

3 Things to do when the going gets tough.

Good to have y'all tonight. Everybody excited to be here? Yes. Yes. Every time you come in here, you see a little something n don't ya? Yeah. Y'all kind of didn't know what to do tonight, did you? You didn't know, didn't know what to do when you came in here. That's awesome. Well, well, let me, uh, let me explain a few things to you and then we'll get started. Tonight, you see in back of me our small little television that we have. And, uh, we have, we have officially named it, it is called The Point Jumbotron. Yes. <laugh>. All right. So, uh, Tropicana Field has theirs and we have ours. Okay? And, um, the bottom, the bottom, still a little loud, Sebastian, I think a little loud there. Um, the bottom is going to be, uh, painted black.

It'll be black by the time you see it on Sunday. Also, at the very top, you'll see a little silver up there. That is a big, uh, steel behind the screen. There's a lot of steel in everything to support this. Okay? And it's in back big steel structures in the back to hold it up and put it all together. Um, this TV behind us here, Tron, "thrombo tron" that I'll we'll call it, it is made up of a whole bunch of little panels about like that. And they started on the one end and, uh, having two people put it together, having to test each one when they were putting it in. And honestly, it, it was amazing. It was like a puzzle that they were putting all this, a lot of technology. And, uh, today, uh, we got a chance to see it. You'll get a chance to see it on Sunday.

All right? Uh, but we got a chance to see it today. And, uh, Sebastian put up a, a picture of, uh, the American, one of the American flags that we're gonna be using for Memorial Day. And just to see that on that screen is just absolutely amazing. And, uh, put on some other things. And, uh, it's gonna give us a brand new, uh, way of being able to do our, our sermons and things like that, that we've never been able to do before. Uh, we practice with the tallest pasture we have around here. And that's Brian. Yes, <laugh>. And, uh, he's standing on, he's standing on the stage, you know, behind the pulpit. And then everything is far above him. It's gonna be right at the very top of the screen. It's gonna have all the scriptures, gonna have the, uh, all the music, you know, uh, words and all this kind of stuff.

And then it's gonna be able to do graphics and everything like that underneath. And, uh, it's just gonna really be nice and, uh, be su It's gonna be super, super nice for our online presence. Um, y'all know, now that we have a, um, I've told you we have a PR firm that's working with our church. And, um, they have come up with a lot of different stuff for us to do, uh, with our promotions and, uh, social media and all that kind of thing. And, uh, they've, they're gonna be designing a lot of our things we're gonna be having out here. If you've gone, if you're on Facebook, you already have been able to see some of their designs that they've put out there. We've got a lot new, new designs for heart of the point. Uh, we've gotten ready to roll out a lot of other things that they're doing for us.

Our website, if you go on our website, our website is completely changed. We're not finished with it yet. We're still, uh, in the process of that, we're probably what Billy about 80% done. Something like that. Maybe is 70% somewhere in there. But if you look at it, you will, if, if you haven't seen it. Just, just the part that we have done now. It is amazing. I mean, to go in there and to look at it and to see all the different graphics, the different colors, I mean, the different ways of doing different things. I mean,

everything from, uh, filling out forms and stuff for sports. It's just a lot of things that, uh, they're being able to do for us. And we're so thankful that, uh, we have that underwritten, uh, for us, that PR firm, which has just been a huge blessing. Something that we, we would never, ever been able to do on our own, but they're really taking us to a new level.

So, we appreciate that. Of course, we've got the painting done in here. Now. We're gonna be having a brand new, uh, drum cage that'll be put in probably, I think next week. Isn't that right, Sebastian? He's not yet next week. Hopefully next week, if not next week, the week after. Uh, the back wall back there. We've got some sound, uh, boards that are back there because we went with the, uh, the hardwood floor on the stage. You'll see that here. And, uh, so it's a little bit, uh, more, uh, reverbs a little bit more for the sound people. So, we've got some of those foam boards back there in the back that have been put up. And of course, we've got new lighting in here, new lighting here. That's why make up tonight. Evidently, <laugh> <laugh>. I, uh, that's the next thing we need to do, is we need to find out anybody that does makeup, because probably gonna have to start doing that too.

