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Luke

Chapter 4 - An Unorthodox Power

The Holy Spirit

Power Over Doubt (vs. 9-12)

Luke 4:9-12: And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, ‘HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,’ and, ‘ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.’” And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’”

One of the things that the Gospel of Luke is telling us throughout is that we see things differently than God, and Scripture refers to the Holy Spirit as referencing to that, that His Spirit is very different than ours. When you consider the passage in Isaiah 6 that declares as the angels are surrounding the throne of God, “Holy, holy, holy.” They are literally declaring, “There is no one like You.” We come to the Gospel of Luke, and we realize that everything is different than we would perceive it to be. If we would perceive God to come into earth, we would perceive the mountains quaking and lightning flashing, and all kinds of magnificent things. Of course, had that happened, we would not exist today. But God chose to come in a manger in little Bethlehem, where shepherds are keeping watch over their flock, and born in this feeding trough. What an amazing picture. We would not expect that to happen, and the individuals that we see take these places of great honor, we would say, “I never would have perceived them to be the ones.” So, all the way through the Gospel of Luke, we're seeing some things that are very unique, very different, very unlike us. The same thing is true with power, and when we consider

power, we would consider something like, “Well, hey, you take this stone, and you turn it into bread. Now, that's power. That's a magnificent power.”

Josephus talks about a guy by the name of Simon Magus. He is actually recorded in Acts of Scripture, and as you read about him, he begins to see the great powers of the Holy Spirit, and he wants that same power. But Josephus writes that he was a man that had extraordinary abilities in magic and could actually levitate. He could actually raise himself up. In fact, from what we understand, according to history, once again, Simon died that way. He tried to levitate himself and actually fell, and history tells us that he died in the procedure. What's interesting about that is that this is one of the things that Satan is going to be tempting Christ in, standing at the pinnacle, “Cast Yourself down. Hey, You'll levitate. You'll have no problem with that” and we perceive great works of power in context, such as that.

The same thing is true when you consider the whole worship thing and we would perceive a great work of power to be in control of all these nations, all these cities;

that they would be under the beckoning call of our authority. This would be a great sign of power, and Scripture says absolutely not. This is not what the power of the Holy Spirit is at all. So, as we look at the power of the Holy Spirit, we're coming from a different perspective and we're seeing something that is not only unique, but it's very Divine that the great power of God that will ultimately be elevated to every knee will bow, every tongue will confess; it will be the power of the Christ with the Holy Spirit, His breath. We begin to realize this is a magnificent power as we go into the heavens. Won't it be wonderful to be in His presence and to realize the power of the Holy Spirit?

What exactly is that power? Well, we've kind of been looking at the temptation to draw Christ away from the power of the Holy Spirit, and that is to seek the powers of the world. When you look at these temptations as it goes down, there is a power over the flesh. Now, the flesh is driven by appetite. It's just a natural inclination. It's the cravings of man, and when we consider those cravings, our perception would be if we can fulfill the fleshly

cravings, that would be power. But Scripture is going to refer to the fact that when the Holy Spirit is filling us, and the reason why we bring the Holy Spirit filling us in the text, if you look at verse 1 is,

(Luke 4:1) “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit...”

So, as the Holy Spirit fills us, we are thinking in the realm of a different kind of power and what is the power? The power is the seeking or the appetite for a different nature. In other words, as the text goes,

(Luke 4:4) “... “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.’””

Now, we read that phrase, and I don't know if we fully comprehend what it's saying, but fundamentally what the text is telling us is that we're not seeking that which satisfies the fleshly appetite. We've gone to a higher plane. Now, the power of the Holy Spirit within us causes us to seek a higher plane.

