

0 (4s):

Good morning arise. It was okay. I guess, for a July 4th. Good to be with you today. And I'm glad you're here or online. Where's your ping on July 4th. We're going to have a lot of fun and party later on, but right now we're going to let God do some partying for us and really help us to grow as his followers. It's great to be here. We love pastor Matt and Melissa and their beautiful family, their miracle family. And it's so exciting for us to be able to be here so that they can get away and rest and relax are tremendous ministry couples. So I hope you take good care of them. My wife Jan is here with us today. Give her a big round of applause.

0 (44s):

Stand yet. Stand up. No, come on, stand up. No. All right. So we have red, white, and blue and pink. I'm not sure where the pink came from today, but that's okay. Well, last year my travels really didn't allow me to visit our great family of churches called converge Rocky mountain, as much as I wanted to. So now I'm trying to make up for lost time, but you are certainly a special partner in our movement. It's churches that have said we can just accomplish more. If we work together than if we struggle along as siloed churches, we can just accomplish more. If we partnered together, we are better together. So it is glad. I'm glad that you're a part of it together. We're all about seeing lives in communities transformed for the glory of God.

0 (1m 27s):

We have a three S strategy converged. Rocky mountain church has worked together to start new congregations. We are estimating about 30,000 churches are going to close, due to COVID. So, so we already have to catch up and replace those churches. We also live in a region that's about 90% unchurched. So we're way behind. So your gifts today, they're going to help us to plant churches at a record pace, plant them in a healthy way, but also get out the gospel as many ways as we can. So we're about starting churches. We're also about strengthening existing churches through training, through helping with pasture placement as your Matsi to do a lot of things, to make you a stronger congregation. And then we send believers across the street and around the world to spread the gospel message.

0 (2m 13s):

So we're very much a missions organization. And if you're part of a converged Rocky mountain church, you're a missionary pretty exciting, huh? Put that on your resume. I am a missionary where ever God has planted you in your workplace, in your neighborhood. We're just hoping that you'll make a kingdom difference for him. And last year, despite the pandemic, we were able to stay on mission. As a movement 10 years ago, we had no churches in Utah at all. Today we have eight churches that are either established or getting ready to start and another one in the pipeline. So very exciting. We're beginning an initiative. There's, there's hundreds of small towns in Wyoming that get overlooked. And we're starting an initiative with a Bible, occasional pastors or circuit riding pastors to try to get a fresh expression of the gospel into each one of those small towns.

0 (2m 59s):

We're looking at the foothills saying, how do we best reach the Foothill communities for Christ? And we just

interviewed pastor Matt. And I just interviewed a guy that has his sights on Denver. I'd love to plant a church in the Denver Metro region. So we're starting churches. And you guys are pros at the sending part of our S you're sending a team over to a Stony. I think coming up like in a couple of days, which is very exciting to support Beth and Ericsson, Jan and I were in a hotel lobby in Tartu Estonia. As, as Beth Ann was just dreaming about maybe someday I can have a kitchen. I can have a dedicated ministry space. Maybe God can help us with that. And we prayed in a hotel lobby for that. And now to see it all come together after four years, it's just been a miracle to see how God is answering prayer.

0 (3m 45s):

So Chris, Chris <inaudible> and I are putting together two trips for next year one, especially for pastors and then one for anybody that wants to come over and see how God is working in the Nordic Baltic. So I'd love for you to be a part of that excursion. Also last February, 2020, I led 17 people from our churches to on mission in the Philippines. We had two junior hires, a senior hire, and the rest were adults, but, but we just had an amazing time. We worked in the slums and we did vacation Bible schools for tribal kids. We took Outrigger canoes to the far islands of the Philippines, which was quite an adventure. And we also did training on spiritual warfare. And I just learned from one of the Filipino pastors as a direct result of our work, two new churches were started on the island of the whole, in the Philippines, people from the Rocky mountain west, making a difference all the way on the other side of the world.

