



Message **Transcript**

Trust God in Your Trials

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Pastor Jeff:

Father in heaven, we just thank you for the privilege it is to gather in your house, to worship your name because you and you alone are so worthy. Lord, thank you as we gather as a people to pray and seek your face, Lord, that you not only hear us, but you respond in the best way possible. And now, Lord, we pray that during this time of our worship, Lord, that you would speak through your living and active word. And Lord, we as a people believe that every time that your word is faithfully and accurately proclaimed that you have a message directly for us. So we invite you Father through your son and by your Holy Spirit to speak directly to our hearts, that we would hear exactly what you want to say and we'd receive everything that you have for us. And so now, for all those who are gathered, who desire to hear the Lord speak directly to you, who will believe what the Lord shows you and who will by faith put into practice what he shows you?

Will you agree with me very loudly this morning, very loudly this morning with me by saying the word amen? Amen. Today I want to talk to you about how to trust God in times of trials. How to trust God with your trials. As we've been studying through the Book of Exodus, we've seen God's powerful hand as he's rained down plagues on the Egyptians and has taken those Israelites who were in bondage for 400 plus years and delivered them from slavery, out of slavery, in a magnificent, powerful way. In the last chapter that we saw, what God did was he sent the 10th plague, the death of the firstborn, the firstborn child and the firstborn animal, to every home that was not painted with the blood of the lamb. And we talked about the protection of the blood and

how the blood is what the angel of death saw as he passed over Israel.

And then God established with them this covenant that they would keep forever called the Passover, that every single year they would gather as a nation and remember what God had done so they could pass it down from generation to generation to generation. And when we hear a story like that, we get excited because we see God's powerful hand at work. And for many of us, when we hear about God's powerful hand or when we see God's powerful hand, then we begin to think, well, from that moment on, things are going to get pretty good. But I have news for you. One thing that Jesus Christ promised us is in this world, something that you will have. You will have what? Tribulation. But take heart, I've overcome the world. What you can count on in your life is trials. You just can't count on what they're going to look like.

You're going to have a trial. There's going to be a time in your life where you're faced with something that you wouldn't have chosen for yourself. Now, there are things in life we call consequences. Consequences are when we choose bad behavior and then there's a consequence for our actions. So if you choose to go out and get drunk and then get behind the wheel of a car, that's not just something bad that happened, that's a consequence of your action. That's not a trial. If you go chew out your boss and you get fired, that's a consequence of your action. That's not a trial. A trial happens when you're doing the things that the Lord requires of you and you're walking in the ways of the Lord and then something hits. And it hits so hard as you begin to wonder, why is this happening?

Why is it happening now? Why is this happening to me? And what in the world do I do to get out of the situation that I'm in? And that's what we're going to talk about today, is how can you trust God in your trials? How can you do that? Now, you hear it from the pulpit all the time, say, well, just trust God, which is true. But what specifically do you need to do to trust God? And I've loved this study in the Book of Exodus. Every time we study the Old Testament, we realize from 1 Corinthians 10, Romans 15, that everything we read about in the Old Testament is for our edification. So we can see the same God we serve now, how he operated once upon a time, because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So when we read these stories, they're to build us.

And what we're going to see today is coming out of this powerful deliverance story where God delivers the entire nation of Israel, the trial that they're now going to face, and how they're called to respond and what they can expect when they see that trial. So we're going to talk about five musts of our trust. What those five musts are for us to really enjoy. And when I say enjoy, I mean truly enjoy, the trials that God sends our way so that we can not only get through them, but thrive in them. If you have a Bible, I encourage you right now to open up to Exodus chapter 14. We're going to be taking a look at that chapter today. And as I mentioned, God was going before them. He was going before them with a pillar of cloud by day, and he was going before them as a pillar of fire by night.

He protected them in the day with the cloud from all the heat. He protected them in the night from cold and he provided warmth and he's giving the direction that they

need to go. And this is where our story picks up. It says in chapter 14:1, "Now the Lord spoke to Moses saying, tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. You shall camp in front of Baal Zephon opposite it by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, they are wandering aimlessly in the land. The wilderness has shut them in. Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will chase after them. And I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord. And they did so." The first must when you're going through a trial is that you must acknowledge God is actively authoring all of your circumstances.

You must acknowledge that God is actively authoring all your circumstances. God is the one behind this. Now, notice who he's talking to. He's not talking to the nation of Israel now. He's not telling two million people what's going to happen. Who's he talking to? He's talking to Moses. And here's what he's telling Moses. Hey, I know you've been delivered. I know you've been freed. I want you to camp at this place right here. And when you camp there, I'm going to harden Pharaoh's heart again and he's going to come after you all. And when he does, I promise you, this time, I'm going to get all my glory and everyone in Egypt will know that I'm God. You already know that I'm God. But Egypt's going to know that I'm God too. And this is where the story picks up. So here's what we can see. When God says what he's going to do, what does God do?

He does everything he says he's going to do. And it's really interesting because

God is the one who's authoring all these circumstances. And here's what I want you to know. God is always the one who is authoring all of your circumstances. He's the author and the perfecter of your faith. God has authored it or has allowed it in your life for your greatest good and for his greatest glory. Many times when we go through a trial, we begin to ask the wrong questions. Why am I going through this? How come I'm the one that has to endure this? If God really loved me, then why would I be doing this? God, I've been doing things your way and I get this as a result? That's the wrong question. Well, God wants you to do what? When you go through a trial, what's he say? Consider it all joy, right?

Paul says this, rejoice in the Lord. How often? Always. Again, I say rejoice. We don't have to rejoice about the trial. We don't have to say the trial is good. But we're rejoicing about our God that is authoring that trial because our God is still so good. Amen? See, here's what we have the ability to do. Oftentimes we get a raise or we meet our spouse and we know we're getting married or we have our first child or we get an increase in pay or a new job or something great happens to us. We're like, God is so in this. God has so blessed me. But when something bad happens, what do we say? Man, this is terrible. Where's God? The same God authors the good and the bad, the same God's working it all out. What we see here, before the story unfolds, you need to see that God is the one who's authoring everything that's going to take place.

