

Keep Moving!

Roy Assanti—July 11, 2015

Good afternoon, brethren! It is interesting that today we had an announcement of someone who has cancer right through her body.

- Have you ever felt an air or atmosphere of gloom ahead of you?
- Have you ever felt that alarming, uncomfortable, uneasiness in the pit of your stomach?
- Where internal alarm bells signal an
 - ✓ echoing loss?
 - ✓ looming peril?
- a kind of claustrophobic grief that clings on to you?

I'm just trying to echo what it's like when you come across a trial. Something that looms; it's terrible. You don't want to face it, but it's right in the pit of the gut. It's an ominous empty deep grief from within. It is so at any time in the life of the people that God calls. These descriptions in one way or another do fit the state of mind that you can be in.

I'm going to talk about three thoughts that may help in a time of trouble to whatever extent it happens.

1. **The Ominous State**—feeling that you're at the edge of the cliff.
2. **The Effort**—you can't just stay there, you've got to do something. That goes hand-in-hand with the answer, where you get the hope.
3. **Keep Moving**

To begin with I just want to say something in general: the things that we understand when we read God's Word there's traction. I wonder how much do we realize that people who are *not* called, that are outside, it means absolutely nothing and they may as well be reading a comic book when they read the Bible; the Bible is not an authority to them.

I spoke to a group of 21 people who were not converted. There were some church-goers there and I spoke to them about God's Word. I said that the Bible is the most distributed book. Why? There have been attempts to destroy it. I gave an example of a flat 3-D picture that you can look at. When you look at it it's just a flat picture, but if you sort of dim your eyes a little bit and you slowly pull the picture away and don't really look and focus, what happens is that you begin to see a 3-dimensional picture that almost magically appears before your eyes. It's not obvious. It's incredible that I can see a ship and some fish swimming around. When you really want to take a close look, it disappears.

I said that the Bible is something like that. This message begins to appear and amidst a few yawns and few scratches of the head I realized that I was not getting through. They were probably looking more on the style, but the 'pearls,' the treasure that I was putting before them didn't make any sense and went right over their head.

Romans 8:5: "For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who walk according to *the* Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death..." (vs 5-6). That's where we all head whether we like it or not. That's our destiny,

"...but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace" (v 6). I tried to talk to these people about this peace, this joy, this energy. It just went over their head, because the carnal mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit.

Verse 7: "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity... [just switch a few letters around and that says *enemy*] ...against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God; **neither indeed can it *be***." People cannot understand God's Word unless God gives, grants, calls and gives the understanding.

Verse 8: "But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God." That's just an understanding that we need to bear in mind. We are a little different ***if we have God's Spirit; we're given a different understanding***. I just wanted to start with that prerequisite because it was really stamped on my mind quite recently.

The first thought is ***the ominous cliff-edge***. The alarm of being stuck in the clutches of a contrary habit, experiencing the trauma of separation, dealing with a terminal illness; on the cliff-edge.

I tell you what, some are on the cliff-edge of financial disaster. These are just words, but it's real life situations. It's a 'punch in the gut.' When you're hit, you *know* you're hit.

- Where do I go?
- What do I do?

Dealing with the death of a loved one is another one. Terminal!

- What do you do?
- How do you cope?
- *You've got to keep moving!*

When we consider going through difficult, trying and absolutely impossible times:

Proverbs 24:10: “If you faint in the day of adversity, **your strength is small.**” Just a quick Proverb, but a lot in there. You’ve got to *keep going!*

When we’re at the ominous stage, where struck/hit, we’ve got to keep going. There’s a situation where an individual gets a new job and it is very responsible. It begins to take more and more time: phone calls, commitment. The prayer and study time is diminished. Work slowly takes over. You lose your equilibrium and then what happens? *This individual leaves the faith!*

Another situation is a dedicated couple lose their son, a son that they loved. He dies in a work accident. What happens? *His widow remarries and their three grandchildren are taken away!* One thing leads to another and eventually they leave and do not seek the Truth anymore.

A longtime faithful member loses sight of the *first love*, the Truth and begins to look at the community and stays with a church community. He’s being led further and further from the Truth. What happens? *He’s talking to a relative who is with the Truth*, and he says, ‘Well, we keep the Lord’s Supper every month,’ aside from all the other moving away from the Truth. He calls the Passover *the Lord’s Supper* and he keeps it every month.

