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Speaker: Pastor Mark Hanke  
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Series: Courageous Living in a Dangerous World

**6** Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. **2** Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. **3** March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. **4** Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. **5** When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in." **6** So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." **7** And he ordered the army, "Advance! March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD." **8** When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD's covenant followed them. **9** The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. **10** But Joshua had commanded the army, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" **11** So he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the army returned to camp and spent the night there. **12** Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. **13** The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding. **14** So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days. **15** On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times.

**16** The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! **17** The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. **18** But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. **19** All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury." **20** When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. **21** They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys. **22** Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her." **23** So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers and sisters and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel. **24** Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house. **25** But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day. **26** At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the LORD is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: "At the cost of his firstborn son he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates." **27** So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

Forty years is a long time to wait. If you're a parent, and you waited 40 years for your prodigal to come home -- you know it was a long time to wait. Forty years, they walked. Forty years, they ate the exact same breakfast, lunch, and dinner. For 40 years, they faced disappointment. For 40 years, they questioned whether they would ever realize -- was it not just maybe Moses and those who were older than 20 that would never enter into the land? For 40 years.

One would think that when you're done with that, you get to celebrate. It would only make sense to me that, if you endure cancer, and you have won it, and you have gone into remission, that you would think, "God, thank you for your faithfulness." You don't expect in that moment to wake up the next day to a heated new battle. You just don't. You expect that God got you through that one -- now it's time to celebrate. But my friends, these guys got through the Jordan -- that was a miracle. They came out of the desert -- that was a miracle. And on the horizon, they looked up and they saw this city. They'd heard about it. Very few of them had seen it. Spies -- they saw it, and they told them about it. But it's probably a little bit like the first time you ever saw the Grand Canyon. Somebody described it to you, and they told you how deep it was, and how wide it was. But did anyone go there for the first time and think, "Oh, wow. It was much bigger in the pictures"? No! When you're there, it's like the first time Kerri and I were with a young man, first time he ever saw the ocean. He just stood there and looked at it! I mean, he'd seen water before. But the ocean, it's like -- to take it in, is -- it's massive. And they came upon this city, it had a history. Archeologists date it back somewhere close to, like, 9,000 BC. The city had been around, and they'd talked about its fortresses. The walls that surrounded it. The walls were not just walls! I mean, they were wide enough that you had houses in the wall. And so, on top of the ridge of the wall, it was like a road, and you could pass two carriages with horses and everything. So, it's not like this thing was like, you know, a little wood fence like that, you know, borders some of your back yards. This is a wall you could drive a car on. And when they got there, it was walled up, and the soldiers were marching around. And I'm sure they looked at each other and said, "God, are you kidding me? The Red Sea, the Jordan -- 40 years wasn't enough for you? You have to give us this!"

Sometimes, when we think that we've reached the end of our battle, we kind of expect -- maybe we expect that God owes us something. "You know, God, we just battled cancer. Lord, we just fought for 40 years and our prodigals come home. Lord, we just -- we just saw a victory in our family!" We don't expect to wake up the day after a victory and have God say, "I've got an even bigger challenge for you." And maybe part of the reason is because -- I think, much to our chagrin, in our country for the last, maybe 30 years plus, we've kind of prepared people. It's not just the prosperity folks. It's not just the Benny Hinns of the world. It's the whole lock of us. That we've kind of looked at this thing, and I think we've created a path or a thinking in us that God owes us something, and that if you walk with Christ it's gonna be easier, and we've maybe misunderstood "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." And we've kind of interpreted from that -- you know what, God? It should be easier walking with you.

