

26-1011a Transcript

26-1011a - *There Is Always Something*, Tom Freed

Bible Readers: Mike Mathis and John Nousek

See a detailed summary: [Detailed Summary HTML](#) - [Detailed Summary PDF](#)

There Is Always Something

Scripture Readings

1st Reading (0:04 - 1:11): Mike Mathis

Genesis 47:7-9: (0:04) The first scripture reading will be taken from Genesis, the 47th chapter, verses 7 through 9. (0:16) Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. (0:27) Pharaoh said to Jacob, how old are you? And Jacob said to Pharaoh, the days of the years of my pilgrimage (0:44) are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, (0:55) and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. (1:09) And that completes the reading of God's word. (1:11)

2nd Reading (1:12 - 2:18): John Nousek

2 Corinthians 12:7-10: (1:12) Good morning. So this morning's second scripture (1:16) reading is found in 2nd Corinthians, chapter 12, and it's verses 7 through 10, which reads, (1:27) because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, (1:32) for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, (1:42) a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from exalting myself. (1:50) Concerning this, I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me, (1:57) and he has said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. (2:07) Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2:17) Amen. (2:18)

Transcript (0:04 - 23:00), Preacher: Tom Freed

(2:23) Good morning. Good to see everybody. My turn in the rotation again.

This sermon is called, (2:32) There's Always Something. Usually I preach on stuff that I deal with, so it feels like there's (2:41) always something, doesn't it? There's always something. Not sometimes, not only in the hard (2:48) year, something is always there.

An ache that will not quite leave, a bill that shows up (2:57) the week you thought you were clear, a person who is wearing you down, (3:05) a body that will not stay fixed, a plan that looks simple until you started it. (3:12) You get one thing settled, and another shows up before the release has time to settle in. (3:18) You ever notice that? It feels like sometimes it's only days between problems.

Like, oh, I finally (3:24) feel good, and then, yeah, not shortly after something else happens. That is not pessimism. (3:34) That is the ordinary shape of life under the sun.

(3:39) And scripture has been saying it longer than any of us have been living it. (3:44) Job 14.1 puts it plain. A man that is born of a woman is a few days and full of trouble.

(3:54) Jacob standing before Pharaoh at 130 did not dress it up either. (4:00) The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years. (4:05) Few and evil have the days of my years, of my life been, and have not attained under the days of the (4:13) years the life of my fathers and the days of their

pilgrimage.

Genesis 47.9. He has a covenant (4:22) promises. He had seen the work of God, and he still called his days few and evil. (4:31) So if he calls it that, you know, what chance do we have? The back finally eases, and two days later (4:41) the knee goes.

And that is not the end of the list. This morning I want us to look honestly, (4:51) at that honestly. Life under the sun is full of trouble.

(4:56) That trouble is not strange for the Christian, and God has already told us what to do (5:02) with the thing that will not leave. Scripture does not flatter us about life in this world. (5:13) Moses, in the only psalm attributed to him, says the days of our years are three score years and (5:21) ten.

And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength, labor, and (5:29) sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Psalm 90.10. Labor and sorrow.

It's not a footnote. (5:39) That's a normal description of life. Ecclesiastes says the same thing from another angle.

(5:48) For man also knoweth not his time, as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, (5:56) and as the birds that are caught in the snare. So are the sons of men snared in an evil time, (6:03) when it falls suddenly upon them. Ecclesiastes 9.12. And the verse before it says, (6:11) The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, (6:20) for time and chance happen to them all.

Careful people still meet trouble they did not schedule. (6:30) Faithful people still bury people they love. Honest workers still watch a simple job turn hard.

(6:39) Aging people watch a list of what hurts get longer, not shorter. This is especially (6:48) plain in a congregation that has lived a while. I know a lot of us have issues.

The older you get, (6:56) the more you seem to have. You treat one condition and the doctor names another. (7:03) The spouse declines.

Money that was finally under control gets hit by something you did not have (7:09) planned. None of that means God has forgotten the church. That means we are still living in (7:18) the world Job and Jacob described.

Jesus did not promise his disciples a clear calendar. (7:27) He told them the opposite. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer.

(7:35) I have overcome the world, John 16, 33. Mark that order. Tribulation is promised.

(7:48) Cheer is commanded. The ground of the cheer is not that the tribulation leaves. (7:54) The ground of the cheer is the one who has already overcome the world that the tribulation comes from.

