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# 1 SAMUEL 27

## 1 Samuel Series

Pray again with me, would you, as we just open God's word and look at it together.

[PRAYER] Lord, your grace is so powerful to envelop us, especially in times of need. I ask, Lord, that right in this moment that you know what's needed in the hearts of each of these folks. I thank you for blessing me this week and this passage in 1 Samuel 27. I pray as I share things with folks that you would bless them and use the teaching in a special way to enrich their lives, inspire them for this week, and provide the hope that you want them to have. Use this time, Lord, we ask. In Jesus' name, amen.

Today we're going to look at 1 Samuel 27. You'll get an idea of what all the cars are about in just a little bit. But would you stand with me and let me read this passage of scripture. This is a passage that we're going to look at today at the end of our teaching. Most of our teaching is in 1 Samuel 27, but the idea is what we're going to learn in 1 Samuel 27 will be impacted all the more by this New Testament passage from 2 Corinthians 4:7-11. I had to choose a particular part of the passage just because we can only digest so much. But it's such a great passage.

You know that's where we're going next, 2 Corinthians. So I'm reading through the book and studying it myself. It's a great study. We'll start it the last week of September. So as we're moving forward, that's where we're headed at the end of September. We should finish 1 Samuel by the first week in September. Then we're having a special Sunday on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Ed's going to be teaching. I'll be here. We're going to have a lunch on that day. It's called Back to Church Sunday. And we're going to just encourage people to get into the swing of things for their fall season of their life. I'm going to teach for the next couple of weeks on church membership and what the church is all about. Then we're going to launch into 2 Corinthians 1 that following week.

But today we're going to look at this passage along with 1 Samuel 27. Let me read these verses to you. *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.*

You may be seated.

Today I'm going to talk to you about discouragement, faith, hope. This is a passage for those people who feel discouraged at times. That should be everybody. If you're breathing we feel discouraged as part of who we are. I want you to understand why. I think that sometimes we view discouragement as a tool of Satan, and it can be, but I think originally it's designed to be something good and we're going to talk about that as we go forward because it reveals something that needs to be changed inside of us. So we're going to look at this idea a bit.

In fact let me take you on what I call a tour of the heart. What does the heart look like inside and what happens there? This is supposed to be a door inside of a heart and when you go inside the door then you would see all these things. If Jesus is running your life, then He orders things and things are rather orderly. We have beliefs in our hearts, we have desires in our hearts, but right there in the middle we have this place for hope. It doesn't always exist. We have this very important place that God has put inside of the heart for hope.

When hope is present, it gives us more strength to persevere, it gives us the ability to overcome obstacles, it gives us the ability to be challenged, and be able to endure those. So hope becomes this very important ingredient inside of the heart and there's this place in the heart for it. But if it is missing in the human heart, then you become discouraged. When you become discouraged, bad things happen. You make bad choices. You start thinking wrong things.

Today in our passage in 1 Samuel 27, we have the story of David who's going to make some bad choices because he's discouraged. I'm going to take you through an understanding of what discouragement is all about. I want you to see it. I want you to see what's happening in his life, and then I'm going to show you how to overcome discouragement using the tools that God gives us, especially that last passage that we just looked at. What I want to do is I want to help you understand this idea of discouragement because it's something we all experience in our lives. We need to know what it is, what it looks like, and what to do when we experience it in our lives. So I'm going to take this passage really slow at first because I want you to see how the whole story develops.

In verse 1 of chapter 27 it says this: *But David thought to himself.* Literally the Hebrew words are "he said in his heart." The idea is he's speaking to himself inside of his heart. That's where we speak to ourselves, we talk to ourselves inside of our hearts, and as we do we wrestle with things. The heart is this wrestling place that we all have and we need to wrestle with stuff.

You know what it is. You're laying on your bed at night wrestling with stuff from the day. That's wrestling that your heart has to come to resolve about. And sometimes those are bad things, sometimes those are good things. The heart is this wrestling place, so we sometimes talk to ourselves. So David is talking to himself.

