

The Lord Test the Heart

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- [0 : 0 0] And please turn in your Bibles to John 6. John 6, and we'll read verses 1 through 15 this morning.
- ! And it starts out sometime after this. So in chapter 5, Jesus had just been warning the Jews about the wickedness of their unbelief.
- And so we come to chapter 6. Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee, that is the Sea of Tiberias. And a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick.
- Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover feast was near. When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, Where shall we buy bread for all these people to eat?
- He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of us to have a bite.
- [1 : 1 0] Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. Here's a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?
- Jesus said, Have the people sit down. There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about 5,000 of them. Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted.
- He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted. So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.
- After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, Surely this is the prophet who has come into the world. Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.
- Open with me to the book of Proverbs, chapter 17. Proverbs 17. Proverbs 17. The book of Proverbs gives us wisdom, understanding, and insight into life on planet Earth.
- [2 : 4 1] Haven't you found that that's true of the Bible as a whole, but it's also true of the Proverbs. It explains life as we experience it here.
- But it also teaches us then how to live wisely here, how to apply our hearts to wise living in this world in which we live. Now we have a precious nugget of wisdom in Proverbs 17.
- 3, and that is our text for today. Notice it with me. The crucible for silver, the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart.
- Now if we were to understand what is going on in our lives this week, and next week, and next month, and whenever, we need to let this light from heaven enlighten us.
- We need to let this little verse here explain to us what is going on in this world. And according to this verse, what is going on in our lives is that the Lord is testing our hearts.

[3 : 51] The Lord is testing our hearts. The Lord, Yahweh, Jehovah, of whom we've just sung, the God of the Bible is putting your hearts to a test.

Now that's what God wants us to be aware of as we go through our lives, that He is testing our hearts. Now we can easily miss this, can't we? We can easily forget that.

We get so wrapped up in the problems of life themselves that we're blinded by them, and we forget what is happening here, is that God is testing me.

And since we overlook this, we find that He reminds us of it often in the Bible. In fact, our text is just one of many, even dozens of texts that we could turn to, to see where God is reminding us, I am testing your heart.

I'm testing your heart. And its importance is seen then by the number of times He tells this to us. And so I'm just here to remind you today of this important reality that's going on in your life, whether or not you're aware of it, the Lord is testing your heart.

[5 : 10] Now one of the reasons we can be so unaware of God's tests is that they do not come to us announced as tests. They just happen. How many of you can remember watching Roy Rogers?

This will date you. But suddenly the screen goes black, and you hear a voice. This is a test. For the next 60 seconds, this station is conducting a test with the emergency broadcasting system.

This is only a test. And then that high-pitched screeching sound, eee! And you realize, we're being tested. There's a test going on here.

Well, when the Lord tests us, He doesn't send such a notice. John, this is a test. There's no screeching sound to wake me up to this fact, that what's happening right now is I am being put to a test.

Rather, they just show up unannounced during the normal routines of life. And so it's that flat tire on the way to work. It's that consuming, time-consuming interruption into an already crammed day and week.

[6 : 28] A schedule that you're trying to keep. It's a tragic loss. It's the threat of loss. It's a death. It's an illness. It's bad news. It's that difficult person in life being difficult again.

It's a marriage problem. It's a family problem. It's a financial problem. It's the job. It's the neighbors. It's that temptation to sin.

It's somebody doing something against you that's tempting you to want to do the same back. It's something popping up on your iPhone or your screen of your computer that you know you shouldn't look.

You're being tested. These things happen continually throughout our day. And it's not only that we're tested by afflictions and trials and temptations, but also by blessings.

Did you know that? You're being tested by blessings, by successes, by financial gains, by good health, by good news, by raises at work, by the praises of men.

[7 : 43] You know, there's a verse later on in Proverbs, chapter 27 and verse 21, that starts out exactly like our text, but finishes a different way. It says, The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.

Oh, now we know that when we're being criticized and judged, we're being tested. What will we do in return? But maybe we've not thought of the fact that we're also being tested when men are praising us.

The test is, what will we do with that praise? Will we give God the glory or will we just suck it in and take it to ourselves? In so many ways, you see, these tests come to us from the Lord, all shapes and sizes.

