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Genesis

Chapter 21 - God's Peace thru Problems

The Answer When Flesh Fails (vs.15-21)

Genesis 21:15-21: When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, “Do not let me see the boy die.” And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept. God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him.” Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water and gave the lad a drink. God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer. He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

You look at the Old Testament, and the Jews actually call that the Torah. Described or defined, that would be the Law. The law of God. Why give us the law of God? We know that Jesus is coming; He's going to save us. Why do we need the Law? Well, as Paul said in Galatians, the Law is a tutor to lead us to Christ. In Romans, Paul will state in that particular book that the Law closes every mouth so that we really have no excuse. So, the Law reveals our sinfulness, but it reveals something else. And it's one of the main points that we see in particular in Romans 8. The Law reveals that we can't be good enough. The purpose of the Law is to reveal that. So that when you come to Romans 8, in particular in verse 3, it says, “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was...” Well, what it's stating is not that the Law is bad. He's already stated in Romans 7, the Law is good. But the problem is that we can't fulfill the Law. The Law is a picture of a man trying to be good, wanting to do the right thing, and failing miserably. It is a picture oftentimes of those that God even calls out as those that would desire to do the right thing, and yet they

fail in many ways. Abraham is that interesting picture of this individual that God calls out to be a blessing. And as much as I believe Abraham would desire to be a blessing, in many respects he's being anything but. Not only is he not necessarily being a blessing to the nations around him, but he's having a hard time being a blessing to his own family. And so, by virtue of wanting to please people and wanting to be a nice guy, he finds himself in all kinds of problems, whether it's taking Lot with him, finding that, or maybe even feeling like he's the savior or going down to Egypt when there's a famine. "Perhaps we're going to work things out by virtue of me trying to do good and I'm going to have a relation with Hagar in order to have a son because obviously God is late and He's not able to make this thing happen." So, everything that we begin to do by the nature of, "I'm going to do it" turns out pretty destructive. And so, we come to the life of Abraham and we see that many of these things begin to happen, and he begins to reap the sorrow of the decisions made. God shows up and God is gracious. And really, throughout the Book of Genesis, we not only see that He's

the gracious One that creates things for us, but that He's the gracious One that reconciles us and redeems us.

God is showing up with Abraham. He knows his heart. He knows his desire. And He is bringing him to a walk of faith. But it doesn't come easy when you're trying to make it happen. And so, now this particular chapter and this narrative, as it begins to show, God shows up. And the problem with Abimelech and the problem with Abraham trying to pass off his wife as his sister and the whole mess of that whole thing, God shows up and He brings life. And He brings reparations. Let me just say this, I know that the government tries to do the whole reparation thing, but actually only God can do that. Only God can bring restoration and reparations. God is the One that does that, and that's who we turn to. The question oftentimes is, "Why do I have to turn to God? Why do I have to point my family to God? You know, I'm a pretty good dad," or "I'm a pretty good mom. You know, we can maybe take care of things for ourselves." Well, what you're going to find out is that there's going to come a time in your life

where your hand is too short; it cannot save. And God's going to reveal that to you.

Isaiah 59:1 says,

“Behold, the LORD’S hand is not so short

That it cannot save;

Nor is His ear so dull

That it cannot hear.”

In this particular passage, we have the crying of a lad. Who hears? The Lord hears. So, what we have in this interesting narrative is a picture of the failing of the flesh. There's only so much that you can do; there's only so much that any of us can do to do the right thing. Do people try to do the right thing? Yeah. They go as far as they can go, but oftentimes the route that they take and the things that they do creates more problems than good. It is strange that there is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is really destructive. So, you sit by yourself and you start figuring out, “Well, I think I need to do this,” or “I think I need to do that.” I would just encourage you to stop. Don't do that. Meditate on the Word of God day and night, and you'll be like a tree firmly

planted by the water. You'll bring forth fruit at the right time, and whatever you do will prosper. But make sure you're listening to God, and He's directing your steps. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. We keep bringing you back to that because, let me say, for a time, things look okay when we do the things that we do. I mean, I'm sure that on the onset, it seems like a pretty good idea, "You know, I'll have a relationship with Hagar. We'll have a kid by the name of Ishmael. Obviously, we'll name him that because we believe that God hears." That's what his name means. And so, God is doing a work. But the kid grows up, he becomes 14, 15, 16 years of age, and he begins to make fun of the one child that God had literally ordained to be the one. Things begin to mess up. It is in that scenario that we find ourselves.

