

Patty Juster

Wednesday AM Session

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Dan Juster

I would like to invite my dear wife, Patty, to come up. We have been married for 48 years having met when I was 21 and she was 18. She has been my partner in everything. She thought she was marrying a philosopher professor, then I changed directions and became a Presbyterian Pastor. Then she had to deal with my being called to the Jewish people and adopt a whole different culture and way of life.

As I said, she has been my partner in everything. She was secretary, then Fellowship Coordinator, becoming administrator of the traveling ministry. She is a preacher and a prophet and a speaker in her own right.

Patty Juster

I have a message that I believe is very pertinent for today. It touches close to home. And it is a challenge to all of us that have been believers for a long time.

I am curious. How many of you have been a believer for more than 50 years? How about 60 years? There is some wealth here. If I talked with you, I would find out that you have a history with God that is very, very rich. You cannot live this life for that many years having not gone through trials.

It is my hope that you would be inspired more and more to come alongside the generations before you and be like that midwife that says, "Hang in there. There is a baby coming!" We really need to stick together generationally. We have what they need, and they have what we need.

One of the issues today that greatly concerns me and weighs heavily on me and also many of the Messianic leaders in the land is that children growing up in believing homes — even ministers, preachers, Messianic Rabbi's homes — are leaving the faith even though they have experienced the Lord. This is very grievous to my heart and I ask the Lord, "Why Lord, why?"

Parable of the Soils

Luke 8:11-15 talks about the Parable of the Soils. With the first soil, the enemy comes and snatches the seed which is the Word of God.

The second soil is the one that I want to emphasize today. It is where the seed falls on rocky ground. These receive the Word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.

Times of Testing

Testing can come in so many different ways. It could be because they did not get into the college that they wanted. In Israel it could be that they did not get the position in the army they wanted. Maybe they had someone that they prayed for, stood in faith that they would live and not die, and that person died. It could be that when they are older they lose a job or did not find a job. Maybe they found a wife or a husband and they were not the right ones. There is so much testing that goes on.

 **Key:** We must equip the coming generations to be able to stay in faith during the difficult times of life.

Today we have a problem because we have not equipped the generations following us on how to go through suffering. We have not given them a solid understanding of why we believe. We must have an understanding of the Word, an understanding of apologetics of why we believe what we believe, so that it can hold up against the arguments of the world.

I imagine that this has touched everyone in this room where people they love have walked away from the faith. Today you see all over media and newspapers about how Josh Harris supposedly walked away from the faith, and also the Hillsong Worship Leader, and other prominent people who have known the Lord. You wonder what is going on.

I am studying and reading more philosophical books on apologetics and other things. One good book is by Timothy Keller on suffering, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*. Another of his books geared to today's modern way of thinking is *The Reason for God*. Two good books for answering the questions of young people.

Pain and Suffering

Another common issue has to do with healing, the Word of Faith movement, praying for the sick, etc. I believe in prayers for healing and we have seen miracles in our life. Yet, very few address the problem of pain and suffering.

We have known people whose three children died in a car accident, in the car pool on the way to school. They were part of a Word of Faith Church. The parents were elders and they were asked to leave their church because they could not handle the fact that if you are believing in God and confessing the Word that you can have such a tragedy happen.

We are all going to experience tragedy and sufferings in this life. At times, it comes close. It is the birth pains. I have had 4 babies and I have been present at 6 of my grandchildren's births. I am telling you, it hurts! My daughter had her last baby in our home. I kept having to leave the room. I thought, "I hope this is the last one she has. I cannot go through this again." A couple weeks later I asked, "Do you need prayer from the trauma of childbirth?" She looked at me and said, "Oh no Mom, it was wonderful!" I thought, "I need prayer for trauma!"

There is a spiritual principal with child birth. It is because it says in Scripture that a woman experiences pain, but after the baby is born she forgets about the pain because of the joy of the baby. (John 16:21)

I hope that is some of stories that I will be telling you, that you will be able to see, that yes, it says in Scripture that it would not be called suffering if it did not hurt. God has orchestrated in His Sovereignty that our trials and troubles in this world produce fruit. What the enemy has meant for evil God has a way of turning it for good. I have some amazing stories that tell how this comes about again, and again, and again.

These are the personal stories from real people that you will be able to tell the generations yet to come. In return, they will tell their children.

I call it a journal or like a captain's log of life stories that are written and able to be passed down generationally. Because they need it. They need to know who God is. They need to know that God is a good God and that He loves us. They need to know that nothing separates us from the love of God.

