

It's Time to Grow Up (Part 2)

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[0:00] Philippians chapter 2 verses 5 through 13.

! He grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now not only as in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? So again, our focus this morning will be on verse 13, that final verse that we read together.

[1:29] And God's instruction to believers that they grow and that they mature as they become more like Jesus Christ. And as we'll see today, this is not something that God expects us to do on our own.

He gives us the ability to overcome what we otherwise never would have the willingness or desire or power to overcome.

In verses 12 and 13, they speak about the sanctification of believers. And if you remember from last Sunday, we went over what sanctification meant. And we'll do that again here this morning just for review.

Sanctification means to set apart as or to declare holy or to consecrate. So sanctification is the act or the process of acquiring sanctity, of being made or of becoming holy.

Wayne Grudem defines sanctification in this way. He says it's a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives.

[2:38] And this is important for us to understand that when we're talking about sanctification, what we're talking about is salvation and we're talking about Christian growth.

And this is important that we understand what the Bible means by sanctification because Jesus prayed for us that we would be sanctified.

Let's look at that verse again from his prayer in John 17, 17 through 19. His high priestly prayer, he said, Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth.

As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake, I consecrate myself that they also may be sanctified in truth.

We talked about the process of sanctification last Sunday, that it is something that has happened positionally when you believed in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The Bible says that at that moment you were sanctified.

[3:34] You were declared righteous by our holy God. Your sins were placed on Christ and his righteousness was placed on you. So when God sees you now as a child of his, as a believer, he sees somebody who is righteous, who has been sanctified.

We also saw that sanctification is progressive. That as we walk with the Lord in this life, we are being conformed more and more like him.

Our wills, our minds, our attitudes become more Christ-like. And that is a process that will be continued and only completed at the death of a believer.

We always have room to grow. There is always more Christ-likeness for us to pursue. And so finally we have ultimate sanctification. That wonderful day when we will be face-to-face with Jesus Christ

forever and we will be glorified and our sin nature, our sinfulness will be a thing of the past, completely behind us, no longer incapable to sin, no longer desiring to sin.

We will be glorified like him, ultimately sanctified. But let's do a little bit more backtracking. Why are we talking about sanctification here in this point in Philippians chapter 2?

[4:52] Well, if you remember, Paul encouraged unity within this Christian community. There is some division that has been going on that he will later address in chapter 4. Before doing that, he presents Christ as the supreme example that all believers are to follow.

He speaks of the humility of Christ in his incarnation, in his crucifixion, and then his resulting exaltation that will culminate in all of creation, bowing their knees and declaring in unison that Jesus Christ is Lord.

So the application here is that unity is achieved in the church when believers are acting like Christ. Which means that we must act humbly towards God and towards one another.

In order to act like Christ, believers must grow up. And that's what we spent a lot of our time on last Sunday. And if, again, you remember, we asked the question, how does a Christian grow up?

And we saw from chapter, or verse 12, excuse me, that there are five ways that a Christian is to grow up. The first was that Christian growth results from us being like Christ.

[6:09] Secondly, that Christian growth is motivated by love. Thirdly, that Christian growth requires active obedience on the part of the Christian. And fourth, Christian growth necessitates self-control.

If you want to be growing in Christ, then you must be controlling yourself. And then fifthly, Christian growth is to be pursued with an attitude marked by fear and trembling.

Now in the church, there tends to be two types of people who pursue their progressive sanctification. When I say that, I mean Christian growth. That's what I'm talking about. There are two types of people who pursue their Christian growth in two extreme ways.

And I think you could go to just about any church and you'd find these two groups in just about any church. One is characterized by their pacifism, their passive approach to their Christian growth.

The other is characterized by their activism, their pious approach towards Christian growth. Let's talk about the pacifist first. This is the person that I like to describe as being a Jesus-take-the-wheel type people.

[7:20] Now I understand that Carrie Underwood is a fellow Okie, like myself now. But, and while that song is better than probably 99% of secular music out there, the truth is this.

Don't get your theology from country music, okay? That is not a good place for you to form your theological points of view. So I don't mean to knock her, but that's the approach that a lot of Christians have.

Jesus, just take the wheel. You know, one of the things that you'll hear them say a lot is, I'm just going to let go and I'm going to let God. You may have said that yourself.

