

CHRISTIAN STABILITY GRACE DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

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GREETINGS: It is such a blessing for me to come to you, once again, to bring you the Good news of Jesus Christ! Today is the second session where I am going to just talk about difficult times and how God helps us in difficult times, how God brings forth His life in us in the midst of difficult times. That means that you can have a good time while things aren't that good. That means that without your situation changing, they can still be life and goodness towards you. That is what I am going to talk about today. We talked about this last time. I've used examples like from Paul and I am going to touch a little bit on Peter and go back to Paul a little bit when he was in front of Felix, and do some recapping there. Then I will get into what I have for you today.

I want you to know that the Christian life that God has come to bring is robust enough that you can have joy. It doesn't matter what you go through. There is something that God produces in us although we can cry, although we can be sad, yet there is something deep inside us that comes forth, that leads us to a place where we can partake of the eternal life that there is in God. So, if you are going through a difficult time, just sit tight. This message is going to bless you and help you.

PRAYER: Father, thank You so much for Your Good News! Thank You for the love You have for us. Thank You that You have expressed Your innermost feelings in Jesus and You bring forth Your life in Him, to all of us. Thank You Holy Spirit that You speak powerfully through me today. Amen and amen

TODAY'S MESSAGE: You know, sometimes things just don't work out the way we think it is supposed to work out or we go through difficult times. Imagine God creating Adam and Eve and then He tells them, "Don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for the day you eat thereof you will surely die." Then Adam and Eve go, something like Ananias and Sapphira, and they go and partake of something that destroys them and kills them. What would go on in your heart when you see that? What do you think was going on in the heart of God when He saw that?

Because Adam wasn't where he was supposed to be, God came to Adam and He was shouting in care and concern for him, "Adam, where are you?" Adam was now in a place where he was walking in the knowledge of his nakedness, in the knowledge of his inability. and he was on a sure path of death... and he did die. He returned to the dust of the earth. God said that would happen to Adam. That was what was taking place in Adam and I think it wasn't easy for God when he went through that... when he saw that. As what was difficult for Adam, it was also difficult for God.

We find that God is a God of compassion, a God of feeling. We find that we see Jesus Christ knowing what it is to go through difficult times and we see that mentioned in Hebrews. So, even God Himself as what He was in relationship with man, I believe, was going through difficult times. But, do you think that God was ever hopeless? Do you think that God was ever overtaken by His feelings to the point that He was in absolute despair, where He could not have good works? No, never! God has a kind of life that is eternal, yet it is relational. So, we can know from that, that we will in this life, while we experience difficult things, as what God has that source of eternal life that cannot be extinguished, we will have that and we will see the life of God manifest in the midst of difficult times. And we know that the fullness of who God is and what God is will continue into eternity and that we can now be partakers of that.

I'm presenting a course through Acts, chapter by chapter. This started about five weeks ago. We are going chapter by chapter, looking at what was going on in the early Church. Let me tell you something: The early Church and what they believed and what they wanted from God was something that I would think would be different to what we experience in our culture today. The early Church was simple people that didn't worry about, I would say, the things we worry about. They were a group of people that were fascinated with the fact that Jesus was physically raised from the dead. They called Jesus, "Lord" as what you would call Caesar, "lord".

They would change their whole mind away from Caesar and then focus on Jesus as Lord. They would, basically, say, "We've got a new physical ruler of the earth and we are now under His jurisdiction." "The belief that they had right there, just in that simplicity, cuts away about 90% of what the Church is about, in general, today. We have so many issues and burdens that we carry on our back but there's good news, even in those times. God can bring us again to the right message and bring us to the place of true peace.

Now, back to the early Church. The early Church, as what they were just simple people loving on one another knowing that Jesus Christ is Lord, were also going through very difficult times. We look at Peter. He goes to the temple. His motives are pure. He preaches a message that was preached in the temple before, the message of the Resurrection. He comes and now explains the fullness of this message and then they grab him and beat him! They beat him and John. My goodness! Just think of yourself. If you go and tell somebody about Jesus, let's say, at a school or at a place, and these people start to slap you around. How will you feel? You will feel, "But my rights...!" You would want to make a court case because somebody slapped you because you've preached the Gospel.

When these people were beaten, they lost. I think of myself. If I go to a place and somebody starts to bump me around, the first thing that comes to my mind is, "I need protection. Where is the government?" That's the first thing that I think. You know I'm just confessing to you. That would be in my mind. Where is the police? Where's the government? They need to protect me! I have rights here and I'm falling back on my rights.

