

“Just Make the Best of It”

By Chris Ulrich

Sunday, November 13th, 2016

Thank you, this morning. You may be seated. Good to see everybody out this morning, and, enjoyed that ice-breaker prayer at the beginning, for sure. I enjoyed the music, a lot, too, I have to say. It's been a great month; this is a month that we revisit, it's about giving thanks to God. The theme for this month is about giving thanks, and, if you haven't already read, our theme verse for the month is:

Mark 8:6 *And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.*

There's going to be three points, this morning:

- We Can't Fake It
- How Much Have I Been Forgiven?
- Just Make the Best of It

I'd like to ask Laygoze, if he could come up and lead us in a prayer about the service.

Laygoze: Father God, we come before you this morning to thank You for all that You've done. Father God, we thank You. Father God, we look toward our nation, this morning, Lord, it seems to be mixed up, Lord, but I know You can straighten it. Father God, we thank You, we just thank You, oh, God. Father God, we thank You for our children; if they're good, or if they're bad, they're our children, Lord, and we know that You can ring them in, oh, God. Father God, we thank You for all that You've done, Father God; You've been a good God to us, especially me, Lord. You've been so great to me. Father God, if You would just be our light in dark places, if You would just be our bridge over troubled waters, Lord, we can thank You, we will praise You we will honor Your name. In Your Son, Jesus Christ's name we pray, amen.

Thank you.

1st Point – We Can't Fake It

There's a term that maybe many of you have heard before, maybe not. The term is, 'euphemism.' I thought about that this morning. That wasn't originally part of the sermon today, but, it was something that, you're going to understand where I'm going with this when I read some of the verses that I'm going to read. And, a euphemism is a mild or indirect word or expression that's substituted for one that's considered too harsh or too blunt. In other words, like, when there's a big lay-off at a company, what do they call it? Downsizing. Whenever you hear about something that's a death, a lot of times it's called somebody that's deceased, or somebody that's departed. You hear about a tragedy, and, sometimes, it might be given a euphemism of, "Well, it's a misfortune," or, "It's an unfortunate event."

So, I'm going to start by reading Matthew chapter fifteen, verses seven through nine. This actually originated, a little bit, as far as its usage in this message, we had a fellowship gathering, about a week and a half ago, and there were a few of us sitting there—myself, Bill Adams, Pete Sipla—and we were talking

about some of the things about, like, what about being thankful, what about not being thankful? So, these are the words of Christ:

Matthew 15:7-9 *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

So, does this sound like a euphemism? It isn't. I mean, this is pretty blunt; Christ isn't mincing words, and He's not holding back. But, He's not talking to every single person, He's talking to the Pharisees. He's talking to some people who had become—the religious people of that day—that had become so engrossed, and so entrenched in their own beliefs, in their own ideology of what religion was supposed to be, that they missed the point, altogether. And, I get that this isn't a pleasant verse to start a sermon, especially during the month of giving thanks, but it's more about knowing that what we display on the surface can sometimes differ from what's down within our heart. I almost called this point, "We shouldn't fake it," because it really still is an option.

I'm going to read another verse, and this is a prophecy to the priests, the ones that were in charge of the Temple. And, it's the word of God that comes to Malachi, and it says:

Malachi 1:6-8 *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.*

This is another passage that we can all pretty plainly see, it's not from the happy play list. It's a strong warning from God that being half-hearted and having no fear of God is not going to cut it. It's not going to endear us to the Holy One of Israel. But, this is as relevant today as it was thousands of years ago. We've all heard the expression, "They're two-faced," or, "They talk out of both sides of their face," or, "They say one thing and they do another." We've all heard these expressions. These are things that, basically, going back to the term that Christ called the Pharisees, hypocritical. And that's one of the worst things to be. We're not going to get too deep into that portion of it.

But, why did I use these verses, today, to make the first point? Because God doesn't want lip-service. We can sound off all we want in public, and, "Praise the Lord!" and "Hallelujah!" and "Great is our God, all the time!" and all these kinds of things, and, I've got to say that those are expressions that are fine. Those are expressions that are important. Those are things—but, if we're going to just say them, and not act upon them, and we're not going to live them, it doesn't mean anything to God. Not one bit at all. And, I don't make that statement to make it sound as though I've never been guilty, either. I've had to make necessary changes at times.

