



Gospel Lessons From the Old Testament – Part 4

The Postponement for Moses

Pastor Mike Fabarez

I hope you appreciated that worship this morning. It was good. Good lyrics and great truths. If you've been praying for my health, I appreciate that. This has been I guess I'm entering into my fourth week here of this COVID event and yeah, it has been a challenge. I, like a lot of you, have been through the ups and downs of this, the fatigue and great desire to taste food again and things like that. But if you have been praying for me and asking God to strengthen me, I appreciate that. I certainly need it. So don't stop now. I'm hoping, like a lot of folks, this fourth week, I can start pulling out of the curtailing of my brain and my energy and all that. So thanks for praying and your indulgence here on a Sunday morning when my preaching voice has stayed home. You can indulge me graciously this morning, and I appreciate that very much. Thank you.

Enough about my health. I'd like to talk about your eyesight. I don't know how you're doing with your optometrist, whether you need glasses or whether you wear contacts. Maybe you're nearsighted, farsighted. But even if you smugly sit here and report that your eyesight is perfect. Prideful person, you. (audience laughter) I know that no matter how good your eyesight is, there are plenty of factors that can affect your eyesight. You could sit down in the chair at your optometrist, he can point to the chart up on the wall and say, "Read it," and turn the lights out. I don't care how good your eyesight is, if it's dark, you're going to struggle.

Or he can peel that thing off the wall and he can walk out of the door and go across the lobby and maybe the doors line up and he can go across the street. Now it looks like a little postage stamp and he says, "Read it." You're going to have trouble. And if his assistant comes in and has a fog machine and sprays the fog around in the room and sprinklers come on between the chart and your eyes, I don't care, even if you got 20-20 vision, you're not going to do well with that.

Distance in particular. If I put you in the back of my truck and I said look at the face of someone you love and study the details of their face. And then we drove down the street and that face would become just increasingly small and blurry and hard to focus on. Distances to the eye are what time can be to our faith. Right? We can have the scales fall off, Second Corinthians 4:4, you can see clearly that Christ is real, that God's truth is true, and that his promises are faithful. And you can imagine what that's like that God is going to, as Isaiah 40 says, "if there's a valley, it's going to be lifted up, if there's a mountain it's going to be made low. If there's something crooked, he's going to make it straight." "The kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." You need to say, "I see it, I believe it." I trust that I'm going to live in light of that truth. Christ is the king and I'm going to be a faithful servant of that king.

And then the crooked things don't get made straight and the valleys don't get lifted up and the mountains don't get leveled, and the time between promise and fulfillment starts to elapse and the wait is protracted. And that, unless you have some binoculars, unless you have some aid,



the lights go down, unless you have a flashlight, you need more than the unaided eye. You need help, you need focus, you need equipment. Time and trouble, the fog of adversity.

The waiting for God to do what he says he will do. Those are hard things for our faith. And by faith, of course, unless you're new, I hope you know we're talking about confidence in what we know is right and what is true. Faith is not believing something we know is not true. It's believing in something we have reasonable, rational, logical, acceptable reasons to say this is right. God is true, God exists, he's revealed himself. His book bears the marks of his revelation and inspiration. And I'm going to take it at face value.

Waiting for God to do what he said he's going to do is inevitable. What's not inevitable is that you wait well. He told a lot of parables about the fact you better learn to wait well. I think of Luke 12. He says you ought to be like people, servants of a master who goes on a trip. And you better be ready, "dressed, prepared for action," "so that when the master comes back and knocks, you will open the door at once." And he said, "how blessed is the servant who does that, even if it's the second or third watch in the night," that you didn't let time dim your faith, that you had the confidence to say, "I believe what God said and I believe it is true and I'm not wavering."

And he said there are a lot of people that because of the wait, because of the time, they start to do all kinds of things. They beat their fellow slaves, they forget about the master's instructions, they don't anticipate it. And the problem with the Christian life is you're told to expect this stuff, the return of Christ, the making of the world to make it right, that the kingdoms will submit and that "every tongue will confess and every knee will bow." And you say that's coming and you're supposed to expect it like the early church and say "Maranatha", come quickly. It's coming. The imminent return of Christ.

And yet from the day you first with clear eyesight said, "I believe that," it was crisp, it was clean, it was clear, it was I'm living my life now based on the priorities of those promises, time can dull all that. And I need to tell you that that is the battle we all face and you and I are going to have to say we have to work through this. We have to not allow distance in terms of time and the trials and the struggles and the pains of life, the disappointments of life, to ratchet back our confidence in what God has said. If we don't learn that now we're in trouble. Maybe your Christian life is already expressing that trouble, your compromise, your lack of assurance, your lack of being drawn to the truth of God like you used to.

We've been studying in Acts Chapter 7, Stephen, who's giving this response, it's the longest recorded response in the book of Acts of any sermon, any speech. He's standing before the same council that condemned Christ, it was the Sanhedrin, the top leadership adjudicating council of Israel, and they had just dragged his pastor in there a few chapters earlier. Peter was there beaten and arrested. Now, Stephen is there and he's having to respond to the accusations. They've rejected Christ. They've rejected his pastor. They're rejecting his message. They're claiming that they're right and that he's blaspheming Moses.



So one of the things he does here in the middle section of the speech is he talks about Moses. We're taking three weeks to work through that discussion of Moses because it nicely fits into three chapters, three movements. This chapter or movement of him in Pharaoh's court in Egypt being prepared, we talked about that last time. Then this middle section where he's in the Midian desert. He gets to the place where he's just done in Egypt, because they're not interested in hearing what he has to say.

And the amazing thing is, and of course he lives longer than we generally live today, back in the day, closer to the flood and creation, he lives to be 120-years-old, but he's got 40 years of knowing that he has been prepped to be a part of God's solution to the problem. And he's acting on the promise of Abraham, which was you're going to have a land and it's not Egypt, it's in Canaan. And as we started our passage last time, it said "as the fulfillment of that promise drew near" these things happened. Well, he's like, "OK, this is it. God has made a promise. He's going to fulfill it. He's prepared me to play a role in it. Let's go get it."