0 (4m 37s):

That is just fantastic stuff. But a week after we got back from that trip, the country shut down, but our churches didn't hundreds were saved and baptized through indoor and outlaw an online and drive in services. I was just thinking, do you remember? That seems like a long time ago, doesn't it, but all kinds of creative ways, we were just continuing to get together. As God's people training took place on zoom, people learn video conferencing for the first time churches were leaving their buildings and really caring for their communities. We had one church that gave away three semi-trucks full of food to people that needed it, that were hungry. We began to start to understand the needs of senior citizens, how maybe we need to spend a little more attention there and really what are their needs?

0 (5m 20s):

How can we care for them? And first responders, our church surrounded them with encouragement and put signs out and just loved on them and a lot of different ways. And so God reminded us again that the power of the gospel is an unstoppable force. So that's why we work together to reach a dark and dying world. No matter how difficult our circumstances might get, and times have been tough. Haven't they? That's what I want to talk about this morning. Hopefully it's timely. Turn in your Bible, your device to James one, one through four. And it's also going to be up on the screen behind me, James one, one through four, pastor James, the brother of Jesus has written a letter to his young church and he begins by giving them some pointers on how they can navigate their own tough times.

0 (6m 12s):

James one, one through four, he starts this way, James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the 12 tribes scattered among the nations

1 (6m 22s):

Church. Greetings continue,

0 (6m 25s):

Consider it pure joy. My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance, perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Let's pray. Heavenly father. We come this morning on this great holiday celebration and we take some time just to bracket it out for you. We move in close. We sit at your feet and we want to hear from you

1 (6m 59s):

Speak truth to us.

0 (7m 1s):

Lord, take my words and interpret them for everybody in this room. You know how we all need to grow and change and Morphin. And we do it through your spirit, but help us to listen this morning, speak to our hearts. Lord, help me get out of the way. And you just do work in a mighty way in Jesus name. We pray amen. A long time ago when I was a youth pastor in Minnesota, one of our favorite summer activities was to take a canoe trip up to the boundary waters. Anybody been to the boundary waters?

1 (7m 34s):

There you cut. Well, you're going to hear more. It's a, it's

0 (7m 38s):

A pristine chain of lakes. We could drink water right out of the lake between the border of Minnesota and Canada. Well, across from our campsite one year was this place called warrior hill. It was a mountainous rock that just erupted out of the lake. It was perfect for warriors to use as a lookout and hence the name. But Jan Jan, his dad was with me on this trip. He had a group of kids on a different island. And so we decided wouldn't it be fun to climb warrior hill. So the next day we did, you know, I paddled to the bottom of the cliff and tied up my canoe. And I began my ascent, you know, from the bottom, it looked like a piece of cake, but we really wasn't going to be a problem. But, but as I was about halfway up, I surveyed my situation and I quickly realized that this is the day that I die.

0 (8m 21s):

This is the day I'm going to die. I'll meet my maker on this day. I mean, it was not good. I mean, I'm pinned

against this yellow rock. The wind is hollowing around me. It's not looking good for one thing. I'm afraid of Heights for another thing, no one has ever confused me with Spiderman. Okay. I'm not, not real nimble. And, and, and, and finally we were free climbing, no helmets, no safety harnesses, no nothing. I mean, if I let go, boom, I fall to my death motivated by that. I only had one thing to do. I couldn't stay on the rock, the rest of my life. So I needed to, to just kind of muster up the courage and continue my vertical ascent, which I did praying a lot.

0 (9m 2s):

You know, as I got to the top, I, my hands were all scratched up. My, my mouth was parched by I had a cold sweat. That was just, you ever been in those situations where you think you're going to die and you have that cold sweat that comes over you. But I got to the top and I just let out a whoop. And I laid back on the rock and I was giving thanks to the Lord for everything I could think of, including being still alive to give thanks to the Lord. And I was just like, ah, that adrenaline pumping and everything. Well, a few minutes later from a different direction, Jan's dad comes Walton up the hill with a group of girls. They waltzed in giggling and messing around and he walks over to me. He goes, what's wrong with you?