Paul makes mention in Philippians 3 of those who are godless men whose god is their appetite. Now, when you think of a person whose God is appetite, of course,

obviously you go all the way back to the Old Testament, you see somebody like Esau, who sold his birthright for his appetite. It literally puts us in the realm of, like 2 Peter 2:12 says, you become like unreasoning animals. That is to say that your decisions you make are based on the appetite of the flesh, but the Holy Spirit moves within our lives and causes us to be drawn to a greater kind of appetite and that is to be like Christ. In other words, to have a compassion for others, like with the woman at the well at which Christ was not concerned as much for His food but was concerned for this woman. It takes you to a higher level. If in fact you're operating in the realm of what's to eat today, and about filling your fleshly desires, then where are you? I would say you're on the level of the beast, but the Holy Spirit has the power to take us to a greater level, to go beyond bread alone into the realm of, "I want to please God. I love Him. I long for Him more than anything else." And it causes us to long for relationships more than things or more than the flesh. The same thing is true when He was dealing with, of course, the temptation, dealing with covetousness really,

because it really was a sense of, “I can give You all these things. I place all these things before You. The whole world is at Your feet.” When you really consider it's not as much appetite that's drawn you, but it's a sense of covetousness that's drawn you; more specifically, the question is, what is it you value? So, when you're dealing with the appetite or you're dealing with your cravings or you're dealing with what you value, what is it that you long for more than anything else? If it's power, authority, or oppression, then you've missed the point. You should value God more than anything. That's why we call it worship, which is actually an old English word, which means “worth-ship;” ascribing worth to. What we're saying every time we worship God is “You're more valuable to us than anything else.” What gives you the power to say that? It would have to be the Holy Spirit. You can't confess Jesus as Lord except by the power of the Spirit of God. So, we worship Him.

As Jesus gives answer to that temptation in verse 8,

(Luke 4:8) “Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’””

There is something inside of me that says it was the Holy Spirit, isn't it? That I can't love anybody else. I love Him more than anything else.

As we come to this particular passage today, we're going to be dealing with the area of trust and probably more than any of the other temptations we're dealing with the area of pride. If you were to parallelize 1 John 2:16, it will kind of give you a parallel to these. That is to say, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. Another way of putting it would be your appetite, your covetousness, and ultimately, your sense of superiority because really that's what faith and trust are dealing with. Who do you really trust? Who do you really feel is in control? You or God. I know that oftentimes people perceive the whole concept of doubt is kind of an innocuous thing, but it really is the greatest assault on God, to doubt Him. Now, when you think of doubt, that's kind of a nice word, and I kind of threw in a nice word because ultimately what it leads to is incredulity. That means that you purposely won't believe. It's sort of like when you think of holding on to anger, you go, "Well,

anger is kind of a bad thing.” Anger in and of itself is not sin. It becomes sin when it becomes bitter, and a root of bitterness comes in. So, you hang onto that anger, and it becomes bitterness. Doubt, you are sinning, but it gets worse. It goes into the realm of incredulity, in which you go, “I'm not going to believe no matter.” We make reference to Agnostics which basically say, “Well, you can't believe really anything. There's nothing out there that you can actually really know to be sure.” And this is the pride and the arrogance of man. Let me just kind of throw in some synonyms in all of this too, that when you're dealing with doubt, you're dealing with things like apprehension; you're dealing with things like distrust; you're dealing with words like “suspicious”. “I'm really suspicious about God,” or perhaps it's just plain cynical, but these are all interesting pictures of doubt because you become not only cynical, but you become a skeptic of the things that God has for you and it's all unbelief. That's why it's the one sin that will keep you out of heaven.

2 Thessalonians says they will not be in this place of eternal life, because they did not obey the truth of God so

as to be saved, and they wouldn't accept the righteousness of God. They wouldn't embrace the love of God, and it's all those things that virtually you're saying, "Well, I don't trust God. I don't believe that He loves me. I don't believe that He cares for me." It's why you don't go all in. It's because you go, "Bottom line is I'm just a little bit skeptical about these things." Well, that's kind of a nice way to say, "I don't believe you." But it fundamentally is incredulity in the sense of you've totally rejected and said, "I will not believe" because it will ultimately come to that point. In this refusal to believe, comes a trying or testing of God. It's what the Pharisees began to do, and this is why Jesus says, "Even an adulterous generation always seeks for a sign." And they would always basically say, "Well, prove it. Prove it. Prove it." And they're always in that particular state, which is an endless state because of the fact that they're in this mindset of they don't trust God. Once again, one of the greatest insults to God.