I've got a quick story that I'm going to share, here: This was probably about twenty years ago, and, I'm not going to get into the names of the people, but I know Rick Matczak—is Rick here this morning? He's working? Okay. Well, he was our cook, in the kitchen, at the church, also part of the school, that many of you were part of. So, at the building that we had, there was the kitchen, and then there was the back loading dock area, so, anyway, there were times that, whether something happened, that I got upset, or whatever the case may be, I know that that back door, it withstood a lot of my punishment, I just have to say. And, I'm not proud to admit that, but I'm just going to say, I don't know how many times Jim Bailey had to fix that thing. And I know that Rick Matczak probably, "What's with this guy, again?" But, you know what? I had to make the correction. Because, if I'm starting to get this reputation as a hothead,

that's not really boding well for my Christianity or my testimony. Now, why would I share that? Because I have to be honest about it. If I sit there and say, "Oh, no, that wasn't me; that was somebody else. That was Pete Shepherd." People are going to be like, "No, I don't think so." But, we all get angry on occasion, and I get it, but the Bible tells us not to let the sun go down on our wrath. And I'm going to just share one other thing that's not really part of my notes, but, there's going to be times that there are things, or whatever the case might be, where we're going to be so enraged, or we're going to be so frustrated, or we're going to be so displeased, that we're going to feel it that night. We're going to feel it, and, what I mean by that is, we have to give it to God, because we can't take it away, a lot of times, because, a lot of times, the circumstances are going to be the same the next day. I can't tell you how many times that I've gone to sleep and just I've felt like, "I can't get over this on my own." And, whatever the case might be, whatever that wrath was directed at, and I woke up the next day, and it was gone. I'm not talking about there still weren't problems in the world; I'm not talking about there still weren't problems in America, but that was gone, and I knew that God had taken it. And I knew that God had given me that power to overcome that. And that's not an every night thing. I think we all know each other well enough to know that, it's something that—you know, the Bible talks about the wrath of God. The Bible talks about, you look at, like, how Moses got angry when he came off the mountain; he slammed down the commandments. I mean, it's not something that we make excuses for, or it's not something that we let ourselves off the hook, but, it's a real characteristic; it's a real trait. We need to give it to God and let it go. And, this point isn't solely about anger, but I know that I can't really be all that thankful when I know that I'm filled with anger, I just know that's a fact. I know that when I'm so enraged, or, whatever the case might be, I know, at that moment in time, I'm not thinking, "Oh, thank You, God! Thank You, God, this is so great! I'm just enjoying this so much!" because that's not the case. But, God wants to be the potter, and He wants us to be the clay. We have to make adjustments. I feel like that was something in my life that I had to make an adjustment. Have I gotten angry since that point? Sure, I have. But, I share that with you to know that there are things that are going to happen that we can't just fake it, we can't just always think that, "Well, I'm just going to act one way, and live another. I'm just going to say one thing and do another.

But, one last point in this section, as far as being thankful, there's no strings attached. In other words, we can't think within ourselves that we can be thankful, only if certain things happen to us. I'd like to say that again: We can't say, "I'll only be thankful if certain things happen to us," or, "if certain things happen around us." I'm not going to get into politics, but, I'll tell you one thing: I feel like God laid on my heart, "Put this together before the election, because, if you don't, the effects that you're going to have"—I didn't know who was going to win, and it really didn't matter, because I looked at it this way, "I'm going to put this together. I'm going to listen to what God's telling me about this particular, specific detail." But, we can't just be thankful if we get the raise, or if we get the house, or if we get a relationship, or if our team wins the World Series. Nah, I'm just kidding on that last one. But it's still the same. There's plenty of times when we're not going to get what we want, but God's always going to give us what we need.

2nd Point – How Much Have I Been Forgiven?