When his in-laws say ‘no, we keep it once a year.’ *Oh, we always kept it once a month.* ‘No, we kept it once a year, remember?’ This is someone who was in the Truth for most of his adult life. Suddenly he does not remember that the Passover is kept once a year at a specific time, at a specific time of day and in a specific way.

When we’re stuck in a hole, there’s no turning back. When we’re there we have to *keep moving*. Otherwise, it can take us away. We have to exercise the right priorities.

I think it is interesting that when the Romans invaded the English shores and a certain commander had his men, his legions, up high. He asked them to turn around and look back and they could see the smoke going up. He said the smoke were the ships. ‘If we do not succeed we do not go back.’

It’s almost like that when we are put in a spot. The choice is that we either believe God or there’s no turning back. We have to trust and have that faith in His promises.

1-Corinthians 10:13—an encouragement: “No temptation has come upon you except what is common to mankind. For God, Who *is* faithful, **will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear.**... [there’s the promise] ...but with the temptation... [trial, difficulty, the fact that you’re slammed against the wall] ...**He will make a way of escape,** so that you may be able to bear *it.*”

When we are in a hard spot, that’s a promise, a testament equivalent to this where Israel stood to take the ‘promised land’ and it was war! War is not an easy thing. War is a matter of life, death and it’s dire. I can’t imagine a time when you’re standing there opposing an army with swords ready to jab into someone’s stomach or cut someone’s head. It’s really vivid!

Or likewise have someone’s sword, spear or arrow aiming at your head, chest, whatever. This is a serious, ominous situation and Joshua had his back to the wall and he has to encourage his people:

Joshua 1:6: “Be strong and of good courage, for you shall divide for an inheritance to this people the land, which I swore to their fathers to give it to them.” Imagine being in his position having to lead armies, potentially lead men to their death. It’s a matter of life and death!

Verse 7: Only be strong and very courageous...” This is God’s instruction: *Move forward and be strong and very courageous, don’t cave in!*

“...**so that you may observe to do according to all the Law,** which My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may prosper wherever you go. **This Book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth...**” (vs 7-8). You do not forget God’s ways! You hang on to God’s ways regardless of the trial, difficulty or problem

“...but you shall meditate therein day and night, **so that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it,** for then you shall make your way prosperous... [that’s the way to prosper] ...and then you shall have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage. **Do not be afraid...**” (vs 8-9).

When we have a trial, something either financial or the fear of a loss of some kind, *we tend to fear!* God says, ‘Don’t fear and stick to My Word.

“...neither be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you in all places where you go” (v 9). We might say that Joshua was a tremendous leader and went from success to success, so it was easy for this man. However:

- Is it about Joshua?
- or**
- Is it about you and me?
 - Who is it about?
 - Was Joshua that tough?
 - What he that strong a leader?
 - Was he really?

Joshua 7:1 “But the children of Israel committed a sin in the cursed thing, for Achan, the

son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the thing which was cursed. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Beth Aven on the east side of Bethel. And he spoke to them, saying, 'Go up and look over the country.' And the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, 'Let not all the people go up.... [this is going to be a pushover] ...But let about two or three thousand men go up and strike Ai. Do not make all the people labor there, for they *are* few'" (vs 1-3). This is going to be a pushover.

What's the principle there? *When we get cocky and think that we are doing it all, and it's not God that is helping, blessing and strengthening!* What happens?

Here's a principle, v 4: "And about three thousand men of the people went up there. And they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai killed about thirty-six men of them, for they chased them *from* before the gate to Shebarim and attacked them on the road going down. Therefore, the hearts of the people melted and became as water" (vs 4-5). Not so good now! Not so tough now!

This is what happens when we lose sight of the One Who gives us the power to face our trials, the power to face our difficulties. On our own we have little power. Joshua wasn't so tough!

Verse 6: "And Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the Ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads."

- Does this really apply to us? *That happened thousands of years ago!*
- Is there a message today, and up to date message for us?

We read 1-Cor. 10:13, but it's interesting what went before that.

1-Corinthians 10:1: "Now, I do not wish you to be ignorant *of this*, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea." He begins to talk about the history.