James speaks of trials of many kinds that come to test our faith. A variety of tests. More varieties of his tests than even the thousands of different varieties of beetles that he's placed on the earth.

All kinds of varieties of these tests. Now, we need to think and know this about these tests, that there's always two sides to them.

[9 : 08] There's always two sides to the test that comes to you. There's God's side and God's purposes. God is testing you to lift you up to him, to draw you closer to him, to teach you.

At the same time and in the very same test, Satan is tempting you, seeking to pull you down, to get you to sin. So, what is a test from God is also a temptation from Satan.

And what is a temptation from Satan is also a test from God. God does not tempt us, but he does test us. And in that testing, Satan will be tempting us.

Do you get the idea? Two sides to these tests. A divine side with his purposes and a devilish side with his purposes. And James recognizes that our trials, indeed the word for trials is test, temptations.

It's, you can, the same word translated both ways. It's, it's one and the same, it's, it's both. It's, it's test from God. It's trial.

[10 : 19] It's, it's temptation from Satan. And James recognizes that, that, and urges us to be aware of both sides of our tests. And so he tells us to, to submit to God in the test and to resist the devil in the test.

James 4, 7. There's always two sides. So submit to God's purposes and resist the devil's. So the Lord comes to test the heart.

Some of his tests are big, some of them are small, but most of them are unannounced. They just show up as pop quizzes in the midst of life. Now, sadly, we're often clueless at the time and it's only later that we, oh, was that a test?

I wonder how I did. Well, it's our wisdom to know that God is testing us. It's our wisdom to identify this is a test.

This is a test. And this is going on much more often than we may realize. Job says, you examine man every morning and you test him every moment.

[11 : 30] Now, whether Job was just feeling like that or that's a statement of truth, I think it bears a bit of both. We are tested all through our day.

We need to be aware of it. Now, a test may have several purposes. Let's think about the purpose of a test. Usually, a test is given to discover something. So, your teacher gives you a test, kids, to see how much of what she's been teaching you has stuck up here.

She wants to discover how well you understand and how much you understand the information. There is a discovery that goes on in your test.

A laboratory will put a product to the test to discover how well it is made. The underwriter's laboratory may be testing an electrical switch and so they'll hook it up to a machine that does nothing but for hours turns that switch on and off to see how well it is made.

It is out to discover how well it is. The condition of this switch. your doctor puts you through a stress test to discover how healthy your heart is.

[12 : 48] Now, that's the purpose, at least a purpose, a significant purpose of a test and the example given to us in our text, Proverbs 17, 3, is that of a refiner with his crucible and his furnace.

Now, a crucible is a refining pot. it's a heat-resistant vessel that holds metals that are to be tried in the fire. So that's the crucible and it's placed in the furnace and it's heated up.

So you inherit a piece of gold. There is a chunk of gold and it looks so shiny and pure and you want to discover its real value so to the refiner you go and he puts your chunk of gold in his crucible and he puts the crucible in the furnace and then he heats up the furnace and at some level the certain temperature that is reached the baser metals the lesser metals will be separated from the pure metal the gold.

So the lead will come to the top and this scum this dross comes to the surface. So you thought it looked like pure gold but in fact there was a lot of worthless metals mixed in with it and it's the furnace that discovered to you the true condition of your gold.

It was a test it was put to the test that's the illustration of Proverbs 17 3. Now let's remember that the furnace did not put the dross into the gold it was always there.

[14 : 30] All the furnace did all the test did was to bring out what was there all the time but was hidden from men's view and even so the Lord tests us he puts us into the furnace of affliction of hard times he turns up the heat to reveal the true condition of our hearts.

