

(Suffering in the Christian Life) 2. the Chastening of the Lord

by Roy Hession

Suffering is not punitive but restorative, designed to restore us and provoke us to see something we've been blind to.

Duration: 45:26

Scripture: Psalm 94:12, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 11:29, Hebrews 12:5

Topics: "Chastening"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a personal relationship with God and seeking His guidance directly. He warns against relying solely on the opinions and experiences of others. The preacher also discusses the role of suffering in the Christian life, urging listeners not to waste their sorrows but to allow them to deepen their understanding of God's will. He encourages the congregation to have fresh courage and not to fear the challenges they may face. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God's guidance and a reminder to trust in His grace.

Transcript

These mornings, I bring the message straight hot from the oven. Indeed, you can do sometimes with a bit more baking. And when one has spoken on it and one thinks about what one has said, one is tempted the next time to put it back into the oven for a little more baking and recap again.

But I am going to resist that temptation. I am going to take it so that you are spiritually intelligent and you don't need man to emphasise and emphasise what's already perhaps been said once. And the Spirit is going to take you back to anything of value in a former message.

And we want to proceed on, stage by stage, with this great important subject of suffering in the Christian life. Sometimes, as I have said, it's called tribulation, sometimes affliction, sometimes distresses. All sorts of words are used.

But it's known only too well by the human race, and each of us either has had experience of it, or certainly in one way or another will have some experience of it. And the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ has budgeted for it. And Jesus takes it in his stride.

He went this way himself and he's made every provision when you have to go in any degree this way. And I'm surprised how much there is in Scripture. Once you get on to a certain subject in the Word, because perhaps you've had some experiences that need your understanding of that subject, you can interpret it, you find it everywhere, until you come to the next thing in your life and the next truth, and that's everywhere.

What a wonderful book this Word of God is. All right then, suffering, or whatever other word you like to use, what is the divine intention in it? Apart, of course, from what we saw yesterday, that tribulation worketh endurance, and endurance worketh testedness, and testedness worketh a new holy confidence and assurance. Quite apart from that general sketch that Paul gives us in Romans 5, what other intentions are there from God in the sufferings of one sort or another, either physical, or circumstantial, or psychological, or from the world of persecution? They can all be very severe, hard to bear.

Is there a divine intention in it? Of course there is. Nothing touches the child of God but what God allows. In the centre of the circle of the will of God I stand, there can be no second causes, all must come from his dear hand.

And it's good to ask ourselves, when we're in the midst of trouble, if God has got an intention, and would he please reveal what we need to learn from it. Now the Word of God tells us in many places of one very definite intention in some of the sufferings that come to the saints. They don't, they aren't always along this line, but many are.

There are a number of purposes that God has, and this morning's subject is a very, very important one. They are to be regarded very often, God will show you, as his chastenings. And our subject then this morning is the chastenings of the Lord.

Now let's see it in the Word, in a few scriptures. Will you turn to Deuteronomy chapter 8? Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 2, And thou shalt remember, Moses is speaking to Israel, all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no, and he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manner which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know, that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Verse 5, Thou shalt also consider in thine heart.

That as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chastened thee. And there are sometimes hard experiences in the wilderness where to be regarded as the Lord chastening his people. David, Psalm 6, he regarded many of the hardships he endured as chastenings.

And by the way, Psalm 6 is one that speaks of sickness, sickness nearly unto death. And he says there in his prayer, O Lord, chapter 6, verse 1, rebuke me not in thine anger, Psalm 6, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. And he goes on to say, and he doesn't just continue in a wail of lament, but he gets through to assurance, the Lord, in verse 9, hath heard my supplication, the Lord will receive my prayer.

And his prayer was, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Almost the same words he repeats in Psalm 90, oh no, there's another one I needn't refer to, it's the same, but here's a variation of the same sort of theme, Psalm 94, verse 12. Psalm 94, verse 12, Blessed, hallelujah, what's this? Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, Lord, and teachest him out of thy law, that thou mayest

give him rest from the days of adversity, etc., etc.