 **Key:** God loves us in the midst of hard, painful, difficult times.

Christianity has been infused with secularism and individualism. Even the American Declaration of Independence says that everyone is entitled to "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." It caused Americans to grow up thinking that life is about MY happiness. In the beginning of America, the thought was more that we are here for HIS Glory, not OUR happiness.

 **Key:** Our Christian walk will include painful experiences where God will carry us through as we press into Him.

God does not exist to make our lives happy or to satisfy our needs. It is not all about us. It is about Him, His Kingdom, and His Glory. So back in the early days of America there was not a problem with evil, pain, and suffering. Many families lost half of their children before they became adults. Suffering was a way of life. They learned how to press into God to obtain Grace in that time of need.

 **Key:** Weak Christianity has robbed us of the strength to preserve during difficult times.

Today we have thin or weak Christianity that has no roots. It is shaky when things do not go the way people think they should go. For example, 'I did not have children. I did not get the right spouse. My spouse does not make me happy – he is controlling or she is controlling.' And if you have children, you want somebody to take them off your hands because you cannot handle taking care of toddlers. The resilience of young people is so much less than what I saw in years past

Joseph

One of my favorite stories from Scripture is the story of Joseph.

I am one of these people who cannot remember not being a believer. I grew up in a believing home and at age 3, I can remember playing the story of Joseph with my brother and sister. We were very close in age and mother had her hands full - three children in two years. We were almost like triplets, but worse because we were not on the same schedule. I do not know how she survived.

We are familiar with the story of Joseph and how his brothers betrayed him. Before that betrayal, he had dreams about his siblings bowing down to him. He was not discreet in how he shared the dreams. Then his father gives him this beautiful coat and loves him the best.

This stirred jealousy and the brothers wanted to kill him. They threw him in a pit. Can you imagine how Joseph felt? Betrayed. Really hurt.

I am going to back up a little bit because this is going to expand this mystery of the Sovereignty of God, yet Him being in control of history. There is the complete Sovereignty of God, yet the complete freedom and free will of man. It seems like a contradiction that comes into play when something really tragic happens.

Do you know that every time I have been through something horrible, it is like, "Whose fault is it?" In the home when something would go wrong we would try to find which child did it. They would all try to bring it back to, "It is mom's fault

 **Key:** Difficult times, even tragedies, do not change the Sovereignty of God.

When something bad happens, it is a natural tendency to try to figure out who did it. At first you think, "Oh was it me? Was it my sin? Was it this?" Then you may blame your spouse. You may end up blaming God or you blame Satan.

Samuel Juster

I know that many of you heard the story of how we lost our 12 year old son in a house fire 21 years ago. People would come up to me and say, "Satan took your son." That really freaked me out. I thought, "If Satan can just come whenever he wants and take somebody's life that makes me really insecure. I am scared because I do not know when or where he is going to strike next."

So, I would reply to people, "God took him." And people would say back to me, "How can you say that? He is a good and loving God. He would not cause you to suffer like this." And so this went back and forth.

Well, maybe, because we let our son spend the night at the neighbor's house, it is really our fault. We should have heard from God not to let him spend the night. They left the candles burning and the house caught on fire and two boys died.

Our son was on life support for a couple days. We had worldwide prayer. We prayed and prayed and believed. God said not to grieve, but to expect a resurrection. When the time came to unplug him, we said that he was born of a prophetic dream that I had and his life was almost taken when he was 1 year old, but God miraculously raised him up. So, we thought that this was another occasion when God was going to do a miracle.

Again, God told us not to grieve, but to keep fighting for a resurrection. People all over the world were praying and connecting it with Israel and those dry bones. It came time for the funeral and my husband had a nice resurrection liturgy so that we could speak to little Samuel to rise up. We had reporters there, a couple thousand people, and we had two services.

Low and behold, he did not get raised from the dead. We did everything we knew to do. We even brought a change of clothes for him.

Some people thought we were crazy. Most people said, “You did all you could do.” But that sent me on a spiral of questions.

It says in scripture if you have faith the size of a mustard seed you can say to this mountain be moved and it happens. Then you can come under such condemnation. Every time I would hear a faith teacher say, “If only you have enough faith,” this would put it all on me.

And it is like, “Who did it? Did God do it? Did Satan do it, or did I do it?” There are so many questions that can go through the mind of a believer when you have stood in faith and what you were believing for did not happen.

Back to Joseph.

Imagine Joseph going through these type questions along with the agony of being betrayed.

Now here is Joseph who had been in prison. While there, grace and favor was upon him and he got put in charge in Potiphar’s house. Then he went back to prison because of false accusation. And all the time he is wrestling with all that is taking place.