Now we have a problem here that we need to speak about so the Lord tests our hearts we need to realize that it is not in order to discover for himself what's in our hearts it's not like he doesn't know and oh I need to find out what's in what's in John's heart so I'm gonna I'm gonna put it put him in the heat and then I'll learn something that I don't know God is omniscient he knows everything David says oh Lord you've searched me and you know me you know when I sit and when I rise you perceive my thoughts from afar you discern my going out and my lying down you're familiar with all my ways before a word is on my tongue you know it completely oh Lord such knowledge is too wonderful for me too lofty for me to attain if I say surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me even the darkness will not be dark to you for the night will shine like the day for darkness is as light to you it's not like God's in the dark and he puts us through a test to enlighten him he knows the heart

Jeremiah says you know me oh Lord you see me you test my thoughts about you I'm an open book to you and you read every every word of it Hebrews 4:13 nothing in all creation can be hidden from God's sight everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give an account Jesus knew all men he did not need man's testimony about men for he knew what was in a man so when we talk about the Lord testing the heart we must not think that God is ignorant and needs to find out something he's omniscient well then what and why if the Lord knows all there is to know about us and doesn't test us because he's ignorant then why well to discover to us what is in our hearts to reveal to us what is lying under the surface there are few things we are more easily deceived about than the condition of our hearts

Jeremiah said it the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure who can know it who can understand the heart and he answers it I the Lord search the heart we're often in the dark concerning our own hearts Charles Bridges says none of us know ourselves until the fire has tried each man's work of what sort it is you know that's why God that's why we're not to judge men finally we are to let!

do the judgment because only he can see the heart and what looks like a good work on the outside to be rewarded with God's favor may really be a bad work because of what's in the heart that's why we've got we've got to leave the judging to God as to a person's final condition before him David cries who can discern his errors forgive my hidden faults you see David's not just saying I've got secret sins that I'm hiding from you no David's saying I realize I've got hidden faults in my heart that are hidden from me we're so proud!

[18 : 26] that we don't even see our own sins you see so much remains hidden not only not to the Lord but to us lurking in the dark corners and back alleyways of our hearts but then the Lord tests us and he reveals what's inside he turns up the heat and then we discover our hidden faults then do we gain the knowledge of the remaining plague of our own hearts and then we're brought face to face with the idols of our hearts things that that have sort of taken on a life of themselves and and have weaseled their way into a place in my heart that only God's to have and I didn't even know it was there but the test you see brought it to light it discovered it it's the heat of the test that brings to the surface the hidden dross within so there's pride and self righteousness growing in

Peter's heart and he doesn't have a clue that it's there no if you ask him he thinks that he possesses a superior love and devotion to the Lord Jesus far superior than these other guys these other apostles he's got more zeal for the Lord that's what he sees it as and so on the night of Jesus arrest we read that Jesus says to his apostles you will all fall away and Peter declared even if all fall away I won't you see what he's saying I can understand it of these guys James John Thomas Matthew I can imagine that they would fall away but not me I'm better than them I'm better than them he's raising himself up in his esteem above his brothers he's thinking more highly of himself than he is of them and the

Lord says no no Peter I mean you not them I mean you you too will fall away in fact you go you go further you go to go to!

you will go as far as to disown me three times you see Peter doesn't know what's in his own heart and he insists no Lord I would die for you I would die with you this will this will never happen I will never disown you and they all said the same well it was just a few hours later wasn't it and the Lord turned the heat up on the furnace and he tested their hearts and into the furnace they went the arresting mob binds their Lord and is hauling him away and what a discovery they made of the remaining plague in their own hearts they discovered that they were not nearly so loyal to Christ as what they had thought they were they were far weaker than they ever knew they esteemed their own lives as more important than loyalty to Christ and they all fled for their lives you see what came to the surface in the heat of the furnace was the scum of their own self love they love themselves more than the savior and

Peter having claimed for himself more faithful love to Christ than all the others found his heart was just as fickle as theirs as words of denial overflowed from where from the heart for out of the heart comes the words of the mouth and those words of denial tumbled out of his mouth from his own heart not once but again and the third time swearing an oath that he didn't know this man Jesus and at the crowing of the rooster the look of the Lord Jesus Peter went out and wept bitterly confessing his sins that he hardly knew he was capable of committing he's humbled in the dust well that's the remedy you see for his high opinion of himself his arrogance and pride and self righteousness his looking down his nose and despising others later to drive home the lesson even deeper the Lord Jesus asked

