

Suffering for Christ

By Alistair Begg

Announcer:

Ready to go? Father, we thank you. Uh, just. Through your amazing love for it and for the continual reminder, after three days to to stand before you and look to you and just learn more about who you are and who we are just before you, Lord. Father, we thank you for Professor Begg, and just for. The amazing ways that you've spoken to him, we pray that as he opens your word today that you use his words to touch our hearts like that, we would look to you and all of this in your name and then.

Tonight, Fernando Ortega concert, you will need your ID cards to get in free Biola staff, students and faculty are free general public at six bucks. Nonbiased students and senior citizens are poor, but you have to have your ID card to get in free and I think also to get credit for it. I think that's it. So with that, it is my great pleasure to introduce you to the speaker that we really don't need to introduce, we could talk to you about the BMW that he will probably soon have, since he doesn't yet. It has been a great pleasure for me and I know for most of you to hear Pastor Alistair Begg speak, this is his last time for conference for nineteen ninety eight. So you all get to hear him for the last ones. We get to hear him for this year. With that, let's bring to you Pastor Alistair Begg.

Begg:

OK, OK. Good afternoon, nice to see you. Thanks for coming together here on in here or something, nothing. Yeah, I could see if you complain enough. It's there's no saying what can happen. Well, it's it's so quickly the end of these talks and I was dreading them at the beginning and now they're over and I'm almost disappointed that I can't get to do it again and try and do it properly. But it's been a privilege to have this time with you. And thanks for the questions, the comments and the. Casual interaction, all of which I've appreciated, and. Let's just get down to the business of turning to the Bible together, and then I'll try and do this with brevity and clarity with the clock still stuck on eight, 30 and.

It's kind of like a time warp in this place. This is a twilight zone in this room. You can check out any time you want, but you can never leave. OK, I'll dream about that now I've looked at it, and so you should turn to Colossians, Chapter one. And you could actually put your finger in Ephesians Chapter five for just a moment, but Colossians one is where we want to be. And we'll just read from verse nine, diverse 14.

Thanks very much. And this is one of pongs prayers for the church in colossi, he says for this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and

patience and joyfully giving thanks to the father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the Saints in the Kingdom of Light.

For he has rescued us from the dominion of Darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Now that's where we're going to be. And if you turn just to Ephesians five and verse 10. Actually, we should read from their seat, but I simply want to draw your attention to the final phrase, a first hand, but he says to the feet and he says, where we were once darkness. But now you are light in the Lord. Livest children of light for the fruit of the light consists in oh, goodness and righteousness and truth. And here it is. Find out what pleases the Lord. Find out what pleases the Lord. I want to conclude by suggesting to you that this is a vitally important question for any of us who are concerned to know God and love him and serve him. And I am assuming that that is true of each of us, albeit at various stages along the journey of our spiritual pilgrimage.

Some of us are indifferent at different points along the journey. We recognize that that's why it's so important to be brought into communities such as you are here, and there will be friends in whose company it's easy to be good and there will be friends in whose company it's easy to be bad. And you will establish essentially a level of relationships with one another which will tolerate all kinds of things. And so it is important that we keep before us this expressed desire to find out what pleases the Lord.

Now, polls mentioning of this in Ephesians five is, of course, not unique to that section of the Bible. It is, if you like, a recurring theme in relationship to all that Paul writes about. And in Ephesians, since the beginning of Chapter four, he's been driving home for these Ephesian Christians, the practical and ethical implications of faith in Christ. Paul has a fairly standard pattern where he moves from the doctrinal indicatively to the moral imperatives.

So, for example, in the Book of Romans, he goes through eight chapters of doctrinal indicative things that are doctrinally true. Then he has a sort of parenthetical section in nine, 10 and 11, and then in chapter 12 and verse one, he comes to that. Therefore, this is what you ought to do. And he moves from the doctrinal to the the practical in terms of the implications of it. He does the same in the book of Ephesians.

The first three chapters are largely doctrinal and then it is in Chapter four that he begins to make application of that which he has been conveying to them. There are implications, he is saying to them, of their new life in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has reminded them that they are dearly loved children, that they are God's holy people, that they are in seat, as we noted, light in the Lord and this new identity and this union with Christ, as I mentioned to you yesterday afternoon, is that which establishes the basis for their lifestyle.