He's going to, he's saying what's going to happen to Israel, he's saying what's going to happen to Egypt, and he's saying, in all of it, I'm going to be God. In all of it, I'm going to get the glory. If you want to know the theme of the entire Bible, it's the

glory of God. God is going to get glory no matter what through our actions, right? Either we're going to respond to him in such a way we worship him and he gets glory, or we're going to harden our heart towards him. And guess what? He's going to show you and the rest of the world that he indeed is God and he's still going to get glory. Either way, our God's going to get glory. So see what happens. What God says gets done. So notice verses five and following.

"When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people and they said, what is this we have done that we have let Israel go from serving us?" See, a change of heart again. What have we done now? We let them go. They were serving us. They were our slaves. Now they're free. "So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him and he took 600 select chariots and the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, just like he said he would, King of Egypt. And he, Pharaoh, chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly. Then the Egyptians chased after them with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horseman and his army. And they overtook them camping by the sea besides Pi Hahiroth in front of Baal Zephon." You see what's going on? God said, this is what I'm going to do.

And what does God do? He does it. Do you realize God can move on the hearts of people? God can change things. A king's heart is like channels of water in his hands. He can turn it wherever he wishes. God says, here's what I'm going to do, Moses. I'm going to have you camp at such and such a place. Now, it took me all week to learn

how to pronounce those words and I still can't pronounce them, as you can tell. Now, where is this place? I could show you on a map where the place is, but I want to tell you, because many of you are in that place right now. Some of you have been at that place before and some of you are going to get there really, really soon. Here's the place. The place is when you're between a rock and a hard place. That's the place they're at.

You ever been in a rock and a hard place before and get punched in the gut and you're kind of doubled over? It's like you're at the corner of darned if you do and darned if you don't. That's where they're at. There seemingly is no good choice. They are hemmed in. And when we see this Egyptian army coming after them, we hear the word chariots, and we're not familiar with that as a fighting strategy because we live in a world of tanks and airplanes and all sorts of different ways of warfare. But in that day, that was the most sophisticated type of warfare. So you have the greatest army in the world coming after you with 600 plus chariots, all of Pharaoh's armed men, and they're coming after you and you got nowhere to go. You got a sea in front of you, you got a rock behind you and now you're done.

That's where they're at. Have you ever been a place like that? You ever been in a place like that before where you're like, I don't get what to do. I don't even know the steps to take. I mean, I read my Bible, but I don't even know what the next place is. Here's the first place. You acknowledge that God is actively authoring your circumstances. When you're in that place and you don't know what to do, you're going to thank the Lord. Lord, while I don't know what to do, and while I'm uncomfortable

with this situation, I am thanking you that you are the one that's authoring these circumstances. Because God's always in control of those things. See, so often we ask questions like this, how am I going to get through this? God, where are you? Did I do something wrong? Do you still love me?

I want to trust you God, but I don't understand. Please explain this to me. If I want God to do that, if God just would show me why he's doing this, I've studied God's word for about 32 years and I find that in God's word, God doesn't promise explanations for everything we go through. But in God's word, God explains his promises. He doesn't promise explanations, but he explains his promises. In other words, God is not going to tell you, well, here's why I did that you finite being who knows nothing. Let me explain to you all the intricacies of everything that I'm doing that you'll never understand. It's like a parent trying to explain to a three year old why they can't cross the street. They don't get it. You just say no. There's things that God can't explain to us. We wouldn't even be able to fathom why he did it.

What he does tell us is you can trust me because I'm still the same good God that loves you so much that I sent my son to be slaughtered on a cross, who rose from the dead, and if I can do that, I'm still good and I have your back. Would you please acknowledge that? God is authoring those things. Now, some of you would say, well, I didn't even have a choice in some of the things that God authored. There were some bad things that happened in my life. There's bad things that have happened in everybody's life. And sometimes the enemy turns up the voice and gets even louder.

Like if God was so good, then this wouldn't have happened to you when you were four years old. This wouldn't have happened to you when you were 10. That wouldn't have happened to you by your dad or your uncle or your father.

That wouldn't have happened to you by your coach. You wouldn't have been overlooked. You would've got the promotion that you deserved. Like all these things that are outside of your control that we begin to wonder if God's so good, then why are these things going on in my life? And we could make an exhaustive list. Some of you were abused, some of you were overlooked, some of you been cheated, some of you have been maligned, some of you been sick, some of you been through divorce. How about a death of a loved one? An untimely death? That's what we call it. Do you know all death from our perspective is untimely? I mean, there's never such thing as, oh, they died perfectly. It was a timely death. A few years ago, my grandma died at 104. Do you know why she died? She was 104. And it was an untimely death.

We would've wanted her to stick around forever, right? I mean, there's never a time where somebody you love dies and you're like, oh, okay, perfect timing, right? But from God's perspective, do you realize that no one dies except on time? Psalm 139 says, "All of your days were ordained before one of them came to be." There's nobody that dies that goes before the presence of the Lord where he asked, what are you doing here? I wasn't expecting you right now. There's no such thing as untimely death. God is always authoring everything. But there are so many things that we don't understand. We don't understand why. We don't understand how come. We don't realize what God is doing in the circumstances? But can I tell you this? God does. And

God uses trials to accelerate your growth in him. God wants you to grow. He wants you to worship and read his word and study his word and put his word into practice.

He wants you to pray. He wants you to be generous with your resources. He wants you to grow. But when trials come into your life, it's like adding fuel to the fire. It accelerates what you can do if in that trial you can acknowledge that God is the one who's actively anchoring and authoring your circumstances. God's the one who's holding it all together. God's the one who's doing it. When you go through something really devastating and really hard, God doesn't ask you, hey, rejoice that it's really bad in your life right now. What you're rejoicing in, rejoice in the Lord always. Rejoice in who? The Lord. Not your circumstances, but rejoice that in the circumstances, Jesus is still the Lord over all of that. There's so many things we don't understand now that will make sense someday, but we'll never understand them on this side of heaven.