I'm just kidding, <laugh>. But, uh, I really didn't know how these, I, I, I preached Sunday with the new lights, and they were different. I mean, when I was staying up here preaching, I mean, sitting down here preaching, I should say, but I, looking out, it was different. And tonight, sitting here like this, it's really, I mean, I'm really a deer in headlights tonight, so, but no. Anyway, it is nice. And, uh, again, the lights are really, uh, good for our online presence and everything too. And of course, I, everything in here's a whole lot brighter. Uh, we've got a new configuration with the chairs tonight. You've, y'all have figured that out too. Uh, so let me tell you the new house rules, okay? House rules are gonna stretch your spirituality. All right? Here it is. We want everybody that is a regular tender in this church to do me a favor, starting on Sunday, okay?

And that is, nobody sits on the ends, okay? Everybody, when you come move in, here's why you put yourself in a position of a new person coming in the church. You walk into the church for the first time, you will not. You will not, unless you're very unusual, you will not hope hop over six or eight people to find a place. You won't do it. You will walk out that back door. So, here's the deal. We've got people coming in here. Their lives are broken. Some people need to find Jesus as our Lord and Savior. And we preach love. We talk about love around here. So, one of the most loving's things that you can do on a Sunday morning is to give up the end seats, okay? To our guest. All right? Really mean that folks really mean that. Okay? And, uh, if you've got special needs where you need to sit on the end, sit in the back somewhere, okay?

Way in the back. And, uh, because, um, you know, we really need to give these seats up to the people that are gonna be coming in. We have a good amount of visitors every week. You know, we're sometimes we're eight to 10, 10 guests, uh, every week that come. Had a whole family last Sunday, uh, that, that came in. And I've got, I know we have another new family, brand new family five come in this coming Sunday. So, um, we're getting a lot of people. And, uh, online presence is growing. A lot of things are happening. So, remember, there is no assigned seats in this church. All right? I heard somebody said,

said not too long ago that you said, you can't sit there. That's my seat. It's a good thing. I wasn't around when they said that. Yeah. All right. I would've relocated their seat out in the yard, <laugh>.

But, uh, there's no assigned seats around here, okay? Best thing you can do is to give your seat up to somebody that's a visitor or somebody that needs Jesus. Amen. Amen. So, we need to practice what we preach, all right? All right. A few little house things had to share with you. And the hope I've, uh, covered

all of your different questions about all different things that are going on. But a lot of exciting things are happening, and, uh, we praise, and we thank the Lord for that. Give the Lord a hand clap. Hey, I agree. I agree. So, you know, it's just so encouraging. And again, I, I don't say this about, um, in any way to put other churches down, but on day and age where churches are struggling, they're having their hard times, a lot of churches are closing, things are happening.

Our church is growing, and, uh, we're seeing a lot of great things happening around here. And, uh, it's just wonderful to see how God is blessing. And it's because we're walking with the Lord, you know? And we're preaching the truth. We're doing what God wants us to do. And, and God's blessing it very simple, same way. It, it, it happens in your life. It's the same way it happens in church. It's no different. All right? Okay, let's go ahead and get into the word tonight. Uh, Brian's in the back with the discipleship class. So, I'm gonna go ahead and, uh, preach to you tonight. We're gonna let out a little early tonight. My goal is a quarter to seven. So I will be, we'll be outta here about a quarter to seven. Cause we've got a meeting tonight that some of us have to go to.

So, we'll go ahead and get into it. And y'all follow along on your, on your note sheets. But before we do, let's have a word of prayer and we'll get started. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you so much as we've already said, Lord, for the great and wonderful things that you're doing around here. Lord, we've talked about a lot of aesthetic things that we've been doing. But most importantly, Lord, we thank you for the souls that are being saved. Lord already had 50 some this year, have already committed their lives to you and accepted you as their Lord and Savior you here, Lord. And, uh, we're not even halfway to the year yet. And Lord, we praise you for that. We thank you for also for the lives that have been changed. Lord, we've got a lot of people that lives have been radically changed, father, through your power, through your glory.