It is not simply behavioral modification. It is that they have entered into a whole new life that they had never known before. And as a result of this, it becomes an express concern of theirs to find out what pleases the Lord in the same way as would be true of finding out what pleases our boss. If we work in a factory or find out what pleases our father, find out what pleases our mum. It's because we are part of the family that we care.

If you are not in the family, you couldn't care less. You're not going to go out in the street and say to somebody you've never met, hey, would you like to find out what pleases my mother? They say, no, I couldn't care less about your mother. I mean, I'm sure she's a very nice lady, but no, I got places to go and things to do. I don't have any interest in that. Well, but if they were members of the family and if they cared, then of course, it would be different.

It's imperative then that the children of God grasp and are grasped by an understanding of the Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was for Paul an obligation for all, not an option for some. So it's not as if we have the option to bow down beneath the dictates of Christ if we want to go for the gold, as it were. However, if we're just going to get the green ribbon or something or just smoke into heaven with the seat of our trousers on fire, then of course, that's an option for us.

Know? I know. No, I'm not going for the big one. I'm just doing the I'm doing the smoking Joe entry. You know, I'm not to try that. Because you might get completely burned up in the transition and you'll arrive in another place and it won't be with your trousers on fire, so it's not a good idea. So all of that by way of introduction, you say, well, get on with it. OK, I'm planning to Paul is concerned always to please God.

He says we make it our goal to please him in two Corinthians five nine. When he writes to the Thessalonians, he says, We instructed you how to live in order to please God. It is the clear insistence of scripture that those who profess to love God will want to know how to please him. And it's not as I'm saying, it's not like buying a car where, you know, they have a car and then you can get the X package, which gives you wheels, you know, how would you like the X package?

Well, what's in it? Well, wheels. Oh, I thought that was basic. Oh, no, that's an extra we just or intermittent wipers or whatever it is, xenon headlights or who the world knows. But you can basically get along fine without it. But it would be kind of nice to have and that's the way I hear people selling this call to commitment to Jesus Christ. And I don't like it. The reason I don't like it is because it's not true.

It wouldn't be right for me to come to you and say, you know, this is an option that some of you could aspire to, but most of you don't need to worry about it because the car will run fine without it. I mean, you can wind the windows down yourself. You don't need the power windows. You'll be OK. And you hear people suggesting that. That said, you know, there's a sort of base level Christian experience, which is for the also rans.

And then if you want to become a missionary or get really weird and become a pastor, then of course you have to get the electric windows and the X package. That's not what he's saying, it's not a special dimension for these weird quotes full time folks, but it is the normal Christian experience. Incidentally, this kind of distinction has been largely responsible for the kind of two tiered structure of understanding where in an environment like this, for example, the Bible, the Bible majors may regard themselves as more significantly called than the business majors.

Not true. Just called in a different way and to a different place. But all of us called to find out what pleases gone and whether we end up as a tinker, tailor, soldier or a sailor or a rich man or a poor man or a beggar man or a thief. Whether we live married or single, whether we live in plenty or in poverty, whether we live in the Western world or far from here, confrontation with the Lord Jesus Christ is our test and conformity with the Lord Jesus Christ is our standard.

Now, still, we have the question. Find out what pleases the Lord. Now, we could answer that so many different ways. If you turn to Colossians one, I want to tell you four things that Paul has here. And I mentioned them and then we're done. And I want to speak for a long time. I spoke far too long last night, and I do apologize for that. I almost put myself to sleep in the circumstances.

Now, if you are using an NIV, you will find that there is a there is a colon in here. Let me find it, yes, halfway through the last 10, 10, and we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way. Colin you see that, Colin? And then he goes on to say, bearing fruit and every word, good work, growing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all power and joyfully giving thanks.

So in other words, here's the whole sermon, right, and there's nothing brilliant, incidentally, about being a pastor or a teacher, you just need to understand the English language fairly well. You need to understand every bit of grammar. You've got to know what N.A.S.A. and so on. You're supposed to read your Bible, study your Bible, ask God to help you understand what it says, and then simply let other people follow along with you and discover that it's actually their.