I mean, I think of my grandma. She quilted when I was a kid and she would make all these patterns on the top and it was beautiful if you like quilting and all that stuff. But if you ever looked underneath a quilt, what did you see? You saw all these strands and everything's out of place and it looks really ugly from the bottom. But when the thing comes down and you see it, it's got a perfect pattern to it. When we're looking up, God, I don't understand. God's like, yeah, you can't understand. There's no way I could explain it to you. But when it comes down and when I return, you'll see how I've been building this perfect pattern and that everything has been authored by me and I'm doing it for your greatest good and my greatest glory. That's who I am. And here's what I would say to you.

Some of you that have been through some of the most difficult trials, I think God entrusts some of his most difficult trials to some of his greatest saints. When you go through a trial and it's not a consequence, you're walking with the Lord and wow, why now? It's because God is entrusting you with something awfully special. That's why he tells us to thank him. That's why he says, consider it all joy. Why? Because you're special enough that God can entrust you with that. And if you look through the Bible, some of the greatest characters that we know and that we like listening to, and I love that story, we wouldn't want to live it. We just like hearing what God did through them. Like Job. Anytime we go through suffering, like Job, remember it's just like Job. Well, what was Job? Job lost everything. He lost his family.

He lost his fortune. He lost his house. And then he went through all sorts of times as he was doing the right things and all of his friends were theologically gathering around him to say, hey, it's because you did something wrong. And Job's like, I didn't do anything wrong. This is a trial. Though he slay me, I will not curse him. And we see Job all the way to the end where God doubles his family and doubles his income and blesses him twice as much. And we're like, oh Job, that's great. You want to live Job's life? No, I don't. But it's a good story for Job. Good for him.

Or how about Joseph who grew up in a family with 11 other brothers, but he, because he knew he was favored, showed off his coat of many colors and as a result got sold into slavery, ends up in a foreign land, gets lied about by Potiphar, ends up in prison for a number of years, and guess what? Then he ascends to the throne. He's

number two in command and his brothers come and see him because of a famine. And in Genesis 50:20, I'm paraphrasing, he says, what you intended for evil, God intended for good. See what he was saying? You thought you were authoring my circumstances for evil. God's always been the author of my circumstances and they've always been for good. And we hear the story of Joseph like, that's a great story. You want to live his life? No, but it's good for Joseph.

And we can say that about any character in the Bible that we follow. I mean, what about the Apostle Paul? When he gets saved as Saul, he ends up at somebody's house. God sends Ananias to him to show him what? How much he must suffer for my name. You want Paul's ministry? I don't but I'm glad he had it. And what did Paul say? For me to live is Christ, to die is gain. These light and momentary afflictions are nothing compared to the weight of glory that is to come. And what about our own savior? Did he endure any hard times? Did he go through any trials? His whole earthly ministry was a trial, to give up godliness and to become a man and be fully God and fully man, and then to be challenged and abused and beaten and spit upon and mocked and then crucified on a cross.

That's why he's praying in the garden. Father, if there's any other way, dad, let me know. But not my will, yours be done. I'll endure any trial you have. I'll go through it all. I'll model what it looks like. Aren't we thankful Jesus went through all that? Amen. And three days later he rose from the dead in glory. Show me one saint worth the salt in the history of the church that hasn't gone through something difficult. You won't find it in the Old or the New Testament. So why do you consider it strange when challenges

come your way? Why do you think there's something wrong with you? For some of you, there's this proclivity. It's in your health. For some of you, it's in your finances. For some of you, it's in relationships. We could go down the list and it seems to kind of come back and get you every single time.

Why? Because we're living on this side of heaven. There's no saint that you will meet in heaven when you meet him that will say something like this. Oh yeah, I remember my time on earth. It was awesome. It was just blessing upon blessing. Glory upon glory. I was so mad the day I died and had to be in the presence of the Lord. It was so good on earth. Not one. So as you walk with the Lord, know that trials will come, tribulation will be a part of your life. And when they come, just acknowledge this, that God is active. He is not distant, he's not somewhere else. He's actively authoring your circumstances. Now, you may never know why he authored what he authored, but if he's the one that authored it and he's good and he's merciful and he's faithful and he's true and he's entrusted with some great trial in your way or some great pain that you've gone through and that's for your good and for his glory, then it's best not to keep asking why, why, woe is me and do what?

Lord, I thank you that you're God in my circumstances. Show me how you want to be glorified through them. I want to continue to walk with you. That's what we need to do. When you go through a trial, acknowledge. That means believe. That means own the fact that God is actively authoring this circumstance for you. Amen? That's what he wants in your life. Number two is this. If you're going to trust God in trials, you must not only acknowledge that God's actively authoring your circumstances, but this is

the one I've been waiting to say all week. You must stop whining to God and stop blaming others. Some of you missed that one. I want to say it again. It felt really good coming out of my mouth both services. You must stop whining to God and stop blaming others. Notice this, in verse 10. It says, as Pharaoh drew near, so Pharaoh's coming with 600 chariots plus multiple other chariots and the entire army.

And as he draws near, the sons of Israel looked and behold the Egyptians were marching after them and they became what? Frightened. When you go through a trial, what's one of the greatest emotions that you're probably going to feel? Fear. Fear. Do not fear. Do not be afraid. How many times is that said? It's all throughout the Bible. I've heard people preach on this and say it's said 365 times, one for every day of the year. I've never counted. I just know they're myriad. They're all over the place. Do not fear. Do not fear. Do not fear. So they're living in fear. They see Egypt marching after them, so the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord. Now this doesn't mean that they prayed to the Lord, and the reason we're going to know they weren't praying saying, Lord, help us, we trust you, is because of what's going to come out of their mouth next.

Because they don't have faith to believe that God's going to do anything. Now they're in the blaming stage. Notice who they go after. Moses. "Then they said to Moses, is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way bringing us out of Egypt?" Moses, why'd you bring us here? Weren't there any graves back in Egypt? We could have died there. "Is this not the word we spoke to you in Egypt saying, leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it would have been better for us to serve the

Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." Friends, they've been slaves for over 400 years. They saw God rain down plagues for months. They saw the final plague of the death of the firstborn child and animal in every house that wasn't covered in the blood.