You talk to yourself, right? I hope you're self-aware enough that you know you talk to yourself. If not, let me give you an example. Give you an example. The last time you folded a fitted sheet, you talked to yourself. You know the fitted sheets are the ones that don't have corners, the ones that have elastic with no reference point to fold it with. So you sit there and you're trying to fold this fitted sheet and you say to yourself, "This is ridiculous. You can't fold this thing." So you start over. So you're going to try to figure it out. Do I start from the middle?

There are some of you who think you can fold a fitted sheet. You're the ones who take the corners and put them up inside of each other to try to do whatever you're doing. But I want you to know that when you get done, you have a fitted sheet that's folded up that looks like just a wad of something that's a little straighter.

Most of us what we would do well when we're working with the fitted sheet is just wad it up and throw it in the drawer. That would be a real problem for most of us because we don't wad things up and throw them in the drawer, so now there's this inner dialogue inside of us saying, "I really should throw this in the drawer because it's impossible to fold the fitted sheet, but rather I don't feel like I can do that." So because of the perfectionist tendencies that some of us have, we try over and over again.

In fact I think there's a good psychological test that we can create for people – how many times you start over when you're fitting a folded sheet can be directly correlated to how much perfectionist tendencies you have in your life. When you're talking to yourself you're basically saying, "I really ought to wad this thing up and throw it in the drawer. But if I do, that would mean abandoning my whole value system, so I can't do that. And the only other alternative is to get therapy. So you have to do something with this fitted sheet. So I'm telling you, when you're working with a fitted sheet, you're talking to yourself. And you're saying, "This is ridiculous. I can't believe I'm doing this."

Now David is talking to himself. He's going to share some very important information with himself and then he's going to evaluate with himself and he's going to come to some rather odd conclusions as he's talking to himself. I just don't think talking to yourself is a great way to make decisions, but that's what David is doing.

He's talking to himself and he says these words – "*One of these days.*" I just want to stop there because what he's doing is thinking about the hypothetical. One of these days, sometime in the future...and we start thinking about the hypothetical. We get rather negative quickly because if this bad thing happens, I can't believe what's going to happen in my life. So we start talking to ourselves and we start imagining the hypothetical things and that gets us into trouble. That's exactly what David is doing and he's going to make a bad decision here.

This is what he does. It says – *But David thought to himself, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand."*

Now this has got to be the craziest idea. It's true. Why would anybody go look for him in the Philistines? Why? Because he is the soldier who has killed so many Philistines that's what he's known for. Saul has killed thousands, David has killed ten thousands. He has killed so many Philistines. Now he's going to go hide there? Of course nobody is going to find him. Only a crazy person would do that. So I just want to say several things about discouragement here. This is a note to self. You might jot this down. Note to self: Talking to yourself doesn't always produce the wisest counsel. That's what he's doing. He has this brilliant idea, he thinks. But we look at it and we go, "This is not a good idea."

But let's think about it from David's perspective for a moment. Let's try to get into his head because maybe we can understand how we find ourselves sometimes going down the wrong path and end up doing the wrong thing. Here's what happens. We have these expectations of what life should be and how we should go and what should take place, and then we have reality. When reality doesn't meet expectations, then there's the room for disappointment. Discouragement can step in and grow right in the midst of that. That's when we find ourselves in trouble. And then we start talking to ourselves about this and we end up in a place that isn't good. But the reality of life that we live gets us in trouble because it doesn't meet our expectations or our hopes or even the promises of God sometimes. We know God has promises, but the reality of life doesn't seem to match those. I don't think this is going to work. This is going to be really hard to see this develop in my life. So in those moments then, discouragement starts to grow inside of us.