I know that there's been times where I have said that as well. It sounds like good, wise, sage advice, but here's the problem. The Bible never suggests that this should be our attitude or our approach towards our Christian life, towards our Christian growth.

This is the type of person that will look at verse 12 and ignore it about their part to work out their own salvation, but will love hearing verse 13 where they see, well, it's all God's work, you know, so I don't have to do anything.

[8:30] I can just let God do it all. This approach says I'll do nothing, I'll say nothing, I'll feel nothing, I'll simply live and allow the circumstances of life to just roll over me.

How does this align with Jesus' instruction on what it means to live the Christian life, though? He didn't give this advice. In fact, let's look at Luke 13, 24. Jesus said, strive.

Strive. Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Strive. Striving is a verb. It's an action word.

And there are many other scriptures that reference the Christian life as being active. Remember? Fight the good fight. Run the race. Put on the full armor of God.

Letting go is a dangerous approach to our Christian growth, and it's not the approach that God and the Bible calls us to take.

[9:30] Faith and trust in God are commanded by the Bible, but nowhere does that imply that we do nothing when it comes to our own progressive sanctification. I hope that we understand that.

So that's one group of people. Now let's look at the other group. These are the activists. These are the ones who take the opposite approach to their Christian growth. The activism leads to a form of

extreme pietism.

And this is what we see happen for a lot of Christians. Now, to their credit, most of these types of people take this approach to their Christian growth, and they place strong emphasis on Bible study, on self-control, on moral purity, all of things that are good, all of things which the Bible commands. However, the danger with them is that they can stress so much on their own self-effort that the Holy Spirit's work in their sanctification gets marginalized or minimalized.

Their approach often leads to legalism, or to moralism, or to self-righteousness, or a judgmental spirit about them. And ultimately, it will lead to hypocrisy because they aren't able to practice all that they preach.

[10 : 42] People like this remind us of the Pharisees in Scripture and how they acted towards Jesus. We don't need you, right? We've got the law, and we are doing a pretty good job of checking off the boxes without you.

In Philippians 2, 13 through 13, the Apostle Paul avoids both of these unbiblical extremes and presents the true balanced view of our sanctification.

The better we understand it, the more we will grow up and be like Jesus Christ. And so having presented the believer's responsibility in verse 12, Paul now in verse 13 focuses on God's role in the believer's sanctification.

The believer is working out what God has worked in. Without God working it in the believer, there is nothing for the believer to work out.

Jesus stressed this truth, didn't he? To his disciples in the upper room on the night before his crucifixion, he said in John 15, 4 through 5, Abide in me, and I in you.

[11 : 47] As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

For apart from me, you can do nothing. And so my hope and my prayer is that God will grow our church by growing those of us who are already here and myself included.

Therefore, there are many ways we understand for a crowd to be drawn to a church, but we aren't interested in those ways. Our interests lie in abiding in Christ and bearing much fruit by relying upon his power and not our own.

This doesn't mean that we sit passively by and wait for it to happen, nor does it mean that we take matters into our own hands. I believe that this will be accomplished when we understand God's role and ours in our sanctification.

Again, last week we focused on our role, and so today let's focus on God's role. God who plays a much bigger part in this than we do. And so there are three truths about God's role in believer's sanctification that I want you all to see today.

[13 : 06] The first is this, God is the one who sanctifies. God is the one who sanctifies. In the beginning of verse 13, the apostle writes, For it is God who works in you.

It is God who works in you. Nobody is capable of producing their own salvation or sanctification. God is the only one who can sanctify because he is the only one who can save.

Let's look at Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 through 10. We're going to look at verses 1 through 5 first. And you were dead, the Bible says, in trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of the world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. These verses describe the spiritual condition of all people who have not been born again. They are spiritually dead.

A dead person has no pulse. A dead person's heart does not beat. A dead person's brain does not function. Why?

[14 : 40] Because they're dead. And dead people are dead. Right? Because none of those things are working. They are dead. Dead people, therefore, are incapable of saving themselves.

Now you might ask, well, what about Jesus? Good question. Well, Jesus was more than a man. Jesus was the God-man, the eternal Son of God.

Read Romans 8, 11 later on and understand this. You and I are not Jesus. Jesus, we were spiritually dead before being saved by God.