0 (9m 43s):

I said, I just, I just made it up. Warrior hill Lara said to me, that's, Jan's dad's name Lars Larson. Can't get more Swedish than that. Hey, don't you know, you bet ya. He goes, you went straight and up. Why didn't you take the path? Why didn't you tell me? There was a path know it's to me, if I would have just paddled a few yards further, there was a Trailhead that led to this path. It just kind of switched back. It's way up, easy peasy. Now I have a question for you this morning. If you pulled most normal folks, not mountain climbers, but most normal folks and ask them, which route would you rather take to the top of warrior hill? Do you think? They'd say the easy path or the more difficult one?

0 (10m 24s):

Probably the easy path,

1 (10m 26s):

Right? What if you asked them the same question about life in your

0 (10m 32s):

Road through life? Would you like it to be easy or really hard? What would they say? Well, of course they want to take the easy way up the hill, right? I mean, I want to win the lottery, so I don't have to work another day in my life. I want to take a pill that makes me instantly physically fit. I liked my spiritual growth to be nothing but butterflies and daisies. I mean, don't, we kind of think that a blessed life is really going to be a life absent of struggle and hardship. If God really loves us, he's going to keep us comfortable. Isn't he? And my guess is those first believers in James' church felt the same way I'm given an option. They would have taken the easy path up the hill.

0 (11m 14s):

So imagine their shock. As they received this letter from pastor James, the gatherer around, we got mail, the terror opened the letter and they read this,

1 (11m 24s):

Consider it pure joy.

0 (11m 26s):

My people so far so good. Whenever you face trials of many kinds,

1 (11m 34s):

What? I mean, James throws him a major curve ball here. I mean,

0 (11m 39s):

What is wrong with pastor? You've been dipping into the communion wine a little bit too often. Consider it pure joy when you face trials.

1 (11m 48s):

So what's going on here? I

0 (11m 50s):

Think pastor James knows that he's writing to some very young believers. Remember this was early in the life of the church. And so some are just beginning their journey with God. There were others in the group that were proudly pious, but we know from reading the rest of the letter that they had already infected the congregation with division and intolerance and favoritism and judgment, very immature believers. And so as James spiritually assesses his congregation, what he sees is a desperate need for his flock to grow up, to mature, to develop a spiritual toughness that will stand strong in the face of persecution and difficulty, because that is what is ahead for his

1 (12m 32s):

Church. And so right out of the

0 (12m 34s):

Gate, James presents a foundational truth for his people, a foundational truth for us. And that truth is this. God is much more concerned about building your character than he is about keeping you comfortable. God is much more concerned about building character into his people than he is about keeping us comfortable. Yes, there's all kinds of wonderful blessings and benefits to being a believer, peace and hope and strength. But Romans 8 29 reminds us that God's primary agenda for each of his followers is that we be transformed

into the image of Jesus Christ through the power and work of the holy spirit within us.

0 (13m 16s):

You see God as the master Potter is reworking us, remolding us into a remarkable human being. He wants to develop within you a rugged, righteous core that equips you to choose what is good and right, and best in every situation. I mean, the Lord wants you to be able to stand your ground. When the enemy attacks, the Lord wants you to courageously attempt great things for his kingdom, no matter how hard the storm winds are blowing, you're standing strong. And if you haven't noticed the storm winds are blowing pretty hard. These days, those around Jesus, even his enemies couldn't help, but notice the amazing character that he displayed in each and every situation and our heavenly father says, I want that same kind of character to emerge in all of my followers.