I've called this message the postponement of Moses, because now he's made to wait for 40 years. Just let that one sink in. Think, think, think, 40 years. If I said that you had to wait for something for four years that would be a long time. Right? Ten years, a long time. If we were in the middle of a 40-year wait and God has prepared you for something and he's made a promise and he says, I'm going to do it, and then you're made to wait for 40 years. Let's just say we're 20 years into it. What was going on 20 years ago? And you know you got another 20 years to go. And that's a long time. What's your faith going to do?

I mean, at what point do you just say, "I'm just not interested in reading any more about, you know, the truth of God. I'm not interested in praying anymore to this God who's made these promises." It's easy for your faith to wane.

So I want to look at this middle section of Steven's speech. I don't want to confuse it, but you know we talked about three balls, right? We've got the Christological truths. How do these stories relate to Christ? We have the lessons themselves. What do we learn from Moses? And then we have the defense. What's the defense? I don't want to take too much time on this, but do know that the defense is clearly here in this passage, which is, you think you stand with Moses and you might now stand with Moses, you don't understand him fully, but Stephen says they rejected Moses. Just like you rejected Christ. You rejected my pastor, Peter, you're rejecting me, you're rejecting our message. This Moses that you so heavily lean on as your guy, he was rejected by God's people. So be careful who you reject. I mean, there is the underlying message of the defense. Be careful who you reject.

Let's look at these verses, Acts Chapter 7 verses 23 through 29 as Stephen says let's consider these middle 40 years of his life. Verse 23, let's read this together and get a sense of what he's saying that we might learn from that this morning. This is all a recapitulation, a retelling of Exodus Chapter 2.

"When he was 40 years," Moses, of course, "it came into his heart to visit his brothers." There's a big statement we can read a little bit more about it next time. We don't have a ton



on it but the idea of, "listen, I am not an Egyptian, I'm an Israelite, and I have been specially prepared, providentially prepared to do something about this plight. And I'm going to go. I'm going to check this out. I'm going to see what's going on." So this is a shift. This isn't just, "Hey, I'm going to go see what's happening." Of course he knows what's happening in the kingdom, but he's making a shift right here. It's a decision that Hebrews 11 talks about, we're going to look at that in a second, but he's making a decision as to who he's going to identify with.

"When he was 40 years old, it came to his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man." So one of the Israelites is being oppressed. We can assume he's being beaten because he's going to respond with violence. So he's probably being violently attacked. We get a sense of that in Exodus 2. "And he avenged him," he stepped in. Self-protection, you know, he was defending this man, right? He's stepping in as a defender and he struck him down. He killed him, "striking down the Egyptian."

Now, here's the commentary, it's helpful. "He supposed that his brothers," the Israelites, "would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand." Read that again. "He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand." Do you see how that echoes into the defense of Steven? Right? Jesus came here offering salvation to the Sanhedrin and you did not understand that he was here as the means of spiritual forgiveness and salvation, that you get it right with your maker.

"My pastor was just here. You beat him and had him arrested. You told him to stop preaching the message that could save you. Now I'm here. I mean, you keep talking about Moses, you're concerned about Moses' reputation, and whether I'm blasphemy or not. He was misunderstood." Which, by the way, if you're a Christian, I assume you are being misunderstood, to the extent that you're vocal about the truth of the gospel.

You go into our culture and you say things like, "Jesus is the way, the truth, the life, and no one comes to the Father except through him." You say, "there's no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Buddha doesn't work. Islam doesn't work. Hinduism doesn't work. That all the monks on, you know, the news feeds, they're all going to hell unless they trust in Christ because there's no other way to get saved. This is the lifeboat. Right? This is it. There's no other way. That's what the Bible says, and out of love, we say, "get to the lifeboat, get in, it is the only means of salvation. There's a flood coming. Here's an ark. There's only one way to get out of it. This is it. The means of salvation has been graciously granted."

You start saying, "Hey, guys, I have the answer for you. You guys are in sin and you need to repent and you need to get right with God and the only way to do that is in Christ." Share that with all your coworkers this week and see if they understand it. I'll bet that they'll not understand it. I'll bet 95% of them will not understand it, and that's the reality for Moses, just like it was for Christ and Peter and Stephen.

"On the following day," verse 26, "he appeared to them," these two guys. He just defended, avenged their beatings, their oppression, you'd think that it would be like, "Hey, here he comes. Our savior. Our redeemer, the leader who is going to get us out of slavery in Egypt." Well, "they're quarreling with each other. And he tried to reconcile them and he said, 'Men, you're brothers. Why do you wrong each other?'" Let's stop. We need to unite. "But the man who was wronging his neighbor," strong word here, "thrust him aside," rejected him, "saying who made you a ruler or a judge over us?" What's the answer to that question? Look at verse 35, drop down real quick to verse 35. We're going to get this in the next section. "This Moses, whom they rejected," and they said stuff like this, "'who made you a ruler or a judge?' -- this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer," just like you've rejected Christ, God sent him as ruler and redeemer. Just like you rejecting me as the ambassador of that ruler and that redeemer, you're rejecting that. "Who made you a ruler?" Well, God did. But we're going to find out now he's going to be shelved for 40 years.

And they said something that scared him and they said something that imperiled his life, which is the word is out. "Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?" So now you're not going to side with me, you're going to side with them, and you're going to rat me out. I can't even go back now to my home. I have to pack my bags and leave. And that's what happens, verse 29. "At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian," a desert land, "where he became the father of two sons," Gershom and Eliezer, by Zipporah, the daughter of the priest Jethro, also known as Reuel. So he starts a family in the desert and it's going to last for 40 years, four decades. Rejection, thrust aside. Why? Because of a misunderstanding, verse 25. If you're not being rejected because of your Christianity, then you're not very clear about your Christianity.

