

0 (0s):

My name is Matt Wolf. I'm the lead pastor here. One of our core values at our church here is transformational teaching. And by that we mean that we teach God's word accurately and relevantly to transform lives. And one of the coolest things about that is when I see people taking God's word and applying it to their lives, that it's actually changing things, transforming things about them. I got a call on Monday morning from someone because they had heard me on Sunday. Just give the challenge. Hey, if we're supposed to be thinking of others first. So we learned our message last week on companions. Just text someone if you're thinking about them. So someone did that in our church and then texted me the whole text conversation back and forth. Cause they texted this friend they hadn't talked with in months, said, how are you doing? I'm thinking about you. And she said, I'm so glad you texted this friend in response because I'm going through some really hard stuff with my kids.

0 (44s):

Can we talk? I'd love to get some wisdom from you. And I just love seeing this woman applying what she learned into our lives. That's transformational teaching. I also heard from another woman this last week, who, who heard the acronym that I taught last week, the team acronym, although there's a little bit of debate in our community group, whether it was an acronym or a mnemonic, I don't know the difference. It was one of those things, but team was T think of others first, encourage them always assemble in community and motivate toward love. And they took that, that, that thing, whatever it is. And they taught it to their whole staff the next day at work. And they were like, Hey, I want everyone to learn. And I just love that. Taking what they're learning, even applying it to people in the workplace. That's great. That's what we're talking about.

0 (1m 23s):

Transformational teaching. And I love hearing those stories. So if you are applying anything you're learning or growing in your life, I want to hear about it. Text me, send me an email and Wolf at arise, denver.com put in the comment section. We just love hearing people applying God's word to their lives because it transforms you from the inside out. So that's a cool thing happening. We are going to continue our quest series today, you know, in this quest series, we're seeing how this story, a lot of the quests that we see again and again in our literature and in our stories and our movies is very similar to the quest that God has for our lives. And we're seeing it through this angle, through the book of Hebrews. The first week we looked at the call that Jesus just simply invites us to come follow me. We follow him and take a step to begin that journey.

0 (2m 4s):

We don't know everything that's going to happen, but we just start that journey. And then last, and in two weeks ago, we talked about one of the relationships we need in that journey is that of a guide that we need wise people in our lives to help us because we don't know what the heck we're doing. So we need guides in our lives. And then last week we talked about the companions that we need people on the journey with us that are surrounding us. But what we learned last week that, Hey, it's not about what my companions can do for me, but what I can do for my companion. So that's what we talked about last week. And then today we're going to move away from those relationships that we need on our quest to talk about some of the things we

encounter on our quest. So today we're going to talk about the obstacles that we encounter. Don't we all encounter obstacles in our lives and our journey 2020 is a year of obstacles, right?

0 (2m 49s):

It's your, as I think as a pastor, this is an incredibly hard year, 2020. And of course it's still continuing. And I just remember like last March when it was like, we're shutting down, we're not meeting at all in person. You remember that we're all freaked out. Nobody knew what was going on. And for a period of months, we weren't meeting together at all. And everything that I knew that I had been practicing, just wasn't working. This is a major obstacle. I had this whole rhythm. I've been doing this for almost 10 years. I have this rhythm of what my week looks like, so that I'm ready to preach a summit sermon to you guys on Sunday. And now we were trying to pre-record on Thursday. I wasn't ready. Like, I've got to figure out how to do this. And now I'm trying to preach to people. I like seeing people. Cause I can see you respond to me and laugh at my jokes.

0 (3m 32s):

Sometimes I like that. I get to respond. But now I'm looking at a camera. I don't see anybody. And I'm like, what the heck are we going to do? Are people even going to care about our church? Are they going to keep giving, how are we going to keep this thing? Moving this huge obstacle that pastors face, right? That I face. We all had obstacles like that last year. And we wonder, how can I make it through this? How are we going to overcome this? Is there a way around it? We all face these obstacles. Sometimes there are situations. Sometimes there are things that happened to us. You know, that's going to be an important differentiator between next week. Next week, we're going to talk about temptations because sometimes we do sin in our lives. We do bad things and we experienced the bad consequences of those bad things that we've done. Okay. We're not talking about that today. What we're talking about is the things that happen to us that just happened in our lives.