And in Chapter 21, as God comes on the scenes and He makes things right with Abimelech, it just takes one... What does Ecclesiastes say? One fly in the ointment just messes everything up. So, you're having this grand party, and one person does one thing, and everything goes awry. Not only is Isaac being made fun of, but Ishmael is

the one that's doing it, and Hagar's upset, and Sarah's upset, and of course Abraham's going, "We're supposed to all be getting along." And nothing's happening right. God shows up in the picture, and He literally turns to them and directs them in the way, "Let's start putting things back in order." Because obviously, some of the things that had happened were because Abraham had taken things out of order. "Let's put things in order. Abraham, I'm going to speak to you; you speak to your wife. Let's not ignore things just because the person is saying it the wrong way. If it's right, let's do it. But let's do the right thing. Why don't you trust Me to take care of the results instead of you trying to push these things? And let's get back to the fundamentals."

What are the fundamentals? Well, the fundamental, if you go back to Genesis 12, is "I'm going to make you a blessing." Now, once again, in this particular setting, Abraham is anything but a blessing. But God says, "Let's get back to what I called you to do. And we're going to be a blessing not only here, but with Abimelech and with Pharaoh. I'm going to make you a blessing to the nations."

I'm going to make you a blessing all the way around. But listen to Me." So, we're getting back on track, so to speak, as we come to the passage. But there is collateral damage, and there are residual things that are beginning to take place within the setting. And that is, "Now, what do we do with Ishmael?" I mean, it's clear that he was never a part of the plan. Is he a mistake?

A number of years ago, I was teaching in this particular area, a class outside the church. And at this particular time, it was a pretty good-sized class, I would oftentimes do question and answer. And on this particular day, I thought it was probably a good idea to do question and answer, so we were doing some question and answer. And someone raised their hand, they said, "Listen, I have a question about artificial insemination." I'm saying to myself, "Okay, I wonder where this is going." "Is it a sin?" was basically the question that was asked. "If in fact we do the whole test tube thing, is that something that you would say is a sin?" I remember answering it to a certain degree, and I don't remember all the details in which I stated, but I fundamentally said, "Sin is when you miss the

mark. So, sin is when you do something that is not perfect. It's not according to that which God ordained. Sin is not as much as something that we do wrong; it's what we don't do right." So, as you think about the whole concept of sin, you go back to the beginning. It's much like Jesus when He was talking to the Pharisees and they go, "Is it okay to divorce" And He goes, "Okay, let's go back to the beginning. From the beginning, it wasn't so. I created man and woman." So, obviously there's not any more choices beyond that. And there's only two people, so it's not like you can go around marrying other people. But the point is, "I established this relationship." Well, the same thing is true with children being born. That it goes on and states in Genesis 4 in NAS, man had relations with his wife, and she conceived. Now, what the text is telling us is, and probably the more accurate translation is man knew; it uses the word "to know," which is a picture of intimacy. And the whole point is that children come about because of intimacy. They come about because of a relationship. And so, you want the child raised in a home where people love each other. Well, that doesn't work too well with the test tube. So, what we're doing is that

we're missing the mark. I sort of went into that with this particular gentleman, but then he turned to me and he said, "Well, my daughter came that way." So, this is what he asked me, "So, you're saying my daughter is a mistake. You're saying my daughter's a sin." And I said, "No, I'm saying you sinned. I'm saying she is God's grace." The thought oftentimes in our lives is that we try to rationalize and justify the things that we do. I mean, you go out and kill somebody, you get thrown in jail, and you find the Lord in jail. Now, you can't come up with the conclusion of, "Wow, it was just a wonderful thing that I killed somebody, because here I got to receive the Lord," because the end doesn't justify the means. But man tries to rationalize and justify himself because he wants to see himself as the good person. And so, he throws up all kinds of defenses to ward off any kind of thought that he could be the bad person in this scenario. I thought it was interesting, the individual, "Then my daughter's a sin." Why didn't he say, "I sinned"? But he's doing everything he can to throw off because he's the good one, "I did all that I could to make this happen." Well, that's what Law is. That's me trying to make things happen. And that's