But here we find the apostles not even having that going through very difficult times. Now imagine you are in a place where you basically have very little rights, where there are dictators around you, where you go and preach the truth with all purity in heart, loving on people, really helping, just bringing the truth and here they start to beat on you and threaten you. You know that they are trying to kill you. But, thank God that a notable miracle took place when you raised a man that was a paralytic and because of a crowd, these people aren't killing you but they now have their knife in for you. They want to destroy you! Imagine that!

The Church, in that time, were happy. We can hear that and say, "You see Bertie, this is a message of condemnation. This is a message of guilt because are you telling me that in these difficult times, I must now start to try and be happy as what the early Church was happy?" No, that is not what I am saying. What I'm saying is that as we understand the real and the true Gospel, even if things like that would happen, we would find the Holy Spirit bring forth fruit in our lives even in the midst of those times.

As much as what we would want to do that, we cannot, from the Bible preaching it in context, promise the Church today that they will always be financially prosperous, that they will always have everything go well with them, that every time they pray for the sick, the sick will be healed. We cannot promise that. As Charismatics, we sometimes as Charismatic preachers, have made promises to people that God didn't even make to them in this time. We know that there will be perfection in the day of Jesus. But, in this time we are going to have difficult times.

We can just look at different nations and what they are going through. I mean there are people that started businesses and all of a sudden, the covet regulations came in and they went bankrupt. It happened to people. It happened to Christians. Now, what if that happens? How will we handle those difficult times? The apostles were beaten and they were just pure in their hearts. They did nothing wrong. They did just nothing wrong. They loved on people. They went to the Jews and said "Listen, we want to tell you that this Jesus you guys killed, the Father raised Him from the dead and put Him at the right hand of God. And you, Jewish people, do you know what? God is so good that He now comes to you through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit first as Jews." He is saying to you, "Listen. Repent of thinking that this man Jesus is not Lord and repent to believing that He is Lord. Confess Him as Lord and do you know what will happen? The Spirit that is upon us, that gives us life, will also come upon you! Hallelujah!" And then you see them being beaten! That just doesn't sound that fair but that is what happens and these people were happy. There is something inside the power of the Resurrection that can bring us joy even in those difficult times.

Last week we looked at Paul when he was in front of Felix. Paul came into the temple. He didn't even preach in the temple in Jerusalem. He came in and they saw him and they caught him. They said, "This guy preaches false doctrines in other places where there are synagogues!" And they wanted to kill the man! It was terrible! He was then brought before Felix. Felix listened to his case. He put his case out perfectly. He is 100% innocent and Felix took longer than two years to say "guilty" or "not guilty".

Listen to what this judge does. His governor allows Paul to put his case and then he says, "I will give judgment", and then he waits. He allows his friends to come and visit Paul and bring him food and care for him because he is just setting up a perfect place for bribes. He never receives a bribe and Paul waits in jail for two years.

Then another leader comes in and he says, "The Jews like it that Paul is locked up, so I am just keeping him here!" This is happening to a Christian. We would say, "Justice did not prevail! Unrighteousness was at the order of the day." Yes, according to the law, those things are unrighteous. But you know what kind of a righteousness did take place? The righteousness that Paul, in the midst of those times, can have enough life inside him that he would write letters and help people and spread the Gospel and preach boldly!

We will find that Paul, at the end of Acts, was under house arrest! Now the thing why I mention these things as, Church, we look at our own lives and we look at going through difficult times sometimes. We look at unjust things that happen to us and we say, "Where is God?" Then we start to do introspection, want to find out what is wrong with us. Why does my car break?" I mean, somebody's car is going to break! One day it is going to be yours.

Well, you know there are other people that are very prosperous financially and other people that are not that prosperous. The Church is made up of rich and poor people. That's the way. That's just the way it is and there is nothing you can do about that. "No, Bertie, but the poverty is not going to be mine!" Well, glory to God if you've got a passion for business and God has gifted you to be in business and that is going to be part of the Church, no guilt for you. This is wonderful!