They've seen God's power on display. They plundered Egypt, they left. They're completely free. And now, one challenge, not so far later, what are they saying? God, why'd you bring us here? And Moses, it's your fault. We told you when we were back in Egypt, we love being slaves. It was better to be a slave than being free. And why didn't you just leave us there? Weren't there graves there? I mean it would've been better just to die in our home, man. Now we're out here with nothing. I mean, we have this entire army marching after us that's the most sophisticated military in the world. And we're holding unleavened bread. We're toast. Pun intended.

Right? That's what they're saying. Do you hear them blame? You say, well, why would we need to know that? Because we do the same thing, don't we? I mean, if you just think about it, I know this doesn't happen here at Brave, but there are Christians out there who, when things don't go their way, complain or whine or grumble or gather together or call on the phone or get together just for the sake of talking, how bad is everything going on in my life?

Because they forget the first point. If God's the author of it and you're talking about how bad it is, what are you saying? The God I serve doesn't know what the heck he's doing. That's what you're really saying. I mean, how much time gets wasted? How much oxygen gets wasted? How much energy gets wasted because we sit

around and whine? And then when we can't look in the mirror and look at ourselves for maybe what we need to fix, what do we do? We look for other people to blame.

Oftentimes it's those who we think led us in this way. In a marriage, who do we blame? We blame the spouse. In a relationship, who do we blame? The other person. Right? When it's finances, who do we blame? The person that told us where to invest wrongly. Right? It's always somebody else and we whine about it and then we blame.

Don't blame people. If you find yourself in a situation where you're whining and blaming, what you're doing is you're missing out on the blessings that God has for you. Isn't it interesting? I mean, Moses is the one who was told everything that needed to happen. Moses is the one that's been obedient to the Lord. Moses has been doing everything that the Lord has shown him to do. And who are they going after? Moses. Right? Can I just say this? Please don't blame other people. Your boss may not be a good boss. Don't blame him. If he fired you unwittingly and God's authoring that circumstance, it's because he has something better. Quit blaming other people. If your relationship didn't work out, God probably has something better. Quit blaming other people. Don't spend your energy and time blaming other people. I know when people come and make Brave Church their home, sometimes, not often, they might come up and talk to me about their last pastor and what he did wrong.

I don't have ears for that. I don't want to hear about it. And here's why. Because I know if you're blaming him now, it's only a matter of time you're going to blame me. Quit blaming pastors for your lack of spiritual maturity. It's not their fault. It's yours. Stop whining about it. Stop complaining about it. It's not just pastors. It can be bosses,

coaches, parents. We get all worked up about if my parents would've done this and my coach would've done that, if my boss would've done that, my pastor would've done that. When you find yourself blaming, here's what you can be certain of. You are not trusting God and you're not seeing his hand at work in that situation. Yeah, it may have been unfair. Guess what?

Unfair things are going to happen in this world. I promise you. It may not have been right. I promise you there's going to be some things that aren't just that the Lord will have to make right someday. But when something unjust and not right happens to you, don't complain and blame. Do what? Say okay, God, I rejoice. This seemed unfair. I don't like this. I don't know exactly what you're doing. I may never know what you're doing. But here's what I do know. You're authoring this. You're going to bring something good out of this mess that's right before me. I trust you God. That's what he's looking for. That's what he's looking for. And Israel doesn't understand that at this point. They're still whining and complaining and grumbling. It's kind of like when we ask questions like this. And I'll give you these verses. You can look them up this week just because of time.

But Jeremiah 12:1-2. Jeremiah 12:1-2. Job 21:7, Psalm 73:3, 13. You see the psalmist, you see Job, you see Jeremiah, they're asking this question, why are the wicked prospering while the righteous are suffering? You ever ask that question? Hey Lord, I go to church and I'm hearing what I'm supposed to do and I'm actually doing all the right things and life is really, really hard for me. But there's this one over here. They're not doing anything you want. They're going completely against you and their

life seems so good. What is going on here? You ever ask that question? Can I tell you why you ask that question? Because you're envying the wrong thing. Never be envious of the unrighteous. Their time is coming to a close. I mean, all of us know the story of the Titanic. If you don't, I'll save you three hours. The boat crashes and sinks.

But if you were watching people get on the Titanic knowing what was going to happen, you wouldn't be envious of the meals that they're going to eat or the quartet that they're going to hear or all the fun things that they're going to do, because you know it's going down. Friends, the unrighteous are dead and are dying and an end is coming. Don't envy them. I don't care how much money they have or seemingly how much influence they have or seemingly how happy they are. If they don't know the Lord and aren't living for him, it's a bad day for them. Don't ever be envious of them. You've been redeemed, you've been washed in the blood. You've had the Holy Spirit deposited in your life. You have your entire eternity set. You have a utopia of a kingdom that Jesus Christ is bringing back to the earth that you get to be part of. Every good thing is yours. Don't envy the unrighteous. Amen?

So let's talk about some truths about trials. I'll give you five truths about trials that you can write down real quick. When you're going through a trial, these are five truths about trials. Number one is this. Trials serve multiple purposes. They serve multiple purposes. Listen, when I'm going through a trial and when you're going through a trial, you know who we're thinking about? Me, myself, and I. My trial. This is my. It's not about you. This trial that Israel's going through is not just about them. It's about God, it's about Egypt, it's about all of us 3,400 years that are going to read it later and be

inspired. It's never just about you. When you go through a trial, it's never just about you. God is using, has multiple purposes for your trials. Number two, we've mentioned it already. Trials, grow your faith. Trials grow your faith.

