzziah was punished. God can see in the dark, God knows what He's doing, and look at it now, He's dead so fast, I couldn't even get medicine to Him, and I said, look, this is God, this is God's work.

I said, now I want you family to go and bury Him, I'm not going to the funeral, and I said to the rest of you, you got to realize you're dealing with a God so big that knows your sin, He knows, and many were converted at that place, some of these heathen people from other villages, and then I walked home with the, and that little preacher boy was with me again, the guy that preached about the ten virgins, and he,

and I said, Jaycee, what did Uzziah do? And he said, Tuan, you mean you don't know what he did? I said, no. He said, well, how could you preach what you did? I said, well, you remember I preach in general terms, I didn't name any specific sins, but what did he do? And he said, oh, Tuan, he was a bad man, he was a very immoral man, he said, just like the chief in a village can sleep with any woman in the village, so the chief of the church can sleep with any woman in the church, and so he was the chief, he was a pastor, and that's the kind of life he lived, and they all accepted that, and God just removed that guy out. The next Saturday morning, I sat with nine preacher boys.

I looked at those nine, I said, hey, if any of you are fakes like Uzziah was, hey, God, God will get on you, leave the ministry, get, don't ever come, you don't have to get up now, but don't ever come back again, because God cannot put up with that kind of thing. He hates sin, and they got, all those nine guys were scared, and they were sitting there almost shaking, and two of them never came back, and now I had seven preacher boys left, seven men that feared God, oh, they feared God, you better believe they feared God, and the worst one, that tenth one, became one of the leading preachers of the AU church, you never know, you know, but when I heard the news that Uzziah had died, and I walked outside, I said, oh, God, what are you doing to me, this is the best preacher boy, God, that's the wrong man, and what did God say, rejoice, and all of a sudden, I got, I said, okay, forgive me, God, it worked with the hornets, and it worked when the war was around the house, and I said, praise your name, go ahead, take them all, do whatever you please, whatever is best, go ahead, and I gave, I started to rejoice again, and that's when God turned that thing around, and others were saved, and I had the pure preachers now, who were, had a fear of God, and everything worked so well, friends, God knows what He's doing, we can afford to obey Him, can't we?

Obey Him, even if you don't understand, even if your emotions won't let you do it, but you don't feel like it, obey Him, He does what is good, God is a righteous God, He loves us so much, He wants, He, you love your enemies, and see what happens, I know it's hard to do, some people say, well, it's harder to love my wife than love my enemies, well, love her too, even if you don't feel like it, love your neighbor, do these things which God tells you to do, find out all the commandments in the New Testament, start obeying them, because all of them do you good, and when you start doing it, God will bless you, friends, I was praying in those days, I'm kind of ashamed, I hardly want to put this on the screen, but here goes, I got the title wrong praying, now, let me explain this, here it is, I

used to pray, God take away all my problems, have any of you ever prayed that, God take away my problems, I got so many problems, you know, it's rather selfish, number two, bless all I do, bless the wife, and bless the kids, and bless the food, and bless this, and bless my garden, and just wall to wall blessing, that's rather selfish too, isn't it, but now, I'm kind of proud of this third one, I really, I prayed, see, what's wrong with this, is I prayed these three together, take away my problems, bless everything I do, and help me to grow in Christ, now, that is the one that God is after, isn't it, He wants me, and He wants you to grow in Christ, and so, but you realize what happens, some of us only operate in plan B, we only grow when there's problems, when God puts the pressure on, and

so, He knows me well enough, that He knows that if He took away all my problems, blessed everything I did, I probably wouldn't even pray, I'd have it made, and so, He's more interested in answering number three, so He says, yes, I want you to grow, and since I want you to grow so much, I'm going to give you extra problems, because that's when you grow best, and I'm, if I'm, you see what I'm saying, and so, God is interested in our growth, now, let me show you this, this is the, what we call the victor's, the victor's cycle, look at this a minute, up here on the top, you see growth, this is the way the spiritual man reacts to

problems, we start over here with the word affliction, or this is the area of the tribulation, and this is based on Romans 5, 5, 3 to 5, which says, we glory in

tribulation, because tribulation works, tribulation is the affliction here, works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and so on, and then the love of God is spread about in our hearts, and we grow, alright, so, here's the problem, the affliction, that's when the hornets got on me, now, what happens here, this distress, I panic, it is not sin to panic, it's same as, it's not sin for you to be tempted, it's what you do with the temptation, but at first, you panic, say, oh, man, it's all over, but this distress point is the choice point, that's where we make the choice what to do, that's where you say, I'm going to rejoice, you see, now, at first, you don't want to, but, and that's where you think, you rejoice, and then, what happens when you rejoice, when you say, I