where we sin in the greatest terms. Because what we're saying is we're more holy than God. We're more righteous than God. We can do better than God. We can be more righteous than God. It's kind of like Isaiah where God says, "You know, I've been reaching out My arms to a people that are obstinate, and they say to Me, 'Depart from me, God, I'm more holy than You.'" And that's the way man thinks. And they're looking for an excuse not to obey God, to say that God is mean, that He's not working things out, or He's late about doing things, and they're looking for ways to justify themselves. When we think this way, we ultimately find ourselves in a condition and in a state in which we end up failing. Because we've trusted in ourselves; we've trusted in the wrong thing.

And I think it's one of the reasons why, and we're going to take a moment and look at the passage, but the psalmist will say in Psalm 116, "I said in my alarm, 'all men are liars.'" His point in the passage is, "In my distress, in the hardship of my life, I saw the end of every help of mankind. And there was a point where they virtually would have to say, 'We can't do any more.'" It doesn't

matter how wonderful the person is or how kind they are, or perhaps they're a family member or something like that. I consider Job in, I think it's 19:17, in which he literally says, "To my wife, at this time," he uses the word, "I have become offensive." Now, this is the person that's supposed to be encouraging him. This is the person that's supposed to be lifting him up. But at this moment, she's offended by him. In fact, she tells him, "Curse God and die. You know, let's just get this over with." Which, you know, somewhere along the line just doesn't sound encouraging to me.

The psalmist will talk about in particular in Psalm 41, he'll use the phrase, "You know, I sat with this guy, he was my familiar friend, and he betrayed me." You get this feeling like he can't even think beyond this.

There's a passage in Isaiah, if you take a moment to look with me, in Isaiah 49; one that we've often quoted, but you know, there are times in your life where you're going to feel forsaken, you're going to feel that people have done you wrong, you're the only one, so to speak. Elijah

felt that way, so you're in a good boat. Wrong thinking, but good boat.

But Isaiah 49, if you look with me in verse 14, it reads this way,

(Isaiah 49:14) “But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me, And the Lord has forgotten me.”

(Isaiah 49:15) “Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb? ...”

Now, we would actually say at this point, “No, she can't. She can't. It's impossible.”

But God says,

“... Even these may forget...”

A mother? There are all kinds of reasons why a mother would no longer reach out to her child. One is perhaps maybe she's just so angry at him, she doesn't want to have anything to do with him, you know? Maybe he just made her so upset because of the things that he did. But there's actually another reason.

And if you can turn with me to Lamentations; which it's right after Jeremiah, just to let you know. Jeremiah's a

pretty big book, so it's pretty easy to find. Lamentations 2. Lamentations, of course, is made in reference to the crying and the weeping, one of the reasons why Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet. He writes not only Jeremiah, but Lamentations. And the Book of Lamentations is him weeping for his nation as they rebelled against God, find themselves in the worst of conditions. And now, they're reaping these things. Because of this, people are watching their loved ones die. And there's nothing they can do about it. We all have our limitations. And as much as you would perceive yourself to be a savior, you will fall short. Your flesh will fail. I think that's one of the reasons why the psalmist, and we actually sing this psalm in Psalm 73, "My heart and my flesh may fail, but You're the strength of my life and my portion forever." We're going to fail because we're in the flesh and we're trying to do everything ourselves. I mean, even when you think about it emotionally. I remember thinking with my kids growing up, "I don't even know what they're thinking. How can I help them?" Because kids don't always share everything with you. It's an epiphany, right? Lamentations 2 is about the sorrow

that's coming about and mothers not being able to do anything.

(Lamentations 2:11) “My eyes fail because of tears,
My spirit is greatly troubled;
My heart is poured out on the earth
Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people,
When little ones and infants faint
In the streets of the city.”

Can you imagine this picture? Little kids are fainting because they have no food.

(Lamentations 2:12) “They say to their mothers,
“Where is grain and wine?”
As they faint like a wounded man
In the streets of the city,
As their life is poured out
On their mothers’ bosom.”

“Mom, help me.” “I can't.”

The passage goes on and says this in verse 19,

(Lamentations 2:19) “Arise, cry aloud in the night
At the beginning of the night watches;

Pour out your heart like water
Before the presence of the Lord;
Lift up your hands to Him
For the life of your little ones
Who are faint because of hunger
At the head of every street.”