Like I said last week, "You know it is even in this ministry." Yes, there are people of all income groups that support Dynamic Love Ministries and I am very grateful for that. But it is also the financially wealthy people that pay for flights and buy cameras and those kinds of things. So, yes, in this Church, will people will prosper? Yes, people will prosper, but I can tell you now that if you take any Church, you will find there are people in that Church that are not financially prosperous. You can take any Church and you will find that there are people in a Church... let's take a Church of 300, 400, people. There are going to be people in that Church that are on chronic medication. It's just the way it is. By that I am not saying, "Settle for that!" But what I am trying to say is, "If that is you, don't think, "God, what's wrong with me? God, why aren't You for me? Lord, what have I done wrong? Is there something wrong with my faith?" Being an introspection thing where you cannot even have a smile on your face.

No, there is a message. There is a hope that the Gospel brings which puts out a place where we can have a smile on our face today. I'm looking at one of my friends, Danie Van Wyk, Danie and Tashai. Their daughter has epilepsy. At the moment, she is in a hospital here in Cape Town. They put these wires inside her brain. Man, I tell you that operation doesn't look like a Sunday School picnic. It is not nice. And this is their daughter. When I look at Danie and Tashai, yes, they smile and everything but I can also see the burden of this in their eyes which they cannot hide. We see this. It is normal.

But yet, we find them being people, spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. In the midst of this, doing everything they can after they've prayed, have done everything, people have prayed. People, with great faith, have prayed and here we find this person still going through this. Should they now go into an introspection thing trying to find out what's wrong with their faith and all these kinds of things? All the people that will judge them and say, "Oh, you of little faith" or "It's not because of faith that has prayed for them, for her, that's also seen the healing." I mean, all of them. They are sitting there looking at the situation but there is Shawnee. I believe that God loves her. I believe that God has a hope for her. The hope that God has for all of us is the resurrected, glorified, eternal life as humans. When we go through these difficult times in this world, our eyes are only on the hope that Jesus Christ has given us. There's something phenomenal that takes place in our hearts when we behold this eternal life that God has brought to us where we see that all people are mortal, all people, to some degree, are actually poor because there will always be someone that's richer than someone else. But that we can reason, if we want to reason that way, that all people are somehow actually rich. Paul says that there's contentment for us. We have clothes and food and we there we are content. What a robust life!

Their daughter is in the hospital with those wires in her brain waiting for an epileptic fit so they can measure to see if they can remove a small part of the brain and you can say, "Bertie, we can pray, in the name of Jesus, that she's going to be healed." Well, you're welcome! But, while this lady is not healed, she needs to live and she needs to have joy. I've seen her give a thumbs up and she smiles and says, "I'm okay!" I see in her that there's a part of the robustness of the eternal life of God, that shows me that there is more than just healing in this world. There's more than just prosperity in this world. There is something that God has put inside us... a hope that is inside the Christian that is greater than the things of this world, which we, maybe, cannot explain today.

I remember, years ago, I went to Danie. The first time I preached in Palobora at the Kruger Natural Park, a beautiful area there. He talked about his daughter and you know, when you get a difficult question like these, you don't always know the answer. I mean, they prayed for years. done everything that you can possibly do and they didn't see the miracle take place. He asked me, "Bertie, what do you say about this?" But do you know what was the beautiful thing? As we were talking about this, or the run-up to this, we were thanking God that it is not by tithing or sowing or reaping. How this Gospel is a Good News Gospel and how we give everything. Let us preach this Gospel... excited about the Gospel and all of that. And then he came and said, "You know, I want to talk about something else. I said, "Yes, what is it?" And this is what he spoke about his daughter and this was my answer to him: I said, "Danie, this might sound like a harsh answer but it shakes us to the reality of the truth of what the Gospel eventually is all about. Danie, I don't have an answer for you but why don't we talk about this in a hundred years from now? Or we can use these words, "Why don't we talk about this in the resurrection?" You know, in the resurrection, when you look back, we won't even see a need to talk about this because, yeah, this is what it is about. All of us, somehow, somewhere are going to die if Jesus doesn't return but there's a greater hope for us as a Christian.

And as our mind is focused on that, the Bible says in Peter that we are now starting to experience the first fruit of that life. We see that in the Apostle Peter.”

Listen, when you get slapped, you don't smile, man! These people preached the hope of the resurrection. They get beaten and then they go back and they rejoice because of the suffering that they're going through for the Gospel. We also find, in the Gospel in these times, that Paul couldn't heal all the sick. He is there. He prayed for people. He left them at places, moved on, basically left them to die and then find that God healed them. He didn't just raise them up in the name of Jesus all the time. So how do you live as a person in those difficult times?