0 (4m 15s):

Like I didn't do this. I maybe made a decision. I moved to Denver, but now I'm super lonely in a way from everyone I knew, okay, we do that. It's not sin to move to Denver. And yet we run into these obstacles. So that's what we're going to talk about today. Those things we encounter in our lives, sometimes it's relationships. Sometimes it's difficulties. How to do we deal with those obstacles because sometimes they seem insurmountable. So that's what we're going to talk about today. Every week I've been showing a little different movie clip of a quest story. And because I've been talking about Lord of the rings so much, I have a special clip today for my wife, Melissa, for movie, you may know as legally blonde about a woman named Elle woods played by Reese Witherspoon.

0 (4m 58s):

Who's on a quest because her boyfriend dumps her because he's going to law school and he's too good for this little fashion blonde girl. And then, so she decides she's going to Harvard. That's the first obstacle has to

go get into Harvard law school, but then she gets there and it encounters another obstacle. And we're going to pick that up in our clip.

1 (5m 23s):

So first class for this horrible preppy girl that tried to make me look bad in front of the professor, but the biggie you're here now. So how was your summer? Does he do anything exciting? Oh, hi Vivian Kensington. Do you know her? She's his fiance. <inaudible>

0 (6m 9s):

You know, that's the, this new obstacle. There's another woman, right? The boyfriend she was in love with is now engaged to Vivian Kensington. What a name, right? So this obstacle that she's running into now is this other woman, how can she win Warner back on her quest? Right? So these obstacles we face sometimes they are people. Sometimes they're situations. Sometimes they're a job loss. Sometimes it's a health issue and we run in these obstacles. How can I make it through this? Well, today, that's what we're going to talk about because what it's going to require is a complete change in mindset for us. We've got to start seeing things differently, thinking about things differently. If we want to learn to overcome our obstacles, because we've got to begin to see that obstacles are opportunities to grow.

0 (6m 56s):

Obstacles are opportunities to grow. It's a complete different mindset. And we're actually going to learn three different points that kind of build up to this one bigger idea that we're supposed to learn in our passage, that these obstacles we encounter just like our favorite heroes. They run to the obstacles and they actually help them grow on their quest to make it to where they need to go. So obstacles are opportunities to grow and like we've done throughout the series. We're in the book of Hebrews. We're going to jump in here and there in that book, if you have a Bible, go ahead and get to Hebrews chapter 12. We're going to read verses four to 13 today. If you have, if you're online or you have your phone, you can use the YouVersion Bible app. Look for our arise Denver event. You can even take notes in there. That's a great place to find our, our announcements and what's going on too.

0 (7m 36s):

We don't do bulletins anymore. Have you noticed? But if you go to that YouVersion Bible app, it has all of the things that are going on in our church. It's a great place with links and all that stuff. So we're going to be in verses four through 13. This is a larger chunk of scripture than we have been going through. So we're going to move quickly and we'll start reading here in verse four, where we read in your struggle against sin. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. It's confusing. We'll get back to that verse. Let's skip it for right now. Verse five and have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement? Well, that sounds good, right? That addresses you as a father addresses his son. Okay. This is good. This is a word of encouragement.

0 (8m 17s):

It's from a father addressing to the son. And I just want to put a little blurb in there that yes, women you're included in sons of God. Okay. You're like, that's weird. Yes, but that's just how language works. Sometimes women, you are sons of God and we men are brought the bride of Christ. Okay. So it's a little bit of quid pro quo that, you know, we each get a little awkwardness, right? But you're included in this. So here's this word of encouragement. That sounds good. I want that this word of encouragement from a father, our father in heaven. And it says, my son do not make light of the Lord's discipline and do not lose heart. When he rebukes you because the Lord disciplines one, he loves and he chastens everyone.

0 (8m 58s):

He accepts as his

2 (9m 0s):

Son. So this, this versus that.

