

Mark 1:12-20

The King Tested, The Disciples Called

Good morning, Church. It is so good to be here with you.

This is good hiking weather, isn't it... Springtime?

When Jess and I lived in Havasu, we had a Foreign Exchange student from South Korea live with us for 10 months. Her name was Seyoon.

It was Springtime out there, and she wanted to experience a nice American hike, so we woke up early and took her to a pretty famous trail there.

We called it Sarah's Crack, not the most flattering name, but that is what the place was called. Part of the hike went through this tiny crevice through the canyon, a crack.

Now, there was a place on that trail where there was a split off, and there was an easier hike and a harder hike through the crack.

The harder hike really did have the most incredible view, and Seyoon would probably never get the opportunity to see Lake Havasu from that vantage point ever again in her life.

So, I asked Jess, “You packed the waters I said to grab, right?” She said, “Yep.”

I said, “Let’s take her up the harder trail.”

We also had our little pit/lab, Henry, with us.

So, we hiked this trail, and maneuvered through the crack, and made it to the top of the plateau, and the view was just spectacular...

We even decided to go further, because our dog loved the water, and we let Henry jump in.

It was awesome, and worth it, and getting back out was a whole other ordeal.

In the end, Seyoon was so blessed, it was worth it, every single step, for the experience, the view, the story...

And you know, looking back at that, I realize something: that morning, the decision was more than just which way to go on the trail.

It is a life decision, one that I am often trying to teach my kids.

The hard path is the best, the most rewarding path, the one worth taking.

We will see this in our text today.

In Mark 1:12-20, Jesus has just been baptized and will be led into the wilderness. He will face the easy path – these shortcuts offered by Satan – but He will refuse them.

Jesus will choose obedience over comfort, faithfulness over compromise.

Then our reading will take us up to the shores of Galilee, and Jesus will call ordinary men – fishermen – to leave everything and follow Him.

They will face a decision, their own fork in the road.

Follow Jesus or stay where it is safe.

They can choose obedience or comfort.

They can accept their calling or try to control their destiny.

And, incredibly, they choose the hard path immediately.

Something that sticks out to me this morning is that, before Jesus ever called disciples to follow Him, He chose the path of obedience Himself – and then He invites others to walk that same road.

Let's pray, and we will get into the teaching.

Remember last time we were together, we ended with the Baptism of Jesus.

It really was a powerful scene, with the Father speaking from heaven, endorsing Jesus's earthly ministry.

There at His Baptism, we also had the Holy Spirit descending upon the Son of God in the form of a dove.

This picture testified to the reality that this was no ordinary Man in the water that day, but one who was operating with Power from on High, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

And we might expect that after such a climactic moment, there at the Baptismal of John, there in the Jordan River, with such a dramatic showing from heaven, that perhaps Jesus would jump right into ministry, maybe start with some miracles.

Maybe a healing... maybe He could do something to show His power over nature, or He could teach an authoritative teaching and embarrass the religious leaders, or maybe teach something that would move the crowds to tears.

Maybe Jesus should cast a demon out right now to assert dominance; after all, the Father has blessed Him and the Holy Spirit has empowered Him; it only seems logical.

Something theatrical to utilize all the dramatics of the moment for His advantage.

Jesus is on the mountaintop here... we have all had these mountaintop experiences...

Where the Lord does something incredible, He meets us, maybe at a retreat, or on a mission trip, or even here in a time of worship.

We did not want to leave the moment, God is so close, His presence so real, it is all so powerful...

But eventually, you have to move from that moment... life goes on, we have to go home, and we have to face real life, our marriages, our jobs, our rebellious kids, our debt, and we are met face to face with a battle from the enemy...

And that great mountain high, the wonderful experience we just had, that incredible moment, it is gone, swept away, as the pain of reality floods in...

Church, the reality is that the mountaintop experience usually prepares us, equips us, and readies us for the battle that awaits in the valley below.

Church, it is in the trial that we are prepared, shaped, and molded...

There is a purpose for it all.

I read this quote from Spurgeon this week, and it really spoke to me. I hope it does to you...