If you remember Lazarus from the Bible, right? Remember when Jesus went and resurrected him? What role did Lazarus play in his resurrection?

Amen. Zero. Lazarus, if you remember, had been dead for four days. Four days his body had been in the tomb and was undergoing decay.

[15 : 47] One of my pet peeves is the misunderstanding of why Jesus wept in John 11, verse 5. You know that two-word verse, the shortest verse in all the Bible? Jesus wept. And there are so many people who misunderstand why Jesus wept at that moment.

And again, I'm not saying that Jesus didn't have feelings. He certainly did. And he wasn't, and not that he was unmoved by the grief that he encountered when he arrived on the scene, because he was when he came to Lazarus' home.

But he wasn't moved to tears because Lazarus had died. He was moved to tears because the people didn't believe. Didn't believe him.

Didn't believe who he said that he was and what he was capable of doing. Go back again and read John 11 and see that Jesus knew that Lazarus was deathly ill.

Remember? He got news. Lazarus is ill and he's probably going to die. You know what Jesus said? We'll wait here a couple days. We'll wait here a couple days.

[16 : 49] Right? Now again, we understand that Jesus is not, his power wasn't bound by distance. If he wanted to, he could have spoken that moment. You know, Lazarus is fine now.

And it would have happened right at that moment, right? But he chose not to do that. He waited for two days so that Lazarus would die. And that's exactly what happened when news got back to him that he had died.

This is what Jesus said. Lazarus has died and for your sake I'm glad that I was not there so that you may what? So that you may believe. But let us go to him.

Believe what? Believe that he is who he said that he was. Believe that I am the son of God. That's what he wanted them to see and believe.

So Jesus goes there and he weeps because he sees all the unbelief of the people. And he orders the tomb to be opened up.

[17 : 46] And you remember in that moment he kneels down, he prays, and he stares into that dark, cold tomb where a dead man's body laid.

And Jesus cried out to him, Lazarus, come out. And Lazarus came out.

Covered in his burial clothes which were soon removed. There's no contemplation here on Lazarus' part in this story, is there? Lazarus wasn't being called and wondering, I don't know.

Should I come out of here or not? This is interesting. Right? No. Why could he not contemplate? Because he was dead. He was dead.

He gets up and he walks out of that dark tomb and he steps into the light. His resurrection was all of Jesus' doing. He had no part in that. The only response that he had, the only part he had was to respond to the regenerating work that God, that Jesus had done for him when he called to him.

[18 : 53] You understand what I'm saying? He was dead. Jesus spoke and he brought him back to life. The only thing that Lazarus could do in all of that was simply respond to what Christ had already done in bringing him back to life through his calling him.

And so it is with us, those whom God has called out of spiritual death into life. Let's continue reading in Ephesians chapter 2.

But God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead, even when we were dead in our trespasses, he did what?

He made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved, which means you didn't deserve it or earn it in any way. And he raises us up with him.

And he seats us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

[19 : 58] For by grace, again, in case you misunderstand, for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

You think that Lazarus, after he came back to life, ever boasted about the fact that, you know, hey, guess what I did? I was dead. And I brought myself back to life. Never. He knew who it was who brought him back from death to life.

God is the one who saves. He is the one who sanctifies. God brings his children to life and then works in and through them. He calls them to obey.

And then through his sovereign power, he empowers them to be able to obey. He calls them to his service and then he empowers them to be able to serve. He calls them to holiness and then he empowers them to pursue holy living.

Work there in the Greek is from the Greek verb *energo*, which is the word from which we get our English word energy. God is the one, this verse says, who energizes his children to be able to serve and obey him.

[21:16] He is the one who energizes our growth and maturity. His power working in us enables us or produces within us our sanctification.

This is not something that we are able to do on our own. Paul confessed this truth over and over again. It says so in Scripture. Look, he said, Nothing good dwells in me that is in my own flesh. For the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. In Romans 7:18. In 1 Corinthians 15:10, he confessed again that by the grace of God I am what I am.

And his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God within me.

He encouraged the Corinthian believers to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labor was not in vain.

[22:17] He reminded the Ephesians that he was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given to him according to the gift of God's grace, working of his power through him.

And he rejoiced. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout generations forever and ever.

Amen. Now this should come as great news to us. Great news. That our sanctification and progress in Christlikeness and our work in the church does not ultimately depend on our own human efforts and abilities.