Verse 2: "And all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." It's a comparison with baptism, a physical walk is like our walk.

Verse 3: "And *they* all ate the same spiritual meat. And *they* all drank *of* the same spiritual drink; for they drank from *the* spiritual Rock that followed *them*. And that Rock was Christ" (vs 3-4). They were following Christ. We are following Christ today. There are similarities there.

Verse 5: "But with many of them God was

not pleased, for their dead bodies were strewn in the wilderness. Now **these things became examples for us...**" (vs 5-6). God brings the past to the present, right to the now.

What happened to them became examples for us. "...so that we might not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.' **Neither should we commit sexual immorality**, as some of them committed, and twenty-three thousand were destroyed in one day. **Neither should we tempt Christ**, as some of them also tempted *Him*, and were killed by serpents. **Neither should we complain against God...**" (vs 6-10).

- What happens when we have a difficulty? *Why does this have to happen to me?*
- Is that kind of the first reaction?
- Why did this happen? *I didn't want this to happen!*

Verse 11: "Now **all these things happened to them as examples**, and were **written for our admonition**... [the past is the present and it all has a lot of meaning] ...on whom the ends of the ages are coming." These are the things we don't do when we're backed into a corner:

- We do not break faith!
- We do not give up!
- We do not say that it's too hard and can't do it, can't break a habit!
- We do not say that this is an impossible situation and is not fair!

We keep faith!

- We do not surrender to fear!

There is someone I know and he is literally on the edge of a financial cliff. His approach is to sell out completely. What do you do? You've worked all your life and it's not your fault and you have all these obstacles put in front of you, and you literally line up and POW! you're done!

How long do you endure for? *I'm barely hanging on!* How long do you endure? *Until you die if necessary!* This is our mandate: ***to endure to the end!*** It might sound tough, but that's our mandate. Of course, we rely on God's mercy. We never give in!

Verse 12: "Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall." When we think we have it all worked out, then WHAM! we're hit! We don't think like God thinks. We're not on the same wavelength naturally.

God chose King Saul when Saul was little in his own eyes and followed God's direction. But when he became great in his own eyes and followed

his own direction, decisions and looked at people who wanted to be big, that's when he got into trouble.

Generally, we are the ones who get ourselves into all the 'pickles.' There's a good example in King David, and they're principles for us. King David was on his housetop one day and he sees this 'gorgeous babe' bathing. Think about it (for the ladies): Would you take a shower with the window that is clearly transparent so that you could be seen? Would you do that? For the men who are looking: 'She knows I'm looking at her, why isn't she covering up?'

So, you see *that Satan begins to work in the mind*. This is one of the most righteous men who wrote the Psalms. We're not looking at a novice. Let's get the picture. This guy is strong, spiritually strong, close to God.

Where does it come from? *Satan!* Lucifer had it all and was able to convince our first parents where all the trees were good for food and were also beautiful to watch, Satan narrowed them down to one place, because there was something that he couldn't have. His mind speaks of his own nature.

Would Satan not be there with the ruler of Israel trying to deceive him? *I would say so!* David had many wives and concubines. So, he has it off with the woman, a pregnancy results and the husband is called back from battle but he wouldn't sleep with her or go home with her.

- How could you keep a straight face with what's happened?
- Don't you think with the husband coming back would get the vibes?
- Do you think his wife could act just like nothing has happened?

He would have picked up on the body language. We're going to look at reality, the truth behind this story.

- How would it happen?
- Could she be just nice?

Something is going on!

- Why is the king being so nice to me?
- Why are all these servants a little quiet?

It was obvious!

Ultimately, David has—in his deceived heart—the man killed, and he takes his wife. What could he be thinking? *I'm the king! I'm doing a great job and helping all these people!* Power got to his head!

Verse 12: "Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall." If King David could fall like that, I would say that each and *every one of us needs to be on guard!*

Galatians 6:7: "Do not be deceived. God is

not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

We can see what happened to David and what was going on in his mind; Psalm 51:7: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

He knew he was filthy, dirty! 'I'm a murderer!' He realized it. This is a cry from the depth of his being. He's slammed against a wall! He realized that's the way he was.

Verse 8: "Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones, which You have broken, may rejoice." Can you imagine the state of mind even physically that he was in.