0 (9m 4s):

So the quoting from Proverbs chapter three. So these words of wisdom that we were given from a father to a son now are being applied to our father in heaven, speaking to us, his sons, his daughters, his children, but look at in these just two verses from Proverbs that are being quoted. No, let's, let's jump back to verse five, Maurice, just ahead of where I'm getting she's she's right on. Okay. It says, my son do not make light of the Lord's discipline. You see that word and do not lose heart when he rebukes you because the Lord's discipline. So twice there's this word, discipline there's once the word rebuke. And we talked about rebukes last week, those are kind of hard to hear a rebuke when you're needing to do something differently. And this last word chastens that we're chasing is could be translated as

2 (9m 49s):

Whip or scourge. This is even physical pain that you're experiencing.

0 (9m 57s):

The author of Hebrews is saying, is that on our journey? Some of the obstacles we face the hardship, the difficulties are actually disciplined from God. It hurts because he's trying to teach us something. So the first thing that we need to learn today from this passage, the first point that I want you to pick up is that God's not breaking

2 (10m 15s):

You down. He's building you up. God's not breaking you down. And then

0 (10m 20s):

We'll leave you with these obstacles and, and try to ruin your life. He's not trying to destroy you. He's trying

to discipline you. He's not trying to break you down, but to build you up, he cares about you and loves you and sees where you're supposed to be going and sees who you need to be coming, be becoming. And he says, I'm trying to not break you down, but to build you up. And we see that in that passage with this discipline look, one more time in verses five and six, where it says, my son do not make light of the Lord's discipline.

2 (10m 46s):

Okay. I need to kind of step away

0 (10m 50s):

For our passage for just a second, because everyone in the first century would have agreed and like, okay. Yeah, God's disciplining us. Okay. I understand. But I just need to say, because over the last 30 and 40 years our country is,

2 (11m 1s):

And I just need to say that discipline is good.

0 (11m 5s):

When your parents discipline you, it's good. If your kid, parents, you need to discipline your children. In fact, if you don't do it, you hate them. It's not me saying this. This is what God says. I want to show you another proverb. And Proverbs 13:24, it says, whoever spares, the rod hates their children.

2 (11m 22s):

Hmm. This is God, this is not me. This is God.

0 (11m 24s):

But the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.

2 (11m 29s):

Okay? If

0 (11m 30s):

You do not discipline your children, you actually hate them. And you're setting them

2 (11m 33s):

Up for failure to discipline.

0 (11m 35s):

Your children is what God calls us to. And I'm not saying this as an expert, I have three kids. The oldest is

four. I have no idea what I'm doing. The more kids we have, the more I realize, I don't know. Right? I, so I'm not speaking as an expert. I'm just telling you what God says. That's my job anyway.

2 (11m 49s):

Right? If you don't discipline your children, you hate them. This is

0 (11m 55s):

A really big deal. Okay? And it says the rod, the rod is actually representative of discipline. It doesn't mean you. I need to go out and get a rod. I need a rod. Now I can be a good dad or a good mom. No, it's just saying you need to discipline them so we can debate and figure out what the disciplines are. And it is differently already. I can see it. It's different with kids. I'm just getting started. Some of you who are parents for awhile, you know that one kid, you can just look at like this and they're going to weep, right? They're going to melt. They're crying. I'm so sorry. I'll never do it again. That's enough discipline for that child. But for another child, maybe

2 (12m 32s):

You did it. Doesn't hurt.

0 (12m 34s):

Take away all their clothes, all their toys. I didn't need those anyways. Right? Some kids need different discipline than others, right? We all know that. And you have to learn that and figure it out. As you go as a parent, the point is you have to discipline.

2 (12m 48s):

You have to be teaching them

0 (12m 49s):

And training them and giving them consequences. And I say this because I did read a very popular parenting book, very popular right now. And it said, not only don't discipline your kids, but don't even give them consequences. This is a very popular book in our country right now. Ridiculous. That's setting your children up for failure because you don't want to deal with them right now.

