

Trials Show Gold

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- [0:00] Genesis chapter 22, we're going to read the first 19 verses.! Early the next morning, Abraham got up and saddled his donkey.
- He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. And on the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.
- He said to his servants, Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship, and then we will come back to you. Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife.
- As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father, Abraham, Father! Yes, my son, Abraham replied. The fire and wood are here, Isaac said, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?
- Abraham answered, Abraham answered, God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son. And the two of them went on together. And they reached the place God had told him about, or when they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it.
- [1:46] He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, Abraham, Abraham, here I am, he replied.
- Do not lay a hand on the boy, he said. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.
- Abraham looked up, and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.
- So Abraham called that place, the Lord will provide. And to this day it is said, on the mountain of the Lord it will be provided. The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.
- Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies. And through your offspring, all nations on earth will be blessed because you have obeyed me.
- [3:12] Then Abraham returned to his servants and they set off together for Beersheba and Abraham stayed in Beersheba. All true religion is heart religion.
- Which is just to say that all saving religion not only deals with our outward behavior, the things that we do, but also deals with the heart, the inner man, our thoughts, our motives, our desires, our will.
- So man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. In high school we used to sing a little song that said, what if your heart were made with a window on each side?

So that all could see not just outward charm, but detective inward harm. People often see you as you are outside. Jesus really knows you for he sees inside.

How about your heart? Is it right with God? That's the thing that counts today. All true religion is heart religion. And we've been seeing that in our study of Proverbs 17.3, that what's in our heart is important to God.

[4:30] So, Proverbs 17.3, the crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart.

The Lord tests the heart. Just like the furnace tests gold, so the Lord tests the heart. And that's not something that is a rare thing that he only does a few times in our lifespan, but rather we're seeing that it's something he's doing quite often in our lives, not just in the big things, but also in the little, everyday, ordinary things of life.

He's testing us. This is a test. And I wonder if you recognize those tests in this past week, and did you remember what he's doing in those tests?

One of his purposes is to discover to you what's inside. To bring up to the surface that you might see your sin and then confess it and be purified from it.

When gold is put into the furnace, the lesser, the baser metals, the lead is separated and is skimmed off that the gold might be refined and become more valuable and more precious still.

[5:53] And that's what the Lord is doing with our hearts. In the heat of his tests, he's bringing to the surface the scum of sin that was always there.

The test doesn't put the scum there. It was always there. Sinful thoughts and desires and attitudes that were hidden in those dark chambers and corners and alleyways of our heart.

And under the heat of the test, it comes to the surface. It comes into the light. And it's for that very reason that we might see them and then confess our sin and be forgiven of our sin and purified from all unrighteousness.

And then walk more humbly and dependently upon our Lord Jesus. So his tests are designed. Your dross to consume and your gold to refine.

Now while all of that is true, the fact is that there is more than sinful dross in the hearts of God's people. And so there is more to his purposes than just to refine us, to get out the scum of sin from our hearts.

[7:07] There is more than sinful dross in the heart of God's people because in sovereign grace, God has changed our hearts, hasn't he? He's radically changed our hearts, given us new hearts, taken out our old, stubborn, unbending heart of stone and has put in a heart of flesh, as Ezekiel says, that's pliable and moldable to God's will.

And so we have new thoughts and motives and Godward desires and a submission to his will. And what's more, God's own spirit has taken up residence within us.

And he's there to go on changing us. He's God's agent of renovation, and he's making our hearts more and more like Christ's heart.

So what is the spirit doing in the hearts of everyone that he indwells? He's producing the fruit of the spirit. And he does that in our tests.

Do you know why love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control are called the fruit of the spirit?

[8:26] It's because the spirit of God is the source, the one producing such virtues in our lives. It's nothing less than the life of God, the spirit dwelling in the soul of men.

And that's why when the Lord tests the hearts of his children, it not only reveals hidden sin, but also hidden good.

Good that God has worked there. Listen to the words of our Savior in Luke 6, 45. Luke 6, 45. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, while the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart.

For out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. So, in the test, in the trials, what's inside comes out.