Verse 9: "Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities." He's pleading with God! Please, I hate this!

Verse 10: "**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me**" (vs 10-11). He was completely rejected by God! It looks like God took His Spirit away from David and turned His back on him. Here David is pleading! That's the end result.

Verse 12: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation..." He did not have salvation then.

Verse 14: "Deliver me from the guilt of shedding blood..."

How does this translate today? That's the emotionality of being in a pit, a desperate situation. There are some in a situation that say:

- my wife is dying and I've lost my lifelong friend
- I've lost my child to cancer
- my father just died
- I've lost my husband
- creditors are coming to sell my home
 - How am I to cope?
 - What am I to do?

I'm full of grief!

- How can I continue on?
- How can I face tomorrow?

That is the pit! That is being slammed to the wall! That is the condition that we're talking about. The point is there's a reason for the trial. When we're at the cliff's edge there's a reason for it. We need to look for the lessons and what can we learn from the trial.

I can tell you this one time in business we were behind every week. We got to the point when we owed \$90,000. It was mounting week by week. I could not go to sleep. I would tell Manola that the bed would 'vomit me up' at three o'clock in the

morning. There was no peace of mind. We're talking about very trying, difficult situations that any of us can fall into.

Christ with no fault experienced the same thing, the same dread that we're talking about. Not because of anything He did, but on our behalf:

Matthew 26:36: "Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here, while I go onward and pray.' And He took with *Him* Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, *and* He began to be very melancholy and deeply depressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me'" (vs 36-38). He had His friends to stay there.

At this point we go into the second point, which are both basically together, intermingled:

- **the effort**, what to do. You've got to do something You must move when you're in a situation like that of grief and pain, you've got to do something.
- **the answer will come**; the light at the end of the darkness will come to you.

Activity and results go hand-in-hand.

There is an interesting obvious statement in Ecc. 11. I wonder if we really think of it like this: *if it happens, it happens*.

Ecclesiastes 11:3: "If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth... [natural; it happens] ...and if the tree falls toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it shall be." What happens *happens*, and it stays like that.

Verse 4: "He who watches the wind shall not sow; and he who regards the clouds shall not reap." There's always got to be activity to change things.

Verse 5: "As you do not know what *is* the way of the spirit, or how the bones *grow* in the pregnant woman's womb; even so you do not know the works of God Who makes all." You don't understand why things are happening, but you've got to continually be involved in activity.

Verse 6: "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know what shall be blessed, either this or that, or whether they both *shall be* fruitful in the same way." Some things are just going to happen! Whatever it is it will happen!

The point is that ***you must keep moving! You must keep doing! Do not stop! You must keep going!***

(go to the next track)

We've got to *keep moving* when we're in a difficult trial or situation. There are some principles in Matt. 7 that are pretty obvious. Sometimes when things become familiar they can be neglected. But God's Word always repeats and repeats.

Matthew 7:7: "Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you.... [here's a promise]: ...For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened" (vs 7-8). The force of the Greek means *to ask and keep on asking; seek and keep on seeking; to knock and keep on knocking*. In other words, ***don't stop, keep going!***

Verse 9: "Or what man is there of you who, if his son shall ask *for* bread, will give him a stone?" That's pretty obvious. There are a lot of things that are revealed that Christ did say that are so simple, so easy to understand.

Christ asked of a Pharisee, 'One owed 50 and another owed 500; who would be most grateful?' *I suppose the one to whom he forgave the most!* Pretty simple. Again, something very easy to understand.

Verse 10: "And if he shall ask *for* a fish, will give him a serpent? Therefore, if you, being evil... [we have an evil nature] ...know *how* to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father Who *is* in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?" (vs 10-11).

There's no time for self-pity. We've got to follow God; we've got to follow instructions. We can't stop. We've got to hang on to the promises that are given to us. Notice what Christ did in His moment of terror and despair, when He was thrown to the wolves:

Matthew 26:39: "And after going forward a little, He fell on His face, praying, and saying, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.' Then He came to His disciples and found them sleeping...." (vs 39-40).

In His most dire moment they just nodded off! It's an incredible comparison of this woman who put aside this ointment for 300 pieces of silver to anoint Him for His death. She had been putting it aside. How long had she been putting it aside for? And here His closest followers were asleep; in His hour of trial!