How do I know that? Because of the number of angry and disappointed people that make appointments with me. They're not angry at me -- they're angry at God. They're struggling -- "God, make sense of this! I thought we were done battling." But Joshua teaches us something. Just because we face a challenge doesn't disqualify the promise of what God has given to us. Now, we in this room don't have a promise necessarily of a land, but we have a number of promises, like --

when Jesus said that you will have life, and that more abundantly, He meant it. He meant that you would have a life of abundance. Doesn't mean you're gonna have a ton of money, but He does say, and He meant it, that we're going to live a life of great abundance. He said -- when Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you." I think you ought to be able to preach that in every country in the world, including Ukraine. Jesus meant that. Doesn't mean that no one's gonna die, doesn't mean that you're never gonna get cancer -- but the reality is, He says, "I leave you my peace. I give it to you. It's possible for you." And He meant it.

When God said through the apostle Peter that we could be partakers of the divine nature, He meant that. He meant that you do not have to live this life simply in the resources of your own flesh. And when Paul promised us, when he said, that God can accomplish more than we could ever dare to hope or ask, He meant that. But sometimes, as we live our lives, and we have these promises in front of us, we turn the corner and we look up and we see this city by name of Jericho. We see this battle, and we have to come to grips with the fact that when you think you've arrived, sometimes when you think you've made it through the battle, and you've won the battle, that's when the real battle begins. And it was for the nation of Israel. Crossing the Jordan would be easy. It would be. It'd be simple. It'd be kind of a cakewalk. They come in there and they see this fortified city that has a reputation, probably the most impenetrable city in the entire region, and it stands between them and the promised land. They gotta go through that. They gotta get by it. There is no way that they can route themselves around it. And God led them right up to that place.

And that's what He intends to do. You can't put your life on auto-pilot. You can't opt out. You can plead for mediocrity and go back into the desert. But oftentimes, what God wants to do is, He wants to strengthen you. I've never met anyone in my life that has gotten really, really strong. I mean, muscularly defined by getting a membership at a local club, walking into the club, looking at the weights, and then going back home. Your body has to experience resistance. You have to go in there, and you have to encounter those weights. And you have to press against them, and they press against you. The only way your body is ever going to be shaped differently is through resistance, and the only way my life and your life is ever going to take a decided improvement, a growth, a change, a trajectory upwards, in our area of faith, is for you to enter into battles that God regularly will bring your way. He has to. He cannot give you an easy life. He cannot give you the blessed life where there's no problems. He can't! Or He is committing you to forever remaining in kindergarten. And that's not God's design.

When you think you've arrived, that's when the real battles begin. Question is, how do we win them? Joshua teaches us. And the first question you have to wrestle with is -- what side are you on? Make sure you're on the right side. We always like sides. We do. With everything. We're liberal, conservative, we're Democrat, we're Republican. We're this, we're that. We're pro CRT, we're anti-CRT. Whatever the case may be. We're always asking, and we always want to know where another

person is at. Are you for us or are you against us? Joshua was that way. It's just pretty natural. He's headed into a battle, and the text tells us, if you could start with me back in chapter 5 this time, how about verse 13. "Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and he saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand." Joshua -- he's a fighter. He just is. Not sure you'd want your daughter to marry him. But this guy knows how to lead, and this guy knows how to fight, and I am telling you, he is tenacious. And he looks at this man, and he's asking himself the question, "Are you the first guy that I have to take out?" He asks him the question. Joshua went up to him, and he asked, "Are you for us or you against us?" I don't know what angels look like. This is an angel. He's got a sword. Do angels go to the gym and lift? I don't know. Does God just naturally make them kind of, you know, ripped? Probably. I think God kinda likes that kinda stuff. I mean, so I think these angels looked like, you know, "I'll slice you up like julienne fries. I'm gonna wipe you out."

Notice the question. I think it's a natural question, it's one we do all the time. "Are you for us or you against us? Are you on our side? Do you believe the way we believe about masks? Do you believe the way I believe about vaccines?" We're always trying to figure out where people are at. His response is humbling. To be quite honest with you, shocking. "Which side am I on, Joshua? Neither." Whoa! Stop there for a minute. "Are you kidding me? You can't choose between bloodthirsty Jericho folks and us? We're the people of God! Which side are you on? It's pretty easy! These folks have a bad reputation. They kill children for worship. And you can't figure out what side you're on?" His response is -- "Neither. I don't take sides. I don't take any side. I'm the commander of the army of the Lord, and I have now come. And here's my question, Joshua. Which side are you on?"