We don't have to fear failure because these things aren't achieved based on our own powers and abilities. They are achieved based upon who God is and God's power at work through us.

We don't need to work out a worst case scenario, right? Because we know and we can trust that God has the power to accomplish all of these things through us.

[23:31] But it gets a little bit scary sometimes, doesn't it? Whenever you feel like you're backed into a corner and you think, okay God, if this is going to work out, if you're going to accomplish something through this, I know that I don't have the ability.

It's got to be you. And in that place, if you've been there before, you know that it's God or nothing. And it's scary to be in that situation, but it's also awesome to be in that situation.

Because when God brings you through it, or when God causes those things to happen that are outside of your control and your ability to, or power, to work over them, your faith grows because you see that God truly has that power and ability that you lack.

Right now, down on my whiteboard, I have a quote from A.W. Tozer. And I read it often as a good reminder. And I want to share that with you right now.

He says that pseudo-faith, which is fake or fabricated, inauthentic faith, always arranges a way out to serve in case God fails it. Real faith, knows only one way, and gladly allows itself to be stripped of any second way or makeshift substitutes.

[24:55] For true faith, he says, it is either God or total collapse. And not since Adam first stepped up on the earth has God failed a single man or woman, and I added, or church, who trusted in him.

That's a great place to be in. Because we're able to see God's power at work in us, and through us, in ways that cause our faith to grow.

And we become more like Christ as a result. Believers can rejoice in the assurance that God, who sanctified them at salvation, is sanctifying them now, and he will one day bring that work to a completion.

When he glorifies them in heaven. Philippians 1:6, we weren't there all that long ago. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you, will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. So, sanctification is a work of God. The second thing we see is that God sanctifies us according to his divine purpose. Continuing there in the second portion of verse 13, Paul says, both to will and to

work.

[26 : 10] And so here we see that God's will is to conform our wills to his. And this is accomplished through our progressive sanctification, our growing like Christ.

The more you are in Christ, the more you are becoming like Christ, the more his will becomes your will. Charles Spurgeon said, the Holy Spirit in regeneration descends into a man and creates in him a new nature.

He does not destroy the old that remains still to be battled with and to be overcome. Though the nature which the Spirit implants is perfect in its kind and in its degree, yet it is not perfect in its development.

God having first worked it in, it becomes the business of the Christian life to work it out. The secret inner principle till it permeates the entire system, till it overcomes the old nature, till in fact utterly destroys inbred corruption and reigns supreme in the man's every part.

So God's purpose in this is to come alongside of us. He gives us the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

[27 : 20] Often it is in doing God's will that we gain the desire to do it. Because the more we do it, the more we experience his power operating through us.

One of the reasons why I hate the health and wealth gospel is because it takes the opposite approach to this, doesn't it? It takes the opposite approach.

That false gospel seeks to bend God's will to man's will and not man's will to God's will. And one of the worst things we see that can happen to a person is that God gives them what they want.

Just read Romans 1. But let's look at 1 Timothy 6, 6-8 together. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and we cannot take anything out of the world.

But if we have food and clothing with these things, we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

[28 : 33] When you're walking with the Lord, your will becomes conformed to him. And that's a good thing. Because he saves you from wasting a lot of time and a lot of energy trying to collect and assume and amass for yourself treasures on earth that will pass away.

Instead of wasting your life on trivial pursuits, he gives you a life worth living. A life that has meaning. A life that has purpose in ways that you couldn't even fathom or imagine.

When I was first called to the ministry and I was 16 years old, I had no idea what I was going to do. I did not want to be a pastor. But I knew that I had been called and I knew that that meant I had to do something in ministry.

And so I remember my dad would get some Christian magazines in the mail. And I remember looking through one of them and one of those advertisements in the magazine was for chaplains in the Navy.

And this picture was beautiful. It was this white church and in the background, not far behind it, was the beach.

[29 : 44] The ocean. And I thought, aha! That's it! I can do that! I can serve there! But thankfully, as I grew in my Christ-likeness, I saw and had it revealed to me that that shouldn't be what I'm in ministry for.

You understand what I'm saying? And I thank God that I'm not in Hawaii on that beach, in that ocean, if you know what I mean. As strange as that might sound to the rest of you, though, it would be nice to visit someday.