“A Christian man should be willing to be tried; he should be pleased to let his religion be put to the test. ‘There’ Says he, ‘Hammer away if you like.’ Do you want to be carried to heaven on a feather bed?” C. H. Spurgeon¹

Jesus, Himself, will now go from the mountaintop, a moment of blessing and communion with the Father

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Swz5UkP3EbM>

and the Holy Spirit, and He will head off to face the enemy in the valley.

Look now at verses 12...

Satan Tempts Jesus

(Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13)

1:12 Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. **13** And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

Mark writes, “immediately,” here, remember, he is all about the action... we will see it eight times here in Chapter 1.

Jesus was led by the Spirit that descended upon Him into the wilderness.

The devil knew about the prophecies surrounding the Son of God and that He would be sinless.

He knew if he could take Jesus down, it would have wrecked the plan of God, which was laid out way

back in the Garden of Eden, when God promised the Seed of a Woman would come, who would crush the serpent's head.

Throughout history, Satan had been in a frantic fight against that promise.

His only hope now that Jesus was here was to corrupt the Seed, the Promise One.

Jesus was not tempted so that God could see whether His Son was worthy.

The Father already gave His stamp of approval at the Jordan River when John submerged Him under the water.

The reason Jesus was tempted is so that every creature in heaven, here on earth, even under the earth might know that Jesus Christ is without sin.

This is a very important part of God's Plan of Redemption.

When John saw Jesus coming toward him, he declared in **John 1:29** “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

For this to be true... There could be no sin in Him; He must be perfect, holy, and Blameless.

This time of Temptation was to make it clear that Jesus is the Mighty One who conquered sin.

He exposes Satan and his tactics and defeats him.

It is because Jesus defeated our enemy that we can have victory over the devil, who daily tempts us and accuses us.

We also know that we have a God and Savior who understands the temptations we endure in this world.

Heb. 4:15-16 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. **16** Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus knows Himself the pressure of it all, the trickery of it all, even the deceit, confusion, cleverness, of our enemy... being at His weakest in the wilderness Himself...

He fasted 40 Days, and Matthew tells us Jesus was hungry... You see, when you are fasting that long, it is said the hunger eventually goes away, but there does come a time when it hits again, and when it does, it means you are on the brink of death... the body is eating itself...

Jesus was at His weakest point when Satan came tempting Him...

Jesus knows weakness; He understands the difficulty of overcoming our terribly cunning enemy, and we can come to Him boldly to obtain mercy and grace to help in times of need. He knows and understands.

Since Satan is the one doing the testing, we know that his intentions are evil... It is not God who tempts us with evil.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

Now, why did the Spirit compel Jesus to proceed to the wilderness to be tested?

That is a great question, and I am glad you are asking it...

In this, we are seeing Jesus's power over Satan, His power to resist the devil, and it is displaying His absolute authority over that Serpent of Old.

We also gain valuable insights into how to overcome sin and temptation ourselves.

Once again, Jesus was there 40 days in the wilderness, this is a Biblical number signifying judgment and testing...

We see this clearly throughout God's Word...

The flood lasted 40 days and nights.

Moses was sent into the deserts of Midian to be prepared to lead Israel, and he was there 40 years.

The number of stripes a person received in punishment was 40.

The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because of their disbelief.

And in both Matthew and Luke's Gospels, we have it recorded that Jesus fasted and prayed for 40 days here.

In those accounts, we also learn that Satan attacked in three basic areas, the same areas he went after Adam and Eve with.

The first temptation for Jesus was the Lust of the flesh...

He tells Jesus to make the stones into bread, which, of course, the Son of God could easily do to satisfy His great hunger instantly.

It seems so harmless, really. Surely God would want His Son fed and well cared for... How can that be a bad thing?

This is how many people measure their spiritual life... Surely God wants me to be blessed... and they measure all the blessings they have, the material things they have in life, and they say, "Oh God is so pleased with me."

Satan is so crafty in getting us to look at our fulfillment as the barometer of God's plan and purpose.

Eat... God wants you to be happy... get your own first... make yourself well first... and when God starts to bless a person's life... they will start to put the things of God on the back burner... because they start to believe "My happiness is the chief aim of God."