[22 : 56] Peter so Peter do you love me do you love me more than these other guys i.e. like you claimed you see it was a huge test for Peter and it revealed what was inside but even our smaller tests are meant to reveal the true conditions of our hearts to us some small irritation riles you up on the inside and out tumbles the unkind words that are meant to hurt that other person and we cry where did that poison come from oh wretched man that i am somebody pulls out in front of us in traffic and we just got to apply the brakes just a little bit and we find road rage in our own hearts if not in our hands in our horns in our words where did that come from out of the heart some temptation draws us to take a second look at something we shouldn't and we find more lust in our hearts than we knew lived there and these tests are only bringing to the surface the remaining impurities within and so like

Peter we are humbled in the dust and we confess and we forsake our sins and we watch and pray against them the next time and we walk more humbly with our God which by the way is one of the big things God looking for isn't what does the Lord require of us will act justly to love mercy and to walk humbly before our God how he loves humility and how he knows just how to produce it in his people when we grow proud and arrogant indeed the first beatitude that Jesus gives describing his people blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven we walk more humbly with our God but then we walk more humbly!

toward our brothers and sisters don't we less of a judgmental spirit toward them less looking down our noses with that holier than thou attitude how could they I never but instead we cry help them Lord you know how weak I am myself hold me that I don't fall in the same way or even worse than they the tests bring up what's inside now why would God do that why would God want to bring the scum up from the bottom I mean why not just leave it buried way down deep in there well you know what's in comes out right that's why if it's in there he wants it out of there because it will affect you the heart is the wellspring of life it's from the heart that we live and and if there's crud in the bottom of our hearts there's going to be crud in the way we speak the things we do and the things we think and all the rest so

God is determined to do whatever it takes to purify our hearts he's predestined us to be conformed to the image of his son so that Jesus Christ can have a whole bunch of sons who are bearing his likeness that's that's what he's doing in your life that's the good he's working all things together for Romans 8 28 and 29 that's the good he's coming test I wonder if we appreciate just how in love God is with our holiness his son died to make us holy his spirit lives in us to make us holy so why does the refiner go to all the trouble of heating the gold until the impurities rise to the surface well it's not just to leave them there to say oh I see I don't have as pure of gold as I thought I had now I know that I discovered that and then he gets his stir stick and stirs the crud back into the gold and lets it cool and he's got his little gold ball again no he takes an instrument and scrapes off the crud he removes it he's refining the gold making it pure so what he ends up with is purer than what he began with even so the

Lord tests us and discovers to us the sin within in order to remove it to refine us and purify us Malachi 3 3 describes our savior as sitting as a refiner and purifier of silver and he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver Isaiah 125 I will thoroughly purge away your dross and all your impurities Psalm 66 10 for you oh God tested us you refined us like silver you see there's not only a discovering purpose in our tests there is a purifying purpose as well he reveals the crud in our heart he brings it to the surface in the test not so that we'll just grovel in the guilt and sorrow of sin it's not an end in itself just to discover it so there stick your nose in it Christian just just feel that for a week or two or a lifetime no that's not his purpose he discovers it to us that we might run to the purifier of it that he would drive us to

[28 : 51] Christ for cleansing and true repentance and so humbled in the furnace we come to God and we confess our sins and he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us purify us from all unrighteousness you see he wants not only our sin in the record books in heaven to be forgiven blotted out but he wants the impurities in our hearts to be cleansed and that's his process the test discovers it oh I didn't know that was in my heart oh Lord forgive me cleanse me your blood purifies from every sin you see there's a discovering purpose and a purifying purpose John chapter 6 the passage that was read for us it was a day not not unlike many other days for

Philip wasn't it there he is he's on the mountain side with Jesus and the other apostles and Jesus is teaching them that often happened but but as they looked up this day they saw them coming a huge crowd of people must have been like a swarm of locusts just coming up the mountain the dark shadow of their presence just moving up the mountain side to Jesus indeed we're told there were 5,000 men let alone the women and children with them and so Jesus seeing the multitude says Philip where are we going to where shall we buy bread for these people to eat and in giving us the account John inserts some information for us his readers he puts a little insight into this discussion for us telling us Jesus asked this only to test him for he already had in mind what he was going to do now