If you're gonna fight battles, God has a question for you. Which side are you on? You don't ask God to join your side, because He's not going to. You don't ask God to take up your agenda, because He won't. He has an agenda, He has a side, and His question for us as a church and for you as an individual is, Which side are you on? Are you for God, are you against Him? And by the way, if you demand your agenda, you're against Him. No matter how principled it may seem, and no matter how glorious it may seem, the text tells us God doesn't take sides. Even when it's between these bloodthirsty Jericho residents and the people of God. God is not here. Why is that important? Because, "Joshua, you've gonna have all kinds of time where it's not quite as clear, and you're gonna have to figure out what side are you on, and I don't take the side, I declare the side." God does not take sides -- we join Him. I think sometimes we need to realize that when it comes to issues of politics and race and a score of other things. We want to find out if we can have dinner with that person. We want to find out if they can be our friend. And God has a question for you: Not, Will God join your side and your view, but -- Will you join God's? Will you take up God's agenda? Will you take up God's perspective? Will you take up God's values? Because I know personally, if I start pursuing my own agenda, it almost inevitably -- in fact, not almost -- it will become twisted.

Two reasons why you have to make sure you join the right side. Number one is because God doesn't take sides, and number two in this text is because God is the one who delivers. And if you want to win the battles -- the real battles, the important ones -- the ones between you and the will of God, the ones between you and fulfilling God's will -- then you have to be on God's side. Why? Because God is the one who declares, "I will win this battle for you." Jericho was tightly shut up, it says in chapter 6, verse 1. No one went in, and no one came out. All of the gates were closed. And they had arrows on the top, ready for anyone that would come within a distance, and they were ready to defend themselves. And God takes Joshua on a little hike. He says, "Hey, come with me." "Okay. Let's go, God, what are we gonna do?" "Well, I want show you something." And they go up, and then God said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands." This is hilarious. You should laugh. Don't do it, because the first service tried, and it was so pathetic. So, we're not even gonna try that one. But -- the reality is, look at it -- the walls are all barricaded. The city is fortified. All of the soldiers are in place. And God walks up with little Joshua -- all by themselves, just the two of them, out taking a little walk. And they're having a great time. And they look up, and He goes, "See, I've delivered the city into your hands." And I gotta believe that Joshua said, "I don't see it. There's not a thing I see that makes sense to what you just said, God."

And that's why you have to ask yourself the question -- what side are you on? Because the battles that we will face, and the battles that God wants us to win, and the battles between us and the will of God, and the battles between us and fulfilling God's passion for us -- as a church, and as you as an individual -- it's gonna need God. Now, I'm absolutely convinced there's not a thing that our city faces that is beyond the power of God to resolve with people of faith. But if we're forever trying to get God to join our side, our persuasion, our solution, God is gonna say, "I'm not in." And He is gonna take His muscular angel and He's gonna walk to another place. What He's gonna do is, He's gonna go to a place where He can find some people who will say, "God, I'm in with you. Why? Because you're the one who delivers." They've tried it before. They tried to take Canaan early on, and what happened? They failed. They tried to make their way. They tried to get out of the desert, and it didn't work. They tried to rescue themselves and they couldn't. That's why God has a question for us. What side are you on? Are you the kind of person who thinks, I'm pretty right, and I expect God to join me?