Hey pastor, I want to grow in the faith. I want you to grow in your faith. How do I do that? Well, I can give you some ways you can read your Bible and study it. You can be in a good church that teaches the Bible. You can worship the Lord, you can pray. You can learn how to be generous with your money. You can share the gospel with other people. Yeah, but I really, really want to grow. Well then, wait for a trial, because you're going to have incredible opportunity, because trials have a way of accelerating your growth if you respond correctly to them. And you know God's entrusting you to grow when you go through a severe trial. And when a severe trial hits, most of us don't knee jerk reaction think, I'm considering it all joy, God, you want me to grow. This is perfect. What we think is this is the wrong time, this is the wrong trial, how come I can't have their trials?

But God uses trials. He uses trials to grow your faith. And for those of you that have done these things and endured different trials, you will say, yeah, God got more glory and I love him more than I did before. Number three, when you go through trials, it provides certainty of God's present goodness. It provides certainty of God's present goodness. Psalm 27:13, David said, "I would've despaired had I not believed I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

He said, I would've been desperate if I didn't believe that God was so present

with me right now. When you go through a trial, there's a nearness of the Lord. He's close to the brokenhearted. He saves those who are crushed in spirit. Number four is this. Trials impact other people. Have you ever seen a Christian go through a trial where they've done it well, where they've honored the Lord through the trial, where you've seen them and said, if I was going through that, I don't know that I would be as faithful as they are and it bolsters your faith, when you see their joy and their hope and their countenance knowing things have been really, really tough. It impacts other people.

And fifth is this, and we've already mentioned it. It brings God glory. Trials bring God glory. Trials always bring God glory. Now can I just say this? I mean, as I read this passage, listen, they've been in slavery for 400 plus years and now what are they saying? It would be better to be a slave than to be dead. Can I just say to you, if your only goal in life is self-preservation, you will always be a slave to somebody else. The goal in life is not to keep breathing. The goal in life is to live to the full as long as you have breath. And there's a huge difference. Some people may die in their 70s, but they actually died when they were 20.

They just kept breathing. Right? That's why God says that when we become a Christian that we've died to our old self and now we're alive in Christ. Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Christian, listen to me. If you've trusted Christ, you can't die. You can't die. The moment that you breathe your last, you're going to be more alive than you've

ever been. You cannot die.

So why would you give up your freedoms to be a slave to someone else? I'm never giving up my freedoms. Patrick Henry, one of the founders of our country said, give me liberty or give me death. I'd rather be dead than not be free. And we watched as a nation over the last two years where some people are like, as long as I'm breathing, I don't care. I just want to breathe. That's my only goal in life. It's not God's goal for your life. God wants you to live to the full. He doesn't want you to be a slave to anyone other than being a slave to the Lord Jesus Christ, which makes you more alive than anything on the entire planet. Amen?

So when you stop whining, you stop complaining, you stop blaming, here's what happens. You begin to live for the Lord. You begin to see him work. Third is this. The third must. You must know that God is fighting for you. You must know that God is fighting for you. Notice this in verse 13. But Moses said to the people, do not what? Fear. Do not fear. It's all over the Bible. Do not live in your fear. Don't take counsel in your fear. Fear is this is never going to get any better. Fear is this is never going to change. Fear is I'm doomed. Fear is there's no way out. That's fear. We've all lived with that emotion. But do not fear. Stand by and see the salvation or deliverance of the Lord, which who, which he will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever.

Don't you love that? He's like, these Egyptians you're looking at, like you're scared of them? Don't be afraid. These Egyptians that you see today, the ones whose faces you're looking at, you'll never ever see them again forever. Why? Because

human beings are eternal. You go somewhere when you die, either in the presence of the Lord or apart from the Lord. But you, if you know the Lord, will never see those again who don't. What's he saying? These people don't know me and respect me. Don't be afraid of them. Stand firm. I'm going to deliver you today from them. And you not only won't see them again today, you'll never ever see them again forever. Don't fear non-believers and what they say. That's what he's saying. Isn't that awesome? Believe that the Lord's fighting for you. Oftentimes when we go through a trial, we forget that the Lord's fighting for us.

We forget that he's doing things for us. We begin to think, well, if God was so good, then why this? And that's when the devil's voice gets loud and says something like this. Either you don't deserve to have to go through this or you deserve better than this. And if your God was so good than why? How come nobody else has had to endure what you endure? You ever hear that lie? That's all it is is a lie. Here's what you can know. When you realize God's author in your circumstances and you're not complaining or whining or blaming, then you can say, my God has my back and he's working through this and he's going to bring something good out of it for God works together for the good of those who love him and have been called according to his purpose. While this looks bleak, I know it's going to be good because my God fights for me. Amen?

Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." God's not condemning you. In Romans 8:31, it says, "If God is for us,

who can be against us?" My paraphrase is, if God's on my side, ain't nobody going to mess with me. I mean, if I have God in my back pocket, if God is fighting for me, I don't need to worry about who my adversary is. And we see that throughout the entire Bible. That when God is behind what he's doing and people are aligned with what God's doing, no enemy ever prospers in the presence of God. Ask Goliath, ask Pharaoh, ask the people that were living in Jericho. Ask anybody who was an enemy of the Lord that when God's people aligned with the Lord and did what God wanted, if God didn't come through and fight for them.

Listen, some of you that are dealing with all sorts of different things, emotional challenges, mental challenges, financial challenges, relational challenges, you name the challenge and the enemy lies and said you'll always be that. You're always going to be that way. This is just the way God made you. No, no, no. My God fights for you. He's a warrior. He goes before you. What you're going through is temporary. Don't ever believe the lie that the circumstance that you're in is permanent. It's temporary. Everything in this world is temporary except for our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now I love verse 14, Exodus 14:14 is one of my favorite passages in the entire Bible. Here's what He says, "The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent." Don't you love that? Moses telling them He doesn't even need you to talk. The Lord's got this.

And I think about silence. Why did God call them to be silent? I mean, we know when God took them into the promised land, he had them march around the city for six days and then on the seventh day march seven times, what'd he tell him? Don't talk.