So that I hope more than anything else in my departure from you, that you will increasingly become young men and women of the book, you'll say, you know, I think I can do that. I think I can study my Bible like that. I think some of you aspire perhaps to the privilege of Christian leadership and teaching and preaching. I hope that as a result of my being here in part in some small measure, I think I can do that to. And then I trust and pray that if it is God's plan for you, that you will be about the business of seeking to do that. In other words, when you go back to Colossians one. You ought to be able to find what I'm about to tell you, and if you can't, then I just blew smoke in your face. So there you have it. Find out what pleases the Lord, what pleases the Lord, No one fruitful living, fruitful living.

Where'd you get that? From bearing fruit in every good work. There you go. Not very brilliant. Is it straightforward? Sometimes you hear of people referred to as good for nothing. We may even view ourselves sometimes in very negative terms, feeling that we are really quite useless or hopeless or that we don't have much to contribute. We're not like this person or that person. And this little phrase reminds us that in Christ, all of our days and all of our deeds are to be good for something and are to be good for someone.

Bearing fruit, he says. In every good work or in every kind of way. In other words, that we didn't separate our faith from Christian faithfulness. There, our professions of love are revealed then in our expressions of diligence, as Luther says, it is faith alone that saves, but the faith that saves is not alone. Effusions do it by grace, we've been saved through faith and then out of ourselves, not

of words, lest anyone should boast that we bang that out all the time, but we usually stop at the end of verse nine.

We don't go to our stand. And it says, and you have been created and in God as foreordained good works for you to do in the Lord Jesus Christ, so that fruitfulness is an obvious expression of being part of the vine. And Jesus, of course, says that he uses the exact picture in John Chapter fifty nine, The True Vine. And my father is the gardener and he cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit while every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

And I've been dealing with some of those you have wandered around and I think you've been testifying to me that you're that you're experiencing a dimension of pruning. And you're tempted to think of it as being punitive or something having gone wrong, when in point of fact, it may simply be that Christ, on account of his love for you, has determined to snip a few of your branches off and to trim you a bit. The Lord knows all of us need trimmed, we have ugly things that grow, that grow on us, and I'm not talking physically here, although there are some ugly things that draw on as physically as well.

But I said enough about that yesterday. I don't want to have any more of that nastiness, so. Little sidebar study and John, 15, go to John 15, think about fruitfulness, you will be confronted by the dependence that is displayed in fruitfulness. Remember, Jesus says to the folks, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. The branches are totally dependent upon the vine. They don't they don't produce fruit as a result of an act of Congress. They don't wake up in the morning, go, I'm going to be a fruit. They're the only way that they bear fruit is if they are organically attached to the vine. Jesus says, apart from me, you can do very little. Now, this is a part for me, you can do squat. Yeah, nothing. That's right. That was a paraphrase by me, not a good one. But nevertheless, apart from me, you can do anything.

In other words, our need of Christ is not partial. It's total. Now, when we get to that point at the core level of our thinking, when we really grab that and understand it. It's a revolution. Because it relieves us of any need to exonerate ourselves or to magnify ourselves or to let everybody know how competent we are and how good we are at bearing fruit and everything else was. The fact of the matter is you can even get enough spit in your mouth to keep enough saliva to swallow your food without the enabling grace of God. That's what Moses found out when he was heading for Pharaoh told the Lord, says, You know, my friend and my brother, he's an amazing speaker, you know? I mean, if you're looking for a speaker, Aron is your man, not me.

And God says to Moses, who made your mouth. Who woke you up this morning? Jesus. Who makes it so that you can do that with your eyes and they don't all go grown together? Jesus.

[Audience laughter]. OK, fine. You're going to mess around, that's all right. So anyway, we won't do any more in June 15, it wasn't going well. Let's go to the second point. Let's go to the second point for a living, please, is God.