2 (13m 10s):

There's, there's

0 (13m 10s):

Another book called the coddling of the American

2 (13m 13s):

In mind. Very fascinating book. But it, but it's saying

0 (13m 17s):

Now that adults entering into college are three years

2 (13m 20s):

Behind we're teenagers. We're even just

0 (13m 24s):

A few decades ago. And it's because parents aren't giving consequences. They're going in there. They're not just the helicopter parents. They're the lawnmower parents. Right? Trying to take out all the obstacles from their kid's path. Not consequences, not dealing with anything. So these kids are not mature. They don't know how to handle themselves. They don't know how to deal with tests and professors or let alone a job. And you know, they don't know how to deal with all of that stuff. So they're struggling. It's increasing anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation in kids. And this isn't just a book written by a conservative. It's written actually co-written by a conservative and liberal. And they're saying, Hey, look at this. We got a problem in our country. We've got to do something about it. And it stems back to the fact that we need to discipline our children. If you don't discipline them, you hate them. If you love them, you care about their future.

0 (14m 5s):

So you're going to deal with them now.

2 (14m 7s):

Okay? Now we can move on from that bonus point.

0 (14m 11s):

Okay? Now that we're on the same page, discipline is good. So now as we return to our passage, but let's look

2 (14m 16s):

At verse seven. As we continue

0 (14m 20s):

In verse seven, it says, therefore, endure hardship as discipline. That's a good sentence right there. Underline that if you're someone who takes underlines, your Bible, endure hardship as discipline. God is treating you as his children for what children are not disciplined by their father. If you are not disciplined and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are not legitimate. There's another English word for that. And yes, that's the same word in Greek. You are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters

2 (14m 49s):

At all. If you are God's children,

0 (14m 52s):

He's going to discipline you because he loves you. If you're not being disciplined, maybe he doesn't love you. Okay? Hmm. That's flipping your mindset a little bit. Isn't it? Verse nine. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the father of spirits

2 (15m 11s):

And live? So what we're learning here is that God, isn't breaking

0 (15m 16s):

You down to destroy you and ruin your life.

2 (15m 19s):

She's trying to build you up,

0 (15m 21s):

Build you up. Those, those hardships you're experiencing are for your good God's to working in them. He cares about you. He loves you. He's the father's disciplining your children. There's a reason why I keep my twins from biting each other and discipline them. Even to just pick one up. Our pediatrician taught me this one, just pick them up and put them somewhere else. Right? That's the discipline for a one-year-old and they're biting their sibling. Okay. But, but we can't just let them bite each other.

2 (15m 44s):

That's not okay

0 (15m 46s):

For a four year old is a little bit different discipline, right? And as our kids get older, it's going to be different discipline all the time. But you do that because you love your kids. And our father in heaven loves us and knows that if we are supposed to be the people he has called us to be and do the things he's called us to do, he's going to have to disappear.

2 (16m 2s):

What us and challenge us. Yeah.

0 (16m 5s):

There's hardships. Even that we have to overcome, we've got to flip our mindset. This is for our growth. This

is for art development. We see this in our quest stories, the Martian Marshall great movie, right? Some of you have read the book to Marshall and Mark Watney, who is played by by Matt Damon. Okay. He gets stuck on Mars by himself and it's going to be a whole year and a half that he's there waiting to be rescued. So his question is, how does he need to survive until long enough that he can get rescued? Right? How can he get back to earth? And he has to figure out some things, right? He has to figure out how to grow potatoes in his own poop.

2 (16m 47s):

He

0 (16m 47s):

Has to figure out how to survive the harsh climate of Mars. He's all these figuring things out. And I know I'm going to be a little spoiler alert, but it's been out for several years. You know, if you haven't watched it, it's your fault. Okay? He does make it back to earth. He does make it back to earth. And then what happens? He is now the instructor, the professor teaching the younger astronauts, what to do so that they are prepared for what's ahead because of all the things he has learned and experienced.

2 (17m 15s):

See, God doesn't

0 (17m 15s):

Want to break us down. He InterPlus stories. We understand this. The obstacles prepare us for the future.