So, we come to this passage as it deals with, I would say, the greatest driving force in our lives, and that is a pride

of superiority in which we actually feel like we're not only the ones who control what's going to happen, we're the judge of God, and it's where we begin to question God and begin to try God. "Well, if You're who You say You are, then do this." So, if we come to this passage, and pick up in verse 9, we see this. It's very interesting, St. Augustine writes this about the whole thing of temptation, he writes, "The devil may place the soul in peril and temptation but can never make it sin." He goes on to say, "It is the devil's part to suggest. It is ours not to consent." So, as we see this, what we're going to see is the suggestions and the moving of that temptation, but it's still within your realm not to consent. The question is, how is it that I wouldn't be drawn to something like this? Why is it that I wouldn't question God? Scripture is going to reveal to us first of all, because you're filled with the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God is acting in realm of trust, not acting in the realm of "prove it."

So, as we come to this, we'll see it in verse 9, it says, (Luke 4:9) "And he (making reference to the devil in this particular setting) led Him to Jerusalem..."

Which right away, we come into the sense of we're coming into a kind of religious realm of faith, of Jerusalem.

“And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple...”

Now, we're not really sure exactly how high this is. Some have reported without going into the valley of Kidron, which was actually right there at the pinnacle, it would be close to 20 stories high. If in fact you took in the valley of the Kidron, you'd be looking at about 40 stories high. So, that's quite a look down within the passage. It would also be at the pinnacle of the temple, the place where the priest every morning would come up on this pinnacle and they would blow the horn as the sun was coming up. It was actually the announcement of the breaking of the day and one of the reasons why they would do that is that it was a picture of them longing for the Messiah to come. They would quote Malachi 3, that someday the Messiah is going to come and He's going to come suddenly to the temple. That's an interesting picture, isn't it? So, you see

this and Malachi's just right before Matthew, just to kind of get you there faster.

(Malachi 3:1) “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple...”

Now, this picture with the sun rising is always parallel to passages like Psalm 19, where it talks like the bridegroom is coming and rising like the sun does. So, it's that picture of coming from the east in particular.

So, it says,

“... will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts.”

So, they and their grandiosity are going to be the announcers of it. So, they would get in there in their arrogance. Now, what's interesting to me is that this promise is actually taken from this book in which they were disrespecting God and not believing Him. So, one of the things that they were saying is, to give you an

example, if you look at Malachi 2 at the end of verse 17,
“Where is the God of justice?”

“I mean, if you are God, then where's the justice in the world?” Have you heard that before? It's a snide doubting of God, and God, throughout the book of Malachi, He's telling them, “You're not doing this.” And they would go, “How are we not doing this? Why are we not being reverent?” and all the way through the book, they're questioning God. It's very interesting that this is the passage that they choose to go on the pinnacle with. So, you're given this interesting picture of them testing God, really, throughout the Book of Malachi.

(Malachi 3:15) “So now we call the arrogant blessed; not only are the doers of wickedness built up but they also test God and escape.”

Shaking their fists at God, telling Him, “If you are God, then let's see this. Let's see that” and always challenging Him. God within the context says, “Look, if you want to test Me, test Me this way by doing what I say.”

If you back up,

(Malachi 3:10) ““Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” ...”

See, we like to test God and tell Him what to do, and He says, “How about you do what I tell you to do and see if things don't happen?” It's a different way of turning around. So, you begin to see, once again, the arrogance of man in the process of testing. Well, it's under this setting that Satan brings Christ up at this pinnacle in which, “Hey, You're the Messiah. You're coming in all of Your glory.”

We have oftentimes read the passage in John 7, where the brothers of Jesus turn to Jesus, and they go, “Look, if You're who You say You are, no man keeps silent during this time, because we're at the Feast of the Tabernacles and this is the time that You make Your grand appearance, if You're the Messiah, if You are, of course.” And His own brothers were questioning Him. Of course, we know had He made His grand appearance in the Feast of Tabernacles at that particular moment, once again, that would have ushered in the kingdom without anybody being saved. So, the grace of God to ignore our arrogance

that would be so demanding because we think we're so smart, we're going to put God to the test. We think we're so smart, we're going to hold Him accountable to us.

So, the way it reads within the passage, if you look with me,

(Luke 4:9) “And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God...””