"...And *He* said to Peter, 'What! Were you not able to watch with Me one hour?'" (v 40). He went over and He prayed for an hour, a full hour!

Verse 41: "Watch and pray, so that you do not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed *is* willing,

but the flesh is weak.” See how Christ does not condemn. He could see that their heart was there, but the physical realities of staying awake, of being there were just overpowering.

Verse 42: “The second time He went again *and* prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if this cup cannot pass from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.’” After an hour of talking, He’s now slightly changing.

Verse 43: “Now, when He came to them, He found them asleep again, because their eyes were heavy. And leaving them, He went again and prayed the third time, saying the same thing” (vs 43-44). Did He pray for three hours?

When we are really at a point of trouble and despair we need to tell God the particulars and have a conversation. Sometimes when I’m stuck, I find it interesting that I just have a conversation on my knees. I talk, just converse, and suddenly a thought comes to my mind or another idea comes up and you begin to think: What’s happening? Is this kind of telepathy or...I don’t know how to describe it, but the answers do come; the direction does come.

All this happened and this was probably part of the discussion with the Father:

Verse 53: “Don’t you realize that I have the power...” The Father would have told Him, ‘If you want I’m going to give you 12 legions of angels and they’ll clean them up. We can clean them up, but how are we going to do it otherwise? So the discussion went on His knees, and the Father would obviously have communicated to His mind.

Verse 53: “Don’t you realize that I have the power to call upon the Father at this time, and He will furnish Me with more than twelve legions of angels?... [this is the conclusion that Christ and the Father came to in that prayer]: ...But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?...” (vs 53-54). It seems that not only Christ, but the Father was trying to work it out. How else can We do it?

“...For this is ordained to be” (v 54). There was no other way. It had to happen!

Now we’ll take note of what David did and how he had to work things out, and the reaction that he had. This is about ***keeping on moving, keeping on going!***

Christ prayed in that temptation, in that time, three separate times! If the prayer was an hour and the others were like the time before, it would seem logical that there were three consecutive hours of prayer.

2-Samuel 12:15: “And Nathan left to go to his house.... [Nathan has delivered the news] ...And

the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife bore to David... [David had married Bathsheba] ...and it was very sick. And David prayed to God for the child. Then David fasted and went in and lay all night **upon the earth**” (vs 15-16). There was probably somewhere in his house that he could lie on the ground.

Verse 17: “And the elders of his house rose up toward him to raise him up from the earth. But he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass...” (vs 17-18) David’s reaction was prayer, fasting before God and going through the whole ugly incident in his mind over and over again.

“...on the seventh day...” (v 18). Look at his repentance; he was fasting for seven days, on the ground dirty, probably sleeping on the ground before God. Truly, truly humiliated and humbled himself before God. ***That seems to be one of the way, obviously, to draw close to God, to humble yourself; ‘I’m nothing before You!’***

“...the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead, for they said... [look at their thinking]: ...‘Behold, while the child was still alive we spoke to him, and he would not hearken to our voice.... [he wouldn’t listen to us] ...How then will he trouble himself if we tell him that the child is dead?’” (v 18). Now what’s he going to do?

It’s interesting, the body language we talked about before when Uriah came back, he would have picked up on the body language. Here’s some body language that is actually mentioned in the account down the road.

Verse 19: “But David saw that his servants whispered. And David understood that the child was dead. And David said to his servants, ‘Is the boy dead?’ And they said, ‘He is dead.’ And David arose from the earth and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his clothing, and came into the house of the LORD and worshiped....” (vs 19-20).

A final prayer; a final seeking to establish connection with God. He had fasted and humbled himself and God had again restored His Spirit within David.

“...And he came to his house and commanded, and they brought bread before him and he ate” (v 20). It was over! He humbled himself.

Let’s have a look at a summary of his thoughts. They’re listed in Psa. 51. Interestingly enough, at the beginning it says: *To the Chief Musician...a Psalm of David.*

Nathan the prophet had come to David after David had gone into Bathsheba. This is the occasion that this Psalm was written.

Psalm 51:1: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions.” I know that I’ve done the wrong thing! I know it! Only You can take it away!