2 (17m 21s):

They prepare you

0 (17m 22s):

For the big climax of the big moments, right? That's that's what we see in our stories. It's the same thing in our lives. God doesn't want to break you down. He wants to build you up. Obstacles are opportunities for

2 (17m 31s):

Growth, for growth. And

0 (17m 33s):

This is so important for us to understand. We've got to change our mindset. We've got to got to start having a growth mindset. That's a real popular phrase right now. Carol Dweck, I think came up with that phrase. Okay. We got to have a growth mindset. When we see these obstacles, there are opportunities for growth. God's doing something he's building me up. He's not breaking me down.

2 (17m 50s):

But I think

0 (17m 51s):

The reason why we struggled to see things that way is

2 (17m 53s):

Because it hurts. It's hard, right? It's

0 (17m 56s):

Difficult. Challenging. Sometimes some of you are in those difficulties right now. And you're like, man, I don't know you. You don't know my difficulty. You don't have a heartedness. And maybe I don't, I don't know how hard it is, but I do know this, our second point. It might not feel good,

2 (18m 10s):

But it's for your good. It might not feel good, but it's for your good things. Don't

0 (18m 15s):

It feels good in the moment, but therefore our ultimate good. And we see this as we continue to read in verse 10, I'm talking about our earthly fathers. It says they disciplined us for a little while, as they thought best. But God disciplines us for our good in order that we may share in his holiness. See our earthly parents. They don't know what they're doing. I'm a parent. I don't know what I'm doing, but I'm trying right. But God knows exactly what we need when we need it, how we need it and for how long we need it. Right? So God knows all those

2 (18m 46s):

Things and it's for our good,

0 (18m 49s):

He continues in verse 11. We read no discipline seems pleasant at the time. Ain't that right? You can underline that too, but painful circle that word painful later on. However, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by

2 (19m 7s):

Yeah, it's not pleasant. Doesn't feel good, but it's for your good, I mean, this is scripture, right?

0 (19m 16s):

To realize that in the moment in the years, it's not, not pleasant. It's,

2 (19m 21s):

It's hard. And yet it's for our good

0 (19m 25s):

Look at the two metaphors that are used here in just this one verse in verse 11, it says it produces a harvest of righteousness. Think about,

2 (19m 33s):

Think about harvesting. Okay? You have to plow the ground, which is hard.

0 (19m 39s):

You have to plant the seeds. You have to water the seeds. You have to watch over them. You have to either spray pesticides or work away. If you're non-GMO all that good stuff, non pesticide, then you have to figure out a way to keep your plants safe from bugs and animals and all that stuff. And then you have to work through the heat of the summer to continue to make sure the plants are okay, so that they're ready for the harvest months, later months and months of hard work, getting up before everybody else to work on this so that you can have a harvest later. It's hard. It's not pleasant. It's not fun, but it pays off in the end in the same way. There's another metaphor. It says for those who have been trained by it, we know this about training. Don't we, we know this about training. If you're training in school, you know that kids have to go through years or over a decade of school before they can ever hold one job.

0 (20m 24s):

Right? And then if they want a better job, they're going to go to more schooling or more professional degrees or whatever, the training that they need. And they have to pass tests and they have to do all sorts of different things. And if they fail the test, they have to try harder and try the test again and keep at it. And they fail a class. They got to try the classic and also that they can be prepared for their future, all these training, right? Same thing. When you're training for a sport event, I talked to someone in the first service who is training for a half marathon. You are out training for a half marathon running longer and longer all the time out before everybody else it hurts. It's not fun. If you're training in the winter, there might be some chafing, right? It's not fun. I've done that before

2 (21m 1s):

Nebraska was cold, but you do all,

0 (21m 4s):

All the Olympics, Olympians who are getting ready for the Olympics. We might have in Japan this year, they are waking up at four in the morning or earlier to train before everybody else and get their hours in, in the pool or hours in, in the weight room. Right? They're doing all that training. It doesn't feel pleasant in the moment. It doesn't. But you do all of that training for what will come. It might not feel good, but

2 (21m 25s):

It's for your good. It

0 (21m 28s):