thank you, God, for this situation, I give it to you, I don't know what you're going to, but go ahead, and when you say, God, just go ahead, then you wait, you sit quietly, and you wait to see the next move God has, you don't panic, you don't struggle, you don't pray about this anymore, you give it to God, and you just wait on the Lord, and that's patience, isn't it, and then you see what God does, and he takes that miserable problem, and turns it over, and makes good come out of it, he doesn't give you problems because he wants to make your life miserable, he gives you problems so that you can grow, you see, have you ever wondered why the world seems to have less problems than us Christians, why do we have, why does God's own children have all these problems, when he has all the wealth,

and he has all the power, and he has all the wisdom, and yet we have such problems, why, is it because he doesn't love us, no, because he wants us to grow, and so we learn patience, and we watch, and then experience, man, when I gave it to God, I found out what God could do in the midst of tribulation, and then the second time after that hornet experience, then when the war came, I remembered again, I said, yes, I rejoiced last time, and now I've got experience, I've seen God move, maybe he'll do it again, and so I've got this experience, and that grows faith, and then I have hope, hope in God, and then I grow in my faith, and then God says, great, I'll give you the next problem, and so he gives me another problem, and I panic again, and I'm tempted to get angry, or I'm tempted, but no, I

say, I've got to rejoice, and I said, I'm going to see what he's going to do this time, and this is excitement, now your Christian life becomes very exciting, and that's what God wants you to be, wants you to be, and you say, I know, you know what I'm going to do when I have my next problem, I think I'm going to face another problem in life, and you are too, I would think, maybe you're in the midst of a problem right now, you can hardly listen to me talk, because your mind is on a problem, all right, what am I going to do my next problem, it's going to come, I'm going to panic first, now I don't do that intentionally, that'll come automatic, and then as I think a little bit, I'm going to rejoice, folks, I don't care what happens to me, or to my wife, or my children, or my family,

whatever, whatever happens, I am going to rejoice, I've made up my mind, now why am I so determined on that, because I've got experience, it works, friends, it works, it'll work for you, because God loves his children, and brings these things for our good, so that we may grow, see God wants us to, wants to answer that third prayer request of mine, help me to grow, and he wants you, and then you have hope, nothing can harm, isn't that what the apostle Paul says, nothing can separate me from the love of God, there's nothing, though life or death, or all that list of things, nothing can harm, I have hope in God, because he is greater than all my problems, and so I grow, and so that's what we call the victor cycle, wonderful, isn't it, but then there's, let me show you something else, though,

and you won't clap after this one, this is what we call the vicious cycle, now this is based on Romans 8, for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace, for the carnal man is at enmity, if you live in the carnal, the natural man, then you cannot react with rejoicing, there's no way you can react, it's, you read that yourself, here's the problem again, and then comes the choice point, which is the panic area, alright, we panic, then if we, what do we do then so often, we react wrong, if we don't, see we all react to problems, we all have problems, I don't have to tell you that, we all react, you say well my husband never reacts to problems, he's so stoic, oh yes he does inside, sometimes it's better for a person to go all to pieces at a problem than to

hold it in and finally blow, but you know, here are the three ways now that we react wrong to our problems, and that is guilt, anger, fear and anxiety, see your problems, your problem may be your own doing, it may be, you know, you say oh if I only had, you know, I should have known better, and you're full of guilt and you're mad at yourself, or you're angry at your wife, you say if only she hadn't done it, and we wouldn't have gotten in this trouble, or your husband, whatever, and then fear, now that could be a natural catastrophe when, you know, whatever happens beyond your control, and fear, or worry, and these are the four ways we react to problems, and different one of us, alright, now what happens when we react in one of those four ways, we hit the panic point, then we have, that's

a choice, we make the choice, and then we make defenses, ah, you know, excuses, if you please, if only, you know, if only this, and you say well it's because, no wonder, it's because of this and this, and if God, why did you allow these circumstances, and so on, and you make excuses, the reason why I, I can't rejoice in this because of this and this, and you make defenses and excuses, and then comes the symptoms, and oh you medical people know what this is all about, doesn't it say in the word of God that the joy of the Lord is like a medicine, but the opposite is true, if you constantly worry, and you react wrong to your problems, and you fear, and you have anger, and all this, you, there's something happens to our stomach acids, and something happens to our digestion, and we get all