0 (14m 5s):

So bottom line, God is much more concerned about building our character than he is about keeping us comfortable. And as much as I hate to say it, any kind of godly growth rarely happens. If we take, just take the easy path up the hill gain very rarely happens without a certain amount of pain and discomfort. Billy Graham noted mountain top experiences are wonderful, but have you ever noticed that nothing grows on top of the mountain growth takes place in the valleys. And so here in verses two through four, James is openly brutally honest, best

1 (14m 42s):

And loving about

0 (14m 44s):

This Christian character building concept. Folks don't make, don't make the mistake of thinking that a blessed life will always be easy life. Just the opposite. It is through the refining fire of trials that your faith will grow strong and your relationship with God will grow close. Therefore consider pure joy. Whenever you face trials of many kinds, it's not meaningless pain. There is an upside to your adversity this morning. I want us to quickly explore three insights that James gives us concerning this concept of adversity and character building. First of all, James tells us adversity is inevitable adversity.

0 (15m 24s):

Personal adversity is inevitable. Look at verse two, consider it pure joy. Whenever you face trials of many kinds, James, doesn't say if you face trials, but when you face trials, Jesus underscores this in John 16:33, when he tells his disciples, Hey guys, in this world, you will have trouble. The Greek wording that James uses here for, for trials is, is, is literally translated fall into trials, like stepping into a hole that you didn't see carries with it. The idea of sudden or unexpected problems that pounce on us out of nowhere, kind of like a pandemic. I mean the world, the, the word is usually meaning an outward attack that comes at us, but it can also refer to those inner battles that sometimes well up when we're going through difficult times, James, isn't

saying we should go out and just make trouble to prove our faith.

0 (16m 18s):

But he is saying that it's normal and natural for sudden storms to sweep in. We're living in a fallen world. So be on your guard and be ready with even more good news James notes that we'll face many kinds of trials. You know, sometimes storms. I hate to admit it are self-inflicted Galatians six, eight says we reap what we sow. I mean, if we mishandle our finances, if we neglect our kids, if we forget to take care of our health or get cozy with some sinful behavior that we think we're hiding from everybody else, there will be consequences to pay sometimes very painful. Sometimes the storm is a spiritual attack brought on by Satan to divide or destroy

1 (17m 4s):

Your faith, your family, this church,

0 (17m 9s):

Sometimes God sends a storm for our own good. Paul was given some kind of physical or emotional foreign in the flesh that kept him humble. It kept him dependent on the Lord. I think the most difficult storms for us to process are those that are just a mystery on this side of heaven. We're really not ever going to truly know why we had to endure what we endured. Different kinds of storms, also different intensities to our trouble. You know, some hardship has nothing more than, than periodic pestering. A deadline at work, the water heater goes out, mask regulations, but other trials are catastrophic.

0 (17m 52s):

They rip our hearts out the COVID death of a friend, a divorce, a devastating doctor's report. I'm guessing many of you know what I'm talking about. You may be going through one of those kinds of trials right now. You find yourself on a sheer rock wall with a tremendously hard climb in front of you. James says adversity is inevitable. So don't be surprised. And don't always think you've done something wrong when it hits your life. God limits it. But he also allows it so that we can be built up as his people. So the question follows then when, when adversity hits us, how should we respond?

0 (18m 34s):

Let's look at the second observation. When it comes to successfully handling adversity, James says, attitude is everything. Attitude is everything he says. Consider it pure joy. When you face trials of many kinds. Now, how can James say that really is James out of touch with reality? Doesn't he realize that joy doesn't go with trials. Misery goes with trials. I mean, doesn't it play out like this trouble hits and the self-talk starts almost immediately. Oh great. Here we go. Again, more rain on my parade. I try to live a good life and this is the thanks I get. And inside, we may even start to shake our fist at God. Why are you doing this to me?

0 (19m 15s):

We see adversity as the enemy and it's not, not long before bitterness and anger and self-pity will infect our soul. And we die a little bit. That's what happens when we follow our human inclinations. But here in our passage, James is pointing us

1 (19m 34s):

To a better way. It's not so

0 (19m 36s):

Much that he's out of touch with reality, but he's in touch with his new reality, his new identity as a child of God, consider it pure joy when you face trials. And I don't think joy, here's some kind of giddy silly kind of a joy as much as it is. And I got this kind of joy. The joy that you experience when you start to attack a fourteener or start a marathon or initiate a big project around the house, yes, there will be some struggles ahead. But at the end of the day, I am going to rise victorious. James says, believers make up your mind to see adversity as an opportunity to partner with your amazing God and together to accomplish something incredible.