Oklahoma is wonderful, though. I love it. So we see that God's purpose is to conform our wills to His so that we stop expending our energy on trivial pursuits that we think will bring us peace, that we think will bring us happiness, but in the end, they just make us more miserable and unsatisfied.

Again, you look at the people in Hollywood. They have money. They have fame. They have influence. They have houses in just about any nice location that you could ever want to live.

But man, they seem miserable to me. They are incapable of having lasting relationships. They keep buying more and more for themselves, and none of it seems to satisfy.

[31 : 05] And so we ought to thank God that He doesn't give us all that our hearts desire. Because a sinful human heart desires things that will make it even more depressed and make their life seem even less worth living.

Thirdly, God sanctifies believers for His good pleasure. The last portion of verse 13 says right there, for His good pleasure, He does this.

Again, as I told you a couple weeks ago, I was not a great student in high school. And remember, I told you my philosophy was D is passing.

Remember? I have all this time and energy. I can do all the things I want. I just got to get a D and I can move on to the next grade. I can move on to the next class, right? And I told you how upset that made my dad.

And there were moments where I knew and he told me later on that my parents were really concerned about how far I was going to go in life and what I would end up doing.

[32:11] But I do remember one instance during that time. And most of my illustrations are self-deprecating and I don't mean in any way to try to puff myself up.

But I knew the importance of work and I wanted to do a good job at the job that I had. My first job was at Lowe's. And I enjoyed it, you know, partially because I got a paycheck, right, for all the hard work that I put in.

That made sense to me. And my dad came in on one Saturday and we were busy and somehow my boss found out that that was my dad and he went over and he talked to him and I was like, oh no man, what is he saying to my dad?

I hope it's good. I remember afterwards when I came home my dad was so happy because he heard from my boss how good of an employee that I had been and I think that that gave him hope. Okay, you know, he's not a very good student but at least he can get a job and keep one, right? So I think that that gave him some peace. Now here's the reason why I bring that up. Because many of you are parents and you have children and doesn't it please you?

[33:12] Doesn't it make you so filled with joy as parents when your children obey you? When your children obey their teachers, when they obey their bosses, right, in good ways, productive ways, doesn't that make you happy?

And I think it's the same thing with God. He enjoys it and is satisfied with our obedience. He loves seeing us becoming more like Jesus Christ and he loves to help us develop more into being like him.

And to me this is an amazing mystery, right? Because we understand that God is self-sufficient. He doesn't really need us to experience joy or satisfaction.

And then you wonder how could a how could a sinful human being who is an enemy of God, spiritually dead, wanting nothing to do with him, how could God in his holiness look at such a one, save such a person, and have that bring him so much satisfaction?

It's awesome. And I don't know about you, but I think that that's what God does. He loves to see his children becoming more like him.

[34:37] Even though we wanted nothing to do with him. Even though he saved us and there are times where you have those moments where you feel like, you know what God, I just, you're having doubts.

Or you're upset with your station in life. He still loves you. And he still wants you and works in you to become more like his son, Jesus Christ.

Until he takes that filthy, dirty, rotten sinner and he brings him to the completion of his sanctification where that person is now holy like he is holy.

That is awesome. That is good news. I want to give you some applications to help you grow up and be more like Christ.

Here's three ways that God, three ways, I think they're primary ways that God uses to help us grow up like Christ. The first is his word.

[35:36] He gives us his word. 1 Thessalonians 2, 13. And we also thank God constantly for this that when you receive the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God which is at work in you believers.

God's divine energy is released in our lives through his inspired word. The word of God is unique. Again, it's inspired, it's authoritative, it's infallible.

If we do not appreciate the word then God's power cannot really energize us in our lives as it is capable of otherwise doing. We see this truth in the life of the man with the crippled hand.

Remember when Jesus commanded him to stretch out his hand, the command when obeyed produced the healing, right? He still had that response to outstretch his hand and receive that

healing from God's commanded instruction.

He commanded Peter to walk out onto the water to him and that command enabled him to do so. So as long as he exercised his faith he was able to do what he otherwise had no ability to do.

[36:50] God's commands and his enablements enable us to live this life like we ought to but we've got to be in his word. God wants to be believed.

Grow in your knowledge and your understanding of God's word and I promise you this that you will see God's power working through you in ways that you never thought possible.