Outside of Christ, none of it is pleasing to God. The evil heart brings out the evil. But it's different for the Christian. God has made their hearts good.

[9:46] You see that in the soil parable. What distinguished the fourth soil from all the others is that they had good hearts. God had made their hearts good. So, when the seed comes in, it produces a harvest, 30, 60, and 100 fold.

And here we see that then in the trials, good things come out of the hearts of God's good people. Good things that he has worked there.

So, in the test, that's what the Lord is doing. Not only bringing to the surface the scum of sin, but the gold of grace. The gold of faith and hope and love that he has worked there.

So that others might see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in heaven. You know it is to your Father's glory that you bear much fruit. Jesus tells us that in John 15.

It's to his glory for your heart to bear good fruit and much fruit. It's to his glory because he's the divine gardener. He's the one who plants and prunes and waters and weeds and fertilizes and makes any good come out of us at all.

[11:01] So when it does, glory goes to him. And glory also comes to Jesus who is called the fruitful vine. I'm the vine and you're the branches.

And so any good and fruit that comes on you, the branch, is because you're drawing sap, life-giving grace for me. And so in the trial, what is happening?

God is bringing to the surface his grace that others might see it and praise our Savior for what he's doing in us. And so God is glorified.

So the tests of the Christians are revealing things. They're purifying things, but they're also God-glorifying things as God receives praise for the good that he brings out of the heart in the test.

So I want to turn you to one more text where this is taught and then we'll look at some examples. 1 Peter chapter 1. 1 Peter chapter 1.

[12:09] And the lesson is that God works in us, the good that God works in us, he brings out in our trials for his own glory.

1 Peter chapter 1 and verses 6 and 7. 1 Peter's talking to the saints and he says, In this you greatly rejoice.

What he's been talking about is our living hope in the inheritance that is ours in heaven that will never perish, spoil, or fade. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials, tests, that's our word, trials, tests, all kinds of them come upon us.

Now notice in this verse the strange mix that is found in the believer. Simultaneously to experience great joy and grief.

Do you see it in the text? Great joy and grief. How can these two inhabit the same heart at the same time? Is it even possible? Well, every one of you who have been a Christian for very long at all know that it's not only possible, it's reality.

[13:26] We live with great joy and grief. As sorrowing, yet always rejoicing. And that's what we see here.

And we greatly rejoice in what? In the hope of heaven. It's ours. No more struggle with sin. No more struggle to live in a sinful world.

No more devil to tempt us. The glorious things that Christ is preparing for us. We greatly rejoice in what's coming. Our best things are in front of us.

And though it is yet future, its certainty spills over into this life in present great joy. joy. So that right now, we rejoice in hope of the glory that is coming.

And so Christianity is a religion of joy. God has saved us and called us to joy. Joy unspeakable and full of glory as a few verses later we'll speak of.

[14:34] And so, because of Christ, right now, we greatly rejoice. But, now for a little while, we must go through all kinds of tests that cause us grief.

And though these tests that bring grief last our entire lives, it's just a little while, isn't it? On the timeline of eternity, of forever and ever, where we will be without grief we do our Christ.

So, for a little while, you have had to suffer these tests that have brought you such grief. And why?

What's the purpose? What's the result? Verse 7 tells us, well, these have come. These tests have come so that your faith of greater worth than gold which perishes even though refined by fire may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

So, that's the why, the reason, the purpose for our trials, our tests, that our faith may be proved genuine.

[15:45] There's a whole lot of fool's gold in the world. Stuff that looks like the real thing. It sparkles, but it's not. But the fire will reveal of what sort it is, whether it's true gold, genuine gold, or false gold.

Put it in the fire. And the fire is the prover. It's the thing that shows the reality of the gold. And in the same way, there's a lot of false faith in the world today.

A lot of people claiming to have faith in God. Just ask them, they'll tell you. They have faith in God. But there's a lot of stuff that sparkles that is not true faith in God.

Indeed, James speaks of worthless faith, dead faith, useless, false faith. So, God puts you into the fire, Christian.