And we praise you for that. And Lord, we just asked tonight that you had blessed Pastor Brian in the back. We pray that you'd be with our students. We pray that you'd be with our children, be with our Bible study. And here, Lord, and I pray that you just bless everything is done on this campus tonight. Open up our hearts, Lord, that we might receive what you'd have us to receive tonight. In your precious name we pray. Amen. All right. I'm gonna give you three things tonight, uh, to do when the going gets tough. And I know that that doesn't apply to anybody here <laugh>. Cause I know that your life is always smooth sailing like mine, you know? But, uh, three things to do when the going gets tough, we could say a lot more things, but just gonna focus in on three things tonight, and you can follow along on your notes.

The first one is this, that you resist the devil at his onset. All right? What I mean is when you know the devil is tinkering with your life, when you know that things are not going well, when you know, when Satan is attacking, and we all know that I don't have to sit here and tell you that you don't know when Satan's attacking your life. You do know when Satan's attacking. Right? Everybody understands that. So, what do you do when Satan's attacking you? Resist him. You declare war with him. And as it says in your notes, show the enemy. No mercy. All right? We resist him at the onset. We declare war on him, and we show Satan, no mercy. It's, I can't, I cannot stress this enough. We are in a spiritual battle in our life, and it is not getting better. It is intensifying.

And the level of spiritual warfare that you have going on in your life or in your family is conditional on your walk with the Lord. If you say tonight, well, he's not bothering me very much. It's because he's not threatened by you. There are some people that come here to church that Satan never bothers with. He doesn't bother 'em because they're not a threat to him. Why would he waste his time on people or even churches for that matter that are not threats? This church is a threat. All right? Pastor Brian and I and our staff, our deacons, okay? We have a bullseye on our back. Our teachers here, people that are in part of our teams, people that are serving, we all have targets on our backs. Satan literally hates what's going on at this church. He hates when we stand and we say that 50 some people have found the Lord, yes, he hates when we stay.

Say that 106 people came to know the Lord last year as their savior here in this church. He hates that. And he's gonna do everything he can to come against the church. He's gonna do everything he can to come against your life and against my life. Okay? So, when Satan declares war on us, you, you need to declare war on him. He's somebody that you don't want to mess with. Somebody was telling me, actually, Robin was telling me yesterday that she was listening to somebody, a pastor talking, and he was talking about the different doors, the different avenues, uh, that we open up sometimes to Satan in our life. And we don't realize it, folks, but you know, you can't play with fire and not get burned. And there are different doors in our life that we need to make sure that we keep shut in the name of Jesus.

All right? And what I mean by that is this. We all have different doors that are our weaknesses. Amen. Everybody in this audience, I don't care who you are, yes, you have weaknesses. You have doors that you know good and well, that if you open just a little bit, you're in trouble. Yes, you have doors that have been remained shut in your life now for maybe a few weeks, maybe a few months, maybe even for a year, maybe for a few years. But you, through the power of the Lord, you have gotten that door shut. That door used to be letting in a lot of stuff. It shouldn't be letting in. And you sit here every day, and you praise the Lord that that door is still shut. But it only stays shut if you allow it to stay shut. And just because it's shut tonight doesn't mean that Satan's gonna say, well, that door's shut.

I'm not gonna work with that door anymore. No. Understand this, all right? And I, I'm just, I'm doing more introduction tonight than I thought I was gonna do, but I felt led to do it. Understand this, Satan knows you as well as you know you. Yes. He knows everything about you. Yes. He follows you. He knows your habits. He knows your weaknesses. He listens to you 24 7. When you say you're hurting, he knows you're hurting. When he says, I have a bear problem with my language. He knows it. You let him into your life. And if I'm not careful, I let him into my life all day long. And we'll be talking about that more in a new series. I'm starting in June. I'm talking, I might have a whole series on the mouth, <laugh>. I can't wait. All right? But we don't realize that we think as Satan is somebody that's just roaming around, you know, some little character somewhere.