Jesus didn't tell Philip that he didn't say Philip I already know what I'm going to do but what do! where shall we get bread for no it was not announced and Jesus is not confused and wondering what to do and seeking counsel from Philip no he knew exactly what he was going to do and he asked this only to test Philip it comes unannounced no screeching beep no words this is a test just a question that was asked him and suddenly he's plunged into a test maybe he doesn't even know he's being tested at the moment he's in the furnace the situation is just about to bring to the surface something that's in his heart and it's a test of his faith isn't it would he look to Jesus infinite resources and count on that or will he look to just his own human resources what man can do will he look to the

Lord with whom all things are possible or will he look to man with whom many things are impossible well Philip's heart is exposed by his answer he says eight months wages would not buy enough bread for each one just to have a bite this is impossible Lord this is impossible situation for us to fix can you see the dross of his unbelief bubbling bubbling to the surface in this test that's not the answer of faith that is ever looking to Jesus who's already been doing miraculous things before their eyes turning water to wine at the wedding of Canaan supernaturally healing the sick the lame the diseased Philip's not factoring into the situation the Lord and his almighty power faith sees everything in relation to him in relation to Christ and what he can do and Philip's missing it isn't he's failing the test and

Andrew's hardly any better is he he he says well here's a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish but what are they among so many it's impossible Lord Philip's right well Jesus did go on to reveal his glory and strengthened the faith of his disciples didn't he showing them once again men get your eyes on me not the situation get your eyes on me that's where faith finds a resting place in Christ and so he strengthens their faith by displaying his glory multiplying the food feeding the multitude till everyone not just had a bite but was full and then twelve basketfuls of leftovers were collected but notice it was unannounced out of the blue Philip finds himself being tested and tried his faith failing his unbelief exposed and even so dear believers you should expect to find many situations in your life where your faith is being tested and you don't have

[34 : 18] John to whisper in your shoulder this is one of those times Jesus knows what he's doing but he's asking this to test you Jesus has put you in this situation right now with this person this this circumstance this is a test this is we don't have that but we do have that here and so we need to be ever mindful of the fact that the Lord tests the hearts the crucible for silver the furnace for gold but the Lord tests the heart the whole Christian life is to be we live by faith looking to Jesus and our tests in life show us just how strong our faith is what boils to the top in the time of trouble is it faith or is it unbelief he does it to discover to our hearts but then to bring to us that confession Lord I believe but help my unbelief forgive me for my unbelief teach me we have a lot more to say about these tests next week and what it brings to the surface but never forget it's the Lord himself who's putting you to the test believer it's your loving heavenly father who sits as the refiner to purify you bridges says no refiner ever watched the furnace with such exactness and care you see you're his gold what is the owner's feeling towards the gold not a drop not a gram of it will be lost you're precious in his sight but what he does want is to get the impurities out and so with perfect wisdom tenderness and love he moderates the temperature of the furnace he controls the heat of your test not making it one degree hotter than is absolutely necessary to accomplish his purpose in the test to wean you from this world to replace pride with humility stubborn disobedience with a sweet submission to his will to remove idols to make christ everything to us whatever his purpose is and there are more and we'll see them next week he he's watching you see he knows just how hot to make the fire our refiner does not let us be tempted that is the same word let us be tested more than we are able to bear first corinthians 10 13 and then he doesn't keep us in the furnace!

a second longer than is absolutely necessary it's no hotter and you're in there no longer than what's absolutely necessary to accomplish the task you know he wouldn't turn the heat up so high if it wasn't needed to bring forth the beauty of christ in your life to bring good to us and glory to him and so he's watching he sits as the refiner and he's watching for that exact moment when his purpose is accomplished when our graces have risen to the top and are burning more brightly when our faith is showing itself and is being strengthened when our perseverance and patience is being exercised and developed when our humility is reflecting!