The fire of grief, of tests that cause you grief so that your faith may be proved genuine. And may result in praise, glory, and honor when Christ is revealed.

[16:57] It's in these tests, then, that faith is proven genuine. We need to realize, why is God testing me? Well, we've seen to bring up sin that we might confess it and be refined.

But here's another reason. To prove the genuineness of your faith. It was there all along, but the test called your faith into action.

Proving that it was genuine. It's faith, real faith that works by love. It is that real faith that overcomes the world, that rejoices in hope, faith that trusts and obeys God.

It's that faith that quenches the flaming arrows of the evil one. It's that faith that perseveres in trial, that holds on to Jesus and lives upon Him.

That's a lot of good stuff that comes from faith. And it's all brought to the surface, you see, in our tests, in our trials. And that's much to your encouragement.

[17:56] Isn't it an encouragement for you to know that your faith is the genuine article? And how do you come to a growing assurance of that reality?

Because as God puts you into test after test, that faith doesn't just shrivel up and go away. But it remains true.

It works by love. It obeys. It clings to Christ. It purifies the heart. It's real. It's a lie. It's genuine.

And what an assurance it gives to us in a world of false faith to know that we have this faith that is proven genuine. But Peter goes on to say there's a further purpose in God's testing, not only to encourage you by the fact that it's genuine, but that it might result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Praise, glory, and honor will come to the Lord when your genuine faith is seen to hold true during the trials.

[19:09] Now some will see you in this life and they will see you going through a loss, some test, and they'll see, look, look, she has hope. She grieves, but not as others without hope.

And some will make the connection or maybe even ask for the reason of your hope and they will learn that it's because of the Lord Jesus and what he's done. And so glory and praise will come to him because of your faith exhibited in your trials.

but you know, much of genuine faith under trial goes unseen by men. Many of your trials are known only to yourself and God and the audience of spirits, of angels and demons that look on.

There's a lot of your trials that no one else knows the degree into which you enter and yet there is that audience and glory is coming to God as before that audience your faith is being proved genuine in your tests.

But a day is coming when Jesus Christ is revealed, when all that is hidden will be brought to the surface and uncovered. And then the tests that God's people went through on earth will be revealed.

[20:29] And along with the tests will be their responses of faith and hope and love to those tests. They too will be revealed and the result will be praise, honor, and glory.

Now the question is to who? To the person or to God? And I believe the answer is both. Yes, there will be praise, honor, and glory for the tested believer.

The Lord will honor them as the Lord Jesus will say to them, well done, good and faithful servant. Is that not praise, honor, and glory? To have God say that to you?

Jesus to say that? Much glory, honor, will be heaped upon God's children for their well done in the trials and tests of life.

Your faith was genuine. It was no counterfeit. It was the real thing. Your faith rested on me for righteousness. Your faith rested on me for cleansing, for strength, for wisdom, for grace, for all things.

[21:35] And no one who trusts in me will be put to shame, but honored in that day. And so they will receive honor, glory, and praise.

But ultimately that praise and honor and glory will redound to God himself. We will cast our crowns at his feet and he is the one who will receive the honor, glory, and praise for the Christian's genuine faith because then it will be seen clearly that what was done in our lives was done by the Lord himself working in us.

And so he will be glorified in his saints and they in him. So that's the principle that in our trials and in our tests, God is proving its genuineness, the genuineness of our faith, but he's also bringing the result of praise and honor and glory to himself, to his people that they will receive when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Now, let me give you some examples because in our earlier studies, all of my examples that I brought to you from the scriptures have been those where the test brought up some of the scum of sin, right?

So we saw Peter and we saw his pride and his arrogance and thinking he loved Christ and was more faithful and devoted to Christ than anybody else in the twelve and then the test came and it showed him his real heart.

[23 : 06] Or Philip, you know, when Christ says, well, where will we get enough food to feed all these, the five thousand? We saw his unbelief that came to, it was a test. Jesus asked him that, to test it. Well, I want to show you that that's not the only thing God's tests have brought to life.