He is not a character. He is real. And he wants you to open that door just a little bit, just a, he's not asking for a lot. He's just asking enough for him to be able to put his shoe in your door, in my door. And then he's gonna work on blowing that door wide open. Yes. And then he knows he has got you. And that area of your life, you've gotta be careful. So, you've gotta keep those doors shut. And how do you do that? You do that by knowing you can't keep the door shut. It's impossible. You can only keep the door shut through the power of prayer. And to say, Lord, I am not capable of keeping that door shut. I've gotta have your power. I've gotta have you working with me. And, and you directed me and your wisdom to be able to keep it shut.

Cause I know what the consequences are. Maybe I've been there, maybe I've done that, or maybe I haven't. But I've heard of other people that have. And you don't want to be there. So, when you see that door is being knocked on by the devil, you know he is fighting you, him declare war on him. I am not gonna open that door, and I am gonna come at you with everything I've got. Put down my notes. Cri scripture clearly teaches us that we have an adversary. We have an enemy that spends his time looking for rail ways to derail God's purpose and your life and mine. That's what he's all about. If you know Jesus, you're not going to hell. Praise God. He's given up on that because there's nothing, he can do to get you to hell. However, he can cause, cause a lot of hell in your life.

Yes. And he has bent and determined to take away your joy, your happiness, your purpose, that God has given to you. God's given you a purpose, all right? Given you a great purpose. He hates your purpose. He hates your existence. He hates everything about you. So, he is bent and determined causing all kinds of chaos, all kinds of depression, all kinds of derailments, all kinds of exits in your life. He's coming at it. And I related that to, and Brian would love to be in here for this tonight, but I related this, Brian's really good with movies. He's a movie guy, but I love the karate kids myself. All right, well, the karate kids, well, Daniel Russo, he got out there and he started fighting one of the other senses for the other team. I think his name was John Crease. Yeah, it was, there you go.

John Crease. He looked at his guy that was gonna be facing the karate kid, Daniel Russo, and John Crease. He was a mean character. All right? He was a mean guy. Mean guy. So, what he told his guy was, he says, I want you to sweep the leg. Remember that? I want you to sweep the leg. Now, that wasn't right, okay? That was going against the rules. But what he was trying to do was, he said, if we sweep the legs, we can win this. We're gonna put him out of action. We're we're not playing nice, okay? We're not gonna play nice with him. We're not gonna hit him here and hit him there. We're gonna sweep the leg. We're gonna put him down. We're gonna put him out any way we possibly could. Well, he swept the leg and he, of course, you know that Daniel came back.

You know that. But we're not gonna deal with him coming back tonight. We're gonna deal with what they did to him. They swept the leg. That's how Satan watches you and me. He doesn't come to play nice with you. He doesn't come to play nice with me. He wants to sweep the leg. He wants to cause as much pain, as much misery, as much suffering as he possibly can in our life. Understand that all right? He's playing for keeps. All right? He can't have our soul, but he loves to see you and me miserable. He loves to bust up families. He loves to bust up marriages. He loves to bust up our relations with our friends. He is about destroying your testimony. And mine. I've gotta watch mine 24 7. I've gotta watch my back. I've got people that, as they say in the military, that watch my six.

All right? I've got certain people that are my, are my Nathans. They speak into my life. They watch me. I watch them. All right? We have that. We have it. The back and the fourth. I say, hey, you watched my six. I'll watch yours. The for boob traps that Satan was set for me. I'm watching for boob traps that Satan sets for them. I've got mine. You've got yours. Amen. Amen. Best thing you can do is to find somebody that you know this, walking with God that you trust to tell you not what you want to hear, but what you need to hear. Are you listening? Yes. Yes. Because you and I are not smart enough to do that. All right? My wife does that for me. I do that for her. But I need somebody other than her. All right? She needs somebody other than me.