Satan doesn't throw any old temptations out; it is strategic... he knows you, what you have dreamed about, waited for God to bless you with, he knows you, and when good things come your way, oh, he makes that your focus...

Satan will say, "Now, just focus on you, focus on the blessings, not on the One who blessed you, no, don't look that way... make more bread for yourself."

Jesus was weak, His body needed food, and Satan appeals to the lust of the flesh... but Jesus replies with the Word of God... and this is the thing... the Word of God must be our standard...

He quoted from Deuteronomy, of all places; some people think the Old Testament is not relevant.

Jesus sure did, **Deut. 8:3 Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.**

Satan loses round one...

He tries again with the Pride of Life...

Satan takes Jesus to the highest pinnacle of the Temple and challenges Jesus to throw Himself down.

Mind you, the devil was quoting Scripture as well, telling Jesus that God would give the angels charge over Him, and that He would be protected... misusing Psalm 91.

This is what the devil has done since the Garden: taken what God has said and twisted it, "Has God indeed said this..."

The devil is telling Jesus to make a scene, a spectacular scene, to have God react, protect Him, to make God do something on His behalf.

This is a play on the self-centeredness of man's heart, to want to draw attention to self...

People longed to be noticed... and Satan plays on this all the time... trying to get people drawn into drama

and theatrics in the name of faith, to get God to do something, to open the windows of heaven on my behalf.

Some can make very foolish decisions in their life out of pride and presumption, trying to blame it on faith and the Lord.

Jesus would not dare step off that ledge, and He once again looks to Deuteronomy.

Deut. 6:16 “You shall not tempt the LORD YOUR God...”

Satan knocked down again, in the second round...

So, he comes out strong in the third and final round.

He comes at Jesus with the Lust of the Eyes...

Satan took Jesus up on an exceedingly high mountain... There he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory...

They were Satan's to give, Jesus never disputed it...

Jesus would come one day to Crush the Head of the Serpent...

And here He could do it without the Cross... Satan would surrender if Jesus would only worship the devil.

So many have sold their soul for instant exaltation and power in this world.

For the fame and praise of this world...

They wanted it all now... their comfort now... they wanted the glory now... forsaking the crowns and glory to come... because that means forsaking this life here and now...

Oh, how Satan wants you looking at this world... He wants you to measure God's Blessings by the monetary gain you have achieved in this world...

He wants you looking to your success, the big nice things you have, the kingdoms built here and now, and for us to say, "My, My, we are blessed aren't we..."

Satan wants us asking for more here and now... give us it all now... he wants our prayers consumed with our well-being, our prosperity.... More... give me...

Forgetting the Bible completely; it tells us clearly what will come of it all...

2 Peter 2:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with great noise, and the elements will melt with

fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

All that a man is killed himself for in his life to build... as he stands back and looks back at his life... all of it will be burned...

The giant investments... the homes... the treasures... all the gains... burned to ash...

The kingdoms of this world and their glory... gone...

What will remain... what did you do for Jesus?

Jesus wouldn't take the easy road either... He knew better... the Cross was the only way...

Don't ever believe the easy way is God's Way...

There is a cost in all of this... He carried the cross for us... He looked at this easy path before Him that day...

Then Jesus looked to God's Word, and He quoted **Deut. 6:13 You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him.**

Jesus said, **Matthew 4:10, "Away with you, Satan!"**

It is not about me at all... It is not about my safety... it is not about my nice little plans I have for myself...

It is all about Him and His Glory...

Away with you, Satan!

This is such a powerful response... Worship God first in our lives...

We will be tempted, we will be tempted often, and most often after a great victory or momentous time with the Lord.

Almost every time the Lord has done something spectacular for Jess and me in our marriage, miracles, impossibilities overcome, and breakthroughs, we have learned that Satan will almost immediately meet us with temptations of selfishness...

You know what, let's take a season to focus on us, to look at our situation, we deserve this, we need this...

And then one of us will wake up to what is happening... and we will say, "What are we doing, after what God has just done, we need to press in... Away from me, Satan!"

It never gets to be about us! That is Satanic talk...