God's tests have brought to life faith, hope, and love in him and it's on record for us for his glory. So, think with me about Job.

Of course, Job was one of the most seriously tested of men on the earth with all ten of his children killed and all of his wealth taken in a single day.

He's in the furnace and the fire is hot. What comes to the surface of his heart in that time? Well, it's not the dross of cursing God, which is what Satan predicted.

No, it's humble submission to God's will and worship and praise. For he fell to the ground in worship saying, naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I will return.

[24 : 14] The Lord has given the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised. He worshipped. He praised God.

Grace, not sin, was brought to the surface by this test to all who saw Job, the spiritual unseen world included. And oh, how glorifying that was to God to have his children.

How glorifying it is to him today to have his children entrusting him, worshipping him in the fire, in the losses. He takes great pleasure in Job's righteous response because very soon after we find the Lord boasting to Satan, have you seen my servant Job?

What's he boasting about? He's maintained his integrity. He hasn't cursed me like you said he would. He stayed true to me. His faith is real. He's holding to me.

He's clinging to me. Have you seen his fear of God? His righteous response? And dear ones, when you go through trials and losses and you cling to Christ and you praise him and you worship him even through your tears and you grieve but not as those without hope, you bring great glory to God, great pleasure to him.

[25 : 40] David. David. You remember, he wanted to build a house for the Lord and through Nathan, God said, no, it won't be you.

It will be your son. So David donated tons of wealth for the temple. Gave this wealth to the Lord to build the temple.

And then he called on all Israel to give as well. And they gave willingly, gladly, generously, wholeheartedly. And then David prays to God about this offering. And in that prayer, he says, I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity.

I know that you test the heart and find pleasure in integrity. That when you test the heart and put it through the fire and see integrity, it pleases you.

So even in this offering, the hearts of God's people were being tested. And what rose to the surface was the gold of integrity, genuine willingness to give.

[26 : 48] It wasn't just pretense, it was real. It was the authentic gladness of giving to the Lord with devoted hearts to honor Him with their monies, and it not only pleased David who prayed for it to continue, but it pleased the Lord because I know, Lord, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity.

So, dear ones, how you spend your money is a test. It's a test from the Lord. And when you honor the Lord with the first fruits of all your increase and you do it with willing, generous, glad hearts, the Lord is pleased.

Remember, He loves a cheerful giver. This is a test. We would do well to remember and even hear those words as we walk by the offering box.

This is a test. And the Lord is pleased with integrity as we come through that test with hearts that esteem Him and honor Him with our wealth.

You know what that says? It says, what must God's grace and goodness be that He has a people so willing to give to Him?

[28:07] You see how it shows glory and honor to our God? That was David and the people of God who gave in their test. And then there's Hezekiah and we're all familiar with that day when he suddenly finds himself smack dab in the middle of a test.

the Assyrian Sennacherib has come with his undefeated army to Jerusalem and is threatening to destroy them. No one has been able to step up and defeat him.

And he sends this letter to Hezekiah threatening him. And so this is a test. This letter is a test. Would Hezekiah trust in God or fear men?

Well, he takes the letter, doesn't he? And he goes to the temple and he spreads it out before the Lord and he says, Lord, see what they're saying about you. Act on our behalf.

Act on behalf of your own name. Show that there's a God in Israel. Make a name for yourself here. And he sought help from the Lord. What came to the surface in his test was a dependence upon God.

[29:13] And dear ones, when your tests bring you to the throne of grace with a sense of your utter need, I need you every hour. I need you especially in this hour.

He is pleased. He has brought out that wondrous fruit of the Spirit of dependence upon him. And when help arrives, there's another test.

Do we return praise and thanks to God for that? There again, that brings much glory to him. And that's often what comes out of these tests, the grace of thanksgiving.

And then there was not only Hezekiah, but the church in Corinth. You remember, it was a troublesome church. They had a lot of problems. And to this church, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 2:9, the reason I wrote the earlier letter, now he's writing the 2 Corinthians, the reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything.