(Lamentations 2:20) See, O LORD, and look!
With whom have You dealt thus?
Should women eat their offspring...”

Could things get that horrific? Are people that desperate? Scripture continually reminds us of the weakness of the flesh and the lack of ability to actually care or to meet the needs of those around us. It's no wonder that the psalmist says, “I said in my alarm, ‘There is no hope with man. They're all liars.’” To hope in them would be a lie. To put your trust in them would be a lie. Why is it that we need to direct our kids not to trust in us, but to turn to God or anybody that we're ministering to? Because someday you're going to fail. It may not be today. It may be that you can go and minister to somebody in the way, just the right way that they need you. And God can use

you in that way. But someday you're going to fail. You're going to fall short. Then what? And there are needs that you could never meet from emotional to eternal.

Just as a way of reminder, Psalms 49 begins to reveal that I think sometimes the thought is, “Well, if I have enough money, I can rescue everybody, if I just had more money.” Of course, Ecclesiastes will say, “Money has an answer to everything.” Not the right answer, but it has an answer.

But Psalm 49 talks about those that are wealthy, and yet the psalmist says,

(Psalm 49:5) “Why should I fear in days of adversity,
When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me,

(Psalm 49:6) Even those who trust in their wealth
And boast in the abundance of their riches?”

But he states this, and you might want to have an underline in your Bible,

(Psalm 49:7) “No man can by any means redeem his
brother

Or give to God a ransom for him—

(Psalm 49:8) For the redemption of his soul is costly,
And he should cease trying forever—

(Psalm 49:9) That he should live on eternally,
That he should not undergo decay.”

You can't rescue him. Your hand is too short; it cannot save. “Well, I've got lots of...” I don't care how much money you have. “I've got lots of ability.” I don't care how much ability you have. You can't do it. Abraham's going to have to come to that understanding. And God is not only going to have him do it here, He's going to have him offer Isaac. But at this juncture, it's a step. And he had to pack Ishmael up. And he gave him water, gave him bread and supplies. But the supplies run out. And that's where we pick up.

Pick up with me in Genesis 21:15,

“When the water in the skin was used up...”

I think some translations actually say the water in the bottle was used up. But the bottle was a skin bottle. So, that's why the NAS translates it that way, because it's skin. The purpose of it is wonderfully poetic in the fact

that it's given us this interesting picture of the flesh failing, running out. There's so much you can do, and then you run out. You don't have any more power. You don't have any more strength. You can't add refreshment. You can't sustain this person anymore. So, the water of the skin was used up, “spent” would be another word, and actually, oftentimes translated, “perished”.

“... she left the boy under one of the bushes.”

Not only have we seen the end of the ability of Abraham, in his desire to supply the needs of this lad, loved by his father, Abraham, for over 14 years. And now, he has to let him go. He gave him all that he could, but that's run out. And now, the mother has to watch this happen. Oh, she's part of the problem, too. No doubt. I mean, why did she even go into this area? Why did she go into the desert land? Why is she going back home? You know, there's all kinds of things. And, you know, obviously in all of this, nobody's perfect. We all sin in many ways, James will say. If you're trying to pick a good guy out of this, forget about it. It's just a mess that can only be rectified by God.

(Genesis 21:16) “Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away...”

Now, from what I understand, a bow shot away at that time was about 300 yards. That's 3 football fields. So, that's a long way away. One of the reasons why you would do this whole bow shot thing was because you were trying to figure out if, in fact, it was possible to figure out where you would be safe. So, they would try to figure out how far that arrow can fly. And well, they could measure it off mentally even, perhaps see it, and they go, “We'll be safe here, they can't reach us with the arrow.” So, in a way, it's kind of a defense mechanism in that sense of she's going to go on and say, “I don't want to see this.”