Secondly, knowledgeable living pleases God. Knowledgeable living. Growing in the knowledge of God, growing in the knowledge of God, one of my favorite little songs is that song, Lord, I want to know you live my life to show you all the love I owe you. I'm a seeker of your heart. I brought up in a Christian home profess Christ is a boy baptized in my middle teens, sang in a band in the 60s and did all the things here I am. Forty six years of age and saying, Lord, I want to know you. I want to grow in my knowledge of you. I don't simply want to know about you. I want to know you. See, we use that all the time, don't we, with our non Christian unbelieving friends, we say, well, I know that you go to church, but is it that you know God or do you just know about God?

Because we are the conservative evangelicals, we actually know God, but you you know about God. So, I mean, do you know God or do you know about God? Do you ever hear yourself saying that? Does it ever register with you? In other words, you have to apply it yourself. You walk out the door and say, do I know God or do I know about God? Zero zero zero, no, God, I know the creator of the universe.

That I know is incarnates on. That I know the Holy Spirit. Knowledgeable living, the kind about which Paul is speaking here, would be a challenge to the folks in the Clarence Valley because the folks in the valley were struggling with an incipient form of Gnosticism and the Gnostics. And the very word, as you would understand, is all about Gnosis. It's all about knowledge. And they were always saying to people, you know, if you do this or you come there or you're way behind afterwards, we can introduce you to the Mysterium.

And I know that you know a little here, but if you come, as it were, behind the stage, I'll show you the intricacies of what it is to know God. And Paul Demythologize is that. And the knowledge of which he writes is neither the superficial theory of the unbelieving mind, nor is it the secretive heresy of the Gnostic thinker, but it is the birthright of those who are in the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, this knowledge living which pleases God is heart transforming and life renewing.

Heart transforming and life renewing. Indeed, we might summarize it by pointing out that it is personal, it's a personal knowledge of God in the 60s when the Beatles were the Fab Four and everything was off and running. They used to produce those little fan club magazine for the Beatles. And in it you would get a profile of one of them on a virtually monthly basis. Paul

McCartney's favorite food spaghetti, Paul McCartney's car for Paul McCartney's address and all that kind of stuff.

And if you were remotely interested, you could learn all of that stuff. His eyes are blue. If they were, who knows? His height is five 11. He weighs one hundred and fifty nine pounds soaking wet and so on. He has two dogs, a cat, a gerbil and and, you know, and a lizard on his head or whatever else it is. And you could you could go and you can impress people with all the facts that you put together.

And they said, well, do you actually know Paul McCartney? Give a minute, I never minute. We seem to know a lot about him. Where'd you learn that? I learned it in a book. Yeah, but you don't know and do you know what really? I don't know it. Know. Jesus says, if a man loves me, you will obey my commandments. And my father will love him. And we will come to him and make our home with him.

We will show ourselves to him. I'm thinking a lot about that in the moment. I'm trying to work out just exactly what that means so that when I talk to people in the street and when they asked me about God and about knowing God, that I don't just trot out this stuff. Well, you know,

Christians aren't perfect. They're just forgiven. Good. Is that it? Is that what you want to tell me?

Well, that's a big part of it, you know.

So Christians are not perfect, they're just forgiving. Why don't you make a bumper sticker with that? Oh, someone did that. Oh, that's good. Good. Yes, this is the person forget that for the moment, forget that for the moment, I want to know never mind forgiveness at the moment. I want to know if you know God. Tell me about how you got. You see, nothing steals our lives and ties our tongues more than the poverty of our own spiritual experience, we say nothing because we've got nothing to say.

That's why this is exciting. Here's Paul, I'm praying for you. He says that you might be fruitful, that pleases God, and that you might be knowledgeable, that pleases God as well, not a tadpole knowledge we were referring to yesterday, but the knowledge that is fostered by listening to what he says, by engaging him in conversation, by spending time in his company, by being with others who know him, too, by opening our hearts to him in worship and in praise.

And we don't have to do that in a very overt way, we don't have to become very public about that. We just need to be sincere in our hearts. And I try and do that all the time now on my own, talking to the Lord out loud, I just make people think I have a cell phone in my car. I don't care.