It reminds me of the story of the Israelites going into the Promised Land. At first they sent the twelve spies out. Ten of them came back and gave a bad report and two gave a good report. The ten that came back had some very important things to say. It says – *But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. (Exaggeration.) All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”*

So what happens is they are unable to put together the promises of God to go in and take the land with the reality that they're experiencing in the moment, so they make a bad decision and they don't go into the land. Wow.

David is doing the same thing where he's just under pressure. He's running for his life. Every time he turns around he's got to fight the same challenge over and over again.

You might have that same thing. You've got an issue in your own life. Every time you turn around, you've got to wrestle with that issue or you've got a person problem and you're trying to wrestle with that person. Every time we turn around you've got the same thing going on. It's in the midst of that that this discouragement takes place. I think we all experience discouragement. We see David experiencing it here.

I often am working with people. When I first talk to people and they start unburdening their life, I love to listen to them. I have a lot of compassion for people. Often they're discouraged in those moments because of the overwhelming pain or pressure that their life is experiencing at that time. As I'm listening to their pain and their pressure that they're experiencing, I start to feel angry about the same thing they're angry about or I start to feel depressed about the same thing they're depressed about. I can over-identify with their problem.

Here's what happens. You've got to realize God does not give grace to the listener. God gives grace to the person with the problem. So if I'm listening to a problem, God hasn't given me the grace to listen to that person's problem, but God has given that person the grace to deal with their life situation. He wants to empower them to move forward.

So as a listener many times what I need to do is I need to remember God has grace for this person. I may not have it. I may think this situation is hopeless. I don't know what to do in this situation. But the reality is God has grace for this person. He promises His grace is sufficient for their needs. He wants to give that to them. So somehow in the midst of that, I need, as a listener, to participate in faith that God can do that work in a person's life. But I don't have to go looking at other people to identify discouragement. I feel it in my own heart at times. I get discouraged about things. And when we get discouraged we tend to be in this negative spiral that creates a problem inside of us. That's what's happening with David in his passage. It's a rather difficult experience for him because now he's discouraged and he starts to make a decision.

So in verse 1 the whole verse says – *But David thought to himself, “One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand.”*

Verse 2 – *So David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maok king of Gath.*

King of Gath. That should stand out to you. Know why? Because Goliath was from Gath! He goes and lives in the same place where he killed Goliath, cut off his head, and he goes and lives there? I feel like saying to David, “David, are you an idiot or practicing to be an idiot? What's going on here?” There's a problem happening in here and David is making a bad decision here because he is focused on himself, he's not getting outside counsel. Never once do we see him praying and saying, “I'd like to offer a sacrifice and hear what the Lord has to say.” Or “I'd like to talk to the prophet and find out something.” He's not getting any advice from anyone here. He's just relying on his own thinking to himself, and that creates this problem.

Note to self about discouragement. The choices we make when discouraged affect others. I don't know if you saw that, but he's going to take his 600 men and he's going to go there. So now he has 600 men and their families that he's responsible for and they're all going that direction. And that happens in our lives. When you get discouraged and you make a bad choice, or you start yelling at someone because you're upset or whatever, when that happens, other people are affected. We have to be really careful about our own spiritual nurture so that we can be doing the right thing, we can be handling problems the right way, handling life situations with hope so that the discouragement doesn't get hold of us. Because it doesn't just damage us, it damages other people as well.

Verse 3 – *David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal. When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him.*

*Then David said to Achish, “If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be assigned to me in one of the country towns, that I may live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?”*

Now I want to point out that David has some promises. Remember I said reality doesn't match promises. David actually did have some promises about him. Remember he was anointed the king of Israel. God had promised that he would be king. But Abigail is mentioned in this verse. Remember she's the one who said, "I know you will be the next leader of Israel." That's her words. Jonathan in the past said, "You are going to take the place of my father as the king." Even Saul himself says to David, "You are going to replace me. You're going to be my replacement." That's what Saul says to him. So in all of these times, David is given these promises.