Now the Bible doesn't tell us why. But we can speculate. Because I guarantee when they were marching around that city, they may have known God was going to work, but there was doubt in their mind and there was doubt in their heart. And guess what they would've talked about if they could have talked? Yeah, we're really stupid. They could rain down flames on us right now and arrows. And this is so dumb. I don't know why we're, shut up. Just do what God told you. He's good. Don't talk. I don't need your help. You don't need to tell me what to do. I already know what I'm doing.

Talking to my friend, he is a pastor here at our church, a former Marine. He asked me today on my way in, "What's the theme of your message today?" And I'm like, "In Marine language?" He's like, "Yeah." I said, "Shut up and keep moving." He's like, "I like that." I said, "I don't know if everybody else will, but you're a Marine, you'll get it." God doesn't need us to talk. He needs us to seek him. He needs us to pray. But once we know what to do, then we keep moving forward. God's fighting for you. Do you realize God's fighting for you? You're not alone. You'll never be alone. Jesus said, never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. I'll be with you always to the very end of the age. Even when you're going through the trial, even when there's tears and there's anguish and there's pain.

Guess where the Lord is? He's the God of all comfort. He's right there with you. He cares about every single situation and he is the one who will fight for you. That's why Satan lies the loudest during trials because he knows that if you can just continue to focus on the Lord and trust the Lord's doing good and trust the Lord's going to bring good, there's nothing he can do about it. God's always going to win. Good will always

triumph over evil. That's who our God is. Then he says this. Must number four. To trust God in trials, you must stand firm and take your next step of faith. The Lord's going to give Moses a command to tell the people. The Lord's going to tell Moses what to do and then the Lord's going to say, here's what I'm going to do. Notice verse 15, the Lord said to Moses, why are you crying out to me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward.

I mean, apparently Moses is calling out to the Lord like, Lord, here we are in this situation. What are we going to do? It's almost like the Lord said, I already told you what to do. I told you what was going to happen before it happened. We're done having this conversation. You know what to do. Tell the people to keep moving. We talk about being a warrior for Christ. When we talk about being warriors for Christ, we're talking about spirit filled warriors. We're talking about spiritual warriors. We're not talking about in the flesh. God never wants us to fight in our flesh. What's He want us to do? He wants us to allow Him to do the fighting in and through us. He wants us to seek Him in prayer. God is the one who's going to do the work. And what's He tell us to do?

I mean, the Bible says that we're sheep. We're like ferocious lambs. I mean that's how the Bible defines. That's why we put on the full armor of God. If you can picture an armored sheep, that's what Christians are, right? So I mean it's not like we're going to hurt somebody or offend anybody, but what's he tell us to do? If you read through Ephesians 6 so many times, stand firm, stand firm, stand firm, stand. He doesn't say fight. Stand firm and let me do the fighting. Stand firm, let me do the

fighting. Stand firm, take another step. What does God not want you to do? Don't look back. Don't go backwards. Don't turn around. Remember when God rained down fire on Sodom? What did he tell Lot? When you get your whole family out, don't look back. Lot's wife looked back and what? Became a pillar of salt.

Don't look back. Don't wonder, well why this? Why can't don't look back. You just keep standing firm. This is where I'm at now. God, what's the next step? And when you're standing on that corner of darned if you do and darned if you don't and I don't know where to go, here's what I can tell you. The word is a lamp to your feet and a light unto your path. And while God might not show you that full direction, he'll give you enough light to do this and take one step. And then there'll be enough light there and he'll show you the next step. You don't have to worry about what's the next 30 years look like or the next decade look like or the next month look like. When you're in a trial, oftentimes it's just that small little step, that step that you don't want to do.

Forgive somebody that you don't want to forgive or show love to somebody and encouragement to somebody you don't want to show love to and encourage or you be more generous with your finances or get in community or go show your neighbor some love or whatever it is that you're like, well, that's not that big of a deal. Hey friends, that's the big deal. When you're going through a trial, listen to the Lord and obey him in every small thing. That's what he's saying. Hold your ground and keep moving forward. Don't you dare back up. Because here's what the enemy likes to tell us. Yeah, if God was so good, you would never marry that person. God was so good you would've

never had that job. God was so, quit looking back. Some of us spend all of our time hitting rewind on our life saying, if I would've only done it, if I would've only known it, if I would've done, God's still authoring good for you.

You can't go back and fix anything. I can't go back and fix anything. What I can do is from this moment on, and what you can do from this moment on is like, okay, this is where I am, this is my current situation, this is my as is, this is where I'm at objectively. I'm going to stand firm right here and I'm going to keep stepping with the Lord from this point on. I can't change my past, but I got someone better than that. I got a God that will give me grace for all of it. Fill me afresh right now and help me keep taking steps forward. Amen? That's what he's saying. So when you see the enemy come, he's going to tell Moses, you tell the people, keep moving forward. I already told you what to tell them. So that's what Moses tells them to do.

Then God says to Moses in verse 16, as for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land. So Moses, all you're going to need to do is this. You tell them to move forward. And then I want you to stand on the sea's edge. And I just want you to hold that staff out, the one that I empowered months ago. Just hold that out. The sea's going to divide. Everybody's going to walk through it. It's cool. You got it? Now wouldn't it be interesting, because we would want to know, well, how's that going to happen? And Lord, what if you don't show up? And what if you don't? I'm going to be standing there on the side of the cliff watching all my people drown. No, if God tells you to do something, just do it.

Doesn't even make sense. Just do it. If it doesn't go against the word, then do it. God says, "As for me, let me tell you what I'm going to do. Behold I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so they will go in after them and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horseman. Then the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and through his horseman." God says, all of Egypt's going to know I'm God. They saw me rain down plagues. They still don't get that I'm God. They're still not giving me the honor I deserve. But I'm going to get my honor. I mean, you see, if God's authoring these circumstances, what's he doing? He's invited Pharaoh into a ring for a battle and Pharaoh's taking the invitation and is going to get utterly destroyed.