And he realises that though it's sometimes hard to be chastened by the Lord, it's always ultimately an experience of blessing. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, about whom thou dost take a lot of trouble, Lord, to teach him how to walk. And then you turn over to the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 11, verse 29, there's New Testament references to chastening, and this is the passage where Paul is giving instructions with regard to the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 11, verse 29, He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation, says the authorised.

That's too strong a word. It should be, even the margin of my authorised puts it, eateth and drinketh judgment, not damnation. That's something for the lost, damnation.

It's very near judgment. In the Greek it's krino, judgment. Condemnation is katakrino, down-judgment.

But judgment here is just another word for chastening. It's not condemnation necessarily at all. It's this other, rather lesser word, chastening to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. What an astonishing thing. The chastening of the Lord meant sickness, and in a few cases perhaps early death for some of those saints that were compromising, playing with sin, not repenting, and yet partaking of the Lord's Supper.

And then he goes on to say if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned of the world. Now that is it, that's katakrino.

It's rather like a judge who's going down to the assizes to deal with a whole string of serious cases, men who'll be brought before him as criminals, and on whom he'll have to pronounce katakrino, judgment, condemnation. But before he goes, Mother says, there's some trouble with the children. They've been doing some naughty things, they need some correction.

And before that judge goes down to the assizes he deals with his own family. And the reason is he never wants them to stand in those assizes. And therefore he meets out chastening, correction.

No, that's not the law court. They're his own family. This is a domestic matter.

And then he goes down to proceed to the legal matters to the world outside. And that domestic matter is called here chastening. And then there is the classic passage on the subject of the chastings of the Lord, Hebrews chapter 12.

Hebrews chapter 12, beginning at halfway through verse 5. Well, the beginning of verse 5, You have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children. And here, this next word is a quotation from the Old Testament. I believe it's from the book of Proverbs.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou rebuke of him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.

For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits

and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, that he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening for the present. Seemeth to be joyous, but grievous nevertheless afterward. Praise the Lord for that afterward.

It yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. And so there are a few scriptures which speak of this great subject, the chastening of the Lord. This word chastening in the Greek simply means child training.

And all children need training. We say that some children are well brought up because they've been subjected to child training, they've been subjected to correction, they've been subjected to chastening. And sometimes it hasn't always been pleasant for them, but how good it is that they've been brought up in a home where there was a right and proper chastening.

And if our sufferings, whatever they may be, are to be regarded as the chastenings of the Lord, it implies that we, his children, need correction. So you don't likely say, I'm being chastened, unless you really mean by it. You need it.

It isn't a question of whether you deserve it. We shall see that in a moment. It's a question, do you need it? When you deal with a child, it isn't handing out legal punishments.

It's according to their need, and according perhaps to the standards of the parents. Some parents wouldn't bother about some things, others would. And I want to tell you it's humbling to have to acknowledge that the suffering you are going through, whatever it may be... Oh, by the way, here in the Hebrews, the suffering wasn't physical suffering, it was persecution.

It was opposition from the world. And yet they were still regarded as the chastening of the Lord. By the time it reached us, it had been allowed by them, reached them, its character had been changed, and it was now something from God, it was to be regarded as a chastening.

God was after something in them. And I know for myself, when I lay in hospital in traction, I had taken it quite well, I felt I was able to accept it as from the Lord, it was under control. It wasn't easy at first to accept it, but there was nothing for it.

And I felt quite at peace. And then the Lord began to draw near to me. He said, this is chastening.

And I tell you, I found it hard to accept. Chastening. And I didn't want to tell Pam that God had shown me that this was chastening.

For her, it was something else. She has her own testimony as to what she saw was God's intention for her. Maybe she'll give her testimony one day.

But for me, I had to accept what I didn't want to accept, that this accident, the injuries involved, and it was going to have a long-term effect too, as far as I can see. I got to accept it as the chastening of the Lord, thereby admitting that there were things that needed it. That I needed it! There was that in me which needed correction.