They're assuming that I'm talking on one of those little there's no microphones. I'm not I'm talking to the Lord. I'm telling him, Lord, I am. I'm ticked off. And, you know, behind me, giving you a holy prayer, Jesus, because I am stinking annoyed. And since you know that, I am annoyed, since you understood me, I want to talk to you while I'm in the car while no one else is listening to try and get this thing sorted out here. Instead of the one little girl who really don't hold it up and the Lord's going to turn off Channel Nine, he's doing that stuff again, he's doing a little thing there.

So, guys, don't be so dumb. I mean, if he knows everything about us, cut the funny playing out, cut the cliches, cut the trying to impress the people in the prayer group, cry out to God. You honor that. Lord, I need to know you because people are asking me if I know you and I only know about you and I don't know what it will mean to know you in a deeper way, but I know that you want me to know you because you will never put a longing in my heart to know you without wanting to satisfy the longing.

And then things begin to buzz, you know. Because he promised. I'm taking him at his word and it says in here, you show yourself to me, show yourself to me. I was speaking at Harvard two and a half years ago now, I had to speak before a fairly August group of people in Cambridge. I was scared to death at the prospect I got up about six o'clock in the morning, I went to the coffee shop on Public Square there in Cambridge. And as I said in the place, I would say to myself, you know, if Christ was going to return, this would be a fabulous time for it to happen and relieve me

of this responsibility. And I sat in the place and I had my notes and I had my Bible and I had the clock ticking, unlike the one up here. And it was moving me inexorably towards my doom. I was eventually to go back in front of this group and I had to address them.

And I was wrestling in my own mind with how much of the concern was, frankly, my ego simply. I want to do good in their. I don't want them to think I'm an idiot, at least I should say I don't want them to find out that I'm an idiot. And then I move to the other side, said, well, I want to glorify you on to praise you. And a voice is going, oh, wait a minute.

Do you think so? I don't know. And eventually, in my desperation, I say to myself, you know, God, if you if you are right now in here and there were people sweeping the streets outside and there was hardly anyone said maybe you could just just show me your cell. I don't know what the word I'm talking about, I don't do this a lot. And in to the place within 60 seconds came a young Korean girl.

Backpack comes in, coffee on the table, backpack out. Into the backpack, gets a four binder, lays it on the thing, I look away, I look back, she has another book underneath the table and. Then she's scribbling in the thing, so I look forward. And I see that she has her Bible. And I said. Are you a believer? And she said yes. And I said, where are you from? And she said, Carea. And I

said, are your family believable? She said, no. I said, how did you come to Faith in Christ? She said. I entered in at the narrow gate that surrounds. I entered in the Narrogin. So here in this bastion of sort of intellectual ism. Comes one of the very Harvard students and she takes her Bible and she opens it up and says, God, that's good. That's nice. Anything else while we're here?

And just that, that a sparrow came and landed right on my table and picked up some of the crumbs that were lying there and went away. And I heard the word of God say to me. I take care of the sparrows. And you are far more valuable. Then Speros. Do you know Christ? Even open to the possibility that he would make himself known to you. Does this mean anything? Heaven above is softer blue. Earth around the sweeter green.

Something lives in every hue, that Christless eyes I've never seen. Birds with gladder songs or flow and air with deeper beauties shine, since I know as now I know I am his. And he is my. We can't give up the universe to Greenpeace. We know the one who made it. OK, that's enough on that one knowledgeable living, its personal and it's progressive plan ultimately. So translate for the. Remedial students, second to last. Powerful living, powerful living, what pleases a large group of living, knowledgeable, living, powerful living, look at 11 being strengthened with all power.

Where is it discovered? Where is it discovered? In his resources, according to his glorious might. Knowledge is power. Everything about that knowledge is power, and that is exactly what Paul is saying here, growing in the knowledge of God being strengthened with all his power, we'll never be stranded by the power of God's will. We grow in the knowledge of God, and it is in our awareness of the knowledge of God that we discover the enemies of God, that dynamite is all wrapped up in the information that he has given us concerning himself.

That's why you can never get beyond this book. He has made himself known to us here, neither aspiration nor determination nor perspiration are adequate for the challenges of the journey of Christian living sufficient only his inspiration and the word which is used here is one of those piggyback words in Greek, do not or do no movement. No, no, no do no movement. I who knows something like that. But it is, it is it gives you that impression of it's not like Duna which would be like static but do not enjoy doing right.