But do you see he gets focused on the reality of life and he can't see how reality ties into the promises. You know what connects them is hope. In order to have hope, you need faith. So if we have faith, it takes us that direction so that we can have the hope we need and not get discouraged. Discouragement is such a challenging thing that when you get discouraged, this is what happens. He goes and lives there and he calls himself the servant. He's going to be over there with these guys.

Here's what happens, just another note to self that you want to consider: Discouragement often leads to wrong relationships. When you're discouraged you enter into a relationship that's not healthy. This has got to be the classic example in the Old Testament passage of the person who's a Christian who goes and starts living like the world. When a Christian starts living like the world, they start developing wrong friendships, they do the wrong things, and what they say is "being a Christian is too hard." Or they say "When I'm a Christian trying to do the right thing, I get a lot of challenges in my life. So I'm just not going to do that." So they start doing the wrong thing. They start building relationships that aren't the best. So when a Christian who is supposed to be living in a godly way starts to become part of the world and says, "I don't care," they've given up, they're discouraged because they don't see the promises of God.

We're going to come to the solution here in a moment. I just want you to see how we get there because sometimes we make these bad decisions and go the wrong direction because of discouragement. It just leads us in that direction that's wrong.

Verse 6 – *So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag.* That town is going to be important in our future study and this is probably in the passage here so that we'll know the history of Ziklag and how David got it. So we'll pick this up later in future chapters of 1 Samuel. *So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since.*

*David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months.* That's sixteen months he's living in compromise. Sixteen months he's going to live in compromise. It's really interesting we don't have any indication during these sixteen months that he wrote any psalms. Here's the psalmist. The guy who writes all these beautiful psalms. He wrote half of the book of Psalms that we have and we don't have any indication of any of the psalms written during this time.

Note to self (since we're talking to ourselves here): We can't sing songs of victory to God when we're living in the enemy camp. So there's the real danger of pretending you're a Christian or talking about being a Christian, but actually living in the enemy camp. The things you watch, the things you do, the things you say, the actions you get involved in, the friendships you make are all over here in this enemy camp and so it seems easier. Why? Because you're not going through

the challenges. There are challenges in the Christian community. There are challenges by being a Christian in your life. There are challenges for taking a stand for God. When you do meet those challenges, then you have victory songs to sing. If you don't have any challenges, what you're going to end up in is a place you didn't want to end up in in the first place because you go down this path in the wrong direction. Victory songs come from the battle. Sixteen months of compromise in David's life.

Let's go on. Verse 8 – *Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites.* Those are all Canaanites. Canaanites being the people who lived in the same land that they did that they were conquering. These were the enemy. So he went up and he raided them. Remember he's living in Philistine territory and he sends out raiding parties and he goes and conquers these guys. *From ancient times these peoples had lived in the land extending to Shur and Egypt. Whenever David attacked an area, he did not leave a man or woman alive, but took sheep and cattle, donkeys and camels, and clothes.* So he took all the produce, all the benefit to enhance his ability to live. That's how he earned a living. He got all those things. *Then he returned to Achish.* But he didn't leave any of the people alive.

*When Achish asked, "Where did you go raiding today?" David would say, "Against the Negev of Judah."* In other words he would lie. He would say, "I went to the people of Judah and I attacked them." Those are Israelites. He didn't do that. He went to the Canaanites and attacked the enemy, but he said he went to his own people and he attacked them. Where did you go on your raiding party today? David would say, *"Against the Negev of Judah," or "Against the Negev of Jerahmeel" or "Against the Negev of the Kenites."* *He did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought, "They might inform on us and say, 'This is what David did.'"* *And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory.*

Alright. You've got to understand that when you're discouraged, you start making the wrong choices, then you start compromising. And when you start compromising, you live a life of duplicity. Not to self: Compromise leads to duplicity. Duplicity is basically this. On the one hand you're pretending to be something and then on the other hand you are not. You're pretending to be something you're not. It's a hypocritical lifestyle. So you may be pretending you're godly, a Christian, doing the right thing and so on, but maybe at the same time you're sneaking some drugs or watching pornography or something else that's not consistent.