David took that stand. God knows he was a sweet enough child of God, and yet he said, oh, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Yes, he grouped upon his things as a

chastening.

Now, chastening is something reserved for the child of God. I mean to say, you don't start correcting other people's children, correcting their manners, and smacking their hands or doing something. No, that's not your part.

They're not your child. It's your business as a parent. And so it is, when God chastens us, he does it because we are his children.

We're not bastards. God has no bastards. There are a lot of people in our church, they profess to be Christians but they've been never born of the Spirit.

They appear to be in the family but they're bastards, they're illegal. And I don't know that God deals with them quite so particularly as he does with those that really are his children by spiritual birth. He's got a vested interest in you.

He's concerned with your walk, with your holiness, and therefore he takes pains over us. We sometimes wish he wouldn't take such pains. There it is in scripture.

This is something reserved for the child of God and it is to be regarded as a mark of his love. Verse 6 of chapter 12 there it says, Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. Sometimes I've seen some of my friends going through it and I say, brother, the Lord loves you an awful lot and you are to regard it, not to despise it, not to be impatient of it, but to see it as a special mark of the divine favour for you.

It takes away some of the sting. But if ye be without chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not servants. So be encouraged.

When that judge stops to deal with his family, it's because it's his family. He's dealing with things that would never in themselves merit standing in the door. But he doesn't want them ever to get as far as that and he's here nipping things in the bud and doing so because he's their father and they're his children.

And he's doing so at the request of mum. This is a situation that needs dad. Oh, the one who is having a spanking, whatever it may be, may feel a little hard towards dad and if dad loses his temper he better repent because he takes the sweetness away from the exercise if he has a bad temper.

But you can, quite objectively, for the good of the other. And that's how it is with God and ourselves. And it says here, now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous.

Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. And I think that's a very important verse. Listen again.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous. Nevertheless afterward, there's a blessed afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Quite obviously then, suffering, chastening, is not punitive in its intention but only and always restorative.

God is out to restore us where we've gotten away. God is out to restore us, to restore the divine image which has been defaced in us. It isn't a question of our place in the family, that's assured.

We're there forever. But God is now on a work of restoration. It's very easy to underestimate the tremendous coup d'état the devil accomplished amongst men in the fall.

And what God does when he saves a man, he undertakes a task of restoration. It begins when he's born again but it doesn't end that day. It's not the work of a day or of a week but perhaps of a lifetime.

And God progressively now restores that which Satan has ruined, that divine image, and he uses sometimes these afflictions which are allowed to come upon us. Now I want to tell you this very clearly that it's not punitive. Because if you've got a bad conscience and some calamity happens, you'll be tempted to say, God's punishing me.

And I think we've got to rid ourselves completely of that concept, that this is something that I deserve. Actually, if you want to know what you deserve, you deserve hell, not just that sickness or that trouble. No, it's something you need.

It's not punitive, it's restorative. And I'll tell you the great reason why I know all our sufferings put together can never be regarded as an adequate punishment for sin, for the simple reason they're not great enough. What is adequate as a punishment for human sin? Is it calamity? Is it bereavement? Is it sickness? It isn't big enough to be regarded as a punishment for sin, that dreadful thing.

The only adequate punishment for sin is that which Jesus bore in his body on the tree, which caused the Holy Son of God to wail, My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? He wasn't forsaking the Son as the Son, but the Son as the sinner, whose likeness, for the moment, he was choosing to wear. But that punishment is over. He said of it, it's finished! And therefore that which comes to you, no matter how difficult to accept, is never to be regarded as a punishment for sin.

It's designed to restore. It's designed to provoke you perhaps to see something you've been blind to. It's designed for you to ask God questions about how it is with your soul and what he has intended for it.

It's restorative. Diverse and foolish, oft I strayed, but yet in love he sought me, and on his shoulder gently laid, and home rejoicing brought me. Oh, but this other aspect of that other thing, and very often the way by which he brings us home is by afflicting us perhaps in one way or another.