I remember a number of years ago, I was about 13, 14, and thought I would jump over a fence. And it was one of those steel fences. And at that time, they didn't kind of bend over. They just had these things that stuck up. And when I jumped over, my foot decided to stay on the fence. And the rest of my body shoved it on the fence. And so, the thing went through my foot. And there were

some people around me, and somebody had to pull me off the fence. And they just ran away. And their statement was, "I can't look at this." And, of course, you're not thinking about this at the time, but later on I go, "How thoughtful that was." But the thought oftentimes is, "I can't bear to look at this." And here again, who's Hagar thinking about? And she's building up defenses because she can't bear it. And we find perhaps an individual raising his hand and going, "Was this wrong? I'll throw my daughter under the bus, but not me, because I can't bear that it could have been me." There are things that we throw up to be a defense, and so she does.

"Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, "Do not let me see the boy die." ..."

"I can't handle that pain."

"... And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept."

Clearly, 300 yards away, he couldn't hear her weeping.

(Genesis 21:17) "God heard the lad crying..."

And Hagar was crying, but God heard the lad crying. Now, here again, he's in his teens, maybe late teens even, but he's not been able to drink. He's coming to the point of maybe some kind of starvation, and so he's weak all the way around, not prepared for such an event as this. But God heard the lad crying. His arm is not so short that it cannot save. His ear is not so dull that it cannot hear.

When the psalmist says in Psalm 116, "I said in my alarm, 'All men are liars.'" You know what the first verse is in Psalm 116? "I love the Lord because He hears me." And God hears. This is why you always want to point to God. I mean, God is not a tag on. God's the only One that can fix stuff. He's the only One that can repair things. He's the only One that can restore things. He's the only One that can save. Because the time is coming when you're going to come to the end of your rope. And now, who are they going to trust in?

"God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is."

I wonder why he uses the words that he uses. God has heard. Remember, the name "Ishmael" means "God has heard." And that was literally produced at a time at which, you remember, of course, she is now conceiving this child by perhaps a nefarious means, actually Abraham going into her. But because of that, there's jealousy between her and Sarah. Sarah goes, "I don't want this woman around," and so she starts abusing her. And Abraham basically goes, do whatever you want to do. So, Hagar, what does she do? Run. Which, by the way, is what her name means. She runs. She flees. So, every time something happens, she runs away. That's the way she deals with things. And here she has, once again, dealt with the issue. But God then turned to her in that particular setting and He goes, "This is what we're going to do. We're going to call the boy, "I hear." Because God heard her, even in that crying, God heard her crying. And He goes, "I hear you. We're going to rescue you. Now, go back to Sarah; live with her." And if you think about it, the boy living under Abraham's care for those years, had they pushed her out at that time, the infant wouldn't have survived. But God was gracious and said, "Let him become

a man, and then we'll let him leave the house.” So, at about 15, 17, he leaves at that juncture. It was God's grace all the way around. He fundamentally is telling Hagar, “The same God that heard your cry is the same God that hears his cry. Do you understand? Why are you worried about this? Don't fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.”

Verse 18. Now, I like the way that this is put, because you realize that instead of an individual thinking of themselves, they're now forced to think of somebody else. And this is what God is telling us. Because it's very easy for us to get into some kind of pity party, then we throw up defense mechanisms and we try to make excuses instead of just realizing, “Okay, quit being defensive; God's heard you. Get right with God. Open your eyes and see what God has in store for you and then start helping other people.” We just get in our pity party. We just can't think of anybody but us. “I just can't bear to watch this happening.” And God goes, “Okay, this isn't going to fly. I can take care of these things.” And this is what happens when we begin to trust in other things; we

begin to panic and have anxiety over everything. And I guess our thought is, “Maybe my panic is helping people.” But your anxiety and panic are not helping anybody. And your depression is not helping you. And it's not helping anybody else. Because the depression is you just thinking about yourself.

So, He then turns to her, and He goes, “Okay, this is what I want you to do...”

(Genesis 21:18) “Arise...”

You get these pictures; it's a pretty great picture. “You need to come on a higher plane.” It's sort of like when God was talking to Cain, you know, if you do the right thing, won't your countenance be bright? Won't you be better off? Just do the right thing.

“Arise, lift up the lad...”

What is it Galatians says? “Bear one another's burdens”? I have found that one of the most encouraging things in my life is when God uses me to help somebody else. It not only takes me out of myself, but it also actually gives me a lift by helping somebody else.

“Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him...”

You could actually put in the words there, “strengthen him, and encourage him,” instead of thinking about yourself.

“... hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him.”