And so I don't want to assume that and you may say, "Oh, here he goes again, you know. Christianity is all negatives, a battle. OK, I'm sorry. It's just it's the facts because I still get the emails. I still get people talking to me, "You're making it sound like to be a Christian people are going to not like you. And I haven't found that to be my experience." Well, let me help you with that. Let me tell you a few things you should tell your friends this week. Things like we're sinners, things like we need to repent, things like judgment is coming on the world, things like the things that God has said about our ethics, right? Those are binding on all people. Abortion is not reproductive rights. Homosexuality is not just someone's choice they make in a bedroom. These are things that store up wrath for the day of God's judgment. Let me help you with that. Go share that thoroughly biblical truth with other people this week and see what happens. I don't want to enjoy that. I'm not a masochist. I don't like it. But if you're identified with Christ, that's the reality.

Picture the most unpopular political figure, former political figure, in our country. Now, imagine the culture's hatred for that person and you are his wife. OK? I don't care how beautiful you are. I don't care how charming you are. I don't care how well you dress. I don't care how sophisticated you are. I don't care how kind and charitable and generous you are. Do you think you're going to be liked by the culture? Do you think you're going to be on the covers of



magazines like former beloved political figure's wives? It's not going to happen. Not going to happen.

Why? Because the cultures decided we don't like you. I'm not asking you to stand with flawed and foible political figures. I'm asking you to stand with the perfect Christ who gave his life for your coworkers, who says to them, if you say you see, your blindness remains, John 9. You got to admit you're blind and I'll give you sight. You got to admit you got a problem. You have to repent, to see your sin as a perilous danger that will send you to a Christless eternity we keep reading about where there's "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." The flood is coming. Get on the Ark.

You stand with that Christ in this culture, you will not be liked. I want you to get God's perspective on that. If you're taking notes just the first three verses, put it down that way. "Seek God's Perspective in the Rejection." You, number one, should be rejected. And let me say that as strongly as I can. Let me quote the words of Christ that are much stronger than my own words. John Chapter 15 verse 19. Listen carefully, please. "If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but as it is, I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." OK, guys, I didn't say that. Jesus Christ said that.

He said, "If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own, but as it is, I've chosen you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you." He's very clear in the context. Do you think you're going to do better than I did with the culture? You're married to someone the culture hates because they don't like his sexual ethics. They don't like the narrow-minded exclusivity of his means of salvation. They don't like bowing the knee. I think about my conversations and evangelism with non-Christians, "I don't like all this submission to God stuff. That's not my kind of religion. God doesn't want me to submit to him."

Everything about Christianity is going to be rejected, to quote First Corinthians 2, by the natural man. If you don't have the Spirit of God, you do not get this. And what I'm saying is you need to get God's perspective in that. And to quote John 13 he says, you know, "if they reject you," here's the perspective, "they reject me. And if they reject me, they reject the one who sent me." Now let's just think about that. You say something in the workroom this week about the sanctity of life. You say something about monogamy, about heterosexuality. You say something about salvation in Christ. You say something about hell, the reality of judgment after this life. If they reject that, clear, I mean, the perspicuity of Scripture, the clarity of those things in the Bible is so clear. They reject you, you're not invited to their parties this Friday, and they're rejecting Christ, who sent you and they're rejecting the God who made them that sent Christ. There's a perspective for you to say, OK, when they said to Moses, "Who made you judge and ruler over us, we thrust you aside." Who are they thrusting aside? They're thrusting God aside. They were thrusting the means of salvation aside. We got to get a better perspective on this. We need to understand the rejection from God's perspective.

But first, I can't really preach this section of his life without taking you to Hebrews 11. Can you go to Hebrews Chapter 11? Drop down to verse 24. The decision you need to make, and again this is a whole other sermon, but I at least have to say it because some of you sit here



today as undercover Christians. You aren't known at work as a Christian, your neighbors don't know you're Christians, you won't even put a bumper sticker on your car, (audience laughter) Ha! Sorry. You don't want to be counted with Christ. You don't want to shove your religion down anyone's throat. Those are your words that justify your secrecy.

I just need to tell you, you need to make a decision where you stand. And this picture of Moses standing with the Israelites when he had every advantage to stand with the Egyptians is the decision that we face. Look at verse 24 in this passage, "By faith," and this is what's lacking for some of us. Because if I could show you and prove to you that, Christ was coming back tomorrow and every critic and every rebel and every insurrectionist, every immoral person, every blasphemer, everyone's going to have to bow their knee to Christ and they will grovel at his feet. If that was happening tomorrow at 2:00 in the afternoon and you knew it, I bet everything would be different if you had that faith, like that promise was there and the fulfillment was right behind it.

If you really believed the judge was standing at the door, if you believed even though it's the third watch of the night that he's going to knock and tomorrow the door will be open, I think you would have faith, confidence to do the things that Moses did here. When he was growing up, he's 40 years old, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He didn't have to agree with the culture. He said, I'm not going to be associated with that. As Paul said so powerfully in Galatians 6, he says, "The world is crucified to me, and I to it." I'm just done being counted with the world. I refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter "Choosing rather," verse 25, "to be mistreated with the people of God," because the culture didn't like them. Matter of fact, they saw them as a threat, "than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin."

And some of you right now are choosing sin by your silence. You're choosing acceptance over loyalty to Christ, saying, "Well, I'm afraid of the reproach, I'm afraid of the criticism, I'm afraid of the rejection." Moses, verse 26, "considered the reproach of Christ.." I know that's anachronistic. The anachronism of Christ hadn't come yet. 1,400 years later Christ would come. But if you're standing with God in Egypt, and you're standing there saying God wants to fulfill the promise to Abraham, you should follow me and we should see the fulfillment of that, and you reject that. You reject the God who culminates his whole redemptive history in Christ, and, of course, you're rejecting Christ.

So Moses is theologically standing with Christ in all of this, standing with God. And he said, I'd rather stand with Christ, I'd rather have the pleasure and the affirmation of Christ, I think that's "greater than all the wealth and the treasures of Egypt." Why? Because "he looked forward to the reward." He looked past the problem to the vindication. There's a great word. Every time I say that word, I tell you that's a great word. Vindication.