Duplicity causes all kinds of inner tension. It damages a person's life. We must be totally committed to the Lord in everything that we do. Duplicity is damaging to us and that's what's happening to David as he's in this area. He has to lie now to keep up the ruse of what he's doing in order to be safe.

Verse 12 – *Achish trusted David and said to himself, "He has become so obnoxious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant for life."*

It was Jesus who said *you cannot serve two masters. You will love the one and hate the other.* If you try to serve two masters you end up with a problem. Two masters. And now David is trying to do that. He's trying to pretend to be the servant of God and also be the servant of Achish, and it's going to create all these problems for him. It damages him.

Discouragement is a problem. In fact he doesn't even realize the consequences he's experiencing. You know that when people are discouraged they don't think about the consequences of their decisions. Like I would suggest (note to self) that discouragement knows no consequences.

It's one of the challenges in the inner city, of course, when young people grow up and they want education, they want jobs, and they're having trouble getting them. It's discouraging because they're stuck and they just can't get what they want. So sometimes they resort to other things that have dire consequences in their lives.

It's not just people in the inner city. It's any of us who end up going after something, finding solutions or gratification in areas that are not the right thing. We don't consider the consequences because discouragement has this dulling affect on our ethics. We don't care. I'm just going to go do whatever I want to do. So we end up in places that we shouldn't be. Discouragement is something that ends up in a rather negative place.

Let's talk about discouragement just for a moment and then I want to take you to the passage that's going to talk to you about how we move forward. But here's what I want to say about discouragement. Some people would say discouragement is of Satan. I think it certainly can be used of Satan. But I would suggest that discouragement really is something that our God has designed our human heart to experience when things are out of line. It's a natural consequence of something being out of line in our life.

Now it's not always a spiritual thing. Sometimes we are just physically drained. We've been working so much, we're just tired from working so much, so we're out of alignment. Therefore, we get discouraged. So I don't want to suggest that all discouragement is a result of a spiritual something, even though these things can cross over and affect us in various areas. Sometimes just physically you have an illness that predisposes you to discouragement or depression. So there's a biological problem that exists in that regard.

Sometimes when a person comes to me and they say, "I'm depressed," I start talking to them and I say, "Maybe you ought to go see a medical doctor." Why? "Get some blood results, find out if there's something imbalanced in your system."

That's what God did with Elijah. Elijah goes through this big emotional, physical experience where he fights the Baal prophets and he kills 900 of them. That must have been a physical ordeal itself. Then he runs twenty miles over to Jezreel where he spends some time telling evil queen Jezebel what she's done. She threatens to kill him, so then he takes off running and now he feels sorry for himself. Man, that is a big day of activity. Physically draining.

So God, the counselor in that moment, doesn't start telling him, "There are other prophets in Israel besides you." He doesn't do that. What God does is He says, "Go to sleep." He sends the angel of the Lord to provide a jar of water and some bread cakes for him. He goes to sleep, he wakes up, God says, "Go back to sleep. I'll give you some more bread and water." He just keeps him fed and sleeping for a little while. He just needed to be replenished physically before he then



takes him down to the cave and gives him another perspective and says, “You are not the only prophet in Israel. I don’t only speak up on the mountain with the fire, I also speak in the whisper.” Elijah needed that message. But the first thing that God does with him is He helps him physically replenish.

I would suggest that we need to realize that discouragement is always an indicator that realignment is necessary, thus the car illustration. Alignment is necessary. Discouragement is always an indicator that realignment is necessary. That discouragement may come from physical kind of problems that we’re dealing with. We need to get ourselves together physically, take a break, rest. Sure, we attack life, we do all kinds of things, but we need to replenish. Those things have to go back and forth, replenishing and going out and attacking life. God designed our system that way. If we don’t, we’re going to be overcome with weariness and we can then experience discouragement.