Quickly back to Abraham.

God is in charge of history. God told Abraham the promise about the land belonging to the Jewish people. However, He told Abraham, “Your descendants will be enslaved in Egypt for 430 years because God is going to turn the Egyptians heart against you and you will be enslaved. Then He is going to send a redeemer whose going to rescue you out of Egypt.”

Psalm 105:16 He called down famine on the land and destroyed all their supplies of food and He sent a man before them — Joseph sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, to what he foretold came to pass till the word of the Lord proved him true.

This is so incredible! You do not get this without knowing Hebrew, but here is the sovereignty of God! You have to deal with God in every kind of tragedy – disappointment, divorce, losing a job, or anything that happens to you that is painful.

 **Key:** God is with us in every moment, good or bad.

Here was Joseph, in this prison wrestling with the words and dreams that God had given him years before. He kept reminding God what He said that He would do. He kept reminding God of the promises. In Hebrew in this passage of scripture in Psalm 105, it says that when his neck and legs were put in iron, the iron entered his soul. That is the comparison of like the Word going into him. It is like Abraham who it is said ‘against all hope in hope believe.’ But he was strengthened in his faith.

 **Key:** God’s Word must be so strong in us that situations will not move us from that place of faith, hope, and trust.

This is what we want for our children, grandchildren, and our friends. We want the promises of the Word — the knowledge of God — to become like iron in their souls so that nothing will move them. This is something that we are need to do even — in our old age — to tell the next generation and the

next generation about the Goodness of the Lord. We must tell them that you can put your trust in Him. His ways are right and there is no wickedness in Him. There is nothing like a personal testimony.

 **Key:** The testimony about God that we pass on to the next generation is of utmost importance.

Joseph eventually becomes the right hand to Pharaoh. There is famine in the land and his brothers come to Egypt to buy grain. Imagine how they have been suffering from guilt and shame, watching their father cry day after day. He refused to be comforted.

God Heals the Brokenhearted

Joseph had two children, Manasseh and Ephraim. The meaning of Manasseh's name is, "God caused me to forget the troubles that I and my family have had." I would like to add that God healed Joseph of the pain that he experienced. God healed his heart.

Do you know every time there is a trauma or something happens - today they call it post-traumatic stress — there is something in our memories and our cells that remembers the trauma? When we went through that thing with the house fire, it was not just a spiritual thing. It affects your body, soul, and spirit and they heal at different times. These pains that are inside of us, it is like the sting of death.

In 1 Corinthians 15:50-58, talking about death being the last enemy, the apostle Paul declares, "Oh death where is your sting?" And we see that this was true with Joseph even before Christ. God heals the sting of death, disappointment, and betrayal.

God Causes Us to Bear Fruit in Difficult Times

Joseph's second son's name was Ephraim. Ephraim means, "God caused me to bear fruit in this captivity." In Egypt, the land of suffering for Joseph, God made Joseph fruitful.

 **Key:** Truths we can pass on as testimony is that in places of great hurt, trauma, or despair, God is able to turn that place of captivity into a place of fruitfulness.

These are two things that we can expect and then pass on. One, God heals the brokenhearted. *He is close to the brokenhearted.* (Psalm 34:18) Some of my most special, intimate times with the Lord was when I would be crying and weeping after the loss of our son. The Lord said to me, "I want you to give to Me your emotions right now because if you trust Me with your emotions and yield to me during those times of deep grief, I will reveal more of Myself in you."

In grief, you experience times like labor contractions that are grief contractions. You never know when it is going to hit. It comes and goes. And so, by trusting in Him, God brought me through each grief contraction. He showed me how to grieve. He showed me how to do it so it would not crush me.

I learned to say when in the midst of a grief contraction, "Lord if all I have is You, it is enough." I, also, learned that He is in charge of how long grief will last. You see, it hurts much more in this life when we love things in this world more than we love God. This is what we are up against.

 **Key:** When there is tragedy, when there is suffering, when things do not go the way you want, the level of the shaking that you go through is to the level that you have put roots into this world instead of into God.

God has to have first place in your life. He has to be your first love. We must be able to demonstrate this to our children and grandchildren. Why do you think a confession of our Jewish faith is,

|| *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might? **Matthew 22:37***

God is Always Near

This truth about God being close to you is so amazing. He is not just off ruling the universe. He dwells within our hearts. When we suffer, He suffers. There was the suffering heart of God even before He created man, because it says in the Word that the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8) God knew what suffering was going to come upon human kind when He gave them free will.