Christ when glory has come to him with the demonstration of these Christ-like virtues bubbling up from within our hearts we'll look more at that next week it's not just the crud that bubbles up there's other stuff in the heart of a Christian and we'll see that next week and when he sees all the purposes accomplished and folks we know just a fraction of his purposes in the test I'm convinced that when someone is going through a test there are purposes in that test that are involved in a dozen people around them sometimes hundreds of people the one person is going through the fiery test but the spouse the children the parents the churches the watching world there are purposes that God and he sits as the refiner and once he sees all of his purposes accomplished you're out of the fire he's watching over you with jealousy there's nothing sinister and evil about his testing he does not afflict the children of men willingly you can trust him at the controls we sing that song of

Thomas Kelly in the furnace God may prove thee thence to bring thee forth more bright but can never cease to love thee thou art precious in his sight you're the gold he wants to purify you he's counted you precious!

Bridges asks us this is Charles Bridges in his commentary on this verse is not any furnace of blessing even Nebuchadnezzar's furnace! A blessing! If it purges away our dross if it removes our impurities if it brings us to know ourselves and to know our God better if it makes us walk more humbly before him and makes Christ more precious to us then blessed crucible blessed furnace blessed Lord who tests the heart and brings forth such precious results from it I don't know anyone who was tested more by the Lord than the man Job unless it was our Savior himself and Job didn't have any idea why the Lord was testing him it was hidden from him it was a deal struck in heaven between the Lord and the devil he didn't know why he was being tested but he did know the one testing him why the loss of all my children why the loss of all my wealth

[40 : 49] I don't know and when he has tested me I will come forth as gold that's it he knows what he's doing child of God you can trust him with the controls of your furnace with your test that he's putting you through day by day you can trust him he's able to bring forth gold out of such events the crucible for silver the furnace for gold but the Lord tests the heart he knows what he does he knows what he's doing trust him does the Lord have you brother and sister in some fiery furnace trust him you can trust him in the furnace and lost person you're not exempt from this you know the Lord is testing your hearts your whole life here is a test one test after another in this great test that's going on and the test is what are you doing with me

God the heart is always doing something with God it's either loving him or hating him it's either seeking him or neglecting him it's either coming to him or running from him it's either listening or ignoring it's obeying or rebelling it's trusting or doubting but you can't live without your heart doing something God word you were made that way in a relationship God word and you're doing something with him maybe replacing him your whole life here is a test and it's leading up to the final test you know that that final test has been pre-announced hasn't it it's appointed unto man once to die and then the final test then the judgment so you've been put on notice this is a test and out of this test in the final judgment will come your eternal destiny!

with the Lord in that scene in this period of your life what did you do with the gospel you received the word of God that you heard the opportunities he gave you the blessings he lavished on you his commands given his son offered to you the tests of this life are nothing compared to that final test how will you escape if you neglect so great a salvation you see the truth of the matter is that God already knew you failed the test we all failed it didn't we and instead of damning us all what did he do he sent his son and you know Jesus wasn't immune from the test his God God tested him he put him into the furnace of affliction and suffering he turned the heat up like no man ever felt on calvary in every temptation and trial Jesus passed the test didn't he he's perfect and that means he's qualified to be your substitute the one to stand in and take the punishment for you because he passed the test

He can pay for your failures. And he also has a perfect record of righteousness to give to you, to cover you. Because that's the one thing you'll need in that final test.

You'll need a covering of Jesus' obedience and blood. What a gracious father. That when we failed the test, he sent his son not to condemn us but to save us.

[44 : 47] Get into Christ today. Let's pray. For your grace, O Lord, we give you thanks that you have not treated us as our sins deserve.

And we thank you that you know us. You see exactly what we are. You're not surprised like we are when the tests bring up to the surface the scum that was in the bottom all along.

And we thank you that you never grow tired of our confessions. And you never grow weary in your power to cleanse us and to purify us from unrighteousness.

Would you make us more aware this week that we are being tested? Would you put your truth in our inward parts?

Would you get out all that is not like Christ? And would you develop that purity that's found in him? Thank you.

[45 : 55] Thank you that we can trust you with the controls of our life, with the tests themselves. Come and help those who are severely and sorely tried at this moment.

Come and work all your purposes in all of us through these trials. And we'll give you praise. Indeed, even as Job was able to praise you in the midst of his fiery trial, we praise you in Jesus' name.

Amen.