It really tells you that you're on the wrong side of history because you got the wrong sexual ethics, you got the wrong views on morality, you got the wrong view on religion. You're on the wrong side of history, they tell you every day they tell you that. And I'm just here to tell you they're on the wrong side of history. One day Christ will ascend the throne and every rebel will, after acknowledging the lordship of Christ, be cast into outer darkness. And they will wail



and they will weep. And everyone who stood with Christ and was willing to be mistreated and suffer the reproach of Christ, every one of those are going to be vindicated. He was looking forward to the reward.

Let me give you a couple of pastoral, I mean, this is really counseling session, but let's go to First Peter 4. Let me give you things that will help you, I hope, traverse the rejection, be able to weather this. The perspective I want you to have, what's the perspective in rejection? Well, we stand with Christ. OK. What does that mean? What does that look like? First Peter Chapter 4. Let's give you three things real quick, just to compare a couple of things. I know we get scared, we feel insecure when people criticize us, when they reject us because of our theology, our Christianity.

But here's the perspective, let's look at the first four verses here, verse 13, "But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's suffering," this was Christ who was rejected first, you know, "that you also may rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." I'm looking forward to the reward. It's going to be good. I will be vindicated. "If you're insulted for the name of Christ," here's the perspective, "you are blessed," because at that point talk about affirmation, the opposite of insecurity, "the Spirit of glory and of God rest upon you." But at that moment, you should feel hugged by God, by the circumstances I feel affirmed. Now, he's got to clarify, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, evildoer, or as a meddler." I'm not talking about you liking conflict and causing conflict because you're a troublemaker. No. "But if anyone suffers," verse 16, "as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." Don't be afraid. Don't be insecure. Don't start quivering, but instead affirmation. "Let him glorify God in that name." I'm going to stand firm.

Three things. First one. Do you want to work through this with the right perspective? It's affirmation. Right? It's not insecurity. When you get ridiculed this week for being a Christian, when they reject you, when they thrust you out, when you're insulted, I need to say, OK, in that insult, Jesus says it often, matter of fact, he uses a phrase in Luke, "You should leap for joy in that day." What? That's hard to do. Well, no, that's because you're seeing affirmation for "So they treated the prophets." You need to think about standing with the truth of this message in our culture and say, "I see it as affirmation." The bumps on this road mean I'm on the right road.

I think it was Dave Wilkerson used to say the apostles... What did he call it? Of peace or something like that, like the Christian life is going to be peaceful. You may have peace in your heart, but they're going to be storms on the path. Right? There's no way you're not going to have this. So be affirmed when you hit another bump this week, when there's another price to pay for loyalty to Christ.

Verse 17. Here's another perspective that'll help you. "For it's time for judgment to begin with the household of God." OK. There are bumps on the road and the bumps are for us now. Right? That's the bumps because we don't fit in this culture. We're in Egypt right now. So the pain and the frustration and the rejection and the ridicule, it starts with us. We're the ones getting pushed around now. We're the ones being insulted now. And if it begins with us, if the world's pressing on us and we're getting pained for that, think about when it turns around.



What will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? What about when God starts pushing people around?

You've read the book of Revelation, right? I mean, when things start happening in the other direction... See tribulation we should expect from the world. But then there's a tribulation that comes from God and it isn't pointed at us. It's going to this world. If the righteous are scarcely saved, if it's a bumpy road for the righteous to get to the kingdom, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

I want to make some contrasts here. I want affirmation instead of insecurity. I want pity instead of anger because some of you are fighters. And some of you, when you get pushback from the world, you just want to fight because you get angry, your flesh gets involved. And I'm just telling you this, when you get rejected and opposed for your Christianity, you need to pity them. Pity them. When they reject what you say about the truth of whatever it might be that's clearly revealed in Scripture, and they continue to say the opposite and ridicule you and demean you and all the ad hominem arguments and everything that they do, you need to say I feel bad for you, as bad as when someone rejects a spot on the Ark because you're picturing them suffocating and drowning and their lungs filling with water. I'm thinking to myself, I feel bad for you.

Yeah, it's hard. I don't like you throwing rocks at me, but even Steven, when he was being killed and martyred, could recognize this is a bad thing for you. Jesus on the cross could see the same thing. This is a bad thing for you, woe to you. When the women cried when he was walking through the streets naked carrying a cross, he said, "Don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves." You need more pity for them. Which I hope drives you to continue to do what the next verse says, and that is just double down, verse 19. Let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good." And you know what good thing is? For you to be salt and light and to speak up this week about Christianity. Just keep on doing that. Live life consistent with that message and keep speaking that message.

I said recommit, not retreat. Right? Affirmation, not insecurity. Pity, not anger. Recommitment, not retreat. I want to say I'm recommitted to being an ambassador of Christ. Yeah, I'm getting heat and I'm missing out on opportunities because I stand with this person in a culture that's hated. But I'm going to draw near to him, I'm going to recommit to my loyalty to him, I'm going to speak up for his agenda in this world even more because I love him and I love his approval and peace with him more than I love whatever I would get from you. So I don't get popular. So I don't have the applause of the world. Maybe that's some perspective that will help.

Now back to our text. I know verses 26 through 28 in the second scenario in his life the next day, you can say it's just a continuation of the rejection theme, and it is. But let me pastorally shift, let me modulate this just a little bit. He gets thrust aside and outed, and the people who should be taking his message of salvation, in that case to be freed from slavery in Egypt and go to the Promised Land, they're rejecting that. I just want to say that hurts, right? It's one thing to deal with perspective and rejection, but I want to deal with this second thing, number two, just to look at these verses real quick and to think through this biblically, I want to "Seek



God's Comfort in the Pain." Right? Some of you listen to me preach on these things and you think, "Well, Pastor Mike doesn't feel any of this. He's the Robocop and, you know, cyber preacher and whatever. I don't know. He doesn't feel it." And it doesn't matter whether you think I feel it or not. I do and I'm a human being and all that. But I want us to acknowledge the fact that when we hurt there are the right reactions and wrong reactions. If there are people in your family rejecting you, your workplace rejecting you, when there's trouble even in just God not doing the things that he's going to do in the future, and you're having to wait, when there's pain in all of this, when you're in the Midian desert working for your father-in-law and you know that is not what God has prepared you for and you're made to wait, I'm trying to say here, I want you to get comfort, comfort from God.