Back to Joseph. God heals his wounded heart and we see this through the names of his sons. But now, his brothers come into Egypt to buy grain and we see reconciliation coming.

The brothers are scared when Joseph revealed himself to them. Yet, Joseph said, “Oh, do not be so hard on yourselves. I want you to know it was not you who sent me to Egypt, but God did so that many lives may be spared.”

You know this is a mystery. Yes, the brothers did wrong. They sinned. They needed to repent. But, it says that God *sent* Joseph and Abraham was told many years before that God was going to *send* his descendants to Egypt. So who did it? God or the brothers? This is a mystery, we will never be able to figure it out.

In Every Situation, Look for Glory

So when the tormenting questions come concerning my son – I call it reflecting upon the mystery – I allow it to bring me to a place of worship instead. We are going to have times where there are “so that’s” in our lives. Even in the Word it talks about Lazarus and it says, “He died so that My Glory may be seen, so that you may believe.” (John 11:4) And the same thing with the blind man who was healed. They asked, “Did he sin or did his parents sin?” (John 9:2) No, this has happened to bring glory to God. Always look for the “so that’s” in your life.

 **Key:** Sometimes hard things happen so that greater Glory can be revealed.

Dan’s Story

I do not know if Dan told you his story or not, but when Dan was in college, he had a faith nervous breakdown. It was so horrible for him because he became a faith skeptic. Some horrible things happened to him and he lost his faith for a season. At the time, he did not know it was for a season, and he was tormented. Think of Yeshua, His worst suffering was when He was on the cross and He said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

When a relationship is broken it is so painful. Dan said that the period of skepticism was worse than the pain of losing our son. While that is hard for me to imagine, that is how important his faith was

with God. Because of that, he moved from New Jersey to Wheaton College. And guess who was at Wheaton College? Me! He met me.

And because of this doubt and skepticism, he read every book that he could to answer his questions as if his life depended on it. He wrote all along the margins of his books. I mean he was in such angst. He had to find the truth. He had a whole card file of questions and on the back he would put the answers.

At Wheaton College he met this old saint, Chaplain Evan Welsh, the Chaplain of the College. And this Chaplain said to Dan after meeting him and hearing his story, "I want you to know that any time — night or day — that you need to talk, you can come over to my house and we will talk." And Dan took him up on it. Every day of his junior year he went over there. Every single day.

Chaplain Welsh loved Dan back to faith and to the teenage desire that he had had concerning a calling to go into the ministry. He encouraged Dan to get ordained in the Presbyterian Church. He was also interim pastor of the first Hebrew Christian Presbyterian Church in Chicago. He got Dan in as the student pastor in the Presbyterian Church in Chicago.

At that time there began to be shaking in the Jewish believers because they used to assimilate into the churches. There began to be revelation from Heaven that once a Jew become a believer in Jesus, they do not stop being Jewish. There was a calling, and destiny, and responsibility that was waiting for Dan on the other side of his crisis of faith. So when I look at how that terrible suffering that my husband went through changed history, who caused it?

If he had not had the crisis of faith and moved to Wheaton, he would have never met me. We have four children and 11 grandchildren. All of that would not have happened. So I look at that and I say, "Did God cause it? Did suffering and evil cause it?" It is like from before the foundation of the world God knew the calling on that man's life.

Remember in 2 Samuel 24:1 where it says that God incited David to count Israel and Judah? And then in 1 Chronicles 21:1 it talks about Satan inciting David to count the mighty men. This displeased the Lord and a plague fell upon Israel and 70,000 died. When the Lord restrained the Death Angel, the angel stood by the threshing floor which David purchased and is the place of the Temple Mount. Isn't that something?

God is Beyond our Understanding

When you look at these things, instead of allowing the problem of evil, and the 'who done it's' to throw you off kilter, begin to enjoy the mystery because God is beyond our understanding. His ways are above our ways. Certain things that we know about Him will never change and one is that He is good and His mercy endures forever. God is love and nothing, nothing, nothing, will separate us from His love.

Let us be faithful to convey these unchangeable truths to the next generation and then the next generation. I have story after story after story of how God has come through in miraculous ways. Each one of us do.

 **Key:** Rise above things that come to shake your faith and trust in God by responding in worship.

We serve an awesome God. Let us not let the things that we go through shake us. We must rise above them through a response of worship. That is how Paul responded. When he could not understand something, he said,

|| *Oh, God has bound us all over to disobedience that He might have mercy over us all. **Romans 11:32***

Oh the depths and the riches and the awesomeness of God! Let your theology bring you into that place of worship and awe, where you bend your knee before a Holy God. Amen.