So the first letter of Corinthians reveals a very difficult matter of church discipline that they needed to tend to. That one of their members had his father's wife and was not repentant for his sin.

[30:30] And the church was putting up with it. And Paul wrote to them, you remember, in 1 Corinthians 5, and says, put him out. He's yeast in the dough. It will spread through the hole. Put him out.

And they had. The discipline was enacted. And now Paul is writing a second letter. And he says, the reason I wrote that first letter was to test you to see if you would be obedient in everything.

And now he gives them further instructions. Because the man had repented, the discipline had brought about the desired effect of humbling himself and repenting, Paul says, now receive him back.

Love him. Forgive him. Receive him. Affirm your love for him so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. You see, there's more than one trap.

He goes on to say, in order that Satan might not outwit us for we're not unaware of his schemes. You see, Satan has a ditch on both sides of God's will and he doesn't care which ditch we fall in, but he'd like to get us in one or the other.

[31:42] The first is the ditch of just being careless about sin in the church. So that was the first ditch that the church was in and Paul wrote them and says, no, put him out of the church.

You must discipline this man. He's not repenting. And they did. But now Satan was tempting them of having a harsh, unrelenting, unforgiving spirit toward the brother even though he had repented.

And so Paul is now saying, oh, make sure you reaffirm your love. The discipline has done its work. Now receive him. And so Paul wrote this letter to see, to test them.

It was God's test. Would they follow God's directives? Would they obey in everything? And they passed with flying colors.

What came to the surface was full obedience to God's will. Is that not to the great glory of God who works obedience in his people that a local church would do something very difficult and unpopular like putting a member out of the membership?

[32 : 50] Yes, they did. Out of desire for his restoration, the church's purity and the testimony of Christ in the world. Well, when this church follows all the commands of God, it's a great glory to him.

This is a test. When we have an issue of discipline in the church, there is a test. Some of our tests are individual and come to you and you and to me, but some of our tests are corporate and we're tested as a body.

Will we act as a body according to God's instructions? Will we do the hard right or will we cave in and do something that's easy? Well, you see, in the test here in Corinth, God was glorified as they obeyed in their tests.

What about the 12 apostles? We've seen some of the dross that came in Peter and Philip and so on, but you know these apostles did not fail every task. Jesus had changed them.

He had made them new men. They weren't the same people. They had experienced a radical change of heart, not a perfect change. That was, awaits heaven, but he was working in them.

[34 : 04] And so they're in John chapter 6. Multitudes are following Jesus. He's a popular preacher and healer and Jesus preaches a sermon that was offensive to men's flesh.

It was hard to accept and it was a message that thinned the crowds. John marks it as a watershed moment in the ministry of Jesus saying that from that time on, many of his disciples followed him no more.

And so you can see the scene. there's Jesus and the twelve around him and the masses and they're parting with disgust in their faces and in their voices as they're no longer following Jesus of Nazareth, not after what we just heard.

And Jesus turns to the twelve and says, you don't want to leave too, do you? It was a test. What will you do with my hard sayings?

What will you do with my hard doctrines? What will you do when others are no longer following me? And Peter standing in the test and the fire.

[35 : 13] What comes to the surface? Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.

There's no one else to turn to. Nobody else has eternal life but you. To walk away from you is to walk away from eternal life. You are so important to us that we can't imagine life without you.

Where could we go if we left you? This is what the testing of their hearts revealed. A precious Savior. Much to the praise and honor of that Savior.

These men trusted and followed Jesus when few others did. When tested by his command, follow me. follow me. They willingly obeyed.

They left all and followed him. That's what came to the surface in his test. Follow me. He's being tested. They left all and followed.

[36 : 15] And what is that saying about their Savior? He's worth following. Though none go with me, still I will follow. And what happens in your life when you may be the only one following Jesus in that family, in that school room, in that workplace.

And no one else has a heart for Jesus and his truth and yet you're letting your light shine. Amazing, isn't it? To see what comes to the surface in the hearts of God's people.

to the praise of God who is at work within them. And then there's Abraham. We hardly even know what to say about the test he went through.