Might not feel good, but it's for your good it's for an ultimate good that God is doing. And I say this because one of the most interesting things that can happen to us on our quest is that we're going after something and we get just boom, knocked off course. That, that thing now becomes out of reach. It's too hard. You're like, okay, I've lost that. I've given up on this and you have to keep moving. And you're like, Oh my gosh, I've lost. Well, sometimes the obstacles are pointing us in a different direction. It's painful. Sometimes we have to grieve the thing. This was my dream career, but now there's no way I could ever be in that career. I can't see very well. I can't be a pilot anymore. We have these things happen to us. But even those painful things, God is using

2 (22m 9s):

For our good he's directing us maybe to a different

0 (22m 13s):

Wait. I think that's one of the coolest things about that movie. Legally blonde that my wife

2 (22m 18s):

Picked for our certain day, because she's

0 (22m 20s):

Going after Warner, right? She wants to win this guy back.

2 (22m 23s):

But through the process, she realizes he's not worth it. She's

0 (22m 27s):

Learning. And she's growing and she's becoming brilliant. This brilliant legal mind, who also is great at fashion, which prepares her to win an incredible court case. And she's a great lawyer, right? All those things. And she doesn't need that guy anymore. Right? Okay. Sometimes those things happen. It seems so painful in the moment that obstacle, but yet God is using it for our good might not feel good, but it's for our good opportunity. Our obstacles are opportunities

2 (22m 51s):

For growth for us to grow. That was working in those things might not feel good, but it's for your good.

0 (22m 60s):

So what does that mean for us? Because I know that some of us are in really difficult times. Some of you are like Matt, I'm in the pain right now. I'm struggling. I talked with a young man this week who was at his lowest point. He's like Matt, I have seen people. I've walked with people through the lowest points in their life. I've been there when they're at the, the, the complete, you know, low point of their life because of drugs and alcohol. And I've helped those people. And he's like, now I'm at that point, I talked to this guy this week. I'm at that point, I don't know what to do. It's not just one obstacle. It's this obstacle. Plus this one, plus this one. And plus this one and they're all tied together. So in order to fix this one, I've got to fix this one. You know, you got relationship issues and work issues and money issues and health issues. And all these things are compounding.

0 (23m 40s):

And I know some of you might be here watching right now and you're like, that's me. I don't know how to out of this mess. I certainly can't see how it's for my good, but this is what I want to tell you. This is our third point for today. If you're not,

2 (23m 54s):

I said, you're not done. If you're not dead, you're not done. Okay.

0 (24m 0s):

Somebody needs to type this in online. I'm not dead. So I'm not done. Can we say that out loud? I'm not dead. So I'm not done. Let's try it one more time. I'm not dead. So I'm not done. Okay. We've got to learn this. We've got to realize that there is still breath in your body.

2 (24m 14s):

There's still something for you to do to keep moving forward. These obstacles have not completely overwhelmed you. It feels like it. And that's what we learn. As we read in verses 12 and 13, we read therefore, strengthen your feeble arms. You're weak. It's been hard. You've been carrying this heavy load, strengthen them and weak knees. I can't move anymore. Okay.

0 (24m 39s):

Then it says, verse 13, make level paths for your feet. There's obstacles. Move them out of the way and keep going so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Even if you are laying, you cannot walk. Some of you even have a physical difficulty and you think I am done. No, you're not. You're not dead.

2 (24m 56s):

So you're not done. It's time to get back up and keep moving

0 (25m 0s):

Obstacles or opportunities for growth. So I have to keep moving forward. And I said, we'd get back to verse four. Let's do it. Do it right now. Verse four. In your struggle against sin, you have not resisted to the point of shedding your blood. If you still have blood in your veins, still keep time

2 (25m 19s):

To keep moving forward. You're not dead yet. If you're not dead, you're not done. That's what we're learning here. I think of Paul in Philippians chapter one, it's really fascinating. Steve,

0 (25m 32s):

You're reading in that passage. It's a long one, but Paul's like, he's stuck in prison. He's getting older. He's one of the greatest missionaries the world had ever seen in whatever sea. And yet he stuck confined as a prisoner, looking at his possible execution. And he's like, well, should I live? Or should I die? He's like, literally wondering like, what's the point? Should I live? Or should I die? It would be great to be in heaven because it would be better by far. That's what he says. And yet I'm still alive. He says, so I'm going to keep moving. I still got things to do. And he writes this letter that we know as Philippians that's in our Bible, that Christians, millions of billions of Christians for generations have looked at. And it's the letter we call the letter

2 (26m 11s):

Joy. What? Because

0 (26m 14s):

Paul decided with my last breath, I'm going to write this letter. These last moments, I'm going to keep moving ahead. If God still has breath in my body, I still have work to do. If you're not dead, you're not done. Even if you're physically handicapped, you can't leave your home. I know some of you were watching. You can't leave your home. You're in a home.