Paul was poor. Now you must say, “You see, Bertie, but we can understand persecution.” But there were times that Paul wasn't poor because of persecution. He was just poor. People were not giving to him and his business didn't make too much money. You know, he was helping certain people in business making some money and then he says here, “I know what it is to be poor and I know what it is to be rich and I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. That means the revelation of Jesus, as the Messiah strengthens him in the time when he really doesn't have, if you to the point that he has a smile on his face where he says, “I don't need anybody to add anything to me to be happy.

So, Paul, when he didn't have money, when he was at the place where it was difficult for him to pay certain things, do you think that Paul was going through introspection: “Oh, God, where am I missing it? Oh, Lord, did I sow enough money? Should I claim it. Should I frame it? Should I mark it? What should I do, oh, Lord, Jesus?” No, Paul wasn't doing that.

And another thing that I want to add in here quickly when it comes to the prophetic. The apostles didn't know the future all the time. You can see just by the way Paul writes. He says, “Well, I want to come to you and we hope it works out”, kind of a thing, if you read through Acts. So, there were certain things that was unsure. We, today, feel that we are so spiritual if we always know what is going on, how things are going to work out. We are not always going to know how things work out. “But Bertie, that doesn't sound like good news to me!” Well, it sounds like good news to me in this sense, that the Gospel can be so good, the character of God can be so good, that I don't need to know all these things. I can have peace in the midst of all of that.

You know, if I have a child in a car and we are driving somewhere and he asks me, “How long will it still take? How long will it still take? How long until we are there?” You find a slight irritation building up. That's what happens. You feel, “Man, I am taking you there and can you not just trust that we are going to make it?” If you have a child that wants to know exactly what you are going to cook for the next month, every meal in detail, otherwise you cannot have rest, you will say, “Boy, we need to go to some psychologist or something. You need help, or prayer, or some will say, “A slap or something or, you know, some help.” I mean, that is just not normal! But somehow, we have this idea that we need to know the future all the time. We need to know what is going to happen in government all the time. We need to know who is the president's going to be all the time.

We need to know all these things in the future. The reason why I think we want to know all those things in the future is because our hearts haven't come to a place where we trust God. We trust a pilot. I mean, we get into a plane. We don't know how to fly that thing. You know, the pilot might just take a little bit longer. You say, "Well, the flight's taken. They just say it is going to take a bit longer because of the weather." Okay... then we just rest. We don't want to know, all the time, when is it going to turn left? When is it going to turn right? If you are one of those passengers, they're going to start to stress. You are going to bring stress to the plane. You need to relax.

I think that is the same thing when it comes to the Gospel. Paul and they were going through difficult times. They just knew that they were living in this earth. There are unrighteous people in this world. There are things that happen in this world that is not the way it is supposed to be. I mean, Paul got slapped and then he said to the high priest, "God will slap you!" Then they said, "Are you speaking like that to the high priest?" Then he says, "Oh, sorry! I didn't know it was the high priest." That means that Paul didn't know everything. He made mistakes. "Don't talk like that to the high priest." And then he quoted Scripture. "Sorry, sorry, sorry!" He was apologizing. He made a mistake. In the very same way, we today can go through difficult times, but in those times, God will strengthen us!

I am not trying to give an in-depth teaching today. All that I am trying to say is, "If things don't work out perfectly..." I have people that are in our web church. One had a stroke and he is in the hospital, have family that basically left them, but we find these people, on Facebook, encouraging people in the Good News. Yes, this person was also going through difficult times when I've encouraged them, when I put the Gospel to them and helped them. And now I see how there is spiritual growth and just an encouragement again and how this person is now encouraging other people. It is beautiful to see. But he didn't get healed. He is still in the hospital. Unless some miracle happens, he is going to be there for the rest of his life. Those are things and facts that you need to face. But I find that the Gospel... man, it just wants to bring tears to my eyes.... the hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ brings so much hope to that man that he is encouraging other people who are not in the hospital, bringing the Gospel, amening the Gospel, telling me, "Come on, Bertie! Preach the Gospel!" Isn't that awesome! There is something that God can bring forth in us that is wonderful.