There is more ground to take... we have to keep moving forward... the Cross before me, no turning back...

Jesus didn't ask us to take up our cross in the more convenient seasons of our lives; He said we needed to do it daily.

Stand guard against the Lust of the Flesh, the Pride of Life, the Lust of the Eyes...

Satan still uses this against our lives today...

We will be tempted; no one is without temptation.

1 Cor. 10:12-13 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. **13** No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

I remember coming out of our addictions... and just hugging that verse some days...

"With this temptation, He will make a way of escape, that I can bear it..."

It would be my prayer, a promise I clung to, as I desperately needed strength some days.

And God was faithful... through it all... I know what He can do for you... I have experienced it...

Mark here tells us that Jesus was surrounded by wild beasts as well; a lot was going on in that wilderness.

Forty days of a straight battle for our Savior....

He was tempted in every way we are, and He was victorious, and Satan left Him... and the angels came to minister to Him.

I imagine a teaching like this is meant to be heard by those who are going through something this morning.

And if you are in the midst of intense temptation in this season of your life, you are overwhelmed, in a battle, maybe you feel like you are hanging on by a spiritual thread today.

Listen, this happens to all of us. I want to be clear...

Our Savior went through it... Some Christians put on an air about them that they never walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death... or the Valley of Tears... or The Place of Trouble or Trials...

I don't trust anyone who walks in their faith from a position that cannot touch my pain...

There is a battle we all face in our faith... and maybe God is preparing you... and it will be intense and gnarly in those seasons...

When you are in this season of testing and trial for some time, the decision to remain faithful can begin to feel difficult, maybe even pointless or counterproductive.

It is easy to forget that we are sometimes on the winning side.

The overwhelming feeling can feel like a weight on our chest or neck, or like we are sinking in mud... and there is no way out, or there will never be an end to it all.

Another promise I cling to, sometimes recite out loud...

James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Resist him... Maybe you are saying... "Pastor, I am... I don't know how much longer I can."

Keep resisting him.... He is looking for a weakness in the armor, a way in; he wants to steal, kill, destroy...

Battle him with the Word... get into the Word... recite the Word of God... Victory will come...

You are assured, as you resist, ultimately he will flee, and the Lord will minister to you and build you up.

James said right after that, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."

Be encouraged by the Good News of Jesus and look to His example...

Battles will come; we see this at the beginning of Jesus's ministry. Now He has the victory... He will set out to preach...

First, we see this in verse 14...

Jesus Begins His Galilean Ministry

(Matt 4:12-17; Luke 4:14,15)

14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, **15** and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

We have more trials once again here at the outset of Jesus's ministry...

John the Baptist is arrested and put into prison.

That might be something to persuade Jesus to think twice about starting on His own...

He can see there will be a cost to it all... Another temptation to hide away into seclusion...

That will not stop the Son of God. He is a Man of conviction; He is not here out of fear of man... peer pressure will not stop His ministry.

So many are cowardly in their convictions... afraid to do or say anything, stand for what is right... because they have such a fear of their peers, this dread of what people think about them...

Throw that off, Christian, you will not be liked when you stand in this fallen world for what is right...

When you do the right thing, you will be smeared, mocked, and ridiculed... but fear God all the more...

This is the template our Savior put forth... John was arrested... and He stepped up, knowing what would ultimately happen... the easy path was well behind Jesus now... His course was set for rejection, spittle in the face, a Cross...

Don't think your Christian walk will escape the same fate.

John has officially decreased as was his desire; Jesus will now increase.

Jesus went into Galilee, which Isaiah predicted.

Isa 9:1-2 In Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light;

This was another proof of Jesus's calling; He was the Promised One.

Now, this is pretty important: the Spirit took Jesus up to the wilderness, but at the end of the time of testing, Jesus is now full of power.

The Spirit is now carrying Him in the ministry...

As you are going through your own battles this morning, your own trials, you are in a knock-down, drag-out with the enemy, understand what might be ahead.

After this time, that same Spirit will carry you right into a powerful season of being used by God.

The power of God will work in you to do His Will.

We can only be used effectively in our Christian duties and opportunities by the power of God as we are led and filled by the Holy Spirit.