We all have to find someone. Like, if you don't have somebody like that, you pray that God reveals that person, and it has to be somebody again, that you completely trust. Completely trust. I mean, because you're gonna be telling 'em everything, and they're gonna tell you everything. And you gotta make 'em a rule. If you tell them something you know, you're not gonna share it. Vice versa. And no matter what they say to you, they're gonna still be your friend. Yes. Amen. And he can't go back on that. All right? All right. So, I'm convinced today that Satan has come to sweep the leg of so many. Why do I know that? Because there's a lot of Christians in pain. There's a lot of Christians that come to this church every single Sunday, maybe some here tonight. You're in pain, you're in agony, and you feel like every time I get back up, pastor, every time I start moving and the right direction, every time I start seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, I just get knocked back down.

You ever been there? Yes. All right. It's getting old. And I feel like throwing in the towel, one of the greatest temptations that you and I will ever have in life is the temptation to quit on what God's called us to do. And here's the thing, as long as you and I are here on this earth, we will never, ever listen. We will never, ever lose the desire to quit, to give up, to throw in the towel. I've told you, when I was going to college, 47 people in my, on my freshman year at Trinity College, we had seven at the end of four years, 40, gone, gone. Had the same desire the seven had when we started freshmen. Why did they leave? They left because Satan had a target on him. Some of 'em fell cause of infidelity, some of 'em fell because of drugs.

Some of 'em fell because of other reasons. I could go on and on listing all the people. Seven. Why is that? Because a going is tough. Why is that? Because the ministry is one of the toughest things you can ever do in your whole entire life. That's why a president of a college would look at me and they would say, after I said to him, how do I know that I'm called into the ministry? And he looked at me and he said, Branson, let me tell you something. If you could do anything else in life, and I mean anything else in life, do it. Do not be a pastor.

I looked at him and I said, I came to you for some encouragement. <laugh>. You know why he said that? Because he had over 50 years of being a pastor under his belt. And he knew, he knew the attrition rate. The attrition rates. Today, 18 months. 18 months of a pastor in a church, that is the average of a pastor being in a church 18 months. You can't do anything in 18 months. That's why we can't get, that's why we can't get youth pastors anymore. That's why we can't get staff members anymore. Why? Because nobody wants to go in the ministry anymore. They know how tough it is. Alright? Jesus told his disciples twice and one day to pray that they didn't give in to temptation. He told 'em that twice. Why did he say that? He said that because he knew how hard it was for them to be a disciple for them to follow Jesus.

How do you do it? Pastor people have come to me down through the years, and they've said, all right, pastor, uh, you know, we all, we all have our hard times. And yes, we do. Everybody in here has their own juniper tree. Elijah had his, and we have ours. Juniper tree could mean sometimes we lose our job, and we get underneath the juniper tree. We lose a close friend. Death comes to, to one of our loved ones or something that we love. Family issues. Whatever it means, whatever it might be. I've had my, my juniper trees. I've had several juniper tree moments in my life where I just said, Lord, I, man, I don't even want, I don't wanna preach the other day of my life. You said, pastor, I thought you were strong. No, I'm, I'm just like anybody else. Believe me, it's a miracle.

I'm sitting here tonight cuz God had to touch me. He really did. To bring me back. I've been cutting more so than not so as my wife, but we're still here. Praise the Lord. Praise. And, uh, Lord says, the way to do that is to keep the right mindset. Philippians chapter four, verses six and seven says, don't worry about anything. Yeah. It's easy for you to do. Pastor <laugh>, don't worry about anything. Instead, pray about everything. All right? It's impossible to worry and pray at the same time. You ever thought about that? Think about that, pastor. I'm worrying. Well, you're not praying, pastor. I'm praying. Well, you're not worrying. <laugh>. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he's done. Instead of sitting around thanking and telling God about all the stuff you don't have, why don't you start praising God for the things you do have.

Take out a legal pad or a small pad or something, and just write down all the miracles God's done in your life. Thank him for things. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and your minds as you lived in Christ Jesus. If your knees are put, if your knees start shaking, kneel on them. If you start shaking in fear, shaken in doubt, shaken, and saying, I don't know if I can take it again. Kneel on them. Kneel on. The strongest person in this audience. Tonight, is a Christian on their knees. That's when you and I are at our strongest. When we're in our prayer circle, when we're in our prayer praying to the Lord, we're at our strongest. Satan trembles, literally trembles when he sees a Christian on their knees. He trembles when we want to have this kind of mindset right here.