And we on our part humbling ourselves to inquire, and he on his part telling us what! And we on our part repenting, and he on his part forgiving us and restoring that which had gone wrong. Please turn the cassette over now. Do not fast wind it in either direction.

And we on our part repenting, and he on his part forgiving us and restoring that which had gone wrong. We get this very clearly taught us in that great Psalm 119, verse 67, Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep thy law. You got that? Before I was afflicted, said David, I went astray.

And in another place he says, It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Psalm 119, verse 71. There are some other lovely passages with regard to seeing his afflictions in that light.

They had their effect, and he came to appreciate them. And under their influence he humbled himself and found his way back to the God that he slipped away from, in whatever matter it was. In other words then, chastening is affliction with a purpose.

Affliction with a purpose, and the purpose is our holiness. Now you might say, I wonder if so-and-so's afflictions could possibly be looked upon in that light, because so-and-so is such a dedicated Christian. Surely God's got no controversy with him.

Surely there's nothing, as far as I can see, about which God wants to correct him. It may well be he's a deeply dedicated Christian. But you know, even in the most dedicated Christian, there are parts of the divine image that yet needs to be restored.

There are areas in that dedicated life where self is still reigning on the throne, in a very polite guise, but nonetheless there. And the man himself hardly realises it. He's as surrendered as he knows how, but God sees areas, and maybe others see it too.

It's not all that easy to live with. Maybe they're a relationship, even in that dedicated child of God, that aren't as the Lord wants them. There isn't love to this person, to many, but not to one person.

And so it is, he has to take us into his surgery, and he has to deal with us. I have a dear friend in America. I have many there.

We've got a wonderful team, may I say, in America. Sometimes they come over and visit us. And there's one brother who's been over more than once.

You will know, some of you, the name of Jim Perry. And he's a saint in the making, like the rest of us. And God hasn't finished with him yet, and he hasn't finished with us.

And I remember some of you finding it very difficult to receive a certain testimony he gave, which you felt was a bit hard to receive, not the sort of testimony that should have been mentioned in public, and so on. Well, he's the first to tell you you're right in thinking that. There's no quarrel with you over that.

He's a saint in the making. And he received our newsletter the other day, and it sparked many things off in his life, in his mind. And it sparked a beautiful testimony.

Along this, there are nine, and I think it's worth reading what he said. He said, The past twenty years has been a marvellous schooling for me as I've realised God's hand in some of my self-willed ego trips, like trying to be some kind of spiritual leader and benefactor for the revival brethren, only to see it never happening. It took exactly what the Lord allowed for the light to break through.

The death of a wife, a devastating, presumptuous second marriage, and just last year a physical illness that had me despairing until we discovered that Satan had a hand in it, and God completely cleared it up. It was good to have the freedom to just be a nobody if it pleased him. Paul again says in 1 Corinthians 7, So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything but God who gives the increase.

He pictured himself as a bit of a revival leader over there. Also beginning to understand Elijah's wind, earthquake and fire by simply seeing that the Lord was not in it. And it took what God allowed for him to see it, so he says, In the flesh we can stir up a lot of presumptuous things, that God is not in, and they become a lot of noise.

Of course, it's only when we come out of the cave and stand before the Lord that we hear what he wanted us to hear, time and time again. But we didn't quite hear it, that being the still, small voice. And oh, he thanks God for an afterward.

After his corrective process and restorative factors, it always amazes Gene and I how the Lord has meted out so many blessings to us and through us. I say through us because his promise given me at the start of our present interim, and he quotes what the scripture is. And so he goes on, and speaking.

He'd been given a ministry, he's retired, and he is an interim pastor wherever there's a gap. He's allowed to go and take charge of a church for a few months, hasn't got to bother about organisation, just preach the word. And how God has blessed him, the richest years of his life.

But only after God had done his work in destroying what he calls his ego trips, and it took the death of a wife, a disastrous second marriage, and all sorts of other things, but afterward, it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness. I got a letter from another friend of mine in the States, John Whittle of the WEC, and he was commenting on all these things, and he says, as Rusko says, Rusko is one of their great WEC heroes, I think he's dead now. As Rusko used to say, the way into the heavenlies is very often through the hellies.