Sometimes, though, the discouragement comes when our expectations are unrealistic. You might think they are justified, but they’re unrealistic for this situation. They may be good goals, they may be good hopes, but they might be unrealistic to think that this person is going to change in this period of time and so I’m going to be discouraged if I don’t see that person changing. Or I’m going to be further along in my career or further along in my finances. So we have these unrealistic expectations that cause us to feel discouraged. Sometimes there needs to be a realignment of our expectations so that we don’t have these unrealistic expectations that can cause a problem.

And then there are sometimes that the problem can be a spiritual one and our purpose and our goals aren’t where they need to be. So realignment in our life is necessary. So I would suggest if you’re feeling discouraged, it’s like the warning sign on the dashboard – something’s wrong here. It doesn’t tell you exactly what it is; it’s just a light flashing. Oh I need to do something here. And it’s a time to do some realignment in your life in order to get where you need to be.

I looked up wheel alignment on Google. This is what Google says what wheel alignment is. This is so interesting because these same symptoms of a car, if you made cars look like people or if you made people look like cars, then you could see the analogy between them. And now we’re talking about a wheel alignment in a car.

So according to Google, here’s what poor wheel alignment looks like. Here’s your symptoms, so you’ll know. One: Vehicle pulling to the left or to the right. I can imagine in our own lives. “Oh, I got to do this. Oh I got to do this,” instead of focusing on the goal that God has set for us. Poor wheel alignment. We need our life to be realigned. Two: Uneven or rapid tire wear. “I am just so worn out. I’m just weary. I’m just tired. I’m getting worn out.” Number three: Your steering wheel is crooked when driving straight. You’re trying to drive straight, but that’s poor wheel alignment. Some of you need to take your cars into the mechanic, right? But the point is here, that happens in our lives. We’re trying to go, but it’s hard to keep ourselves doing the right thing. That happens inside of us. Lastly: Squealing tires. I don’t know, maybe your feet hurt. Maybe your back hurts. Maybe you have headaches. Maybe something else is bothering you inside. We end up having things squeal inside of us.

I'm just saying that I think an alignment is such a good illustration. A wheel alignment and a heart alignment are really valuable that we can understand how we need to get our hearts realigned. Often the signal is I'm feeling discouraged. Maybe a momentary discouragement or it may be weeks of discouragement. It's going to take some realignment.

I got this idea of the realignment from a book I was reading this week by Cathy Anderson that you sent to me. Cathy Anderson sent her book to me so I read it and endorsed it. But she gave this illustration.

She says: "My life was like a car out of alignment, veering all over the place. The underlying problem was that I was trying to do too many things. I had no clear vision of where I was going. I would hear or read about some expert's five-step formula to success and immediately hop on the bandwagon. I would incorporate the expert's five steps in my daily life without much success. I found myself repeating the scenario too many times. My life was crazy. (It reminds me of David and what he's doing.) I was going in too many directions and not accomplishing much. I knew I had to do something, but I didn't know what. The frustration and discouragement of not living the life I was envisioned was disappointing. I realized I needed a life mechanic. Just like when my car is out of alignment, I take it to the mechanic for him to make the proper adjustments to get my car back into alignment. God has given me a mechanic, the Holy Spirit, and His tool is God's word."

Whoa. I really like that. But you have to understand that you will not get the impact of God's word unless you get connected to it or you spend time with it. So having God's word sitting on your table or in an app on your phone doesn't do it. You have to open it up and read it and get connected. As you do, God starts to speak to you and do some good things.

One of those great passages of scripture is the one we're going to look at in just a moment, that one in 2 Corinthians 4. The idea is hope. We need hope in order to deal with the discouragements that we experience in our lives. 2 Corinthians 4:7-11. It's a passage that if you look at the first few verse before verse 7 it talks about this light that God has placed inside of our hearts. He's given us this light inside of our hearts. We have it. It exists. Because we are Christians, we have the light inside of our hearts.