He wants to divert our, our mindset. Prayer does not deliver you and me from facing our crosses in life, but prayer does empower us to face our crosses in life with complete confidence. Amen. Amen. Prayer is not gonna take you away from the crosses in life. We're gonna have those as long as we're here. And the reason that they're here is for a few different reasons. What of Mr. Grow our faith. If we just had mountaintop experiences, we never knew what it was to encounter a valley in our life, we would never have any need for faith at all. Never. But God puts us in a position, takes away all of our options except for him, and he does it. If he ever been up against the wall and he ever tried to fix things in your life and push all the buttons you could push, and then there's no more buttons to push.

Yes. And the last button is Jesus. Yes. Well, he should be the first button. That's right. Right? But you and my eye, we have a prideful issue sometimes. Number two, we must learn not to let our personal pain dictate the commitments we keep and those we cancel. Deuteronomy chapter 23, verses 21 through 23. This is in the message version. I like how it puts it. It says, when you make a vow, when you make a promise to God, when you say that you're gonna do something, okay, you tell God you're gonna do something. You make him a promise. Your God don't put off keeping it. God. Your God expects you to keep it. And if you don't, you're guilty. There's nothing worse than telling God you're gonna do something and not doing it. It's called a vow. It's called a promise. All right? When you take a vow, it's a serious thing.

Lord, I'm gonna do this in the church. Well, are you doing it in the church or are you just waiting for something to kind of knock you off kilter? Then you don't do it in the church anymore. When you make a vow to serve in the church, you are making a vow to the Lord, it's a serious deal. It's something that we shouldn't take in a flippant manner. Amen. All right. It says, if you say you're going to do something, do it. And you say, well, that's so elementary. No. It's hard to find people that will do this today. Today it's hard. It didn't used to be hard. 40 years ago, we could line up people all around the church that would do things, but now try to find people to just do simple things. It's not as hard here. Praise the Lord as it is in a lot of places.

And a lot of times we get commended here for our servant mentality. I don't know how many people have said, how in the world do you get the people to do things around here? We just love Jesus. Okay? That's it. We don't give you a hundred bucks if you show up on, you know, Saturday morning, eight o'clock. No, we like, we're doing Saturday, we're showing up to do hard of the point. 30, 40 people in there, seven o'clock, seven 30 in the morning already. We take, we look around. How many times do I say, look around the circle? How many other churches would have that? No. No. We're we're special here. That's right. Because we're doing what God's called us to do. Keep the value willingly. Vow to God your God. You promised it. So do it. Being a person of integrity, all right. Means that you can count on me.

God, hey, I made you a promise. I made the church a promise. I am going to be a person of integrity. Here's today's in, here's today's, uh, definition of integrity. My individual problems, my individual crisis, my individual hurdles, my individual difficulties is an excuse for me to bail out of my responsibilities of what expected to me and just let everybody else clean up my mess. That is our society today.

Absolutely. And sorry to say it's in some churches. That's why when we say in this church, I'm gonna serve you, serve. Amen. Amen. Because here's, here's the deal. If we bow, if we bow out of our vows to God, we're gonna answer it for that one day. We are, we, you don't have to answer to me. You're gonna have to answer to God. When I took a vow to be here, this as pastor and for me to keep my life right, so I can be your pastor, earn your respect and be the pastor I should be.

That's the holy vow to God. I'm gonna be held responsible one day for the point. Church. Did you know that? Yeah. It, I am all the decisions that I make, don't make my walk. Hey, everything. You're a person of leadership in this church. You're gonna be held accountable. You serve in this church, you're gonna be held accountable. So, pastor, what do I do when I'm fighting held by the inch and I feel like quitting. I feel like I just need to throw in the towel. Here's what you need to do. You need to keep doing what you're doing.