But you get there. Afterward, it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness. But notice, unto them which are exercised thereby.

And that isn't old English, it's exactly exercise. Or the other versions talk about training, unto those that are trained by it. It's not enough just to have our hardships, our wills crossed, our difficult situations, our sicknesses, our sorrows.

It's not only physical. The opposition of the world, disappointment at work. Yes, it can be quite the hellies, but you've got to be exercised thereby.

Suffering is not automatically going to be a blessing to you. It's only as you and I are exercised thereby. And the first thing is to admit that this is chastening.

Now, I'm not saying it's always that, but God will show you. And I believe it's pretty safe to inquire seriously along that line. And even if there isn't a very direct connection between your trouble and certain things that God's convicting you of, it's a good thing to be convicted of them and to get those things straight.

I'm thinking of that verse in James 5 where it says, if any man's sick, let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him and lay hands on him, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he hath committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. Now, I don't know if in every case that sickness is because God wanted him to see certain sins. It might not be.

Maybe when those sins are confessed and forgiven, that sickness may still persist. It is not always God's purpose to heal at the drop of a hat. And I want to say something before the end about what about the people who don't get healed? Because it's only in the biggest healing movements.

It's only a small percentage that get healed. The great majority do not get healed. Are they second-class Christians? Oh, not a bit.

God has beautiful purposes in allowing what he does allow. Not all necessary. But here's a group around a bed, and they say, well, now let's get all things straight with God.

And the one on the bed, and perhaps those around him, begin to walk in the light, whereas he's in the light, and it shows up certain things. And forgiveness comes into that room. Praise the Lord! Now, whether this is going to touch a spring or not, I don't know.

It may not necessarily be the key factor, but there's nothing but gain if going through a deep time you have learned to humble yourself under his mighty hand and show you. We need to be exercised thereby. And I

can only say for myself, I was exercised thereby.

Lying there, I saw all sorts of things. That I'd been going easy on a besetting sin. That I'd been neglecting repentance at the depth that I should have repented.

I saw that so much self-will was in my service. You know, the Lord said to Peter, when thou wast young thou girdest thyself and walkest whether thou wouldst. And I have had to see that I've been girding myself.

Walking whether I would. Oh yes, in the Lord's service, making my plans. And it seems to me as if I was almost thinking that I was immortal.

People said I didn't look my age, I didn't feel my age. And I could make plans and do I don't know what I didn't dream of doing. I want to tell you, I feel my age now.

I expect I look it too. Good old seventy-six. And all sorts of other things in which there was a presumptuousness.

And I praise the Lord. Afterwards it yields a peaceful fruit of righteousness because the Lord helped me. I don't suppose I've got to the bottom of it all.

And I'm not going to struggle, I'm not going to make a heavy weather of it. If God wants to show me more, he'll have to. And I don't know, frankly, how I'm going to implement some of those things.

I don't know how I'm going to implement, no longer girding myself and walking with the right words. I've only got to feel better and I start making plans for the future. And filling up my diary.

And I'm ashamed to tell you what I've got in my diary. Lord, I don't know, am I girding myself? I've done a lot of it in the past, ego trips if you like. And walking with the right words.

Well, it's up to him to implement these things and make real the new lessons. But, oh, this is the way. And it means there that in the middle of whatever that need is, the precious blood of Jesus reaches you.

And you are restored wonderfully to God. So there it is. No chastening for the present seems to be joyous but grievous.

But it yields, it will afterward, blessed outcome for yourself, for others, for your service. Unto those that are exercised thereby. Paul Bilheimer, a dear American brother, is in his nineties.

He's just come to life again with some new books that have really stirred the Christian world. And he has got one book entitled, Don't Waste Your Sorrows. Don't waste them.

Be exercised thereby. Learn what's on hand. Learn what's going.

Open yourself. And you needn't be frightened of the light for what the light reveals. The blood of Jesus is going to cleanse.