If you want to grow up be in God's word. If you want to grow up pray. Pray. If you want to grow up like Christ then we must spend our time in God's word and we must also pray.

Ephesians 3.20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think according to the power at work within us to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever.

Amen. Christians who don't take the time for prayer will fail to experience the joy of seeing God's answer to their prayers. Prayer is so important because it changes us and God uses it to grow us up.

[37:59] Now here's the third one. Suffering. Suffering. And this is the hardest one. How does God grow us up? Well he uses suffering.

The Holy Spirit works in a special way in the lives of those who suffer when they undergo various trials. God has a way of growing them up like they otherwise would not have been.

On Thursday I got to visit with James Holt in the hospital and you know James has been going through a lot physically with the infection in his leg and man it was it could have been a lot worse as he said you know if he would have waited a couple more days I'd be preaching over his funeral and said thankfully we'll get to see him back again because people in his church family cared for him. And so James in the midst of all of that suffering and he was doing better after a couple of surgeries as we were talking he was joyful because he said you know I have seen the love of God and poured out and over me through his people in ways that I knew that they loved me but now I get to really see how much they care even more so.

He had those moments I mean here's the thing nobody I don't want to say nobody but I would I would find it hard to believe that many Christians pray to God and say you know what God you know what's really lacking in my life right now some real suffering.

[39:35] Bring it on bring it on Lord I'm ready to suffer. I don't think many people pray like that because if you're like me and you've experienced those moments of suffering man it's hard.

Those moments where you're down in the valley you identify with Psalm 23 yea that I walk through the valley of the shadow of death and you have felt death's shadow in those moments I know that there is moments I felt like that and I would never want to go back and relive those things but man I'm thankful that they happened.

I'm thankful for the lessons that God taught me and the way that he revealed himself to me during those moments because it's truly when we're down in those valleys those moments of suffering where the most growth happens in our lives so suffering is a good thing and God will use it to help us to grow.

I want to conclude by saying this. Now you might be here and you might be you know you've understand okay I hear this the sanctification thing well how does it even get started?

Where does it really even begin? Matt Chandler says that for the gospel to be received as the good news that it is it must first enter into dark bad places.

[41:03] The Bible says that in the beginning right God created us to be with him but we see that Adam and Eve sinned against him and as a result of that we are all born with the nature to sin the desire to sin right?

Spiritually dead people who want nothing to do with God. And so Romans 3 23 says for all have fallen short of the glory of God.

A-L-L all. All of us have fallen short of the glory of God and it's not even close. You know we were playing basketball yesterday and we were talking about how close some of us could get to dunking on the rim right?

Some of us Cameron McNeil can dunk. Some of us can touch the rim. Some of us can get you know barely even off the ground. But we're close but man I'm telling you this is not even close.

We have fallen way short of God's glory and it's not even close. And that's all of us. All of us have sinned.

[42 : 15] All of us have fallen short of the glory of God who does not sin. Who cannot be around sin. And so we see that the wages of sin is death.

Man this is bad news. We were born spiritually dead and we will remain spiritually dead. And the wages of sin is death. That's bad news.

But here's the good news. Romans 5.8 But God demonstrates his love toward us and that while we were still sinners sinners. Right?

While we were still enemies of God. While we were still spiritually dead people not seeking and not searching for him that Christ died for us. Taking our sins upon himself.

Dying in our place. And enduring the wrath of God for our sins. In our place. And the gift of God we see is eternal life.

[43 : 19] Through Christ Jesus his son. This is good news. God has made a way. We were spiritually dead but God has made a way.

Romans 10.9 and 13. There's more to be done. That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead.

the Bible says you will be saved. For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. If you're here this morning and you've never done that or maybe you're not sure where you stand with God I could tell you this.

God wants you to be saved. God wants you to be conformed like his son. God sees you in your suffering. you cannot save yourself. You cannot work your way to him.

It is all of God and none of you. And if you sense that he is calling out to you today then your response must be to come forward here this morning.

[44 : 33] That God wants you to have salvation. God wants to take you from spiritual death life to spiritual life.

Doesn't matter how unworthy you think that you are because again we're all unworthy. Every single one of us. So you think man I've done some really bad things.

How could God forgive me? He will and he wants to. Thank you.