0 (20m 19s):

And he plays out like this trouble hits self-talk starts. We do the initial grumbling because we're human, but then the holy spirit interrupts. Here we go. Believer it's game time, rely on your kingdom, resources and attack that challenge in front of

1 (20m 34s):

You resist that temptation.

0 (20m 38s):

You don't need to fall for that anymore. You don't need to cave in. You've got the lion of Judah living inside. You activate that. Stand up to those temptations when they come, when you can't see your way forward, you're not alone. Trust God to guide you through. When you're in the darkness, hold tight to the promises that you learned in the life. They're still true. Even if it's dark, keep on loving those that are attacking you to get bitter, to attack them, to hate them.

1 (21m 8s):

It's just going to kill you. Pray for wisdom. When you don't have the answers grab

0 (21m 14s):

On to God, hold tight until the storm blows by today. You're going to move forward a little bit more in your journey to be like Jesus.

1 (21m 24s):

You know, when you choose

0 (21m 25s):

To make adversity your ally, when you see it as an opportunity to, to partner with God for growth, I think you'll find a lot of different benefits. Let me just give you a couple. First of all, trials really do help us diagnose the true condition of our faith or our marriage or our church. A friend of mine, a construction guy was telling me about a crane company in Venice, Italy. And they came up with this crane, a portable crane. You could stick on the back of a truck and it was able to lift like 20 tons off the ground. It was a scientific Marvel, and the way they put it together was they had a special computer program that would measure how much certain materials they could, could take, how much tension they would take before they broke.

0 (22m 7s):

And so when they finally found a lightweight material that could absorb an incredible amount of tension, they put it all together and came up with this scientific Marvel. Well, well trials have that same kind of diagnostic effect in our lives. In fact, the word that James uses for trial means to prove the quality of worth of someone or some things trials prove the quality of worth of someone or something. Trials show us areas of our faith, where we've matured, where we're able to stand strong and areas of our faith, where we're prone to see app to buckle under the pressure where we've learned to trust God and where we're still trying to overcome the storm through our own strength, where we've learned to pray and where we still panic.

0 (22m 54s):

I mean, think about this past year. Are there any areas of your life or, or in this church where you would maybe kind of like a do-over places, maybe where you got way too concerned with earthly things instead of setting your heart and your mind on things above seeking first God's kingdom, God's agenda God's desires for his people during the pandemic.

1 (23m 17s):

Were there any

0 (23m 17s):

Places where, where the pressures caused divisive cracks to appear in friendships or in marriages, any pressures that pushed you away from God, instead of pushing you closer to him, any places where you realized we really didn't rely much on our spiritual resources. We worried a lot. We should have prayed a lot more. You see, we can learn a lot about areas of growth, where do we need to grow? Where are we strong and where do we still need to grow by simply observing how we respond when trouble hits.

1 (23m 52s):

Another benefit

0 (23m 53s):

Is that God uses hardship to stimulate needed change, like a parent Eagle who stirs the nest to get their youngsters, to spread their wings and soar like parents will stir the nest to get their 40 year old son out of the basement to spread his wings and soar only to come back again next week, God sometimes uses hard times to propel us towards needed change and new frontiers. And I'm so proud of our converged Rocky mountain churches in how fast they pivoted when COVID hit. I mean, you were forced to change weren't you and you did online services, online giving new awareness of senior special care that they need a renewed emphasis on prayer.