We see it in the book of Revelation where God gives an invitation to all the nations of the world to gather together above Israel to come take them down. And the Lord's going to destroy them all. I mean, God will not be mocked. Friends, when you serve the Lord, I know in this world it feels like you're on the losing side. There's only 10% of us in the whole world that think this. I mean, we're kind of getting maligned. We're kind of being out, friends, we are on the winning team. Jesus is going to show up and do some amazing things in and through us. I mean, if we're going to stand firm and take the next step, we take the next step and that's where God is. And then God goes ahead of us and he goes before us and he says, now I'm over here. Take this step over here. And then we do that.

And as we talked about last week, he doesn't take us from point A to point B to point C. He takes us here and then there and then here and then there. Because he

wants us to listen to him and be obedient to him because he's growing us through it. And when you're in a trial, it's important that you hear him. It was important that Moses heard him. It was important that the people of Israel listen to him because God had a plan. Now, I love point number five. I love all the points. They're just difficult. I mean it's difficult when we go through a trial to acknowledge that God's actually authoring that when it's uncomfortable for us and it's uncertain how it's going to turn out and we just don't know. But we're called to do it. It's uncomfortable to not voice our complaints and our whining and our blame.

But God says, yeah, don't do that. It's difficult to believe when we're going through the trial that God still is going to fight for us. And it's really difficult to believe that we're called to stand firm when we're living in fear and continue to take the same steps forward over and over again. We're just joining the Lord. He's doing the fighting. Now if you'll do those four things, then the fifth must is where you need to land. And when you go through trials, you need this fifth must. You need to expect God to show up and show out. You need to expect God to show up and show out. Now, I'm going to read you this section of scripture. I got so excited in the first service, I forgot to read it, but I'm going to read this section of scripture because you need to see what our God's going to do.

He said what he's going to do, now he's going to deliver on what he does. So watch what he does. As everyone is now aligned with what God's going to do, notice what happens next. It says in verse 19, "The angel of God who had been going before

the camp of Israel moved and went behind them and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel and there was the cloud along with the darkness. Yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night." Remember during the day, there was a pillar, or during the night there was a pillar of fire. During the day there was a pillar of cloud. This pillar of cloud moves in to be the rear guard. And even at night, the cloud starts giving off light.

So while it's night in Israel, Egypt can't see, Israel can see. And God is protecting Israel from Egypt. Why? Because who is our protector? The Lord. If the Lord doesn't want you to get touched, you're not getting touched. The man or woman of God in the will of God is immortal until God says so. God gets to decide. So God spins back around, is now their rear guard, is protecting Israel, is keeping Egypt out of the way. And notice what happens. Moses is obedient to the Lord. Verse 21, "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land. So the waters were divided. The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea." On what kind of land? Dry land. Not muddy land, not soggy land.

It's powder dry. I've listened to so many people try to teach God's word that don't believe in God and then they try to come up with all these reasons why God moved the water. That's why it was dry. And the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. So can you imagine what's going on? You got two million people crossing the sea. Why? Because Moses held out his staff. And what's

miraculous about this? Seas don't do that. And now they're being parted and you got two million people throughout the night walking through the sea on powder ground. There was no way forward. There was no way on the side. There was no way back until what? Until God made a way. And when you walk with God, God will always make a way at just the right time to get you where you need to go. Because that's who our God is. What did Moses have to do?

I mean, it doesn't seem very hard. You just hold out a staff. God's doing all the work. God's the one that's getting glorified. I mean, it's an amazing story. Gave Charlton Heston the career, it's so good. Listen. Now notice what happened next. Verse 23, "Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit and all of Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea." So at just the right time, God's going to let them come after. Now remember, this is the most powerful army in the world. But check out what happens. Verse 25, "He caused," well, who's the he? That's God. "God caused their chariot wheels to swerve and he made them drive with difficulty. So the Egyptian said," now, look how the Egyptians are talking to each other. They're not silent. "Let us flee from Israel for the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians."

When they go into the sea, their chariots are swerving. The drivers can't do this. The horses are all over the place. Even the Egyptians soldiers are like, we got to get out of here. Their God's fighting for Israel. We're toast. Right? And notice what happened then. "The Lord said to Moses, stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen. So

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it. Then the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea." Verse 28, "The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horseman. Even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them, not one of them remained." How many were alive at the end for Egypt?

Zip, zero if you're Hispanic, nada, right? I mean zero, none. They're all dead. The greatest army in the world is done. They're all dead. Not one of them remain, but the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Notice verse 30, "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians. And Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore." When the water subsided, all they saw were bodies coming up. These people that they were once afraid of, God said, you will never see their faces again forever. Was God faithful to his word? He's always faithful to his word. And notice this, when Israel saw the great power with which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared what? The Lord. They're no longer fearing their circumstances. They feared the Lord and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Moses is elevated because as they go through a trial, he continues to lead the way God wants him to lead. That's what gives him elevation in the eyes of the people. Dads, husbands, fathers. As you lead your families through tough times, you get elevated when you do what the Lord wants you to do. Employees, you get elevated when you do what the Lord wants you to do. Employers, you get elevated when you

do what the Lord wants you to do. You're obedient to him, especially in trial, and then God is the one who elevates you. I mean, when I see this, I see all sorts of power that the Lord's doing. I mean it's really interesting. I skipped this verse because I got so excited. Verse 24, "At the morning watch, the Lord looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and the cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion."

I mean, now you got the cloud and the fire. I mean there's so much going on. It's like a grand finale of fireworks for Egypt. It's as if they know, okay, he's God. Pharaoh's not God. Israel's God is God. Egypt's gods are not gods at all. They will bow to the God of Israel. I mean, that's what happens. Now, here's the problem. We read this story and we're like, that is such a good story. I believe it. Friends, the God you serve is the same God we're reading about right now. He's the same yesterday, today and forever. The trials you're going through and the challenges that you have, it's the same God who's able to deliver you from them all. The reason we're reading the story is not so that we read a history book and say, that's really neat that God saved his people.