“I have a hoop for You to jump through. I have something for You to do. Prove it. Let's see a sign.” And what you're seeing is this presumptuousness in which you begin to take liberties, and you go into this egotistic insolence in which you're daring God to do something, and it literally undermines Who He is for Him to acquiesce to this. So, he led Him to Jerusalem and asked Him “If you are the Son of God, cast Yourself down from here.” I can just imagine, I mean, you're looking 40 stories down, but yet, “It's no problem with You God, right?”

We come towards the end of the Gospel of Luke, “If You are King, take Yourself down from the cross.” I'm glad He didn't do that. I'm glad He didn't try to prove me wrong.

I'm glad He did what was right instead of doing what I wanted Him to do.

“... throw Yourself down from here.”

Now, he is going to quote a passage. Peter makes reference to those that are unstable and untaught distort Scripture, so don't be surprised if you hear the devil quoting Scripture. There are people out there that know Scripture really, really well, and it doesn't mean that they are believers, nor does it mean that they understand or comprehend what the passage is even about. When you go into passages like 1 Corinthians 2, it's very clear that unless the Spirit of God reveals these things to you, you'd have no idea what it is because these are spiritual thoughts. These are not physical thoughts. So, man comes in with his ability to dissect things with words or maybe even perhaps human insight. I mean, you have them in the universities. With some of the greatest universities you have theological institutions, but they're atheistic, and they open up Scripture and they say, “We think it says this” and then there's debates about it, but nobody knows what it really says because they're spiritual words.

They can't be processed with our minds and our hearts. There has to be a transformation. So, as the world takes these passages, they'll extrapolate a particular passage and go, "Hey, this is a great passage to test God." And God goes, "Where did you get the idea that you need to test Me?" I mean, can you imagine a speck of dust shaking his fist to God going, "You've got to prove to me that You're better than me." You get into your argument, and it just in some way deteriorates the value of Who He is.

So, he quotes a particular passage that actually comes out of Psalm; one of our favorite Psalms, Psalm 91. The Psalm that he gives is,

"... 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU.'"

It actually goes on to say, "In all Your ways."

"So, I mean, go ahead and jump."

It's important for us to go to the passage that's found in Psalm 91, since he is quoting it, and once again in some ways clearly misusing it as we come to the passage. But in

Psalm 91, we read the first part of it dealing with the fact that we don't have to be afraid of anything.

(Psalm 91:5) “You will not be afraid of the terror by night,
Or of the arrow that flies by day;

(Psalm 91:6) Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness...”

I mean, you don't have to be afraid of anything, right?
That's what it says.

(Psalm 91:7) “...ten thousand at your right hand,
But it shall not approach you.

(Psalm 91:8) You will only look on with your eyes
And see the recompense of the wicked.

(Psalm 91:9) For you have made the LORD, my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place.

(Psalm 91:10) No evil will befall you,
Nor will any plague come near your tent.

(Psalm 91:11) For He will give His angels charge
concerning you,
To guard you in all your ways.

(Psalm 91:12) They will bear you up in their hands,
That you do not strike your foot against a stone.”

And he's looking into rocks when he looks into the valley of Kidron. I mean, it's just a very rocky place. 40 stories going into rocks. So hey, a great opportunity to test this verse, but you didn't read the first verse. See, it actually says at the very beginning,

(Psalm 91:1) “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.”

(Psalm 91:2) I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my
fortress,
My God, in whom I trust!””

It establishes trust before anything else, and it is in obedience that we do what we do, and we believe God to take care of us as we trust Him, or as we do His will. It's not us telling God what to do. That's a lack of trust towards Him. So, it is a sense of twisting a passage clearly within the passage, but if you look in verse 14, it reads this way,

(Psalm 91:14) “Because he has loved Me, therefore I will
deliver him...”

In other words, what is the impetus for the saving? It is “Because you love Me.” Well, you don't love somebody that you don't trust, and you don't love somebody that you're skeptical and cynical about. I can't help but think of Delilah going up to Samson, “If you love me, you'll tell me how to get rid of your power.” And he goes, “Ok” and so he tells her. Of course, let's see, was that love? I don't know. I seem to remember it as not working out well for Sampson.