kinds of problems, and they say stomach disorders, and gland disorders, and even arthritis, it's said is connected to this, headaches, nervousness, emotional problems, and all kinds of things that come into your life then, and then of course you feel so bad, because now you got a giant problem, and you're sick besides, and then the pessimism, and the other chart it was hope, and this is hopelessness sets in, everything's going wrong, at this point friends, when you have, when there's a hopelessness, Christianity doesn't work for you anymore, and Satan is quick to tell you, well look, you know, when you need him most in the midst of the problem, that's when he isn't there, that's when he isn't coming to you, and to comfort you, to help you, and you're fighting your way out, and struggling

your way through, and you, and that's when our faith starts to waver, and it becomes hopeless, because Christianity doesn't work for us at the point of need, and friends, there's many Christians today, that come to the affliction, which God has put there for them to grow, react wrong to that problem, and this thing becomes a snare to them, and it destroys them, and at the top here, I've got defeat, when you get finally up here, really that's very mild, it should be death, or suicide, or whatever, because it's, you self destroy as you react wrong to your problems, and then you go around the circle, and you hit the next problem, and God has given you another opportunity, and you react wrong again, and you make excuses, and you have symptoms, and you're sicker, and now you're on

tranquilizers, or whatever it is, and now you're more hopelessness, and around, and around, that's why I call this a vicious cycle, it's a mess, any of you understand this cycle, few of you, are all of you awake, it's

a mess friends, and you know what, you know what A.W.

Tozer said, use every stumbling block, turn every stumbling block into a stepping stone, how true he was, when he said that, because did you realize up to now, how important problems are in your life, and in my life, and why God allows problems, and why God wants us to have problems, because most of us are plan B people, and he gives us opportunities, because he wants every one of us to grow, that's why he gave you the children he did, that's why he gave you the wife he did, or the husband he did, or the government official over your area, or whoever, the pastor, whatever it is, friends, so that we could react right to problems, problems are very, very important, problems are very, very useful, don't waste good problems, they're too hard to come by, no they're too hard, well whatever, alright, now let me put up both charts, I don't know if the ones sitting way back can see both of them, here they are side by side, the victor cycle, and the vicious cycle, and I want to ask you, which one represents your life, now be honest, you say neither one, I don't believe it, I don't believe there's a person here that never has problems, which circle, where are you, you're in one of these two, now some people say, well I go back and forth, one problem I am able to rejoice, and I'm in this cycle, and I'm growing, and the next one I'm over here, and I'm, I blew it, and I go back and forth, now, what I ask you is this, if you're doing that, are you growing or aren't you growing, or you grow through the first one, a little bit in faith, and then you lose it all, and that's where you have the lukewarm Christians, not going anywhere, miserable Christianity, friends, if you're going to grow, you've got to rejoice every time a problem comes, you've got to make good use of them, which one represents your life, and I encourage you to get in the right cycle, to get in the right circle, there was a young man who heard me preach this, and he asked me to sign his Bible, in the back of his Bible he had very neatly drawn this Victor cycle, and I said, well you've only drawn one, what about the other one, he says, oh Mr.

Koenig, I don't need to draw that, I've already got that memorized, you see, he'd been living there, will you go home and pray God for some good problems, well don't you want to grow, what you're saying to me is, you've got enough already, you don't need to pray for more, alright, then use the ones you've got, use the ones you've got, and make everyone, you know, and instead of you leaving each other today and saying, well have a good day, why don't you start saying to each other, hey, don't raise good problems, and then we'll all be reminded, don't raise good problems, okay, guard them carefully, alright, friends, well you know what rejoicing is, rejoicing is faith in action, don't forget that, rejoicing is faith in action, how can I see your faith, I see your faith when I see you rejoicing on your sickbed, when I see you with sorrow, or real problems, and you face me and you're rejoicing and say, God is good, I trust in him, that was Job, wasn't it, man, there was no man that suffered more than Job, and he says, I know that my redeemer liveth, I know, though he slay me yet will I trust him, and friends, rejoicing will help your faith grow, and that's what we need so desperately, we need to, our faith must grow in Christ, so keep rejoicing, and keep serving him, and walking with him, get in the right cycle, learn to pray the right prayers, but again I want to say as I close, it is far more important in our prayer life, in our time of devotions, to rejoice and to surrender than to beg and plead, I thank you for your attention.

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