Verse 2: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity... [I know what I’ve done, I’ve killed a man and taken his wife] ...and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me” (vs 2-3). David was crushed by this stupid activity and what he did. He thought he was above God’s Law and God’s way. He realized it.

Verse 4: “Against You, **You only**, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge.” You’re correct and I’m wrong!

Verse 5: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Who is right on this earth before Your presence? He admitted his guilt, worthlessness and uselessness. He completely humbled himself before God.

Verse 6: “Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts...” David was a liar, a conniving murderer. Talk about politics!

“...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom” (v 6). He realized that something deep inside of him that was ugly, awful, murderous, covetous.

Verse 7: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” You’re going to do it! I’m hopeless and useless! This is what I am and I need You to cleanse me.’

Verse 9: “Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.” Only God can forgive! Only God can look the other way!

Verse 10: “Create in me a clean heart...” Make me a different person; I have seen what an ugly, awful dark individual I am from within.

“...O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (v 10)

Verse 14: Deliver me... [he knew what he had done] ...from the guilt of shedding blood, O God, O God of my salvation, then my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.” I want to praise You. I don’t want to be in this state anymore.

Verse 17: “The sacrifices of God... [when God had given David His Spirit] ...are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart... [lying on the ground for 7 days, not eating] ...O God, You will not despise.”

Let’s have a look at Joshua’s example. What did he do when he was in dire straits? How did he

react? We’re talking about activity and the end result. The activity is that you go to God until you get the answer. If it’s delayed you’ve got go to God continually, because God says, ‘I will answer you. I will not break you completely. I will help.’ But it seems like, at times, God will never help, nothing is going to happen.

We don’t have a choice, *we’ve got to keep going!*

I remember a time when I was being called, before I was baptized that I was in a situation where I had a really strong family bond. It seems as though I was held by chains of iron when you’re brought up like that. They would say, ‘Who are these Bible people? What are you talking about?’ I needed to move away and have a family of my own. I needed a particular individual that was not in the Church, someone who was brought up like me. Someone who fought like me and someone whom God would call.

I asked specifically for that and I prayed and fasted about that. I remember I was in room #1 of the Rest Easy Motel and I knelt down as my usual, and I hadn’t experienced this. It’s rare that you experience something like this: It was almost as though a voice in my head, not a voice, but an understanding and knowing. ‘Get up! I know! Go!’ I couldn’t ask from then on. I knew! I just knew!

This reminds me of what happened to Joshua; Joshua 7:6: “And Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face... [humility; humble ourselves before God] ...before the ark of the LORD until the eventide...” It wasn’t just a ten-minute affair. He was there until evening.

“...he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads” (v 6). Dust, sackcloth and ashes are symbols of mourning. Here they did rend their hearts as well as their garments. What was at stake was the opposing armies could get together and just wipe them out. We’re dead! It was a dire situation that they had to face. Therefore, they sought God.

Verse 7: “And Joshua said, ‘Alas, O Lord GOD, why have You at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us?... [Why have You done it? Why?] ...And, oh that we had been content and lived on the other side of Jordan!’” Whoa! That’s almost like the Israelites saying, ‘We should have been content with Egypt and we would have been happy. We’re going to be wiped out here.’

Verse 8: “O LORD, what shall I say... [a discussion with God, telling Him]: ...when Israel turns their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear, and shall surround us, and shall cut off our

name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?" (vs 8-9).

Verse 10: "And the LORD said to Joshua, 'Get up! Why do you lie upon your face this way?... [God told him that there's got to be a reason for it] ...Israel has sinned, and they have also broken My covenant which I commanded them, and have even taken of the cursed things, and have also stolen and pretended falsely. And they have even put *it* among their own things. Therefore, the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies.... [there is a reason for every trial and difficulty that we have to face] ...They will turn *their* backs before their enemies because they have become cursed.... ['let him who stands beware lest he fall] ...I will not be with you again... [a warning] ...unless you destroy the one who is cursed from among you. Up! Sanctify the people and say, "Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, for thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'A cursed thing *is* in the midst of you, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the cursed thing from among you'"']" (vs 10-13).

So, when a trial comes upon us, it's due to sin; due to a lack in our character, and we need to repent. I remember in my early days a time when I wanted baptism and walk God's way. But there was the family business and all these hurdles I had to overcome. It was not possible for me. I was holding strong and firm.