As we go back to Luke 4, you see then Jesus responding from the passage once again in Deuteronomy. It keeps coming back to the passage in Deuteronomy, which the emphasis of Deuteronomy is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.” So, He'll quote out of the same passage, if you look in verse 12.

(Luke 4:12) “And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’”

In other words, “You shouldn't be testing Me.”

Now, when you go back to Deuteronomy 6, and let's just take a moment and look at the passage. What you see is

the context of it, and he actually draws out a specific incident in which the people of Israel were testing the Lord.

So, in Deuteronomy 6:16, it reads this way,

“You shall not put the LORD your God to the test...”

And now he actually describes the testing that they received. What is it?

“... as you tested Him at Massah.”

So once again, Exodus 17, if you look there with me, it's going to be where they tested Him there, and it's in this context that you see their insolent behavior. Let me just put this in setting if I can. Exodus 16 is all about them saying, “We're hungry.” And of course, that's basically the appetite. So, “We're hungry. We want you to feed us” and God goes, “Fine.” And they say, “We want meat.” So, He gives them quail in the evening and He gives manna in the morning. They look at the manna, and they go, “What is this?” and He goes, “Ok, that's what we're going to call it, “manna,” which means “What is it?” So, He gives them manna and you have God taking care of them. Well, you

would think, “Well, we're happy now.” No, now they're thirsty. They probably ate too much manna. It probably made them thirsty.

(Exodus 17:1) “Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin...”

It's interesting that it looks like “sin,” doesn't it? Which basically means “a place of thorns”.

“... according to the command of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water...”

Which the perception seems to be that this was like an Oasis, but then they couldn't find any water. One of the reasons why they came there or looked at that place, they go, “That looks like a place there'd be water.” They went, there wasn't any water. So, you'd get pretty upset. You probably walked a few more steps than you really wanted to.

(Exodus 17:2) “Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water that we may drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?””

“I mean, didn't He say He was going to take care of us? Hasn't He taken care of us all along? Why do you keep being angry about these things?” I mean, something happens that you don't think that it should happen on a given moment, and you go, “If God is going to be my Lord, He's going to have to prove Himself today. He's going to have to fix this, and I can't put up with this anymore.”

(Exodus 17:3) “But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses...”

I get it. I'd grumble against Moses too. “It's not You, God.”

“... “Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”

(Exodus 17:4) So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.”

(Exodus 17:5) Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.

(Exodus 17:6) “Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

(Exodus 17:7) He named the place Massah...”

Which means “to quarrel”.

“... and Meribah...”

Which means “bitter”.

“...because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying,...”

You might want to underline it,

““Is the LORD among us, or not?””

That sounds just like Satan. Exactly the words, “prove it. I mean, give us what we want when we want it. We’ll believe You.” Like we know better than Him. I mean, the very fact that He would let us be thirsty and go through difficulty, why would anybody do that? But God says, “It was to test you to see if you loved Me. I already know I love you. I've proven it over and over again. I've demonstrated My love for you.” But we keep bringing it

up and saying, "You've got to prove it to us" and He says, "You've got this whole thing backwards." You see, what we're really dealing with is a kind of pride. We're dealing with a sense of "I call the shots, not You." So, when we're dealing with this particular setting, we're dealing with the Holy Spirit's power to draw me out of this mindset. I mean, the whole thing of cravings, the Holy Spirit has to draw me out of cravings of the flesh because it's my nature to crave things and to be animalistic in the way that I go after things, but the Holy Spirit gives me a power that takes me beyond to a different nature that would think of people above my appetite.

Paul talks about this in particular in Philippians 3 and he says, "Look, everything that was gained for me, I count as loss for Christ that I might know Him." And then he goes on, and he explains, "But some don't feel this way." You know who they are? "Whose God is their appetite." When you're dealing with the longing for things or your value system, there are other things, as Scripture says, you can't love God and mammon. But if you have a different value system, in that value system, you'll never worship God the

way that you should if in fact you hold onto a different kind of value system, if you value the things of the world. You can't love the world. You can't love the things in the world. You have to have the different values, and if you will, well, it's only by the Spirit of God that you could value someone greater and give Him worship. That's why we worship God. We declare, "You're greater than everything. You're greater than my stuff. You're greater than golf. You're greater than all the things that I can possess. That's why I'm here, because I declare You the greatest." And the same thing is true in the realm of trust. Why would you trust God? Well, obviously there's no one that you would trust more than Him.