And the end result is going to be something sweeter and deeper. But as I say, it isn't always so. We shall see other intentions that God has in allowing the sufferings of the saints.

The last thing I want to say is this. I quoted to you that marvellous saying of A. W. Rusko of the WEC. I believe he's now in glory.

That he found that very often the way into the heavenlies was via the hellies. Maybe you'll get into the heavenlies in a new way. But there may be some chastenings.

And you must humble yourself at that mighty hand. But I want to say this in conclusion. Your sufferings are not going to bring you into the heavenlies.

Not even your repentance is going to bring you into the heavenlies. Going through the hellies by itself isn't going to bring you into the heavenlies. If you get in at all into that place of close proximity to God again, it's going to be by the blood of Jesus.

Accumulating sufferings of a lifetime, martyrdom among men, into the heavenlies, but the blood of Jesus will. And this is all our hope and peace. Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

The way into the heavenlies may well be from one point of view via the hellies. But ultimately by the blood of Jesus. When I say ultimately, I don't mean getting into heaven itself.

I mean that place of close proximity to God, that new place. If you get in at all, if your heart's desires for a closer walk with God are going to be satisfied, it's only going to be by the blood of Jesus. And that in turn means you've got to put yourself on the wrong.

Only wrong ones get into the heavenlies, but they get in by the mighty sufficiency of the blood of Jesus. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter the holiest. How? By the blood of Jesus, which means the weakest of us gets in.

The weakest saint may win the day, though earth and hell have struck the way. You're going to get in by the blood. So there's a little, some of the things that one's been learning afresh.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take. The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy and will break in blessings on your head. And really, as we shall see tomorrow, these times are only for a moment.

When it's over, you thought it was endless at the time, only for a moment. And the sun is shining again. And you've learned so much.

And I suggest we need to take each thing. You see, I can see young people, maybe they're not going to have any big, terrific catastrophes, but you have your problems. That budding boyfriend affair, which you had high hopes of, may crumble.

And you may be left in tears. It's all of the same piece. No chastening for the present is joyous but grievous.

But afterward, you'll become a new sort of Christian. You're going to become a new sort of Christian. You're going to be a Christian of experience.

You know what grace is. You know what mercy is. You know what is healing of the hurt is.

And you go into life with something to give to others. Let us bow our heads in prayer. Lord, we want to thank Thee that if we get into the heavenlies, it's only going to be by Thy blood.

The hell You've already taken from us. Any difficult thing we may experience is but a tiny reflection of what You've already had. But we're going to get in by Thy blood.

And Lord, if some of us don't feel we're in the holy of holies these days, Lord, we pray Thee, help us to humble ourselves to confess that fact and see Jesus and His blood, rending the veil, making a way, even for people no better than us, to get in to that holy of holies. We want to thank Thee for the afterward that You've got for all of us. We thank Thee that we're in Thy hands.

Life is earnest. Life is urgent. And Lord, we can't play around with Thee.

We don't want to. And You're not playing around with us. You're a good God.

And You're intent upon the very best for each one of us. And we don't want to waste our sorrows, Lord. We don't want to erase them by self-pity or resentment.

We want to get the good of them, Lord. We want them to be the means by which we see what You want us to see. We pray Thee, and may many of us emerge from dark experiences with a glowing, glorious testimony of what grace has done for needy people like us.

We ask it in Thy dear name. Amen. All right, let's sing that verse again.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take. The clouds you so much dread. I don't know what the number is.

Do you know those words, at least? Four, six, three. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take. The clouds you so much dread.

Unbelief is sure to earn. You've got that? Blind, dying belief is bound to get it wrong. God is His own interpreter.

Oh, my dear friends, let's have first-hand dealings with God about these things. Not talking only to other people, pouring out our tales of woe. First-hand dealings with His gracious God above.

All right, the last verse. Blind, dying belief is sure to earn. And stand His worthy way.

God is His own interpreter. And He will make His way. Praise the Lord.

You're dismissed.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18765.mp3>

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