As you are walking in the midst of those pressures right now... the trials... maybe a cancer diagnosis, or a marriage that has been shattered, or sin that you have just put behind you, hang in there...

Take heart, if you are in the midst of it today...

Maybe you came in this morning desperately needing to hear something from God.

See here in this morning's text: there is a purpose for the pain...

God will never leave, He will never forsake you, He will give you strength to stand, even in the middle of this; with all the burdens you carry today.

Notice here, Jesus came preaching repentance, declaring, “The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand.”

That word, time, in Greek is *Kairos*, meaning a period of time set by God or predetermined by God.

All of the prophets foretold, spoke of, wrote about this day... God measured it... as Jesus came into Galilee, it was a day chosen by the Father.

No longer was the kingdom of Satan, stained by the sin and the curse ruling this world, the Kingdom of Heaven had established a Beachhead in Galilee, as the Messiah preached...

This was the moment in history that the sons and daughters of the kingdom of light would start to be won over and rescued from the dominion of darkness.

The message was “repent and believe.”

Remember, repent is to turn from your sin and go to your God.

Come to your senses and realize you cannot do the same things you have always done, turn and believe...

What does it mean to believe now?

We are to put our confidence into, to trust in something...

What are you relying on in your life?

This is more than just a creed or motto someone pledges themselves to.

It is a verb... it is an adjustment of one's life to something.

Jesus is telling those who would hear, turn from your sin, and put your full reliance upon Him for salvation and citizenship in His New Kingdom.

You no longer have to be bound to the kingdom of darkness; there is a way out now, through repentance and belief.

It is interesting to me that Jesus did not take this world-changing message to the Temple, where the great religious minds and scribes sat...

He did not take this Tyre and Sidon, where the wealthy and elite were...

He did not go to Rome to address the political powerhouses of the time...

He did not go to Athens in Greece to convince the philosopher of His day...

No, the Son of God came to this earth and went to a lowly fishing village, Galilee, to minister to the common people.

In fact, He would call those who would be His most trusted companions on this earth from the common people...

Look at this, verse 16-20...

Four Fishermen Called as Disciples

(Matt 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11)

16 And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. **17** Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." **18** They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

19 When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. **20** And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

Now, fishermen were necessarily the top of the class.

As a young boy, I had uncles who took on this profession in Orange County; even today, they are still crabbing in the northern states.

Those men would take me out fishing with them, and the men I would be surrounded with those days were

the most vulgar and debased men I have ever known in my life.

In the ancient world, the fishermen were of low class and not the most polished speakers.

Jesus sees Peter, who will be His lead disciple, and his brother Andrew, and he calls them to follow Him.

It is comforting to a guy like me, maybe to you as well this morning, that the Son of God would swoop so low in the pool of humanity to find His people.

I was reminded of this text this week...

1 Cor. 1:26-29 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. **27** But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the mighty things; **28** and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are

not, to bring to nothing the things that are, **29** that no flesh should glory in His presence.

This is God's way... so that no one can glory in His presence...

Let him who glories, glory in the Lord.

~~People often forget this about the Bible heroes; sometimes they are lifted too high in our storytelling...~~

~~Moses was a murderer, he was a man whose speech was hindered, a stutterer, yet it was that flawed man that God used mightily to deliver His people.~~

~~I have people sometimes complain about where the worship comes from, the ministries that it comes from... and I think that is kind of interesting...~~

~~I wonder, would we sing songs written by a man who committed adultery, then went on to murder a friend to cover up his adultery...~~

~~A man who was guilty of lying, pride, lust, and having multiple lovers...~~

~~Would Church sing worship songs written by a songwriter guilty of those things?~~

~~Well, we do all the time, the Psalmist David...~~

~~Every man is flawed, weak, and terrible... some are just better at hiding than others...~~

~~Here, Jesus calls Simon Peter and Andrew, and farther down the way, James and John...~~

~~Jesus calls average men and women to His work.~~

~~Listen, so many disqualify themselves because of their past...~~

~~Any repentant life can be used for God's Glory...~~

One last thing I want to note here: they left immediately, to follow Jesus...