We, in our Gospel, don't have to, as preachers, assure everybody that everything is always going to work out, all the time, because Jesus died for you and was raised. No! Jesus died and He was raised. What does that mean? He has come to give us eternal life and we also find the way wherein we explain the Gospel is that there is a time now where there is a season where we might go through difficult times. Then there is a day wherein Jesus will return wherein we will find perfection. Prior to that day, we do have the Spirit whereby we can see signs, wonders and miracles, which we are absolutely open for. We are open for prophetic words and all those things but we don't have to know the future all the time.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out on people on the day of Pentecost in Acts, they did not go around and say, "Well, now everybody prophesies. And now as they were prophesying, or in Acts 19 when Paul laid hands on people, they started to prophesy. They didn't go around telling people, "Well, I see a J... J... J.... Jo, Jo... John... your name is John and you live on the corner of what...uh, I see a 1 and I see a long.... On the corner of First and Long! Yeah, yeah, that's where you live!" That's not what they did! Prophecy then was speaking the wonders of God, explaining and preaching under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, on how the prophets were fulfilled and how we have the hope of the resurrection by Jesus Christ. That is what prophecy was called.

But now these days, you know, we think that we should not despise prophecy. Then we refer to these things where people tell our telephone numbers and where we live, and we shouldn't despise that. "Well, if God wants to tell me my telephone number, it's good. I don't have a problem. God can tell me whatever He wants." And I don't want to say that can't be encouraging to people who are at a place where they don't know as if God knows about them anymore. And now somebody comes supernaturally and gives them the telephone number and so forth. That can be encouraging and normally, it then gives a certain hope wherein there's an outcome as pertaining to certain difficult things of this world where it is said, "Don't worry. Your car will be fixed and your child will be okay, and you are going to have a business and those kinds of things, and it brings some hope. But it doesn't always bring life. It brings some form of a hope inside the things of this world. And we even find, I don't say this is the case with people that do this in the name of Jesus, but there was also a woman that followed Paul and he was saying, "These are men of God. They show you the true way and all those kinds of things. But which was not the Spirit of God!"

"But, Bertie, you are too rational about these things. This is not the way we are supposed to think about. You just want to tell me you just believe in Jesus and then as you believe in Jesus, God is going to just give you hope in your heart and it doesn't matter what you're going through?" Yes!

"Bertie, you want to tell me that you believe that your future is not secure as pertaining to the normal things of this world, money and those kinds of things or whatever? Do you believe that it is not secure?" Well, the Bible says, "Tell those who are rich, not to put their trust in uncertain riches." "But, I'm a Christian!" Well, why did Paul write that to Timothy to tell the Christians? "Well, Bertie, that is not nice to know." Listen, let me tell you something. I am not saying that you're going to be poor. That's not what I'm saying. I'm not saying that poverty is a definite, "yes". That's not what I'm saying. I do believe that there is financial prosperity for all of us and I do believe, and this is truly what I feel in my heart, that most people that do have businesses, there is stability in certain businesses and it will go on until the day you die. You know, yes, it would be like that for a lot of us. But we cannot have our peace in that. There's something greater that God has for us as Christians.

And let me tell you something: If our hearts are in that, we will not be led astray by the news media, and our emotions would not run away with the news media, and all those kinds of things because we have this kind of feeling that, "Well, we are under another kingdom and we are not actually of this world although we are in this world. We have a Father that provides for us and we are content people. That's just the way it is!" You say, "Bertie, but this doesn't sound... I'm not even used to this message! I don't know if this message can give anybody life!"

Well, the early Church lived like that. I don't find the early Church ever, ever... and please hear me. There are some of you that might be watching this that might say that this is very discouraging. Maybe this might sound discouraging for you but there are people that are watching this that are struggling, that don't have to. They have been promised that they're going to have and they've given their tithes. They've given their offerings. They've given their money. They've prayed and fasted and all those kinds of things. And if they are just dead honest and they look back, they realize that it hasn't worked for many, many, many years and actually they are worse off now. And those are the people that I have in mind in this message.

Listen, my friend. In the midst of all of that, in the midst of those difficulties, I want you to ask God, "Lord, I want to understand the Gospel, the message that made Peter happy. Ask God, "I want to know that message, the true Gospel and not this typical prosperity gospel. That's not what made me happy. I want to tell you this. You might say, "Bertie, you are prospering financially. You are doing well." But, let me tell you something. It is not the prosperity message, that is going around in the world, that prospered me financially. No. The Bible says that there are those that prosper in this world. What I call prosperity and what other people will call prosperity might be two completely different things.