Did you hear me? You need to keep on doing what you're doing that's provided that you're doing the right thing. <laugh>. Amen. How many times have people come to me and say, pastor, what do I need to do? What do I need to change? Well, is your life right with the Lord? Yes. You don't need to change anything because the devil needs. The devil says you need to change something up. Devil says, you need to tinker with this. Tinker with that. No. You need, if you're, if you're here in this church, you need to keep serving just as hard as you've ever served. I don't feel like it. Keep serving. Keep the pedal to the middle. I don't feel like going to church today. Guess what? Get your fanny up and be in church. Amen. Amen. I don't feel like being with the kids today be with kids.

I don't feel like being with stews. I don't feel like being usher today. I don't feel like being the first touch today. I don't feel like, get up, get up and do it anyway. Amen. Amen. I don't feel like being in the ladies Bible study. Guess what? Get there. I don't feel like being with the men today. Get up and be there. Hey, what am I saying? Get up rid of your stinking excuses and do what you need to do. I don't feel like tithing, tith anyway. You don't know. You don't see my bank account. God does keep tithing anyway. Amen.

I don't feel like praying today. Pray anyway. I don't feel like reading the Bible today. My devotional. Guess what? Do it anyway. I don't feel like listening to a podcast. Listen to it anyway. You saying pastor, what

are you saying? I'm saying do it anyway. What do you do when it's broke? Hey, do it anyway. All right. God will take care of it. You know that God made a vow to us over 2000 years ago when he died on the cross, did he not? Amen. He made a vow to us. And when I was a little boy, eight years old, and when you accepted Jesus as your savior, here's what happened. You accepted his vow to you, and you should have made a vow to him because the only reason that you and I are here tonight is to bring honor and glory and praise to God.

You are not here today to sell Avon. You're not here today to bake cakes. You're not here today to go play golf. You're not here today to watch tv. You and I are here for one reason and one reason other only that everything that you and I would do in this lifetime would bring him honor and glory and praise.

Amen. Period and amen. It's not for your social life, okay? He doesn't mind that you have a social life, and I have a social life, but in our social life, we bring him honoring glory. Praise. That's right. When I'm on vacation, I bring him honoring glory. Praise. He's not against us having a vacation. All right? That doesn't mean you have to be in church. 52 weeks outta the year you're allowed to have week off. Okay? Or a couple of weeks off. I accepted his vow, another vow.

I accepted his vow 45 years ago. 45 years ago, I accepted his, uh, excuse me, eight years ago. I accept when I was eight years old, I accepted his vow, salvation, when I, 45 years ago, I made a vow to him. And that vow was a different vow than me bringing him modern glory praise. But it was to me, for me to be in the ministry. I vowed that to him. I can't quit. Why? Because if I do, I'm giving up on the vow. How long is the vow? The vow is filled until Jesus takes me home. Amen. Until he shuts my mouth. All right. How long are you gonna go, pastor? As long as I can go. Why shouldn't I? That's the vow I made, right? Yes. Things get hard. What do you do? You keep on preaching. All right.

All right. I'm gonna get on to number three here. When our journey becomes difficult, remember that even though the world prefers the easy road, God did not build you and I for comfort. All right? My favorite chair in my house is the lazy boy. Some people, one of the favorite tools that they use in their kitchen is their microwave. Some people say, if it isn't in a box, if it isn't ready in a a minute and a half or two minutes, it ain't for me. All right? God didn't design us just to feel like we have a drive through life. You know, I want it now, or you know, all the other little luxuries we have. What we need to understand is this, that God did not build you and me for comfort. He built you and me for adversity. Okay, let me prove it to you.

Second Corinthians, chapter 12, verse nine. These are the words of the Apostle Paul. Each time he said, my grace is all that you need. My power works best in comfort, works best in the lap of luxury. Oh, my power works best in weakness. It works best in adversity. So now I'm glad to boast about my weaknesses so that the power of Christ can work through me. Amen. When does the world see Jesus' best and your life in mind in adversity? When should the world see the best of Jesus in your life and mind in adversity? False is easy to show the world Jesus when everything's hunky dory, really easy. It doesn't take any kind of spiritual maturity to do that whatsoever, right? It's like giving a little kid a lollipop. It comes really easy. But what do you do when the lollipop is gone, and it's been two weeks since you've had a lollipop?