When you're brought up like that as a child, thinking about family and keeping the business going, etc., it becomes a really big part of you; maybe an idol. It's incredible!

At a certain stage my mum went to hospital and they didn't know whether she was going to live or die. Then dad said, going out the front door and this gust of wind came up and he felt a chill down his chest, he said, 'I took the bottle of scotch and I didn't bother to pour it into a glass; I just downed it.' He felt this chill and he had a very severe pneumonia, so both of them were in hospital.

I had to keep the business going and I couldn't keep the Holy Days or anything like that, because I had to work. I didn't know whether dad or mum was going to live. They were literally just hanging on. This motel business that dad had invested in, everything—financial, their health—was about to collapse. Dad had held everything together and it was quite a trial. It was such a trial on me that I couldn't hear music, it just cut into me. Tears would come down.

- Why?
- Why does this have to happen?
- Why is like this?

Dad was healed and came back from hospital. Mum came back and everything came back to normal.

What happen was that I was never the same. That strong tie that I had with my parents was a rift. I had to go through the severity of that trial so that I could become a different person, so that I could become more independent. That was the result.

I guess we seek God in prayer, but sometimes we just have to go through a trial and not know why. God is healing us, changing us, molding us into what we have to be. If it hurts maybe it's because we're a little bit too far away and we have to be changed.

Job went through a lot pain and trouble and was a hard man for God to change. Job was 'right in his own eyes.' He had to be changed, and the only way you can change is by going through a lot of pain.

It's almost like this, Job 5:17: "Behold, happy *is* the man whom God corrects. Therefore, do not despise the chastening of the Almighty." Job understood the principle, but he *really came to understand* more so what is written here.

Verse 18: "For He makes sore, and binds up; He wounds, and His hands make whole." That's a promise we need to hang onto when we're going through the cliff-edge trials; when we're there at the ominous state. God is wounding us, but He's going to heal us.

Here's another principle that more or less states the same thing; Proverbs 20:30 "The stripes that wound purge away evil, and yea, strokes cleanse the innermost parts *of one's being*."

That's the principle! That's what's got to happen when we go through trials and troubles. It's hard to describe, but when you're there, when you're hopeless and helpless, when you really, really have to and have no choice because the boats are burned on the shore, you need to turn to God's promises and hold Him to His promises, and hang on for dear life!

These two processes, the activity and to solution, go hand-in-hand. At the beginning of Isa. 58 it talks about being estranged and not being close to God. Then He says when you do the right thing, when you follow, when you obey, when you seek God and when you humble yourself, it's like this:

Isaiah 58:8: "Then shall your light break out as the dawn, and your health shall spring out quickly; and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard."

Isn't it great when we have God's power within us? But it only comes through humility and obedience. But God is going to cut us, mold us, tear

us and put us together so that we form a character that He can use that seeks His way.

Verse 9: “Then you shall call, and the LORD shall answer; you shall cry, and He shall say, ‘Here I *am*.’.... [you know it; you feel it] ...If you take the yoke away from among you, the pointing of the finger, and speaking malice.”

Those are the particular points that are brought out. In any case, there is a lesson there for us. There’s a reason why the depths of the promises of devotion God has for His faithful ones, His saints, those who were given a heart of flesh, not of stone—His Bride—are incredible! You’ve got to note the promises, and God’s desire is not really to hurt, to harm, to cut, but to bring us to a place, to bring us to a position where it doesn’t have to happen.

In principle here, He’s talking about Israel whom He has abandoned; Isaiah 54:1: “‘Sing, O barren, you *that* never bore; break out into singing and shout, *you* who never travailed, for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman,’ says the LORD.”

The desolate, the abandoned one is Israel, whom God abandoned. He is her husband, He comes back and says, ‘All right, now get ready for the blessings.’ This is what’s in God’s heart for the nation and the individual and for all.

Verse 2: “‘Make the place of your tent larger, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings. Do not spare, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes... [make the tent bigger] ...for you shall break out *on* the right hand and on the left. And your seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited” (vs 2-3)—because of abundance.