Secondly, if we want to win these battles, we have to understand that it's going to take daily obedience. Yes. Not weekly obedience, not monthly obedience, not periodic obedience, but daily obedience. I want you to just kind of go through the list. What did God tell them? Number one is, "I want you to go out and march. I want you to march in a specific way. I want you to -- on the first day, I want you to march around once. I want you to have the ark of the covenant lead you -- why? Because I want everyone to understand it is the presence and the will of God that is leading this thing. I want you to be silent." Now, I don't know about you, but I think that that's pretty tough. It is. Just try being a referee today in kids' sports. And in

collegiate sports. Professional sports. And just listen as, if you can imagine, all of these parents who are sitting on their duff and don't have a clue about football, or you name the sport, and they're sitting there trying to tell this referee, like he's blind, "Are you blind! Are you an idiot!" And they're going off, and you just want -- you know that the ref wants to turn around and say, "No, I'm not blind, your ugly piece of garbage!" But he can't! They'd be fired. That's what God said -- "You speak up, you mouth off, and you're done. I want you to march, and I want you to be silent."

Now, do you think for a moment, when all of the soldiers are sitting up there on that wall, and they have eggs, and they have tomatoes, do you think any of them just looked down and said, "You bunch of idiots!" Do you think any of them mocked them? Do you think any of them made fun of them? Do you think any of them had, you know, crude jokes to talk about the Jews? Guarantee you they did. "I want you to be silent. I don't want you to mouth off, I don't want you to quibble. And I want you to do it for seven days. First six days, I want you to do it once, and the seventh day I want you to do it seven times. And I do not want you to shout until I specifically tell you."

Why? Why does God give them all of these things? Because of this -- bringing a wall down is easy for God. Developing obedience in your life, which leads to the strengthening of faith, which enables you to take down anything in the world is difficult. Tearing down a wall is the easiest thing for God to do. In fact, by the way, He could have done it on Monday. Does anyone doubt that? Does anyone doubt that God could not have said, "You know what? Why wait. I mean, let's have five days in Jericho with some barbecues and s'mores, and -- let's just do some fun stuff." He could've done it. No. Why didn't He do it? Because God is developing faith in His people, and it takes obedience and it takes listening and it takes adherence to what God wants to do.

What has God called you to do? Well, He's called us to pray. Do you obey Him? He's called us to serve. He has said that every person in this room who is a Christian has been anointed and entrusted with a spiritual gift. And God gave you that gift because He wants to make our church and the body of Christ in this region stronger. And so, He gave you a gift, and the only way we're gonna get stronger is if you use that gift. Can I ask you a question? Are you obedient? Or have you shelved yourself, for whatever reason? Have you just kind put yourself on the shelf and said, "You know what? Not now." And if you've given God that excuse, maybe for three, four, five, six years -- have you discovered that maybe you're simply an attender, and that's not God's vision for you at all.

Battles are won through daily obedience. God has called us to give. He's called us to forgive. And the battles that we face, even in our city, God can solve like that. Like He could've taken a wall and crumbled it in a minute. But that's easy. Developing faith that trusts God for greater things -- that takes work. And that's what God wants to do.

One of the most common things that hits my office is a person trying to discern God's will. I don't regret that at all -- I love that. "Pastor, I'm trying to figure out whether or not I marry this person, whether or not I buy this, whether or not I take this job." Whatever the case may be. "Can you help me?" God has never given me prophetic vision -- "Yes, marry this person. She's the right one. You're gonna have 12 kids, and your life is gonna be glorious." He hasn't given me that. But what He has given us is what He gave Joshua. And it's maybe one of the most helpful principles I've lived personally and I've given to people. Obey God in the known, and the unknown will become clear in His time.

A lot of people sit at the precipice -- how is the wall gonna come down? What's your will, God? How are you gonna do that? How are you gonna resolve this issue? And God freely and regularly does not tell you! What He tells you is what? "This is what I want you to do while you wait. I want you to walk around that every day. I want you to lead with the ark. I want you to be silent. I want you to shout when I tell you to shout." Discerning God's will is sometimes not all that easy, but I would say this -- I don't think God ever plays hard to get. I don't think God is elusive. I don't think He's mysterious. I don't think He tries to shake and bake with you. I don't think God lives that way. There's nothing in the Scripture that tells me God is that way. What He does tell you is, "I want you to obey me. And in the right time, I'll show you what I'm gonna do." If you want to win battles, commit yourself to daily obedience, and if you want to win battles, make the commitment to endure in faith. Because victory is ours if we endure in faith. That's what the Scripture tells us. Hebrews chapter 11 tells us, in verse 30: "By faith, the walls of Jericho fell after the people marched around them for seven days." How silly. How silly! March around them? Yeah.