2 (26m 30s):

If you're not dead, you're not done. And this

0 (26m 33s):

It important for us to hear because your, your dream was this career. Now you can't do that career. You thought you were always going to get married. You're not married. You thought you were gonna have kids. You don't have kids. You're retired. Now. What's the point of my life. And it's time to refired right?

2 (26m 44s):

Okay. There's still work to do. If you're not dead, you're not done. In fact, it might be in those years, later years that you're gonna accomplish way more than you ever did when you were so focused on your career and your job. Now you can pour into other people and be their guides. Okay? There's amazing things God is doing. If you're not dead, you're not done is hard as it is. It's incapacitated. As you feel as emotionally down

as you are, if you're not dead, you're not done. Every obstacle is an opportunity for growth. I want you to hear this. Somebody needs to hear this today to keep moving, keep one foot in front of the other and keep moving. You know, it's hard for us to have this mindset, right? It's hard for us to, to, to figure this out, this, this flip of mindset, because, because we don't see the whole picture, right.

2 (27m 33s):

And what it ultimately comes down to is that we struggle to trust the author. We get it in our books. We get it in our movies. We've seen these movies again and again and again. And we still watch them. Even though we know the ending, the conflict, we know that they're not going to die. We know that there's going to be success yet. We watch it, right. Well, we know the author of our story. He knows that he's writing these obstacles. He's putting us through this discipline. He's deliberately allowing difficult things to happen to us, but he knows the end. He knows the good. He knows what he's creating in us, where he's leading us. So we need to grow in our trust of the author because I look back just at some of the stories in the scriptures.

2 (28m 16s):

If I were the author, I would have written it a little differently. When I see young Joel, Joseph, just a boy and his brothers take him. They throw him in a pit and then sell them into slavery. I would have gone over there and tried to protect Joseph from that, right? No little boys should have to deal with that. Little boy should have to get sold as a slave into Potiphar's house and worked for him for years and years and years, and then get thrown into prison for something he didn't do. But that's what happened to Joseph. I would have protected him from that. I would have protected Joseph and, and taken him out of those years and years and years that he spent in prison, but it was in prison. It was when he was working for Potiphar's house, that he developed administrative skills to run an entire household and then an entire prison from the inside.

2 (28m 56s):

So that when Pharaoh finally released him from prison, he was ready to be the second hand to the entire kingdom to save not only the nation of Egypt, but the entire ancient world from a seven year famine, because the skills and character he developed through those obstacles, I would have protected him. I look at someone else like David, again, just a young boy. And he was thrown out there to be a shepherd of the sheep in the middle of nowhere in a field. And lions and bears would come to eat the sheep. And this little boy had to learn how to defend the sheep from these predators. I would have protected my son from that, right? And yet God allowed it to happen. Why? So that one day Dave would be ready so that he could pick five smooth stones out of the stream and use one of those stones to slay giant and save a nation.

2 (29m 45s):

If, if I were the author, I would have seen young Esther again, just this young little girl that had to go through these beauty treatments for a whole year to spend one night with a terrible, awful King who was a drunk and would do angry things. When he was drunk, I would have protected her from having to marry that guy. But yet because she married him. And because she had developed the confidence over that year and then been

married to him, she was ready. When Haman tried to commit genocide against the Jews, Esther was there to stand up for her people and save many lives. We would've done it differently. If we were the author, we would have tried to protect Daniel from the lion's den and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire. We would've to, to protect all of them because we're not the author. And we don't know the end, but God knows the end.