OK, now the reason I make that noise is because I'm weird, but secondly is because that is the noise of the engines on us on a on a seven forty seven. That's a noise they make to me. Right. Right. You know that. And then it goes and the air conditioning comes on. Right. As well, we're missing this place, the stinking four big Rolls Royce engines. That's what you need in a gymnasium and up on the roof there.

But anyway, they go, they go and then you go [humming]. Now. And it goes approximately thirty four seconds to wheels up, if it's Hong Kong and it's fully loaded, it might be gone. Fifty five seconds and you're sweating bullets. If it goes much beyond fifty five, you're about to hit a wall or go in the ocean and guess what? They keep going. And they're still going you fall asleep and you wake up in the morning. [humming a rhythm], and you don't ever want them to stop till it's time for them to stop. Because if they stop when it's not time for them to stop, we're going to know God a lot faster than ever.

Now, you say, why, why are you doing this stupidity? Well, because because I want to point out to you that Christian living, Christian living, that pleases God is not bursts of enthusiasm followed by periods of chronic inertia. It's not powerful moving in relationship to the word of God and the truth of God is not a human cannonball trip, which is the guy [pause, audience laughter]. Say, the Lord gave you a little illustration there, just a little extra, and it's not a human cannonball where you wear the helmet and stuff. Not that I've ever done it, but what a dumb thing to do as well. But anyway, they poor soulwhere's that old thing like Schultz in Hogan's Heroes. And then he gets slotted down the thing and then they crank it up and he goes, bam, once. And then he comes, whoooo, and then into and into a net. And it's all a big anticlimax.

Now, the thing came out of there and was going like of the neighborhood. That would be impressive, but this kind of is is nothing I am not paying money for that garbage. There's no way that doesn't impress me at all. You just start off and die. Anybody can do that. Anybody can raise their hand. Anybody can turn over a new leaf. Anybody can decide to change the externals. The question is, is it a movement or is it a steady, rumbling, insistent, powerful provision of the power of the risen Christ which sustains us through the years?

I got to tell you, kids, that's the only explanation as to why I'm still alive. Still a Christian and still a pastor. The power which started off. Never quits. The engines may taper back and there may be surges that take us higher and further, but the fact of the matter is that once they go, they continue to go. And that is the exact picture that is provided here, strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might.

So that you may have what? Notice. Great endurance and patience. You think about the average thing that is said in relationship to powerful living in Christian circles, and I can pretty well guarantee you that you haven't had somebody try and impress you about powerful Christian living by suggesting that it is exemplified by endurance and great patience. They'll tell you that if you discover power evangelism, it will be this, or if you discover powerful living, it will be that or whatever it may be looked upon says when the child of God is strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, it is in order here.

It is a purpose clause so that you may have great endurance and patience, not in dramatic displays which capture the attention of man. But in a life of steady persistence, in a life of quiet confidence. In the amazing fact that despite the passage of time. We're still going. See, that's what I long for you ultimately that. Twenty years from now, if we're still alive. If Christ does not return somehow or another, we meet somewhere.

And you say to me, do you remember me, I was the guy you were shouting at on the on a Wednesday night, I was the guy reading the book to which I say, which one? And you say, you know what? Here I am, 20 years on. Finding out what pleases the Lord. A life of steady persistence, a life of quiet confidence when I was an assistant minister and I'm going to wrap this up in just a moment for your encouragement, I I had to visit all these old ladies. It was some of the best times in my life. I could keep you a long time telling you the discoveries that I made and funny, funny stories, or at least funny to me, they might not be funny to you.

So I won't mention any of them. But I used to go to the the the hospital near the Edinburgh Zoo along the Cristoff and Road in Edinburgh, and I had a couple of people to visit there. And one was a lady who had been the matron, that is the senior staff nurse of all the nurses in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. She had never married, she had been, if you like, a career nurse and

she had been exemplary in her career, she was known as a result of her kindness and her capabilities.