I remember a number of years ago when we led a team. We've actually had two teams in our church go to Turkey. Turkey is one of the most resistant countries in the world to the gospel. And we took some short-term trips, and we went there solely to walk neighborhoods and to pray. Somebody asked me one time -- it's a fair question: "Why are you spending that much money to go to Turkey and pray? You can pray for Turkey right from your living room." Yup, you're right, I could. I can't obey God about Turkey from my living room. And there's something about being on site, praying with insight, being there with the missionaries, walking with the missionaries, seeing their neighborhood, seeing their neighbors, and claiming in that moment, "God, this is where we want you to break loose. This is where we want the gospel to take root." Our dear friends, they've been there for years. Faithful. And in recent years they're seeing fruit like they haven't seen in years. Victory is ours if we endure in faith.

Alan Redpath said it this way commenting on this text. He said, "Many people don't see the answers to their prayers simply because they have stopped one round short in their conquest." Yeah. Luke 18 talks about a woman who relentlessly, relentlessly does not quit. In the Scriptures, Luke is writing about prayer, and his point is this: God is not bothered by your persistence. Rather, He's delighted in your

enduring faith. God is delighted to hear you once again, "God, we claim this city. God, would you move in this family. Father, would you break this barrier." Victory is ours. Why? Because we're invincible as a church if we endure in faith. Matthew says it this way: "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed" -- back then, probably one of the smallest known seeds, that was his point. "If you have a miniscule faith, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move." And he finishes it with this thought. "Nothing will be impossible for you."

Joshua, I see that city coming down. We're gonna take this city -- but you have to have faith. And when you have faith, when you've decided to take God's side -- my friends, and this gets a little rough -- you have to let God settle out the results. I think it deserves that we look at verse 21. Because if you're in any sense a skeptic, a critical reader, or even maybe a non-Christian here today, you're gonna look at verse 21 and say, "Wait a minute. Pastor, you better deal with this one or you're a" - - you're not being faithful to the text. They devoted the city to the Lord, and they destroyed with the sword every living thing in it. Men, women, young, and old. Cattle, sheep, donkeys. They all died but one.

The question you might ask -- and it's a fair question -- "Is God some kind of genocidal maniac? And you Christians have all bought into the Kool-Aid, because somehow you believe in the resurrection of Jesus, but you don't look at a critical eye. God murdered these people. How can you ever support a God like that?" If you've never been asked that question, you need to get out. Out of your evangelical little circle, and get out into the world where people look at this stuff and they think, "Wait a minute. You are some sick individuals. On what right does God have to murder everyone?" It's a fair question. If I sign up on God's side, am I signing up with a genocidal maniac who moves about indiscriminately murdering people and taking their lives simply because they're of the wrong race? My answer to that is no, but it deserves at least a response. Who is Jericho? It's a group of people that Rahab tells us, "We've heard about the God of the Hebrews. We've heard of His power. We've heard of His deliverance. We've heard about a people who have trusted a God who is promising a land. We've heard about that. We've heard about that God, and to the person, save one, we have said, 'Go fish, God.' We don't want you."

Doesn't it make sense to you that God would say, "Hey -- I'm gonna give you a 45-minute warning. I am going to annihilate the city if you don't repent"? Doesn't it make sense to you that God would do that? It makes sense to me, and the reality is, God gave them way more than 45 minutes. He gave them testimony after testimony after testimony, evidence after evidence after evidence. And here's the point, Joshua says. God will validate your volition. He will give you a choice, but what God won't do is remove the consequences of your choice. If you want to reject God, reject Him, but you gotta be willing to live with the consequences of that.