(8:03) Peter wrote to brethren who were already under pressure. (8:07) Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you (8:15) as though some strange thing happened to you. First Peter 4, 12.

The trial feels strange when it lands. (8:26) Peter says do not treat it as strange. It is part of the path, not proof you left the path.

(8:35) Some of the trouble is simply the fallen world. Bodies break, wood rots, water turns, (8:43) economies shift, people sin against each other. Genesis 3 is still in force.

(8:52) The ground brings forth thorns and so does a good bit of the ordinary life. (9:01) You can do the work carefully and still meet something underneath that you did not know was (9:05) there. Some of the trouble is [delayed].

If the devil cannot keep a man from Christ, (9:14) he will spend what God permits trying to wear him down after that. (9:19) So the devil can't stop us from becoming a Christian. (9:23) But what he can do is he can make it as difficult as possible.

He could irritate us. (9:29) You know, he could do whatever God permits him to do to us. (9:35) Job is the clearest picture that we have of that.

God set a limit and inside that limit, (9:42) Satan took the oxen, the servants, the sheep, the camels, the children, and finally Job's health. (9:50) Job's friends then made it worse by exploiting his suffering back to him (9:55) as they understood the counsel of heaven. They did not and most of the time neither do we.

(10:06) Do not do their work for them. A hard week is not a verdict you're qualified to pronounce on yourself. (10:15) There's not a verdict you're qualified to pronounce on the brother next to you.

(10:20) If you do see somebody that's struggling, don't be like Job's friends. (10:26) You know, he was better off probably with no friends than what they were telling him. (10:34) Paul knew a version of this that would not leave.

(10:38) To keep me from becoming conceited because of these (10:43) surpassingly great revelations, there was given to me a thorn in my flesh, (10:48) a messenger of Satan to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. (10:55) 2 Corinthians 12, 7-8.

He calls it a messenger of Satan. He also says it was given (11:06) and the purpose he names is that he not be exalted above measure. Both those things can be true at (11:16) once.

The enemy strikes, God governs the blow and uses it. Everybody has a plan until they get hit. (11:30) The Christian life is no different.

You can have the week mapped, the budget set, the project scope, (11:38) the health feeling steady, and the punch lands. The question is not whether the punch is coming. (11:45) The question is what you do once you're on the ground.

(11:51) So that's quotes from a boxer. You know, everybody has a plan in boxing until they get punched. (11:56) That's how it is in life sometimes.

You have all these plans of what you want to do. You think you (12:01) got everything going great and all of a sudden you get hit out of nowhere. Paul asked three times for (12:11) the thorn to depart.

The answer he received was not the answer he asked for. And he said unto me, (12:20) my grace is

sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. (12:26) Most gladly, therefore, I will rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest (12:33) upon me.

Second Corinthians 12, 9. That is one of the hardest sentences in the New Testament to (12:41) actually believe while the thorn is still in. We want departure. God often gives sufficiency instead.

(12:52) Some things leave when we pray. Some things stay. And the staying becomes a place where his strength (13:00) is proved.

Paul did not pretend the thorn felt good. He did not call the weakness pleasant. (13:10) He did decide that if the power of Christ rested on him inside the weakness, (13:16) he would rather have that than a smooth life that left him trusting in himself.

(13:24) This is also why some of the troubles permitted in the first place. (13:29) A life with no thorn, no bill, no limitation, no recurring grief can quietly train a man to live (13:37) as if he did not need the Lord. Trouble interrupts that.

It does not feel like mercy while it's (13:47) happening. It feels like interference. But more than a few of us would not be in Christ (13:56) if life had stayed smooth.

I know part of the reason I turned to God was because (14:03) I was struggling. I had a lot of problems that I needed help. Even now, I feel like half the reason (14:09) we have all these issues is we still trust in God, still go to him in prayer, still rely on him to (14:17) take care of us.

The frustration that drives you to pray is not wasted. Even when the frustration (14:26) itself does not leave on your schedule. James says, count it all joy when you fall in the various (14:33) trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

James 1, 2-3. He does not say (14:43) that temptation feels like joy. He says, count it joy because of what the trial is producing (14:50) in a faith that stays put.

Romans 5 says, tribulation worketh patience, and patience (14:59) experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed. Because the love of God which is (15:08) shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, a chain only works if we do not (15:16) quit in the middle of it. Patience is not produced by the trouble, by a trouble that (15:23) ends before it has done its work.