There are other people that might look at me and say, "But you're not prospering." Well, I find that for the last 20 years, I've only thought that I've prospered. And when I look back, I realized that there were times when I look back, I realize that doesn't look like prosperity. But back then I felt that I'm prospering. Can you see that prosperity is something that happens in the heart? I prospered without a house. I prospered without owning anything. "Then you must have that you spiritually prospered." Man, I'm happy with the stuff that I have with food and clothes. I was content seeing no need to add anything, having a life born in me that is rugged which is so pure that it can produce life in the midst of difficult times.

I want to tell you that as we put our hope on Jesus Christ, that you have the promise of eternal life. You will find that as you find your hope, Jesus was raised from the dead. His eternal life belongs to me. This body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. This body shall be raised from the dead. I'm part of a new kingdom. This kingdom that I am under, righteousness and that kingdom, is different from the righteousness of the world. In this world I'm in a condition to be happy outside, or in a different way, where I can be happy in the world. The world tells me that I can only be happy, if my kids have the highest education, the highest care and all those kinds of things.

Let me put it to you this way: That's not righteous. That's not righteous to have joy only when your kid has the highest education. Is it righteous that joy is connected to that? That's unrighteous because then we can only be happy when governments are at such a place that everybody can have a doctorate. And before the government is in place that everybody can financially prosper in this world, we as Christians don't have a reason to be happy.

It's unrighteous to be under a system where joy is determined by things. But thank God that we are justified by faith. I'm justified with joy. I'm justified with kindness. I'm justified with the fruit of the Spirit as I believe upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And I can hear some of you say, "But Bertie, you need to give me some form of a surety that I am going to be okay." The only form of surety that I can give to you when it comes to money is this: You have a Father. Look at the Gentiles. They care about these things but you that have a Father, you don't care about these things for your heavenly Father knows what you have need of. He knows what you have need of! And I want to tell you, as pertaining to finances and those kinds of things, God knows what your need is and He will meet that. But the greatest need we have is to understand the kingdom of God and His rulership over us. Glory to God!

Let me summarize this part of the message this way and then we will go to Acts. What I'm trying to say is, I'm not saying to you that poverty is a guarantee but what I am saying to you is that joy is a guarantee. Joy is a guarantee. It doesn't matter what. Long suffering... do you know a person that has long suffering, it doesn't seem long for him. To the impatient, it feels long. Long suffering is one of the robust things that God gives us. It is tailor-made for a broken world where we can live in joy. Hallelujah!

I look at some of my friends... my one here in town that has a business. The driver that drives the truck, rolls the truck but it's just because of negligence. Another one breaks another thing. You think of the amount of that is involved in these things breaking just because of workers not really doing what they are supposed to do, putting this man through difficult times.

Then you look at wrong things that happen and you think, "I don't know why all these things happen." But you find the guy is happy! He is full of the joy of the Lord! He's encouraged! His greatest concern was not the things that go wrong in business. And there were some things that were really not, you know, you would say, "Lord, these things don't really look as it was supposed to go like that. But he comes to me and says, "Bertie, you know you really need to help me. Somebody is preaching the law to my son." (I'm using my own words now: "I'm a bit stressed now. This is serious stuff. Here we need help. Please assist me!") But when he was going through difficult times in his business, when it looks as if he is losing all his contracts and everything can go down, the guy seemed okay. But when his son is hearing the law, he feels, "Oh, my goodness! I need help now!" Hallelujah! He's in a different world!

Now you may say, "But, you know, I'm not there because when things happen, I stress." I want to tell you that it is the very same thing with me. There are times when you look at normal things in this world, when you look at it, you find, "Oh, my goodness!" You feel that moment of stress in you. But as you just calm down, think of the goodness of Jesus Christ, think of the Gospel, meditate on the Good News, you find, man, there is just something pushing up in you which is eternal life and it brings peace to you. Sometimes, cognitively, you go through stress but there's this underlying foundation of joy that is always there.

Acts 2: (This is a shocker but this is what it says here. It talks about the early Church.)

48 Every day they continued to gather in a temple court. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

These people were under dictators. They had no democracy... and they were glad. "But, that's impossible!" It's possible to be glad!

"So, Bertie, are you just saying that we should not....?" I'm not saying any of that. But what I am saying to you is that it is possible to have joy that is born from God.