In the book of Revelation, towards the end of the world when Jesus is gonna come back and we go to Heaven, it's gonna be really incredible. But before we get there, it gets really ugly. And in fact, about two-thirds/three-fourths of the entire world is wiped out. But there's a line that happens in 17, 18, and 19, that haunts me. It's this: "Earthquakes come, and all kinds of plagues come. But they would not repent and surrender to God." God does something that most grandparents won't. He holds people accountable. And He tells them, "I will validate your choice, and I will never remove the consequences of your choice. If you refuse to honor me and join my side and trust my Savior, and trust the one that I sent to die for you, if you refuse that person," God says, "I will let you reap the consequence of your choice."

How do I know that? There's a city by the name of Jericho that rejected the testimony of the God of the Hebrews. There is a city named Jericho that sacrificed children in their worship. They created an entire religious prostitution idea. They were a group of people that had idols all over the place. They were pagan to the core, and God warned them, and God showed stories, and they heard about the God of the Hebrews, and they heard about His deliverance, and they heard about His grace, and they heard about His promise, and they told Him, "We don't want you." Unlike in our culture, where we seem to not want to hold anyone accountable to their choices. God does. And so, yes, I stand. With this God. Not because He's a genocidal maniac, but because He's a very honorable God who will be patient and kind and loving and will allow you to reap what you sow.

If you continue to walk in opposition of God, He will give you the fruit of your choice. He will. If you continue to reject God and to say, "I want you to join my side" -- God will not force you. He can't. He will not use his brute strength. He never has. But He will give you the consequences of your choice. When you face battles, God has a question. Which side are you on? And when you choose that side, are you willing to let God be God in your life? Even if it hurts.

A friend -- lady in a class that I teach -- her name is Kelly, and she -- she always dreamed, like probably most of us, that she would have a wonderful family, they would grow up, they would get married, they would move out, and she and her husband would have all kinds of spontaneous time to enjoy being empty-nesters, travel around, and love their grandkids, and go home and not have them. She has four children. One is healthy, three are not. Two of her children are deaf -- completely deaf. And if that's not enough -- and that would be challenging -- later in life, it's actually believed that they've always had it -- two of her children have manifested Lyme disease at a severe level. And she's now facing the reality that she will never experience empty nest. They will never move out. They won't have families, and she will be a caretaker until they die or she dies. And one day she was really struggling with this -- just kind of like, feeling like, "God, why? We made it through the deafness. We made it through this challenge. And it seems like every time we come through a challenge, you have something worse." She went to a friend of hers who's a writing coach -- Kelly's a phenomenal writer. And she went to

her friend, and her friend said to her, "Kelly, I have something I need to tell you today." "What is it?" She goes, "You have an idol, and you need to destroy it."

Now, I don't know about you, but if I had somebody come in and tell me Kelly's story, I probably wouldn't be saying, "Oh, you've got an idol. You need to repent." I'd probably be say, "Hey, can I do respite? Can Kerri and I take the kids? Can we help you?" I wouldn't be telling her, "You have an idol." But her friend did. Why? Because her friend loves her better than I would. "You have an idol." "What's my idol." She looked at her and she said, "Normalcy. You want your life to be normal, like everybody else. And as long as you have that idol, you're gonna hate every day. Because your life's not gonna be normal, because God chose that for you. Not because God doesn't love you. Because God has a vision for you that's different than normal."

See, when I choose to side with God, sometimes God might say to me, "I have a path for you that might be really hard. I don't take you down that path because I hate you." God's love for us was settled at the cross. But I do take you down that path because you're gonna face resistance, and you're gonna have challenges, and if you have an idol called "normalcy," you're gonna hate your life. But if God asks you which side you're on and you say yours, just when you think you have arrived, there will be another battle, but you're gonna win it. If you choose faith. You'll win it. God'll use you. He'll strengthen you. Your faith muscle will go beyond anything you could ever imagine, but the only way you're gonna get there is by watching God crumble some walls. That's easy for Him to do. Developing faith in you is not. But that's why He leads you to that battle.

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