So what do you do when there's always something? (15:33) First, stop reading the latest trouble as proof that you're off the path. (15:38) John 16-33 already told you tribulation is coming. 1 Peter 4-12 already told you not to treat the (15:47) fiery trial as strange.

A hard week is not a verdict on your faithfulness. It may be the (15:56) ordinary week of a disciple who is still in the world. Second, take the thing to the Lord more (16:03) than once, and receive the answer he actually gives.

Paul asked three times. We ought to ask, (16:14) and we ought to ask specifically. Pray about the need, the bill, the diagnosis, (16:23) the work that will not cooperate.

Then be ready for the answer to be, my grace is sufficient, (16:31) rather than it's gone. Sufficient grace is not a slogan for an easy week. (16:40) It's a supply for a week that has already went sideways.

(16:45) It's a thing that [fills the] vacuum. If it stays, ask what obedience looks like while it's still there. (16:55) Removal is mercy, and sufficiency is also mercy.

Do not despise the second because you asked for (17:03) the first. Third, refuse to let the latest thing become the whole story. Paul could speak of (17:13) glorifying and infirmities without pretending they were pleasant because he knew where the (17:19) power rested.

Romans 8 does not deny the groaning. Creation groans, we groan, and the Spirit groans (17:29) with us. The chapter still ends with nothing able to separate us from the love of God which is in (17:36) Christ Jesus our Lord.

Not tribulation, not distress, not persecution, famine, nakedness, (17:47) peril, or the sword. Romans 8, 35-39. (17:53) The something that is always there is real, it is not ultimate.

Paul says, (17:59) the light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal (18:06) weight of glory. But we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen. (18:13) Second Corinthians 4, 17-18.

An aging body makes the contrast sharper, (18:22) not weaker. The days are few, the trouble is full, and the glory on the other side of faithfulness (18:30) is heavier than both. So it is a lot we're going through, a lot of trouble, a lot of pain and (18:39) suffering.

But it's nothing compared to heaven, which we won't have the pain and suffering (18:47) when we get there. So fourth, practice of small obediences, the latest frustration tries to (18:55) cancel. Contentment is not the absence of irritation, it's the decision inside the (19:02) irritation to not let it set the terms.

Be careful for nothing, when everything by prayer (19:10) and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of (19:17) God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (19:26) Philippians 4, 6-7.

The peace that guards the heart, that peace guards the heart even when the (19:36) circumstances do not move your schedule. Speak the truth about the trouble. Jacob did, (19:46) Job did, and Paul did.

Then do the next faithful thing. Show up and finish the work (19:53) that you can't finish. Sit with a person who is not improving.

Open the scriptures when you would (20:00) rather rehearse your issues. Assemble with the saints when the week has already taken more out (20:07) of you than you want to give. And fifth, remember that the Christian has no retirement plan from (20:14) faithfulness.

The body slows and the list of trouble grows. But the assignments we have do (20:23) not expire. We work while it is day.

Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the (20:33) Lord. For as much as you know that the labor is not in vain in the Lord. Moses was 80 when God (20:42) sent him back to Egypt.

The thorn did not end Paul's ministry, it traveled with him. (20:49) But something that is always there may change what you can do. It does not cancel the call to (20:56) keep what you still can on

the Lord and not on the men. But even with the issues we still got to do (21:05) what we can. We still have our duties as a Christian.

It didn't stop Paul, it didn't stop (21:12) Moses. So in conclusion, man that is born of woman is a few days and full of trouble. (21:23) Jacob was right to call his years few and evil.

Paul was right that the fiery trial is not a (21:29) strange thing. He was also right to ask for the thorn to leave and right to glory in the weakness (21:39) when the answer was grace instead of removal. Scripture tells you that trouble is coming (21:46) and that it's not a strange thing and tells you grace is already measured to the size of your (21:53) thorn.

God's strength is made perfect in weakness. The days of trouble are not the end of your (22:05) journey. So get up, the punch has already landed or it will and there will be another one after that.

(22:17) The Lord who kept Paul on his feet with a thorn that will not leave is the same Lord who walks (22:23) with this congregation through the aches, the bills, the diagnoses and the week that did not (22:32) go the way you planned it. God's grace is sufficient for something that is always there. (22:41) So if you're not a Christian, this invitation is for you.

But I think everybody's a Christian so (22:48) if you have something that has gotten heavy, a burden or issues you're going through and (22:55) you need the prayers or anything, now's the time to come forward. (23:00)