0 (24m 35s):

A new value placed on living in community. We missed that when we couldn't get together, healthy changes that without a crisis may have taken a lot longer to implement don't you think? But because God brought purpose to our crisis, hundreds of people accepted Christ through the new methods that we were forced to activate, you know, for you, maybe it's going to be a personal crisis that moves you to finally seek the marriage constantly. And that, you know, you need, or to maybe get your financial house in order, or maybe to move you to take your physical health more seriously, you know, for Jan and I, two of the churches that we started were the result of being forced out of some very comfortable ministry positions, trials that God redeemed to build us and to build his kingdom.

0 (25m 25s):

Well, third benefit of making adversity. Your ally is that as you navigate your trials with God, you will build a deeper understanding of your heavenly father and the tremendous resource he is in your life. I have a picture I cherish of my daughter, Rebecca and me. It's your Becca's birthday today.

1 (25m 43s):

She's 33.

0 (25m 44s):

We tried to recreate this last night, but it was a miserable failure, but I love this picture because it catches her at the perfect moment. She's lofted high above my head. She's just sitting there calm as can be right. And I know she's not wearing a helmet and she's not, I had done never seatbelt or a car seat or so don't get mad at me. But the point is this Rebecca remained calm because she had been tossed into the air many, many, many times. And she had learned that her daddy is faithful

1 (26m 19s):

And he would always catch her. Consequently, she could be lifted

0 (26m 23s):

Up in the air and not worry about it at all.

1 (26m 26s):

He's going to catch me.

0 (26m 28s):

You see the same thing happens in our spiritual lives. You know, in good times, we know about the Lord. He's there to provide and protect, but we kind of hardly notice, but then life tosses us in the air and we panic. What are we going to do? We're flailing away and God us.

1 (26m 44s):

Oh. And just

0 (26m 46s):

When we're getting comfortable passing the arrogance, some other catastrophe, some other things, well, what am I going to do? I can't, Hey, God catches us. And after while as we believers believers, we really start to believe that our God, he is faithful and there's a calm that starts to come over us. Even when our world is very chaotic and crisis filled. I talked to the dad a couple of weeks ago and he shared, my son died in a car accident last summer and it killed me. But the darker my world got the more I was able to tangibly feel God's presence surrounding me. It was the most incredible thing I have ever felt.

0 (27m 29s):

God does allow storms to sweep over our lives, but really never more than we can handle in Isaiah 43, God says, do not fear believer. I have called you by name and you are mine therefore. Or when you pass through the waters, I will be with you through the rivers. They will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched nor will the flame burn you for. I am the Lord, your God, you are precious in my sight.

1 (28m 2s):

And I love you.

0 (28m 4s):

Those are powerful words from our daddy.

1 (28m 7s):

I'll catch you. So I'm

0 (28m 10s):

23 reminds us, even when we walked through the valley of the shadow of death, which many of us did during COVID, we don't need to be afraid because our Lord is there. His presence, his power are always

with us in second Corinthians, 12 eight, Paul writes three times. I pleaded with the Lord to take my thorn in the flesh, away from me. But the Lord said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, Paul, even when you're going through a tough time, I am enough for you.

1 (28m 41s):

Therefore says, Paul from

0 (28m 43s):

My power is made perfect in Greece in weakness. Therefore says, Paul, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power can rest on me. That is why for Christ's sake. I delight in weaknesses in insults, in hardships, in persecution, in difficulties. Why I find joy in trials? You see, because when I am weak, then I'm strong.

1 (29m 10s):

The weaker

0 (29m 10s):

I get, the stronger God gets in me. Paul says, when I'm putting a situation that forces me to come to the end of myself, when I have to start relying on God alone. When I finally give up trying to solve my problem and get out of the way. That's when I feel the amazing strength of almighty God, coursing through my life and carrying me through my struggle. And if you're fighting a battle alone this morning, if you're on a sheer rock wall and you're fighting yourself, and the best advice I can give you is give up, stop trying to fight it alone and invite God into your struggle. You will feel his wisdom, his strength fill your life, and he will carry you through attitude is everything.