You remember how he was tested his whole life and he had been made a promise about a son to whom would be given a promised land and his descendants, many descendants and from that one of the descendants would come blessing on the whole nations.

and yet Sarah's wife is barren and they're getting older. Yeah, there were tests and he failed some of those tests but then finally his wife Sarah gave birth after 25 years of waiting for the promise she gave birth to a son and they called him Isaac which means he laughs.

[37 : 39] He was the joy of their hearts. And then we read Genesis 22 sometime later God tested Abraham. And just as gold goes in the furnace so Abraham was plunged right into the furnace of this test and it comes in the form of a command and God simply says take your son your only son Isaac whom you love and go to the region of Moriah sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.

God's command was testing Abraham's heart. Who really reigns in your affections Abraham? Is it Isaac or me who has the unrivaled first place?

And though as I say earlier tests showed some scum coming to the surface in Abraham that's not all we see. In fact we see something quite different and remarkable in Genesis 22.

What comes to the surface is the gold of supreme love to God that would not even withhold his son his only son the son of the promise but was willing to sacrifice him.

The Lord was so pleased that he stopped him mid stroke and provided a ram to be sacrificed in Isaac's place. And he praises him and he renews the covenant with him because the test revealed Abraham feared God and esteemed God above his own son.

[39 : 17] And so with joy God recounts Abraham's test results in the New Testament. How would you like to have all your test results written in scripture? God puts it in there and we've seen some of the scum but we come to Hebrews 11 and God says let me tell you about my friend Abraham.

Verses 17 through 19 by faith Abraham when God tested him offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son even though God had said to him it's through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead and figuratively speaking he did receive Isaac back from the dead. You see what came to the surface when God tested Abraham was a supreme love for God a supreme devotion a fear of God an esteem of God above all else even over his son but also a genuine living faith by faith Abraham offered his son when God tested him.

It proved his faith to be genuine faith. It was a faith that obeyed a faith that worked a faith that worked by love and a faith that believed that God was able to raise his son from the dead.

If this son Isaac is going to have descendants from which will come one who will bless all the nations then if I kill him in obedience to God's command then God is going to have to raise him up because there's a whole lot more of history that must be fulfilled in him.

[40 : 56] Faith believing what he had never seen believing God's promise came to the surface in the midst of his test.

And even so brothers and sisters in some of our tests God will put his finger upon our Isaacs things that are precious to us people that are precious to us and he's out to test to see if anyone or anything has taken his place and become an idol in our lives squeezing God out of his uncontested high place in our affections and your love for God is being tested by his commands if you love him you will obey his commands so do you love him with all your heart soul mind and strength do you love him more than these more than husband and wife more than children more than parents more than lands and houses and yes more than your own life also these are some of the tests and when your response is like

Abraham's it brings great glory to God it says he is worthy of all I have none to trust in like him all these examples that we've seen this morning brought great glory to God as he tested their hearts and I trust that we see something of the necessity then of why it is that we need to go through suffering in this present little while why is there a need speed yes we greatly rejoice in what's coming but why does it have to be that in this life we must go through these tests that bring grief because some of the most precious fruit of the spirit will only come to the surface in the heat of unpleasant tests from the Lord so how is the Christ like love of enemies to come to the surface of your heart unless you have some people who treat you like enemies and how is joy in the midst of sorrow to be brought out of your heart unless you too are plunged into some sorrow and grief and how is peace and pressure to be exhibited in the test if you are not put under some pressure and how is patience ever to be manifested without anything or anyone who tries our patience and gets under our skin and how will grace and mercy ever be shown to those who have wronged you unless you face a test where someone just flat out wronged you and how will forbearance be shown unless there are difficult people to bear with and how will prayerful dependence on

God be seen without being thrown into situations where we need help and so you see that these God produced virtues the fruit of the spirit are brought into the light through these tests that bring grief so let us remember in our tests that there is something far bigger than just me involved in this test yes God is out to sanctify me in the test but let's remember that he's fetching glory to himself he's out to glorify himself he's out to prove that you are genuinely one of his that that he has worked new birth in you and he's given you a genuine faith and and as he's bearing fruit in your life that he will receive the glory for it there's a God to glorify when these tests come knocking this is the stuff of genuine gold wherein God is glorified as it's plainly seen that what we have done has been done through