Right now was the time to serve Jesus... not a year from now... or at a more easier time in their life... or when they retire... or when the kids are all grown... or

when things get a little slower for them in the business...

Jesus is still inviting us to join Him in this eternal work right now...

Remember... this world is going to burn, and all that is within it... we are

Titus 2:13-14 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **14** who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.

What does all of this mean for us this morning?

God is still looking for ordinary people to join in the work of saving the lost... those trapped in darkness...

Church, the fields are ripe, they are ready for the harvest, and the laborers are few.

Some of you, He has been tapping on your shoulder for some time...

You've been shrugging Him off... “Lord, I just want to get my family started... My career is going... just a little more in life for me...”

We see here in our text that it is a complete turning away from our own direction in life, a surrender, a handing over to Him...

We believe, remember belief is more than a statement we make...

So many people say, “Well, I believe...” and it doesn't mean anything for their life...

What Jesus is saying this morning is believe in Him with everything, trust Him with everything, look through your life, and all that you are trying to hold onto, and give it to Him...

Listen, there will be opposition; it will be difficult... Some people get to this point where they get so close to victory, a breakthrough, and they need to resist the devil, but instead they give in to temptation...

No, resist him, and his pressure for you to do it your way... cling to God's Word and God's Truth at all costs, Draw near to God and He will Draw near to you...

He will get you to the other side...

And through it all, commit yourself to Him, to the work, to what He puts before you...

This week, I was at the bank finishing up creating these accounts for three of my kids who were in an accident...

And it reminded me of probably one of the worst weeks of our family's life.

Jess always wanted to adopt... before we started having kids, before we knew her womb would carry kids, we tried to apply for Foster Care.

They denied us because they said some of the things Jess had been through as a teen and a kid were pretty traumatic, and she needed special counseling.

She was like, "I am a pastor's wife, and I am ministering to people, what do you mean?"

They said she was too broken... not understanding Jesus had put her back together.

But after we had four kids...

Jess said, "I still have this desire to Foster to Adopt."

I said, "Okay, but they denied us, but we can just try and go through that door, until the Lord closes it."

The very first appointment we had was with the lady who denied us; she saw our four running around the house, very much alive, interviewed us, and approved us for the first phase right there.

We made it to the final training... It's coming as a two-day training down the hill on Friday and Saturday, well, the Tuesday before... I get a frantic call from my mother-in-law, and a drunk driver hit her, Jess, and the kids head-on.

And Jess was bashed up pretty good, but everyone came home that night... the Ambulance driver said, "Families don't come home from accidents like this."

My kids still talk about it, it is the only time, they claim they saw their dad cry... I still contest...

I was shook up over it... the elders told me to take a day off or two, John Toomey took the Wednesday Night for me...

And I just started working on projects around the house... When I get stressed, I work, and work, and work...

Jess came out, it was getting late, and she said, "come inside, eat something, it is getting late,"

I said, "I have one more thing to do,"

Well, that one more thing to do cost me my pinky...

All those years in the trades, and I lost it on a little project at home.

I am in the living room waiting for the ambulance. Jess is all bandaged up, blood going everywhere. Jess looks up, “God, what did we do to you?”

But late that night, as we were having surgery on my hand, Jess remembered that training, and she told me, “There is a little child out there, and Satan is doing all that he can to keep us from finishing this training. We are going on Friday, and we are going to finish this out.”

God, I thank the Lord I married an outlaw’s daughter sometimes...

She keeps fighting...

We went into that training, both of us bandaged up, messed up, and we finished it...

We got the call for little Cruz a few months later...

Liana’s comments...

When he asks me what happened to my pinky, I tell him, “You did, and it was worth it.”

But there will be hard times, trials, Satan will hit you with all that he has... keep fighting, resist the devil and he will flee, serve the Lord, now, today, He wants to use your life for Great and Incredible things...

Don't ever take seasons to focus on yourself... remember the temptations of Christ, that is how our enemy takes you out of God's Will and God's Purpose.

Take up your cross daily, count up the cost... this is the Christian way... we decrease, and He increases all the more.

I hope you are all in and ready to face the battle.

Let's pray...