I'll give you three things real quick. And all of them are found in Second Corinthians 1, so if you turn there real quick, but if I could give you two of them right out of the gate, they're all going to be in that passage. But one of my favorite verses is Psalm 62:8, it says that we ought to "pour out our hearts to God for God is our refuge." There are two things there that are key. We're going to see both of them in Second Corinthians 1. But you want comfort, comfort does not come from ignoring the problem. It doesn't come from being distracted. The world likes to be distracted, right? You get hurt, something hurts you, just think about other things. They like to dull the pain too. I just want to, you know, they've got plenty of options for you to try to dull the pain. And those two things are countered in that very simple verse, Psalm 62:8.

I want to pray, it's a lot like Philippians 4, instead of anxiety, the things that are hurting me and causing me trouble, Paul's in prison. He doesn't say "distract yourself," he doesn't say "go party. Just try to drown your sorrows." He says you should take all that anxiety and say, I'm going to pray about it, "Be anxious for nothing but everything with prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Get specific and pray. Pour out your hearts to God. The Psalms are good in that regard. A lot of pain in the Psalms and it's all about talking to God about that pain.

If you're hurt right now because of either God making you wait or you saying, I know this is what's right and the world's acting like it's wrong. I'm doing the right thing and it's being treated like it's the wrong thing. But I know it's what God says and I know it's the right thing. It's the right message. It's the right truth. It's the right stand. It's the right standard. It's the right morality and it's being treated badly and you hurt personally over that, which is totally human, totally understandable. I'm saying your prayer life needs to be the number one focus thing you do. Specifically talk about it. Satan would love to get you to shut up about those specific things. Be specific, articulate those things to God.

And then the next line in that verse 8 says for he's our refuge, "God is our refuge." I want you to be specific about where the help comes from. God is a God when it says "the Spirit of glory and God rests upon you," when it hurts and there's affliction, I want to say, "God, you are the answer. You made me. You give me life. You can give me perspective. You can even give me joy and peace in all this." And that's where it goes in that passage in Philippians 4, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and minds." So



God is specifically engaging in our lives. So I want to look to God and I want to look to God in prayer. Those are two things and you going to see them both.

But the focus of Second Corinthians 1 as you turn there, I want you to look at it now, is about the fact that this happens collectively. Talking about the world, they like to distract and dull. They also like to isolate themselves when they're hurt. Some of you may be listening online, you've isolated yourself and you're not with the people of God, you're not in your small groups, you're not engaging. And I get the pandemic. I get all that. Trust me, I get the sickness part. But at some point, you got to recognize that that can be used as an excuse for you not to be engaged in relationship. And I say it all the time here, because our biggest numbers are on the weekend, right? We fill this parking lot up three times and half of you don't engage in small groups. You're not involved in relationship. And some of you pull away from that because you're hurt, because your Christianity is hard, it's costing you. And I'm saying we need to do just the opposite. Not isolate, we need to congregate. We need to turn our chairs face-to-face.

Take a look at this text, Second Corinthians Chapter 1, start in verse 4. Look at the team nature of this God "who comforts us," Paul says, "in all of our afflictions..." so that we will be comforted. No, "so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction." So God has comforted me and he tells us later in the book, part of it was through Titus. Titus comes and brings comfort. "The God who comforts the downcast, comforted us with the coming of Titus." So God used Titus, for instance, in Paul's life, encouraged him in the midst of his affliction. And then he says all of that happened so that I could be good at comforting you. T.

His is a relational thing. This has to happen in context of community. "With the comfort," we want to take the things that happened in all that "with which we ourselves were comforted by God," he's our focus obviously it comes from God and it comes through the vehicle of human beings, God's people. "For as we share abundantly in Christ's suffering," and some of you, again, to the extent that you mute your Christianity, to the extent that you attenuate your voice for Christ, to the extent that your salt is no longer salty, you no longer have any salt. You're not shining. Your light is under a bushel. Well, then, of course, you don't share in a lot of that.

But to the extent that you're being open about your Christianity, the more you share in that suffering of Christ. They rejected Christ, there's pain, there's waiting, there's a cross before the crown. All that's true for us too. "So through Christ," because of our focus on him, because of his comfort to us, "we share abundantly in comfort too." Suffering is part of the Christian life, but comfort is a part of it too. I just want to look at that emotional side of that sense of our feelings here. God can bring us comfort. "If we're afflicted," and Paul certainly was, he says I'm seeing it as part of the preparation for me to comfort you, "it is for your comfort and for your salvation; and if we're comforted, it's for your comfort." I'm just immediately looking for how did that help me? How can I pass it on? How did that encourage me? How can I encourage others? "Which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer."



So our hope is unshaken. Why? Because we're community, we're together, we're going to work on each other. "Our hope is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings," just like we share in Christ's sufferings, "you will also share in our comfort." You're going to be comforted. "For we don't want you to be unaware, brothers," we're not trying to hide it from you, "the affliction we experienced in Asia." Here he was a missionary. What were they doing? The same thing Moses was doing. Hey,, means of salvation, but they didn't understand the salvation and instead they persecuted him. They left Paul for dead. And he says, I'm trying to help and they didn't take my help as help. I'm doing the right thing, they're acting like it's the wrong thing. So all of that he says, I had all kinds of affliction there. It was so bad. How bad was it? Middle of verse 8. "We were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself."