All right, your heaven withdrawals and you want another lollipop, right? Jesus hasn't done anything good for you in two weeks. You're having struggles. This is going wrong, that's going wrong, that's going wrong, that's going wrong. Well, how is your spirit? What does the unsaved world see in you? Do they hear griping complaining? Do they hear you walking around just being, you know, uh, uh, somebody's

always talking about all your woes and all the things going on, or do they see Jesus in your life? Brian and I talk about that all the time, all the time. He was just telling me, again, somebody that he was talking to yesterday, you know, Brian talks to everybody. It's like me talking to somebody at the clinic yesterday. He had to go give blood and somebody had watched his journey. Uh, somebody was in there and they got a kidney right before Brian did.

And they were in there, and some person, I guess was new. And, uh, they fell that got his kidney before Brian was an African American guy. And Brian had one of his witness shirts on that he always has when he goes to the clinic. And, uh, the new guy was saying, you know, what's wrong with that guy over there? You know that guy over there is upbeat all the time. African American guy says, yeah, got air. He never shuts up <laugh>. He's always got a smile on his face. He's always this, he is always that. I went to, uh, the same kidney specialist that Brian went to. It's amazing how God put us together. Same doctor. His name's Dr. Chak. I went in there and, uh, I found out really quickly that Brian was a legend in that office. Dr. Chae is a believer, but he is a very intelligent, intelligent man.

And the miracle that God has done with Brian is something that Dr. Shae has not seen the way it's been done in all his years of being a doctor. He's finding it very, very, very hard to discount the power of God in Brian's life. In fact, when I went to see him, he said, I heard that you are Brian's pastor. You're the lead pastor. I said, yes. How long have you known Brian? Yep. Known him since he was a Has, he always been this way? I said, yep, Brian's always been a very positive person. And he says, you know, he said, uh, he is a very special man. And, um, he said, he's really makes me think, he makes me think. And I said, he makes you think about the Lord, doesn't he? He says, I'm getting there, <laugh>.

So, we all know Brian's story. A lot of other stories in our congregation I could use, but God does not, has not built us for comfort. He's built us for adversity. Here's the deal. We will meet people in adversity and have an opportunity to witness for them in a completely different way than we ever would when we're comfortable. When I was in the hospital for four days, I told you my hospital room was just like a revolving door chapel. Everybody was coming in and people were calling me, how you doing, pastor? I said, I'm having time in my life except for the food <laugh>, but I I'm serious with you. And I, I was sitting there, you know, and actually, I'm not trying to be super spiritual with you, but I was kind of thanking God because I said, you know, this is awesome. All these people on the second floor really needed to hear about Jesus.

And I was thankful that God had me there and praised God. I had the right attitude. And I'm not saying I'm more spiritual than you. I, I, I have bad attitudes too, but I happen to be in the right mindset, <laugh>, that I could pray with people and try to be a blessing to them. And, uh, God used me just like he uses you in times of adversity. God's not finished with me, yet. My leg still numbs and you know, still pulling it around with me and doing some other things. But that's okay. He's got people that talked to the lady, did MRIs on Monday. Are you comfortable? I said, oh, I'm having a ball. <laugh> gotta tell her about Jesus. Amen. So, remember, all right, don't take Satan lightly declare war. Thank the right thoughts. Don't open the doors. Let the Lord use you for his glory and for his honor.

Okay? Our heavenly Father, we love you tonight. Thank you, Lord, for this time that you've given us this evening. Lord, thank you for those in our church. Many of those are here tonight that are so, so faithful. Lord, they're faithful and servant here. They're faithful in giving. They're faithful in witnessing. They're

faithful in bringing you glory and honor and praise. And Lord, they don't know what it is to quit. Lord, they've made a vow to you, and they're it. And we praise you for that. Continue to bless us. Bring us back again Sunday. Father, in your name we pray, amen. Amen. God bless y'all all. Have a good evening.