Isn't that fun? No. This is a story that says God today will still get all his glory through your trials and insecurities. If you fear him rather than your circumstance, God will show up and show out in your life. And here's what I mean by that. I mean, if I'm just being theological, I think the way I'd make the point would be expect God's miraculous manifest presence in your life. Expect God to show up. Well, what do you

mean show up? God's everywhere. The Bible makes it clear God's everywhere. The Bible makes it clear that God is always at work. The reason that your heart beats, the reason that we have oxygen, the reason that you're still sustained, it's because God is alive. He's everywhere and he's at work. When I talk about showing up and showing out, it's much like when I'm saying when commentators for a sporting event say, if so and so shows up today, they're going to have a great day.

Well, so and so's there. They're saying if he manifests himself, if he does what he's capable of doing. Here's the problem. Most of us don't expect God to show up and show out. We don't expect him to do anything. And so when we're training people that are new in the faith and they read stories like this and they're like, wow, that's awesome. I want to see God move like that. We say things like this falsely. Yeah, God did that once, but that's just history. Don't expect God to work like that in your life. What? The same God that's there is the same God that saved me and you. It's the same God that works through all of our circumstances. It's the same God that heals, the same God that delivers, the same God that provides, the same God that's still being glorified. Why would he be any less present now than he's ever been?

Because his people don't expect him to be. And then we have to go on a mission trip and then people come back. Pastor Jeff, why is it when I go on a mission trip, God does all these miraculous things. But when I'm in America, I don't see it? Because you don't expect him to do anything. I expect God to do things. I trust that God's going to do things. I wish I could tell you, hey, the information I'm giving you, I've lived perfectly, and that's why God does great things in my life. I haven't. I'm just like you. All of us

have failed and fallen short of the glory of God. But I know from experience in times that I've done this, that God has grown my faith significantly, that he's gotten more glory in my life and that I love him more. And the lie of the enemy is, nope, that's true for everybody else except you.

We hear about people's circumstances in a small group and somebody tells us their story and we tell them that our God can heal that, our God can do that. But then we tell them our story and people tell us that like, oh, you don't understand. Mine's way more powerful than that. God can't do that. And yet there's all these scriptures in the Bible. When Mary asks the angel, well, how can this be? I've never known a man. What does the angel say? With God, all things are possible. What do we hear in Genesis 18 when Sarah wonders, how's this going to be? My husband's 100 and I'm 90. With God, all things are possible. What about when the man brings his son to Jesus and said, if you can do anything, and Jesus says, if I can? I can do all things for him who believes.

What about when the disciples ask Jesus how come we couldn't cast that demon out? He's like, because of the lack of your faith. You have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can tell this mountain to move from here to there and it'll be done. In other words, you don't have enough faith. And we read these scriptures like I totally believe my Bible. I go to Bible church, we believe the Bible, except when it comes to our own lives and we don't apply it. I'm just telling you on the authority of God's word, expect God in your life. Expect him to show up. And by the way, he doesn't just show up in his house. He can show up in your office place. He can show up at your school. He can

show up in your family. He can show up in your neighborhood.

He can show up at the mall. He can show up anywhere where you expect him to come, where you're living out what God wants you to live out. And isn't it true? Some people need to see a demonstration of this. It's interesting for me because God said, here's what I'm going to do. He does exactly what he says he's going to do. He invites Pharaoh to a battle to show Pharaoh that he's the all powerful God of the universe and that Pharaoh is not. He does the same today. He invites us to come to him and he says, I love you so much. I sent my son Jesus to die on the cross for your sins and to be raised from the dead so you can have life in his name. And some of us are like, no, I don't want that god, I want to be my own god.

And God's calling you today, you need to repent and make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life. I believe at any time had Pharaoh repented and said, you are right, you are God, we are done, we're not going after this. God would've forgiven him too. And then there's others of you today that are going through a trial or you have been through a trial. And for those of you that think this is not applicable, keep breathing. You will go through one. And when you do and you're at that place that you don't know what to do, here's what God wants you to remember. He's authoring all your circumstances. He's inviting you to stop complaining about it, talking about it, whining about it, and realizing he's the one fighting for you. Stand your ground, keep moving forward and expect him to show up and show out in your life.

He wants to do amazing things in and through you. He's offering that to you. And

the reason he's taking you through that trial is so that he can manifest himself through you in a way that even other people can say their God is the God I want to believe in, their God's the God I want to serve, their God's the God that has power. How are they going to see that if you're not going through a trial? So God gives these things to us so that we can grow in his grace and be the fullness of what he wants us to be. Now, I talk a lot about the fact that I'm not good at fixing things. I'm not over exaggerating. I'm not good at fixing things. And I was thinking this week about what am I good at? And I realized the older and older I've gotten, I realized I'm not good at fixing anything.

About 30 years ago when I started in the ministry, I thought I was pretty good at maybe I could share the Bible or I could help people in a counseling session, or I could orchestrate this or do that, only to realize the older I get, I don't have the power to make anything happen. I can't save a soul. I can't grow a person. I can't do anything. But I know someone who can. And when I go through a battle, I have to realize it's not me that's going to win the battle, but I know the one who has and who will continue to win every battle. He's the undefeated heavyweight champion of the world. The Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. And I don't know what you're going through and I don't know what you're dealing with, but I can point you in the direction of one that does, that's authoring it, that wants to work in and through that circumstance in your life for his glory and for your good.

And he wants you to recognize that he's going to win the battle. He's already won through his death and his resurrection, and he's winning every single day. What's going on in your life will not be for your doom. What's going on in your life will be for his glory

and for your good if you'll continue to stand firm and walk with him. Amen? Amen.

Would you stand with me? Father in heaven, we give you all the praise, glory and honor for who you are. And Lord, we pray that as we're here today that you would do a work, Lord, for some who are here, they would recognize that you need to be the Lord of their life. And if that's you, here's how you can pray.

Lord Jesus, I recognize my need for you as my personal Lord and Savior. I confess my sin to you. Repent of that. And I confess to you as my Savior and Lord. Come into my life and be my Lord and Savior. And for those of us who know you, Lord, you know where the battle's at. Help us worship you, trust you, remain silent and let us see you come through and win the victory for us. We give you all the praise. We give you all the glory. We give you all the honor. Do your work Lord. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. We give God praise.