Then he says in verse 7 – *But we have this treasure (that is, this light) in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

I've said this before, but I'm going to say it again. The difference between humanism and Christianity is best demonstrated when you're under pressure. When you experience pressure in your life you'll know if you're running on God's steam or you're trying to run on your own. I'm not suggesting that we only want to have hope and we want to align ourselves when things are going bad and we have challenges, but I'm saying that's a great test. Because when the pressure comes and the challenges come, then our inner strength is either revealed or not revealed and then the inner strength, according to this passage, comes from *this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

The humanist believes that a person is self-sufficient, that if they're going to get anywhere in life they need to do it themselves or get some friends to help them out. It's all about human involvement, service, getting what you need from yourself. You have everything you need to do what you need. It really comes up short when problems come.

We as Christians believe there are supernatural powers available and I'm really grateful. So when you're at the end of your rope, so to speak, or you need an alignment, you can come before the Lord and you can say, "God, I need your power now. I need the superpowers that you offer me." And God does this supernatural thing. It's not just the natural. It's supernatural that God wants to do inside of us.

In my own life I examine my own discouragement or the stress that I have. I can handle life if only one thing is coming at me. That's fine. The problem is when I've got things coming at me from all sides. So I really appreciate this verse in verse 8 – *We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed*. Why? Not because we have the self-fortitude, but because we have this all-surpassing power that God provides for us. So even in the midst of the most difficult situations we can enjoy the power of God inside of us.

*Perplexed*. Perplexed. I don't understand what's going on here. I'm just confused by this. And confusion, of course, often leads to that discouragement. I'm confused, I'm perplexed, *but not in despair*. Why? Because I don't have to have all the answers because I believe in a God who does have the answers. I can trust in Him. And the all-surpassing power of God is at work in me, so I don't have to have all the answers. I can be perplexed and that's okay. I don't have to live in despair or discouragement. *Persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed*.

*We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus*. The fact that He died for us and offers us that relationship with Him *so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body*. And I think revealed to us so that we can see it. Yes, the Lord took me through that difficult experience today or last week or in this last season. I'm so grateful that He revealed His power in the midst of that. *For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body*. So it's not only so we can see that God has taken us this far, but also so that others can see the testimony.

I want you to understand that as a Christian you handle problems differently. When someone has offended you, someone has hurt you, you have a different response than the person who is not a Christian because you have this heart of forgiveness. You know how to release the offense and how to love someone who has hurt you. That's different than the non-Christian. There's this light that shines in because we are different than the person who is not a believer.

I just want you to tuck this away because probably today you are not discouraged. Maybe some of you are and this is hitting you right where you need to be. That's great. But I would encourage you to tuck this lesson away because you're going to need it. So that when you feel discouraged for five minutes or five days or five weeks or whatever, you can pull it out and go, "Okay. I need to do a realignment. What do I need to do to get back in track in my life so that God can use me as this lantern, this jars of clay with light being revealed inside of me that is really Christ in me,

the hope of glory.” That’s what’s being taught in 2 Corinthians 4:11. We all need these realignments at times and God has provided solutions for us to be able to take advantage of them.

I want to encourage you, if you’ve never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, that that’s where you start. You want to have access to this superpower that God gives, but it starts by recognizing your own weakness. “I’m a sinner. I’ve done all kinds of things that are wrong.” It’s not hard for most of us to see that. If it hard for you, then God may need to develop some more humility in you, and as you do, then you recognize that the sin that you have really needs a Savior. You cannot get out of this on your own. You are stuck unless Jesus Christ comes in and forgives you. And that Savior is Jesus Christ. We embrace Him into our lives and then He comes in and heals us. He forgives us. He turns those past mistakes, those past hurts into a ministry that are so powerful because He does this amazing thing inside of our lives and in our relationship with other people. They become testimonies to others.