If you don't think the Christian is going to lead you at times to despondency then you're a new Christian. It's hard. You check in with all the biblical characters, Moses, Job. Elijah, I mean Jonah, Paul. There are times where you just say like I can't do it anymore. It's so hard. So what do we do? A lot of times we distract, we try to dull and we try to isolate. Paul said, "No, no, no. We're not going to do that." We're going to look to God as the source, look at verse 9, "Indeed, we felt that we'd received the sentence of death," we thought we were done and we were given up. "But we learned that was to make us not rely on ourselves," but on that refuge that Psalm 62 talks about, "but on God who raises the dead."

He raises the dead physically and he raises the dead metaphorically in that he gets you through this. He can bring comfort. And we know later in the book he says Titus was the source of that comfort for us. He brought us that encouragement we needed and God used him. "He delivered us from such a deadly peril," and our own self-condemnation and despondency and depression, "and he will deliver us." There's confidence. "On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many." Prayer, specific prayer. Right? Focus on where the hope comes from, on God, and community, the people of God, God's people, as the means by which that is brokered in life.

Feeling the pain of waiting? Some of you get really into jams, and you won't even call the prayer line at the church. You won't even get on our prayer list. What is wrong with you? I'm serious. What is wrong with you? Why? Why don't you share it? Right? I mean I've watched other people, I've watched other pastors, hide, you know, their COVID and stuff like that. What are you doing? How dumb. I mean, think about it. I want you to pray for me. When I'm suffering I want you to stand with me and hopefully by next weekend, if I'm still alive, I would love for you to rejoice with me that God has brought me through some of this.

I mean, I'm not on a ventilator, obviously, but I'm just saying this is just an example of like when you're in trouble, you need to share it. We need to walk through this together so we can pray specifically, so that we can all rejoice when God brings us through this. If you're despondent, great. And then I'm saying, don't just sit there and go, "Great now that everyone can care for me." You should take your notebook out and as soon as you get one nugget of



encouragement, you're writing it down to say, I know now I'm equipped to do this in other people's lives. I'm comforted so I can comfort others.

Lastly, back to our text, verse 29. He ends up in the desert. "At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons." That's a big thing to stand in this weird place called Midian in the desert when God has equipped you for something and you're benched for 40 years. Not because, because it's not explicit in the text, because you handled the situation with the Israelites wrong, but just because it is in God's plan, that's what happened and God said this is it. Now is not the time. And if God makes you wait, and God brings you into more trials and you got more bumps. You got more problems. You got more disappointment. You got more protracted frustration. You got despondency. I'm saying what you need is the strength to wait well. Waiting is inevitable. Waiting well is not inevitable. We've got to focus on how to wait well. To wait well is to have strength. Right? That's endurance.

Patient endurance is how it was put there in the passage we looked at in First Peter 4. How do you get that strength? You know God wants to give you that strength, right? I mean, that's what he says in Isaiah 40. What a great passage. Haven't you heard, he said? God's not weary. God's not tired. People get tired. God doesn't get tired. Matter of fact, its people, even young people, who stumble and they fall and they grow weary, they faint. "But those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength." God looks at the weak and he wants to empower them. I want to wait well. How do I do that?

One passage, one more text, turn with me to First Peter Chapter 5. First Peter Chapter 5. This line will scare you, but let me give you seven things real quick from this passage (audience laughing). Seven things, yeah. Look at verse 6. Do you want to wait well? Do you want God's strength? Matter of fact, that's the point if I didn't give it to you, "Seek God's Strength in the Waiting." I want to seek his perspective in the rejection. I want to seek his comfort in the pain. And I'd like to seek his strength in the waiting. How do I do that? Seven ways right here. Ready?

Verse 6, first two words, "Humble Yourself." Just write it down verbatim. Humble yourself. Humble yourself. You were brought up in a culture that lied to you about you being able to control stuff you can't control. If your parents were dumb enough to tell you, you could do whatever you wanted in your life, I apologize for the folly of your parents. You cannot do whatever you want in life, you can't be whatever you want. Some say, "You can be whatever you want to be." You can't be whatever you want to be. Also, "I can do whatever I want to do. The heights are just limitless." How ridiculously stupid. That is not true. You couldn't even decide when you were going to be born. You couldn't decide who your parents were. I mean, you couldn't decide how tall you're going to be, you're stuck, man. You're just nothing. I mean, that can could be overstated, I suppose. But you have no control. Humble yourself.

I mean, 10 years into being a worker for your father-in-law in the desert, Moses could say, "I want to go back and deliver the children of Israel." Sorry, you got 30 years to wait. Most say, "I can do whatever I want." You can't do whatever you want. "I can do it when I want." You



can't do it when you want. "God's prepared me for this. This time I'm going to do it and seize it. Take life by the horns and..." Whatever. Moses needed to learn to humble himself. You got to humble yourself.

You're not in charge, you have very little power. Nothing? OK, overstatement, you're more than nothing, but not much more. I mean, really, you are so small, so limited. You don't have this autonomy they told you had. You don't have limitless life. You are so small. So let's just accept that, OK? Humble yourself.

Here's the good news, here's what Christianity gives you hope non-Christians don't have, "under the mighty hand of God." That's a good thing. You've got a relationship with God. I hope you do. And if you do, great, you got the best alliance in the universe. The creator of the universe who has all power is your friend, and you can humble yourself under his hand. There's a concept of sovereignty there. He's got a sovereign plan. And if you're infertile or if you're divorced or your business crashed or you're sick or you're dying or you've got cancer, all that under the mighty hand of God, just humble yourself under his mighty hand. He's a powerful God. He is in charge. He is in control. Nothing is out of control. Thirty-seven years into the shepherding of Jethro's flock. Right? Nothing's out of control. Everything's right on schedule. Everything's fine. "Under the mighty hand of God."

And the next line is the timing, bottom of verse 6. "That at the proper time he may exalt you." The proper time. Is Moses going to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt? Yes. It's not going to be perfect, but it's going to happen. But not right now. So you wait for the proper time. It doesn't mean you're going to be passive, but it does mean you're going to have to wait and you're going to know this, I put it down this way. I'm going to "Remember God's Dates Are Set." OK? Three things I got: humble yourself. Number two, "Affirm God's Power." I didn't say that. But number three, I certainly talked about, "Remember God's Dates Are Set." God is sovereign over the timetable.