Verse 4: “Do not fear...” What do we do today? Is there fear today? What is happening in the Middle East? *There’s a lot of fear there!*

“...for you shall not be ashamed, nor shall you be disgraced; for you shall not be humiliated; for you shall forget the shame of your youth, and shall not remember the reproach of your widowhood any more, for **your Maker is your husband...**” (vs 4-5). If you’re part of the Bride this falls true.

“...the LORD of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called, for the LORD has called you as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when you were rejected,’ says your God. ‘For a little moment I forsook you...’” (vs 5-7).

This is God’s heart, the way He looks to what we’re going to be, not what we are. He has to do what He has to do to get us there. It’s not for

long, ten or twenty years is not a long time to eternity and the tremendous things that God has in store for those whom He calls for His sons and daughters.

“...but with great compassions I will gather you. In a little wrath I hid My face from you *for* a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,’ says the LORD your Redeemer” (vs 7-8)—‘I buy you back! I pay the penalty! You owe, you’re in debt and I’ll pay it and make you free. “...your Redeemer”

Verse 9: “For this *is as* the waters of Noah to Me; *for as* I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn... [He’s saying this is it] ...from being angry with you and from rebuking you.”

These pits and cliff-edge trials and difficulties and problems, God says, ‘No more; I’m not going to do it anymore.’

Verse 10: “‘For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall the covenant of My peace be removed,’ says the LORD who has mercy on you.” We make a covenant with God.

Verse 12: “And I will make your high towers of ruby... [look at the riches, splendor, glory, honor that is for His own, that He calls His jewels] ...and your gates of carbuncles, and all your borders of pleasant stones. And all your children *shall be* taught of the LORD...” (vs 12-13). How many of us would want our families to serve and seek God.

“...and great *shall be* the peace of your children. In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression; for **you shall not fear**... [that’s a promise; that’s what He puts before us] ...and *far from* terror, for it shall not come near you” (vs 13-14). There’s going to be a time when it’s going to be like this nationally and individually.

Verse 15: “Behold, they may gather together *against you*, but not by Me; whoever shall gather against you, he shall fall for your sake.”

So, the promises of God are great and they are for our goodness, for blessings, for happiness, for joy, for a good end result, even though we may be going through terror, suffering, a doubt, a problem, a fear at the moment.

- when you are backed into a corner
- when the proverbial boats are burnt behind you and you have to move forward
- when you’re outnumbered
- when you feel helpless
- when you are overwhelmed and tempted to quit
 - ✓ that is the time to *keep going*

- ✓ that is the time to *keep asking*
 - ✓ that is the time to *keep seeking*
- even if it means on your knees talking for an hour at a time*
- ✓ that is the time to *keep knocking*

You will get there if you **keep going** and keep this vision in your mind:

Revelation 22:1: “Then he showed me a pure river of *the* water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb. *And* in the middle of *the* street, and on this side and that side of the river, *was the* Tree of Life, producing twelve *manner of* fruits, each month yielding its fruit; and the leaves of the tree *are for the* healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse...” (vs 1-3).

This is the time to have in mind whenever we are there and tempted to give in.

“...and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face; and His name *is* in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there...” (vs 3-5). Notice that when Judas left the table in John, it says that it was night, darkness; Satan was there!

“...for they have no need of a lamp or *the* light of *the* sun, because *the* Lord God enlightens them; and they shall reign into the ages of eternity” (v 5)—with spiritual bodies that will never decay and never finish. It will never ever end! They will **“...reign into the ages of eternity.”**

Scriptural references:

- 1) Romans 8:5-8
- 2) Proverbs 24:10
- 3) 1 Corinthians 10:13
- 4) Joshua 1:6-9
- 5) Joshua 7:1-6
- 6) 1 Corinthians 10:1-12
- 7) Galatians 6:7
- 8) Psalm 51:7-12, 14
- 9) Matthew 26:36-38
- 10) Ecclesiastes 11:3-6
- 11) Matthew 7:7-11
- 12) Matthew 26:39-44, 53-54
- 13) 2 Samuel 12:15-20
- 14) Psalm 51:1-7, 9-10, 14, 17
- 15) Joshua 7:6-13
- 16) Job 5:17-18
- 17) Proverbs 20:30
- 18) Isaiah 58:8-9
- 19) Isaiah 54:1-10, 11-15
- 20) Revelation 22:1-5