But, I like the point that you used last week, Parrish, about levels of thankfulness, and it immediately made me think about, "Well, where do I stand? How deep does my thankfulness to God really go? And the next statement he made was "Not everyone is thankful the same amount," and I thought that was a very profound statement; I thought it was thought provoking, and it caused some soul-searching. But, I'll tell you this much: It caused me to be more thankful, because, when you hear that, when you have it put out in such a way that it's challenging, because were not up here to just tickle

anybody's ear, or to give euphemisms. This isn't about trying to slam anybody, either, but, it's not about, like, trying to let ourselves off the hook.

Luke 7:40-47 *And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*

I appreciate the inspiration you gave, Parrish, from last week because, I was glad you didn't use this, first. I thought, "Well, there goes one verse that I planned on using." So, thank you for that. You know, this might sound a little bit strange, but, we're really the ones who decide how much we think we've been forgiven. So, I want to say that again: this might sound a little bit strange, but, we're the ones who decide how much we think we've been forgiven. And I'm not talking about making things up and pretending like we're mass-murderers, or we've committed the crimes of the century; I'm just being honest here. Or, at the other end of the spectrum, act like we've never done anything wrong at all. And, I ask that you not miss-hear me on this. This isn't about thinking about what we've been forgiven of just before we got baptized. This is about from day one of our entire lives until now. And, there are things I've done since I've been a Christian, and since I got baptized that I'm ashamed of, and regretful of, and that I never thought I'd do. And I'm going to share one more thing: I remember the date. It was a Christmas dinner, 1993, we were having a Christmas dinner, and, I remember, there was a bunch of us that were the waiters, and the bussing of the tables, and that kind of thing, and, I remember, over by the baptism tank, as a matter of fact, that there as piles and piles of dishes. I used to work at a Howard Johnson's—Does anybody know what Howard Johnson's is? Oh, good. Well, it's a restaurant that had an orange roof, and they were really popular, I think, from, maybe, Ohio, on East, but, anyway, I worked at one of those, and we used to get slammed, every single day. I mean, it was like—it kind of helped me to some of the work in the church like that, and, this particular night, we were putting all the dishes, and the silverware, and, bussing all the tables, basically, but, I remember dropping a whole bus-pan full of dishes. It was like—I said the name of the Lord in vain. And, you know what? Nobody else heard it. God heard it. And that's not something I look back and—I'll tell you this: it's something that, I felt like—I had been baptized several years at that point in my life—and I thought, "I can't believe it." And I'm sharing that with you because, the point of this is: We've all sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). And that was something that I did after I got baptized, and had been pretty well along in my walk with God in my life. And, you know, you look in the Old Testament, and it says if you use the name of the Lord in vain, you're going to be stoned to death. So, I mean, we're not talking about something where it was like, "Oh, I, you know, I dropped a pen," or, "Oh, I left a dollar out of the offering by accident." We're not talking about something that would be quite minor. But, again, nobody else heard me. And, it would be easy to say, "Nobody heard me; what difference does it make?" Well, God hears all; God sees all. So, it was very impactful to me. And, again, it wasn't a matter of, like, getting over-inundated, or feeling overwhelmed so much to the point... I'm going to read a verse from:

Proverbs 24:16, *"For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief."*

And let's not leave out:

Acts 2:38 *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

That remission of sins isn't just up to that point. If we commit sins after we've been baptized, after we become a Christian—we have to repent—that baptism, and that remission of sins is applicable. It's not something where we have to get baptized again, nineteen-thousand times, but we have to do it right that time. We have to do it right that time. These are important verses to remember whenever we fall into that condemnation that Satan always brings against us. We all need to repent and get back on track, and we need to be able to fight back, regardless of what we've done.

But, here's the big question: Do you feel like you love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Do you feel like God has brought you a long way and given you a greater life than you had before? Do you feel like He's given you stability, comfort, joy and many other blessings? Because if we have that right perspective, we'll all realize that we've all been forgiven of a lot. And, again, that's not a matter of looking at it like, "Oh, this person did this, and that person did that, and I only did this," or feeling the condemnation because we've done something that's so far and above—worse than everybody else. There's only one sins that can't be forgiven, that's blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, and that's a serious thing, but, if we have that seriousness about the Gospel, we'll never get to that point. If we have that repentant attitude, we'll never get to that point. If we have that conviction from God, it's never going to happen.