Romans 5

1 Therefore since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

2 And we^{by} boast in the Hope of the glory of God.

3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;

4 perseverance, character; and character, hope.

The way I see it, the way I would translate it is this way: That even when we go through suffering, we know that by the grace of God, wherein we stand, perseverance will be produced. Longsuffering will be produced. Character will be produced. Character, to stand in that time and eventually we will see the hope that we have all the time being produced which is the resurrection. We know this hope will be produced because while we are in these difficult times, the love of God is produced and poured out in our hearts for we are mindful of what Christ has done for us and where we will end up as pertaining to the resurrection.

You know, I am thinking of a friend of mine in Canada. His wife got shingles. It was in her face and in her eyes. I don't know if I've testified about this before. Yes, it is a difficult time. It's a painful time but we find these people, in those difficult times, continuing to believe in the Good News, even continuing to support the ministry.

Imagine shingles in the face and in your eye! Your eye is so sensitive and now the nerves are inflamed and it has infection in it. There's a virus, or something, inside the nerves. It must be so painful! But in the midst of that time, the Good News of Jesus, the message of the resurrection, encouraged that person, standing in the power of God. And I'm sure that as she was going through that, there might be times where you feel, "Oh, is my faith, of little faith, going through difficult times?" Because when you feel that pain it is difficult! The husband and the children seeing that, questions that might want to arise. But in that, there is a stability which is the Gospel, the goodness of Jesus Christ, the power of the resurrection of Jesus.

It says here that the Church was happy! Hey, we can be happy! "But, Bertie, how can we be happy if we don't have surety about our political situation?" How can we be happy even if the situation is sure without Jesus? That's the question!

Yes, we look at the injustices of this world and our hearts cry. We can read that in 2 Peter. But there is something bigger than these things! You possess eternal life! You are God's! You belong to Him! He belongs to you! You have eternal life in the midst of all these things, there is something greater, more robust! When we see difficult times, what can we expect? We can expect the grace wherein we stand, bringing the things like longsuffering and kindness and patience and character, bringing it forth by grace. It doesn't say that the hard time teaches us! Grace, wherein we stand, brings forth what is needed for the most difficult time.

So, Bertie, do you want to tell me that you have no surety that South Africa is the best place for you now?" The only surety that I do have is that I will be bodily raised from the dead! And on the way there, I will have the fruit of the Spirit by the doing of God as I rely upon Him. That's the only surety I have. "But, Bertie, that doesn't sound good." Well, I think if that is what you say, you go and study the Gospel and ask God to help you to see the Gospel, because this world is too unstable to have our hope in unstable things. Glory to God! Unless we have a God that can help us when we do things wrong... unless we have a God that can bring peace when we are mortal... unless we have a God whose Spirit is powerful enough to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in the midst of difficult times... Unless we have such a God, how will we live in this world? We will not know how to live.

"But, Bertie, are you not saying that heaven is coming to earth?" Yes, it is. But, as for a season now, we are seeing the first fruit of the Spirit and then there will be a day when Jesus returns. And as we see the first fruit, the time when we see things dimly, we prophesy in part, we know in part. While we are in that time I am not going to try and look for faults with myself or with you all the time. We keep looking at Jesus and that is enough. Glory to God!

Well, Church, thank you that I could minister this to you. I trust that this message will encourage many people. And I want to say to you that I don't know how to end this but I find that as I sought the kingdom of God and I found His righteousness, that these things that I always stressed about was just added to me. It was almost as if when I didn't look for it and I looked for what was really valuable, I found that other things were added to me. And now that I found what is really valuable, the things that were added is now just seen as an added and not the main thing. The Gospel of Grace empowers people!

Let me end off this way. This is to preachers and to people that want to theologically maybe struggle with what I say: If your Gospel doesn't work for a blind, paralyzed man in the midst of the African bush where there are no roads, no electricity, your Gospel cannot work for him, it can work for no one. Think about that.

You are the blessed of God. You are His body. He was made sin that you might be made the righteousness of God, in Christ, by His doing. Your hope is sure and hope does not disappoint. It brings forth the love of God, in our hearts, as we are mindful of His love which is that He has given us the hope of the resurrection, the restoration of all things, by the man Jesus and not our good works. Good works is a fruit. It is not a root. It is something that we have been promised by Jesus Christ.

Thank you that I could have served you today. We will see one another, again, next week. God bless....