God so now for a little while you have had to suffer grief and all kinds of tests that the work of God might be seen in you proving the genuineness of your faith that will result in the day of Christ Jesus in glory honor and praise do you know that even God's son did not escape testing did he his whole life was one of continual tests and we saw weeks ago his passing the 40 day test in the wilderness as the devil tested him for 40 days and 40 nights and he comes out with flying colors but the closer he comes to Golgotha the harder the test becomes and so on the night that he was arrested he's in the garden of Gethsemane and he's he's staring the cup in the face he knows that the time has come for him to drink the cup of God's wrath in the place of his sinful people that the time has come for him to drink and to experience what his people should get forever and ever due to their sin never was a man put to a more severe test and it squeamed out of the son of God this prayer father if it be possible let this cup pass from me nevertheless not my will but yours be done father if there's any other way to save these sinners then do it and let this cup pass but if not not what

[46 : 40] I want but what you want and he was given the cup and he drank it down there was no other way you see the Lord had provided the lamb and it was Jesus and there is no sparing him at the last moment if there's to come salvation to us sinners then he must be punished in our place and so the wrath of God fell on his son that it might turn away from us all who believe in him might not perish under his wrath but enjoy everlasting life he was the only sacrifice that could take away sin and so this test of all tests brought out of the Savior's heart that pure gold of submission to his father's will not what I want everything in his human heart recoiled at what was coming at Calvary to be forsaken by his

God to be damned in the place of sinners and yet he says not my will but yours be done and it's that same sweet submission that he's continuing to teach his disciples today in their tests so the test the MRI that came back for our sister Jeanette was not what she and Max would want it was not their will but there's another test you see going on here not just what's going on in your body but what's going on in your heart dear sister in this situation dear brother and what comes to the surface is not our will but yours be done and I ask you where does that come from where does that ever get its start its continuance its perseverance not what we want but what you want it's all of God isn't it and so he is being glorified now and we little know how much glory is coming to him when we too in all of our tests say but it's not about me you're fetching glory to yourself and so not my will but yours be done a sweet submission to the will of

God to bring glory to him oh what glory what joy it brings to the heart of our savior and what it will bring to him to us in the day when Jesus is revealed lost person he's testing you too he tests our thoughts about him and all we think and do God is interested in what our hearts are doing with him our hearts are always doing something with God always none accepted we're always either loving him or despising him we're always either fearing him or forgetting him we're always either trusting and obeying and desiring and seeking him or running from him and doubting him the crucible for silver the furnace for gold but the Lord tests the heart what does he see come and surrender to Christ trust in this land that God has provided for sinners and learn the glorious life of living with him in all of our tests and being able to say in those tests though peace like a river attendeth my way though trials like sea billows roll whatever my lot thou has taught me to say it is well it is well with my soul let's sing that together it's number 580 let's pray together it's a wonderful thing our father to be right with you through a crucified redeemer!

and to know that the blood of Jesus cleanses from every sin having therefore been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and it is well with our soul we thank you that it's well with Jeanette's soul we ask you Lord to heal her body and to glorify yourself in that way we know that one touch from your hand and it's done one word from your lips and it's done yet we too would come with Max and Jeanette and we would say we too must!

bow our necks to your not our will but yours be done and if you would decide to do other than heal her we pray that you would bring great glory to yourself by making these their best days together and their days when Jesus Christ is loved and praised and worshipped in that home and where others see the difference that Jesus Christ is made in this life and in the eternal life to come so we're we're singing as our confession together that it is well because of our savior and that he has taken all of our sin and so we we bless you for the tests that you send our way and when they come oh forgive us for thinking so small help us to see it's not about us it's about your glory being manifested in our tests so get glory to yourself and bring us that great joy in the midst of our trials of walking with you and living for your praise we ask in

[52 : 54] Jesus name amen!