We're going to look at our last point, today. I'm going to spend some time, here:

3rd Point – Just Make the Best of It

And that also happens to be the title for the message today. But, I know I remember hearing this expression a lot, growing up, whether it was in school, or working a job at Howard Johnson's, when I was in the military, or whenever I became active in the ministry, and all the way up to the present day. I've used it myself a lot, too, and can honestly say that it's something I have in my spiritual toolbox.

And, I'm going to read some from the Book of Job, the first chapter. I know it's lengthy; I'm not going to read the entire chapter, but I want to read some from it, and, the reason being is because we have to understand that, in a lot of ways, Job is the gold standard, other than Christ Himself, for suffering. I mean, we've all heard that expression—whether it's people outside the faith. I mean, even my dad, who's certainly not religious—I mean, he's a good guy, and I love him, but, I've even heard him mention Job, and, I'm thinking, "How do you know about Job?" He said, "You know, I was an altar boy." He was an altar boy at one point in his life, but, God's working with him. God's working with all of us. But, again, I'm going to read this, and, again, I'm going to skip through it, skip down as I go through it, and I'm going to read a little bit faster, because it is a very lengthy chapter.

Job 1:1-7 *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed*

God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

So, I want to just pause for a moment, and talk about: We know that, in this day and age, it's become more and more to where, like, you hear people talk about, "Oh, I can't believe you pray to a God that you can't even see," or that you even have a faith in God, or, "Why bother even going to church?" Well, it's a matter of believing this, and having faith in God, that does make a difference, because, it's not as though we have to have been there for every single solitary event throughout the course of history, but, guess who—other than God—has been there? Satan. He's been there; he saw the flood. He saw the Children of Israel cross the Red Sea. He saw the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ. He saw all of it, so he believes it. The Bible even talks about, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:19) And, yet, we seem to have a world, more and more, where people are not trembling or even thinking twice about it, but that's not going to shake our faith.

Job 1:8-12 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*

So, God allowed that. And we could think, now, "Well, that was unfair." It was God. I mean, if we think that every single, solitary event over the history of mankind, or eternity is unfair, there's one verse that I'd like to share with you, that's something that stands out whenever I hear people, "Oh, God's unfair! Why does He allow this? Why does he allow that?" You know, as if every wrong that ever happens is God's fault, but, everything that goes well is just nobody's—you don't give credit to anybody? We give credit to God. But, the verses in Titus, chapter two:

Titus 2:12-13 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*

That grace of God that brings salvation—everybody gets to hear the Word of God. Everybody gets a chance to know the plan of salvation. Everybody gets a chance to, at the end of their life, hear, "Well done, thy good and faithful servant." It's not about excluding anybody. But, it really comes down to what's that person's decision once they hear that truth of God. Are they going to accept it, or, like the Word of God teaches, most people reject it. Or, I think a lot of us see that, most people just say, "Well, eventually, I'll get around to it." How many has heard that argument? I mean, it's common. "Well, eventually I'll to that, after I sort out all this, after I fix this, after I get that taken care of." And, then, if it doesn't happen, time goes by.

I want to share one other thing, that I appreciate the youth coming up this morning, and what you shared, and it was very heart-felt, and it's something that—I think a lot of times about when I was twenty-one—I'm forty-eight now, and I don't feel like life's gone by that fast, like, "Boy, it feels like last week," that's not the case. That's not the case. It feels like twenty-seven years ago. So, anyway, I remember we were riding from work, and I remember God just dealt with me, and He just said, the verse he laid on my

heart, "Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth," (Ecclesiastes 12:1). And, it was something where I can honestly say, as I look back, thank God to have done that. Thank God to have done that, and not to have thought, "Well, there's got to be something else better. Something else better has got to come along.

But, I want to go back to Job and just close out the last couple of verses, here, because a lot of you know about the suffering that Job then withstood.