2 (30m 27s):

And I know certainly I would have tried to protect Jesus. He's a good guy. He's a great guy. He only three years, he got to show the world. God's love. He was amazing. I would have protected Jesus before he got betrayed by his friend and then arrested and beaten and mocked and stripped, naked and abused. I would have tried to protect him. So he wouldn't have to carry his own torture device up to the Hill where they nailed him to that cross. I would have protected him from breathing out his last, as he saw as he was there in the hot Middle-Eastern sun and died. But our author, the good author knew that Jesus had to die as an atonement for us, that his blood all needed to be shed so that we could be forgiven.

2 (31m 14s):

As we put our faith in him, Elizabeth Elliott, who herself had a husband die, even though he was a missionary going to Ecuador to save a tribe, to tell them about Jesus. He was killed by that tribe. And this is what she wrote. Our vision is so limited. We can hardly imagine a love that does not show itself in protection from suffering. The love of God did not protect his own son Because he knew it was in that hardship that the entire world could be saved. You and I could be here and have hope and overcome our obstacles and have purpose in our journey and have eternal life and forgiveness. No matter what we've done.

2 (31m 55s):

I'm glad we can trust an author who knows the entire story and is writing ours right now. Because when we have faith in that author, our, our good, good father who loves us, who declares us to be his children, that every obstacle is an opportunity for growth.

3 (32m 17s):

Let's break,

2 (32m 20s):

Lord God. I'm so grateful that you love us. And you care about us. I'm even grateful that you put us through discipline, though. It does not feel good in the moment. This hardship we would, we would not have wanted it at all, but yet when we go through it, we realize, wow, how much I have grown, how much I have become the person you called me to how it steered me towards a better than what I ever

0 (32m 40s):

Thought. And Lord God, I pray that we'd be able to look back and even to talk about it in our community, the

group this week, and see some things in our life where we have seen you as the ultimate author

2 (32m 48s):

Work for our good and

0 (32m 51s):

That that would help us to trust you even more in the moment in the hardship when we don't know, and we can't see the end

2 (32m 56s):

And the Lord, God, I pray that you'd help us face those obstacles and keep pushing forward that you would strengthen our feeble arms. That, that you'd help us with our knees that are weak,

0 (33m 10s):

Get up and move again. And for those who feel lame, that they can't even move at all, that you would give them a strength to keep moving,

2 (33m 16s):

To face their obstacles and see them as opportunities for growth or God. We love you

0 (33m 23s):

Now with eyes still closed. I know there are some who are here. There's some who are hearing my voice right now, who have not put your faith in Jesus Christ yet. And I have some bad news for you. If Jesus is not your Lord and savior, God is not your father. And therefore he is not working for you. But if today you decide to make him your Lord and savior accept Jesus, and you decide to follow him. Then Jesus is your savior. Your sins are forgiven and you have a father in heaven who will work everything out for your good. He will be growing you and developing you into the man or the woman that he's called you to be. So, so I want to encourage you to say a simple prayer right now, to accept Jesus as your Lord and savior.

0 (34m 3s):

And when you do that, God is your father. So with everybody's eyes closed, if you are already a follower of Jesus, say this prayer to give courage to someone next to you who needs it. And if you need to say this prayer for the first time, say it. You can please just repeat after me, dear God. Thank you for loving me. I'm a sinner. I need a savior. Forgive me, save me. I declare that Jesus is Lord. Fill me with your Holy spirit. Help me to follow you and serve you till I reach the goal.

0 (34m 47s):

Amen. Now with eyes still closed for just one second, I still closed. If you said that prayer for the first time and you made Jesus, your Lord and savior for the first time, would you please slip your hand up in the air so

I can encourage you on that journey if you're here in person or online, and you said that prayer for the first time in minted, go to rise, denver.com/connect and fill out the form. It says I decided to follow Jesus. And I'd love to encourage you. Even send you a book as you start your journey. Lord God, we just pray for all of us. Whether we're just brand new, starting our journey, or have been doing it for years and decades, help us to keep moving forward and see every opportunity as an obstacle there. I'm sorry. Every obstacle is an opportunity for growth. Lord, God help us have that mindset because you are the good, good father and you love us.

0 (35m 29s):

Amen.