We want it now, I get that. And there are good things we want. Think about the apostles in the beginning of Acts Chapter 1 verse 6, they say, "Hey, is now the time you're going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" And remember what Jesus said? "It is not for you to know the times of the seasons that the Father has," here's how the English Standard Version translates it, "fixed in his own authority." That's a big statement, isn't it? The Father's fix these dates. These dates are not for you to... I mean, humble yourself. Right? "The mighty hand of God." God's got a plan and the dates are all set. When is that going to happen for you? When is God going to fulfill that promise? When is God going to do his thing? In the fixed time.

Again, that makes you feel small? Welcome to reality. And now I'm going to have to wait and I'm going to say God's timetable is fixed. People groan, "Well, I don't like all that." You don't have to like it, but it's true. Right? God's sovereignty over all things. And so we recognize that and we affirm that, the dates are set. Like my dad used to say, one of my favorite lines, and it wasn't favorite back then, but I would say to my dad, "I can't wait, I can't wait. I can't wait." And he'd always say, "You're going to have to." That's just the reality. You're going to have to wait. The dates are set, they're fixed.



Number four, here's the practical thing, we've already kind of touched on this, First Peter 5:7, but it says "casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you," he cares for you. So you're under his hands. I got relationship here. I'm humbled now recognizing I'm not in charge. He is in charge. He's got dates that are set. And now I want to say I'm concerned about this. Some say, "What's happening to the Israelites back there in Egypt? They're being oppressed and there are people dying. God, you said you're going to fix it. You're bringing them into the Promised Land." This is like take those anxieties and it's a great word, "cast them on me." I care. I care about that. I care about you. I care about the agenda. I care about my promises. I care. Just "cast those."

There's a great Hebrew word in the Old Testament about committing our work to the Lord. And it's the Hebrew word "to roll." You feel the weight of it. Just take that and roll it on to him. And here it's even stronger. Like push it fast. Cast it. Here's how I put it in the notes I took. I said it softly here, know you're God's concern, but usually when I pray it, I say, God, I know that I am your problem. Right? And all my problems are your problems. Right? When the three-year-old has a problem, it's the parent's problem. When my pre-teen has teeth flying into his mouth in all different directions. Right? He needs braces. It's my problem. Not like, "Hey, I wonder what kind of job you're going to get to pay for those braces." It's my problem. I'm the dad.

Every problem. Kid throws up in the back seat of the car, that's my problem. So I need to know this, I'm God's man, you're God's woman, you are God's problem, you're his servant. You're saying I hope what Moses said, and that is I'm standing with you, I will bear the reproach. I'm going to stand with you. So you say I stand with you and if I'm rejected, if I lose a job, I lose a client, I lose respect, I am not on the cover of any magazines, I get all this ridicule, I have to wait. Those are all your problems God because I'm your man and I'm your servant and so let's just make it, take those anxieties and I pray about them, I roll them over. God's concern.

Well, this sounds like a great Dayspring card until verse 8. "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." Be sober-minded and watch for your adversary. The devil prowls around like a roaring lion. Now you're just trying to encourage me with my anxieties in verse 7 and now you're telling me you've got an enemy that wants to eat you alive. How does that help? Here's how it helps. OK? Number five, I put it down this way. "You Should Fear the Danger of Waiting Poorly." You should fear the danger of waiting poorly.

When Jesus had to wait for the crown to walk through the cross, Satan showed up in Matthew 4 and said, "Here, I got a shortcut for you." When he was trusting in God for his next meal, Satan shows up and says I've got a shortcut for you. I'm sure Moses had plenty of temptations with lots of shortcuts, and when you wait poorly, just know, it's because you fall into the temptation of the enemy to do something that somehow compromises God's plan for your life. You need to wait patiently which does not mean passivity. But it does mean that in situations you know that this is the wrong thing. This is a compromise. And I need not do it. I



need to say I'm not going to do that because I know that the enemy would love to destroy my effectiveness. God wanted to prepare Moses to bring those children of Israel out of Egypt. And he could have destroyed that by how he dealt with temptations. And all I'm telling you, you've got to fear the danger of waiting poorly.

Verse 9, as long as we got spanked in verse 8, he says in verse 9, "Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world." That's kind of a backhanded slap, isn't it? Resist him firmly, but knowing the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood around the world. I mean, today we're looking back in biblical history. We're saying, look at Moses and we're seeing that suffering there. And now he's saying in time contemporaneously, look at people all around the world. In other words, you're not the only one who has trouble. Matter of fact, your troubles may not even be as bad as some people around the world.

I was up this morning reading a new book, a friend of mine wrote on the persecuted church and I've read two or three chapters of it. I'm reading about my brothers and sisters in Christ who are preachers in other lands, in India and Southeast Asia and other places. And I'm thinking, wow, I got my own problems but they're not as bad as those. So that's why I think reading about persecuted church and martyrs, I think is always helpful. I mean, we're studying the first martyr here, Steven, who is going to die for this testimony. And I'm saying I don't want to be insulted for my testimony. I need to see, you know what? My sufferings, I'm not alone in this.

Now, again, these are my thoughts, COVID sermon prep, but I put it down this way, number six, "You Need To Not Be a Spoiled Brat." Don't be a spoiled brat. Because I'm going to walk through the kingdom gates with the guys I read about in this book this morning who are going to look at me and see how I work through the travail of my Christian life. And I'm going to look at how they worked through the travail of their Christian life. I'm going look at the postponement in my life and the pain in my life and the deprivation in my life and the persecution in my life and the criticism in my life, and they're going to look at theirs and I'm going to sit here and go, wow, I sure hope I don't walk through this life like a spoiled brat complaining about the magnitude of my pain and my problems.