0 (29m 54s):

Don't let your difficulties infect you with bitterness. See them as an ally. They are tools that God is using to transform you into a masterpiece, which brings me into my third insight of the James gives us a little bit of pain. Maybe a lot of pain does bring lasting gain. Inviting God to meet you in your trials will make you a different person, a better person now and forever. Look at verses three and four approach trials with a sense of joy, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

1 (30m 37s):

You'll look like Jesus. Perseverance

0 (30m 40s):

Is defined as a determination that never waivers as it moves toward a goal. An inner constancy that is carried along by a greater hope. A few years ago, I had both my knees replaced and breaking the scar tissue

was incredibly painful, but I pushed through the pain with a greater hope that I would eventually restore flexibility to my knees and enjoy a greater quality of life. Today, we celebrate those early Patriots who went through the pain of the revolutionary war and fought and died for the greater hope that this country would be free. Jesus endured the cross because of the hope that he would be able to spend eternity with you and me, that he was making a way for fallen mankind to be reconciled with God so that we could live forever in heaven.

0 (31m 32s):

And the hope it carries every believer is that through our trials, we do it that our trials do have a purpose. They're molding us into the image of Christ and someday we will see him face to face and we will be like him. Our Christ-like character will be complete and fully formed. And you see, in the meantime, God is maturing us up as his people so that we are able to stand strong with a strong character to accomplish the mission that he has set up for us today. Even though our world may be falling apart, even though we're not happy with a lot of the stuff we see out there, God's people, people of character, people of truth can stand strong.

0 (32m 13s):

We can be a beacon of hope for our world. There's Paul says in second Timothy, 2 21, we are becoming instruments for special purposes. God's purposes made holy set apart, useful to the master and prepared to do any good work. Max Lucado writes a to be your instrument or God like you use Paul to the Gentiles, like Philip to the, like Jesus to the world, to be your instrument, to be like a scalpel in the hands of a surgeon, healing and mending to be like a plow in the weathered hands of a farmer sowing, intending to be at like a size in the sweeping hands of a Reaper gathering and using to be an instrument for noble purposes to be home and tune in sync with your will sensitive to your touch.

0 (33m 7s):

This, my God is my prayer. Drop me from your fire for me on your envelope, shaped me with your hands and let me be your tool used for noble purpose. This is the last several months have been tough, but I think you're a better, stronger, more innovative church because of it. You find yourself on a sheer rock wall this morning, you're tired. You're scared. You're confused. You may be tempted to lash out at God and push him away. Don't

1 (33m 39s):

Let

0 (33m 39s):

Your adversity push you closer to him. Discover in a new way, his presence around you activate him power by you, giving up and letting Christ power rests on you. Joyfully move forward. Yeah. To the reality that God is redeeming each of these struggles to shape you into the image of his son. And he will use your life. He will

use the life of this church in incredible ways to bring light and life to a dark and dying world.

1 (34m 11s):

See, that's our mission. There is an upside

0 (34m 15s):

To adversity. Let's pray. Heavenly father. I just pray for everybody. That's here this morning. I pray for a rise church and the great ways that they are just being a beacon of hope in this corner of the Denver Metro area and around the world. Lord just empower them for those that are fighting. A battle that are climbing a mountain today that are they're stuck on a cliff that are scared. Lord help them to feel you to experience you in a new and a fresh way. Lord let your strength course through their body. Let them know that they're not fighting the battle alone, but you're with

1 (34m 51s):

Them. You're ahead of them. And you will help

0 (34m 54s):

Them to safely get through this father. We know we're surrounded with a world, 90% of the people that live around us don't know you. They don't have a relationship with Jesus. They're fighting alone and we see them self-medicating and doing all kinds of crazy things to try to get through the tough times, Lord, we have the answer, so help them to see Jesus in us and to hear about Jesus from us, just bless this church, help them to do amazing things for you in Jesus name, we pray. Amen. Let's give him a hand this morning to say thank you for that. Yeah.