But by the time I was visiting her as a member of our congregation, she was hospitalized herself and she was in a bed. Some days she was in a chair, but most of the time she was horizontal and she had progressively lost most of the motor neuron function in her body. Indeed, so much so that she could not sustain the opening of her eyelids for more than a nanosecond. And she would lie in a bed and I would say it's allaster and I'd come to see you and she would say, what are you going to read to me today?

So I'll read, you know, Philippians four or whatever. That'll be lovely. What can you tell me today? Well, I could tell you this, will you pray with me today? And I used to walk out of there and I say, you know, in the wide world, does this lady have such an unbelievable attitude? It's here. She was strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, and she had great endurance and patience.

What pleases the Lord fruitful, loving, knowledgeable living, powerful living and finally thankful living, thankful, living past 12, giving thanks to the father. Because he's the one who is qualified you to share in the inheritance of the sins in the kingdom of light, in other words,

thankful for the redemption we experience. Notice how all of the terminology here emphasizes God's initiative in the wonder of grace. He qualified us, he granted us a share in the inheritance, he rescued us, he brought us in.

You see, it is a fading awareness of God's mercy, which will yield the fruit of thankfulness. In our lives. Thankful for the redemption we experience and thankful for the relationship we enjoy because he has made us part of the inheritance of the Saints plural in the kingdom of light. We've been granted membership in the family. Well, that's it, let me say this by way of conclusion. First of all, a pitfall to avoid. The pitfall of seeking to please men or please myself rather than pleasing God, everything and everything in me.

We'll suggest that. The greatest love of all to Whitney Houston is basically loving myself, that is bogus. The end of the 20th century, we have made a cure for Paul in the first century, said was a condition in need of a cure. We have made a cure loving yourself, go read 2 Timothy 3 and watch that ahead, unless the Post says of a putrefying culture, people who love themselves so we don't have to work that out, psychology majors. But we cannot have as a cure. What the apostle says is a condition. You set yourself up to please yourself, put yourself at the center of the universe or please, man, because you're tyrannized by your peer group, you'll never know the joy of pleasing the Lord. Avoid that pitfall.

Secondly, a perspective to adopt. This is it, all of my decisions, all of my desires, all of my choices need to be governed by my prior determination to please the Lord. So the first question is always, what is the right thing to do? Any decision you have to make first question, put it at the top of the list, what is the right thing to do? Underneath that, you can write, it is always right to please God. Underneath that you may then write what then, in this decision making process, will please God. If you start there. You have at least an even chance. Of making wise decisions if you fail to start there, if we fail to start there, then we're in trouble.

So there's a pitfall to avoid, there's a perspective to adopt, and there's a place to apply these principles. Whoever you are. Wherever you are and whatever you do. Whoever you are. Wherever you go. Whatever you do. Find out. What pleases the Lord and when you think about me. You see, I wonder where he is, I wonder what he's doing. If you ever think that, you may be sure. That at least part.

Of my day. And part of my journey. Is given to wrestling with the same question. Which I'm posing for you. I've got to find out. What pleases the Lord? Again, I want to thank you for your attention. You've been a very gracious and hospitable group of people. This is a fairly arduous regimen that you have here over these few days. It's fairly it's fairly daunting to have to sit, as

Begg: Suffering for Christ

you have done, and that you would give me the privilege of opening the scriptures to you is something that I do not take for granted and hopefully never will take for granted.

I don't listen to my own tapes. I wouldn't like to. I am not an insomniac. And so I'm not I'm not enamored with anything that I'm delivering. So if it ever is useful, then it's something in the mystery of God's providence that he does. But I'd like just to commit you to dance care before we go. And it's ten to three. So I think we're just a little ahead of the game, Father. Thank you for the immense privilege of these days among these young people.

Thank you for your words and for your son. Thank you for the Holy Spirit. That we will be concerned about everything else to find out what pleases you. And to the degree that we discover that fruitful, knowledgeable, powerful, thankful living does so. We pray that you will make us fruitful, knowledgeable, powerful and thankful. We commit one another and those whom we love into your care and keeping. In Jesus name, Amen. Thanks again.

[End of Recording].