Job 1:2-22 *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

And that, to me, is one of the highlights of that chapter. Not the entire book, because it goes quite deep into the things that he experienced. But, you know, what's interesting about this is it doesn't really get into, you know, the time frame. It doesn't say it lasted a week, it lasted a month, it lasted a year, two years, five years, ten years, and I think that's important to know, because sometimes, we don't know how long the battle will last. I was sharing with somebody recently, I had a particular battle that I feel like it lasted twelve years. And it took way, way, **way**, WAY, longer than I ever thought that I could even handle. Way longer than I ever thought that I can—"Oh, yeah, I can handle this long..." But, you know, when it finally ended—and I'm not saying I wasn't thanking God along the way, and I'm not saying there wasn't fighting—and that's another point I appreciate you mentioning, last week, Parrish, about, "Get Your Fight Back." I mean, don't feel like you can just get run over by the world, or they can just say anything they want, that they won, and I'm not talking about looking for fights, but, sometimes, they're going to come along. Sometimes they're going to come long.

You know, we can't revise history—some people try to—but we can change our perspective about what had happened, even many years later. And I know that rules for discipline, in society, have changed, as far as, schools, and workplaces, and homes, and, I suppose, in just about every other place, and, maybe some for the better, some for the worse. But, I'll tell you this: Ultimately, we've gotten away from Biblical principles, as far as that goes. I can see that. And, I know, a lot of times, people have a chip on their shoulder, and, a lot of times, it's against their own parents. And I know we can't go back and undo what's already been done, because those are things that are written in God's Book of Works, but I'm real thankful for the discipline that my parents gave me, now, but I wasn't when I was in the midst of it. When I was sitting there and I was sixteen or seventeen or eighteen or nineteen, before I got in the military, before I moved out, and thinking, "Oh, they're just bossing me around, trying to tell me what to do, trying to tell me how to live..." What's interesting is, my mom had called me Tuesday night, when I was working on this, and she's like, oh, we're talking about this and that, and she's like, "So, what do you got going on for the week-end?" I said, "Well, I'm actually putting together the sermon," and I was able to read back to her some of this. I talked to her about some of the points that I planned on mentioning, and she was very appreciative, very—you know, because, even then, I know that we didn't get along that great. I mean, it wasn't trained to the point of, just like, absolute departure, until I went in the military. Well, I'll say this much, there were many times, where, after I had moved out, and was on my way in life, that they made the offer about coming back there, and—they don't any more, I'll just tell you that. They don't tell me, "Sure, would you like to move back?" at this point. Those days are quite a bit, long over. But, you know, I remember them telling us—and I've shared this with a couple of people—that, sometimes, if we get just a part of the story without telling the whole story, it could sound like we're trying to just get sympathy, or trying to, like, dig our heels in against our parents, or, whoever else in authority. But, I just want to share something: If I were to just sit here and tell you, "Yeah, my parents used to tell me that I was going to end up in Walpole." Now, Walpole is the Massachusetts state prison, the maximum security prison. And,

if I just told you that, you'd be like, "Wow, those are bad parents! You know, what was wrong with them?" You just, you know, play the sob-story for a while, but, you know, if I don't preface that with, "If you keep acting like you're acting, you're going to end up in Walpole. If you keep hanging around with some of the friends you're hanging around with, you're going to end up in Walpole," then I don't look like the eighteen year old victim. Then it's more like, "Oh, well, we get what they were saying, and it makes sense." Because, some of the things that they taught me, about getting good grades, making sure you're respectful to people, making sure you don't burn bridges, because you never know when you're going to need people. You know, we might be in the midst of a situation right now, and maybe we're not happy about it; it could be a relationship, it could be a job that we're in, it could be a financial hardship, it could have to do with politics. But, then, there's times when others might even wonder why we would be thankful for what we're going through, because, to them, it doesn't even make any logical sense, whatsoever. To them, it seems like, "You shouldn't be thankful! You should be outraged! You should be distraught!" And, sometimes it's going to be like, "I'm just going to keep on keeping on. I know that I have a faith in God. I know that I have a trust in God." You know, we don't have to be happy with every circumstance we encounter, and, most likely, that's going to be the case, a lot in life. I'm not saying that there aren't going to be times where things go our way, because there will be. But then, there's times when things aren't, so, what do we do then? we just make the best of it.