If you look with me in Hebrews, of course, the great Chapter 11 is all dealing with faith, right? In case you don't have this verse underlined, it's to be noted, without faith it's impossible to please God. So once again, it's the greatest crime that you could commit against God. Now once again, I want to remind you that this crime will reveal itself under all kinds of different garb, cynicism skepticism; in some cases, just simple apprehension. It's

still the same dirty word, you don't trust Him; you don't believe Him.

It says this,

(Hebrews 11:1) “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

“I don't see it. I don't get it. I don't understand. It must not be.” And Scripture says, “Then you'll never be there.” Because our whole thing is we believe God, no matter what we see. Faith takes on substance to us. Faith to us is more real than anything else out there, and we don't have to test God because we know who He is. And look, if you want a sign, there is no greater sign than the cross. “How can I believe God loves me? How can I believe He has the power over death?” I don't know. Go to the cross. You can see the great love of God that pours out for you in that while you are yet a sinner, He's dying for you, and while you're cursing Him, He's asking for forgiveness [for you]. I mean, how many times do you want Him to prove this? Hebrews will talk about you again crucify the Lord of glory. You want to see Him crucified again before you? You have to be proven again?

This passage says,

(Hebrews 11:2) “For by it the men of old gained approval.

(Heb 11:3) By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.”

“How did He do that?” I don't know, but I believe He did. All the way through this wonderful chapter, you see that whole aspect of faith.

If you look with me in Peter, just to show you this basic theme, that's really given throughout Scripture, and it's what our whole life is based on. We do everything in faith. I mean, that which is not of faith, Paul will write, is sin. You couldn't get any clearer than that, could you? If it's not of faith, it's sin. In 1 Peter 1, it reads this that you're going to greatly rejoice in the fact that God has caused you to be born again to a living hope.

(1 Peter 1:6) “In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.”

“I don’t understand. Why am I going through all these trials?” Because God loves you. Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that He's testing your faith, that He's producing endurance; that every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variance or shifting shadow. Do you believe that that's true? Do you believe that God is causing all things to work together for good? Do you believe that you're better off if He calls the shots than you? That the end result is going to be far better than anything that you could even ask or imagine? Do you believe that?

(1 Peter 1:6) “In this you greatly rejoice...”

Not that you really understand what you're going through.

(1 Peter 1:7) “so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

(1 Peter 1:8) and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in

Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

(1 Peter 1:9) obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.”

You and I believe when we don't see, and that's the evidence of true saving faith. If in fact you only believe what you see, that's not saving faith. That's called evidence. But if in fact you believe what you can't see, but you trust the one who says it, that's saving faith, and God is calling us to this. You know, there's so much belligerence in this realm that I have seen. “Why is this happening? Why is this happening?” I can tell you why it's happening. Man turned over the title deed to the devil, and he's reigning on the earth, but greater is He that's in you than he that's in the world, and there could be victory in this. But you're going to see devastation; you're going to see hurt; you're going to see pain; you're going to see sorrow; you're going to see all these things that man has done because he rejected and refused to trust in God. You're going to see all these things. Nevertheless, God is calling you out of that, out of the realm of darkness, into

His wonderful light. God has given us this wonderful picture of temptations, so that we would not go there; so that we would not think this way. How destructive, how insulting it is against the Spirit of grace, as we begin to come up to God, going, "Prove it."

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we ask that You change our hearts. Lord, it's by Your Spirit that we would think in a different way. It's only by Your Spirit that we would go beyond the animalistic desires of the flesh, and we would actually think of people and You more than we would food. It would only be by the power of Your Spirit that You would cause us to value that which is far greater and eternal than the things of this world. It is only by Your Spirit that we would put all of our trust in the only One that is trustworthy. Not in ourselves, not in what we think, not in what we perceive to be best, but in You alone.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, we're asking you to stop insulting God. Trust Him.