Not to minimize that pain isn't pain. Pain is pain. But knowing that my brothers around the world, and there are a lot of them right now that have a lot worse than I do. I mean, if you need help with that, there are so many websites, but persecution.com, my buddy who works there, it's the Voice of the Martyrs. Just every day they can send you an email about what's going on in the world just to remind you, persecution.com, go sign up for some of that. And look at the way we as Christians are all in this together. There are people dying because they're standing up for Christ. And I want to know. This is it nothing new? Moses suffered. Peter suffered. Jesus suffered. My brothers in India are suffering. There's suffering going on. I can stand firm. I'm going to resist the enemy, I'm not going to wait poorly.

That's my resolve. It's a hope-filled resolve, verses 10 and 11, because "After you've suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who called you into his eternal glory in Christ," it's all going



to end well, "he will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen." That picture there, interlacing the eternal glory in Christ and the dominion forever and ever, I say interlacing because a little while I don't think is the little while of the Eschaton. In other words, hey, it's all going to work out when "the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of this Christ." Yes, all of that's coming. And in that sense it's a little while, I suppose, because how long until we get there? I mean, it seems like a long time, but it's going to happen. You're going to die and you're going to be in the presence of God if you're Christian.

But I think like Moses, it's not just like you got to wait until you die at 120 Moses to see this vindication. There's going to be some vindication for Moses in 40 years. It's a little while, it's a long while, four decades, but there's going to be vindication, I think, for you along the way. Not ultimate vindication until you see the eternal glory of Christ, not until you get to the dominion of God that establishes itself forever and ever. But you do know there are seasons of reprieve. There are times of vindication even in this life. There are times of being restored, confirmed, strengthened, and established. Was Moses restored, confirmed, strengthened and established?

Did we not look at that briefly last week in James Chapter 5 when it says, consider God's dealings with Job, "how the Lord is compassionate," how he restored him? That was a terrible book of terrible things that happened. But in time, after all that fog of adversity and all the waiting for the resolution of God to do what God he thought should do, well God did it. And it wasn't perfect, but that last chapter of Job, man, it sure was a season of confirmation, restoration, strength and establishing.

I put it down this way, number seven, "I Need to Anticipate Tomorrow's Strength." I need to anticipate tomorrow's strength. I mean, "Weeping may last for the night, but joy comes in the morning." That's an episodic cyclical pattern of the Christian life. Paul despaired even of life, but he got through it. Titus showed up and he got through that. Did he have it again? Sure he did. He had another season of waiting and protracted pain and the fog of adversity. But God kept doing this. And all I'm saying is, if you're in that season right now, whether it's sickness or illness or whatever it might be, and you say, "God, I'm doing the right thing and the right stuff isn't happening as a result of the right thing, it's being treated as the wrong thing. And the circumstances look all wrong when I do the right thing," I'm just saying hang in there, anticipate tomorrow's strength, humble yourself, affirm God's power, remember the dates are set, know you're God's concern, you're God's problem, fear the danger of waiting poorly, don't be a spoiled brat, anticipate tomorrow's strength.

There were times, I'm sure, that Moses felt like Paul felt like despaired even of life. I can imagine that. But in that desert, God worked in Moses' heart to not fear the king's edict, but to trust. And he had to have the mechanism of God's help and the equipment of things like I analogize with binoculars and flashlights to be able to say, I got to see this more clearly.

At the end of Moses' writings in Deuteronomy, he makes a statement, I think that's got a double focus. It's a statement about the children of Israel coming through the desert, but I



think he clearly had to, and if he's not making the connection, we're making the connection, of how he spent all that time in the Midian desert. One thing in the Arabian desert there, the children of Israel wandering around, but he had his own desert experience. And here's what he said about it. Deuteronomy Chapter 32 verse 9, he said, you know, God loves his people, "The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted of heritage." He loves the people. "He found them in a desert land, in the howling waste of the wilderness," sandstorms. He encircled them, he cared for them, he kept them, he protected them "as the apple of his eye."

Think about that, the glossy membrane of your eyeball, you get sand in that, you're going to deal with that. And God says, I found my people, I love my people, I encircled them, I care for them "like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over her young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them up on his pinions. Yes, the Lord alone guided him and no foreign god was with him."

Yeah, that's true and perfectly true with the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt. They rejected Egypt, stood with God, God cared for them for 40 years in the desert. But before that there were 40 years for Moses in the desert. And it was the same thing there. God loved him, he cared for him, he protected him, he guided him, and he kept, as Hebrews 11 testifies, that there was no other God for Moses but God. And right now, the gods of the culture, the gods of approval, the gods of applause from people, you've got to just sacrifice those and say I'm going to stand with God, stand with his truth. I'm going to be salt, I'm going to be light, I'm going to be an ambassador, I'm going to be used by God to advance his kingdom in this age. And may you have a sense of renewed perspective and comfort and strength in the process.

Let's pray. God, we need you now. Obviously, we need you always, but we need you now, it seems, in such a just a clear and just an obvious way as our culture increasingly gets hostile toward anything that reflects biblical Christianity, we know there's an increasing price to pay. And when we reach out even to people who will one day trust in Christ, even right now, a lot of those people reject it. They don't understand it.

The people who may become Christians a year from now may be our worst, most hostile adversaries in our workplace and we hurt, we want to retreat, we struggle. But I pray you'd help us. Give us the right perspective. We stand with you under your mighty hand. We're your ambassadors. Give us the comfort we need just to get up tomorrow morning and say, yeah, we're going to be back at it. You can encourage our hearts. You can strengthen us. And God do give us a kind of strength that gives us that patient endurance to carry on, not just until we get some reprieve next month, next year, but to the ultimate eternal glory and kingdom and dominion of God settles on this planet. We know that's coming with the appearing of Christ and we look forward to that and we pray with the early church, Maranatha. May we be ready like those men dressed with their lamps burning, ready to swing that door open the minute the master knocks on the door, whether it's the second or third watch in the night. Give us patient endurance. Give us faith that's clear and crisp and clean and strong.

In Jesus name. Amen.