So, here's my movie reference for this morning: there was a movie that came out several years ago, it was called, "Little Big Man." It's not that old, it was actually in color. But, there's a scene that's close to the end of the film, so, at this point, we're really aware of all the hardships of this one particular character. The character's name is "Old Lodge-skins." The time frame of the movie is the 1850's – 1870's, and it takes place in the foothills of North Dakota, the Black Hills, Eastern Wyoming, Montana, that territory. And, a lot of you that are more history buffs, there was a battle called "Little Big Horn" that happened at that time-frame, 1876, if you want to look it up. But, anyway, this man has been through many battles, and he's older, he's probably in his sixties or seventies at this point, but, he had lost his eyesight in the midst of one of the battles. But, as is one of the tribe's customs, he climbs a nearby mountain, near the end; he knows his life is near the end. In this one particular scene, he just cries out, "Thank you for the victories, and thank you for the defeats, and thank you for my vision, and the blindness in which I saw further." And he's thanking God. And he's thanking God for things that you'd think, "Why is he thanking God for something like that? Why would you thank God for losing your eyesight? Why would you thank God for the defeats? Why would you thank God for the temptations and the trials and anything else that you go through? Why would you want to thank God for having to put up with what seems to be insurmountable heartache or frustration?"

I understand it's just a movie. But I like that scene because of the reference in—it's about having a perspective about something (in this instance, blindness; it's obviously a tragedy). How could anyone be thankful about something like that? We don't always have to like something to be thankful for it. And it's not always about showing our battle scars, or thinking that we've been through it worse than anybody else, or think that we've had it better than everybody else. God's dealing with everybody. That grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all of us (Titus 2:11). Some have been down some pretty difficult roads, but I remember this, this girl, she was actually a waitress at an Outback, I believe it was. This was a few years ago, and I was in White Plains, New York. Your neck of the woods, Ken. It's kind of an upscale area, that town is. I remember just sitting down, and starting to talk with this girl, and she was probably twenty, twenty-one, and, you know, she had mentioned—I forget how she had mentioned it, but she alluded to, you know, coming from a fairly well-off background, but she was almost apologetic about it. I said, "Don't apologize for that. If you had a decent upbringing, what's wrong with that? Don't let anybody who thinks they have it far worse than you make you feel less than a person, or make you feel like, 'Oh, you haven't had it really hard, because I've had it this hard, and, so, you really haven't got a voice, or a leg to stand on.' What's the point of that?" And I felt like that was just something—and I didn't

break out the Scriptures, “Here, let me show you the verse,” I just told her, “Don’t apologize for that. Don’t feel like you’ve got to get down on yourself.”

This is the last part of that book. I wanted to read through Job, the first chapter, and I want to read through just part of the last chapter, because there is a message here.

Job 42:10-17 *And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.*

I remember when I first heard about Malcolm and Rebekah’s daughter being born, and I said, “What’s the name?” And they said, “Kezia.” And I was like, “I know where that’s from. From the Book of Job.” And, I’ve got to say, I don’t know anyone else named Kezia, but, it’s a very pretty name. And, I appreciate that, because I feel like that’s something that, you just take a little tradition, I guess, from the Bible, and that’s what I got from that.

There’s another point, Parrish, that you mentioned last week, that stood out a lot, and that is that sometimes we see what seems like a sad story, but that’s not the end of the story, and I’m closing soon. I wanted to read that last passage, because that is the end of the book of Job, and it’s a victorious celebration. It’s a glorious celebration.

Just making the best of it is about having a vision and not just seeing what’s right in front of us. It’s about having hope in the middle of a corrupt world, and that we’re going to be saved and endure to the end. It might even be something we’re tired of telling ourselves—I’ve been there. I’ve thought to myself, “You know what? I’m not going to make the best of it. I’m tired of making the best of it. I’m tired of all that time going by, and feeling like it just isn’t going forward, or I’m not making progress.” God rebukes me, God corrects me. God says, “No, just make the best of it.” It’s not an easy thing to do when things aren’t going well, because that’s going to happen. There’s a song we did many years ago—and I’m not going to sing, either, I’m going to read this—but, the first part, it doesn’t sound very encouraging at all, it says, “...though the trials never end...” Anybody remember that song? And, then, the second part goes something like this, “I learn to take them as my friend, for each day He covers me.” And we all have something to give thanks to God for.

Thank you all for your time, and God bless.