Which is something He already said in Genesis 16:10. He'd already established that. He's just reminding her of the things that He had stated. We'll sing the song, “*Standing on the Promises*,” and then forget the promises.

Watch verse 19,

(Genesis 21:19) “Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water...”

“Why didn't I see that?”

We have another story of the woman at the well right here. We pick it up in John 4. And in John 7, Jesus will stand in the middle of the feast and go, “I'm the living water.” The answer is right in front of us.

Romans 10 will say, “Don't say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven or who will go down to Sheol?’ The Lord is near,

even at the door. If you confess with your mouth, salvation is here.” We serve an omnipresent God. Where do you think your salvation is? Right in front of you. Paul will say, “I pray that You would open the eyes of their heart, that they would see the things.” It's not that they're not here. It's not that they're not in front of you. God has provided opportunities and things all around you. You just need to open your eyes. Stop being defensive. Open your eyes to what God is doing. “Oh, there's a well.”

We're going to kind of follow this well, because what's interesting is in Chapter 16, she was by a well too. So, all of this is being tied together, and God has ways of reminding us of things that we have a tendency to forget.

(Genesis 21:19) “Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water...”

Isn't that great how we can be refreshed again, all over again, to be used by God? Corinthians says that God will supply everything that is necessary and will be abundantly supplied for everything. And Philippians 4 will emphasize that as well.

“Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water and gave the lad a drink.

(Genesis 21:20) God was with the lad...”

So, there are three things that we're seeing within the passage, and that is that clearly God heard, God opened the eyes, and that God was with the lad.

“... and he grew...”

That is to say, he became strong.

“... and he lived in the wilderness...”

And I would say, God doesn't necessarily have to take you out of the wilderness for you to be okay. God can make you strong in the wilderness. Did you know that? Wow. God can do some pretty good stuff. Yeah.

“God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer.

(Genesis 21:21) He lived in the wilderness of Paran...”

Which is a desert area in Arabia.

“... and his mother took a wife for him...”

You know, sometimes our thoughts are, “Well, you know, if I do what God says, He's just going to totally take me out of the picture.” God goes, “I'll keep you in the picture. You can be a part of his life. Don't you try to do everything for him. Let Me do that. You enjoy the benefits that I give you.” I think that's the wonderful thing about putting your children in the hands of God. You know that God's going to do a work far greater and far better than you do. By the way, there's kind of a nuance here, and I don't know if you caught it or not. He became an archer. A bow shot away. It's like God goes, “I want you to remember this one.” He has subtle ways of reminding us, doesn't He? And I can imagine this young man every time he shot that arrow, “My mother gave up on me, but God didn't.” What a great reminder that is. God has great things in store for us. As John says, He is the living water. He's the answer. The Lord is near, even at the door. And you have this picture almost being played out in Luke 22, in which, look, Peter says, “I'm going to stay with You no matter what. I'm not going to abandon You.” And Jesus goes, “You're not going to make it. Your flesh isn't going to make it. But I'm going to pray for you. And then when

we're done, you're going to help other people. You're going to pick them up.” And actually, that's the only way we can help people. Because we have to experience the power of God in our lives that rescues us when we come to the end of our rope. Or as Paul will state there in 2 Corinthians 1, “We had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we wouldn't trust in ourselves, but in God who raised us from the dead.” And when you have that to hold on to, you can then pick up other people. You can help them. God supplies. He fills that skin again, and you're able to do something beneficial, but only until that.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and it's our desire to trust in You with all of our hearts; not on people, not on family members, not on anything else. And it's our desire to point to You, not to ourselves, because we know that when all is said and done, there is no help other than God. You're the only Savior, the only Savior.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what I would ask you to do is remind yourself of this. Live this way. Don't leave the sight of God. Don't think for one moment that you're the answer. That's the Law. And the Law, weak as it is, will always fail because the flesh cannot fulfill the Law. Cannot. It actually becomes, as Paul will say, hostile towards doing right. But the Spirit says, "I'm going to trust God. I know He loves me. I know He'll take care of me. I know He can do anything, and I know He's everywhere. I know there are things that I couldn't possibly do, things that He knows that I couldn't possibly know, and that He's going to cause things to work together for good. I believe this." God's going to free you up from a lot of misery and from a lot of defensiveness that really doesn't benefit anybody. Get up. Help somebody else out. Trust in God.