

## Kenny Moorer 2/4/24 – Using My Wilderness To Transform My Life

I'm confident that you have your Bibles open already. So, if you would, please turn those Bibles to Hebrews, the 10th chapter, we'll look at some passages from that particular chapter here in just a moment, it's good to have all of you today. As Mitch said, as he began our service this morning, we are thankful whether you're in this auditorium this morning, whether you're watching our live stream online, we're grateful that you have joined us. We appreciate you being here. I would just like to say something to you this morning that I don't often say, but that I always think, and I want to say to you how much I appreciate the attention that you give me. As I stand before you and preach, it's very, it's very helpful when you speak publicly that people look at you -that people appear to be listening. And I don't say that thinking that you aren't. But it does me a world of good to look into your faces and see people who appear to be thinking about what I'm saying and giving some thought to that. And I really do appreciate that. So, I feel like I don't say that to you as often as I should. So, thank you so much for doing that. That means the world me and I know, I know, that's a result of the fact that you're interested, and not what I say, but what the Bible says. And I hope that regularly I present those things to you. That is always my hope. So again, thank you for doing that.

I have some good news and some bad news this morning. And I want to give you the bad news first. It's found in Hebrews 10, beginning in verse 26. It's not just bad news. It's very bad news. It's about the worst news you could ever hear. And I want to share it with you this morning. So that it in contrast to the good news, you understand both. This is the bad news if we sin willfully. After we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses law dies without mercy on the testimony of two three witnesses, of how much worse punishment do you suppose will be - will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing and insulted the Spirit of grace. For we know him who said VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY says the Lord. And again, the Lord will judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Can you imagine being in a situation where when you sin, there's nothing you can do about it, and nothing God can do about it. That's the worst news that any of us can have. And that's what this text tells us if we sin willfully. After we've already accepted the gospel, and, the way he puts it, received the knowledge of the truth. He says if you continue to do what you're doing, there is nothing that can take away your sin anymore. He's talking to people who are Christians. He's talking to people who have received the knowledge of the truth. And he says what you can come to expect is a fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries I cannot think of a worse punishment. As a matter of fact, that's exactly the words that he uses later on in this same context. Verse 29, of how much worse punishment. There is nothing worse than sinning WILLFULLY when God can do nothing about it. I want you to think about that. And so, what he says is to these brethren is he concludes it by saying it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, I'm not sure we think about that very often. Why would he say that to people who are Christians, it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. You know what's interesting about that is we don't have anybody we can go to and ask. Well, there's no one among us who's been where this writer says, some people will go, none of us, there's no one in this audience who said, you know, I've been there as a witness. And I can offer expert testimony to you that if you go on sinning WILLFULLY, like I've done, you're going to fall into the hands of a living God, there's nobody in this audience who can say that and verify that. And so, as a result, I don't think

maybe we think about that as often as we should. But the Hebrew writer says, You better think about that. The news for a willfully sinning Christian cannot be worse. Now a person who's never obeyed the gospel, it's equally as bad. Because there's no sacrifice for sin if you're not in Christ. So, may I lovingly say this morning to you. That if you're in this audience, and you never obeyed the Lord, you've never done what he and the apostles taught a person must do, in order to have their sins forgiven, you couldn't be in a worse place spiritually. Or to put it in a more common vernacular, you're in deep hurt. You don't have any hope. You're in trouble. And the news for you won't get any worse. It just, it's as bad as it can get. And I say that to you lovingly. I want you to hear it lovingly. But I want you to hear it. And so let that sink into your heart this morning. This is bad. This is as bad as it gets.

But I have seen something. I'm seeing something maybe at least in my mind, I've seen it. I don't know if it's for the first time. But I've seen it in a way that maybe I haven't seen it more similar to what Milton said in his comments. From what I've read, I've read this translation. And I've read these words, and it makes me see it in a different light. I'm reading from the same translation that I've read from and preached from for years, but I've seen something in this context that has that has changed me. I want to share it with you this morning. We go from very bad news to very good news. Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward for if you have need of and for you have need of endurance so that after you've done the will of God, you may receive the promise for yet a little while, and he who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now they just shall live by faith. But if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

I want to juxtapose these points; I want to look at the contrast because it goes from the worst news to the best news. And he starts this context by saying, Don't cast away your confidence. Don't think that what you're trying to do in your life is impossible. I think sometimes we're frustrated. And we'll talk a bit more about this in just a moment. Because we don't think we can live the kind of life that God is pleased with. That's exactly what this passage says we can do. Therefore, don't cast away your confidence. Don't throw it aside, don't think that you can't do what God wants you to do. He says you can. And not only can you but that when you do, you can have great reward. But you have need of endurance. This is something that needs to last he tells his first century readers. And then he says so that after you have done the will of God, you see that? After you've done the will of God. But what about those who don't? What about those who willfully sin He just told you what's going to happen on them. But if you if you endure, you can do the will of God. I want you to think about that, my good friends. We can do the will of God. We can do it. We just have to have confidence that this reward awaits us. But he says you can do it. And he speaks to us just like he spoke to them, you can do that we need to understand this morning, we can do what God wants us to do. So that after you have done the will of God.

I'm going to tell you; this is what's so exciting to me about studying the Bible. I read these verses for year for years. And honestly, I think I've just now seen this, then you might say I've known this, I've known this about this passage, that's great. Maybe you should have told me. But I've seen this. And when what I'm seeing here there are there are two different paths for the Christian. They said, You can go on sinning willfully after you've already received the knowledge of the truth. Or you can do the will of God, you can have confidence, and you can do the will of God. And he says it in the same context. What's he telling them? And what's he telling us? I think what he's telling us is something that he never

mentioned in this context. And I want to go back, and I want to draw a parallel to something else in Scripture. I think what he's telling us is that the way you handle your life after you become a Christian, is the difference in both of these things. The stakes are high for a variety of reasons. And let me contrast this as well. The stakes are high, because many of us, I think we're after we become Christians, we live in a state of anxiety for the rest of our lives. You know, I've obeyed the gospel, and I just can't sin anymore. What's God going to do to me if I sin? Well, you know, and we're so anxious with it, and I know people who are that way. And we're so anxious about what we do. And we live in this state of perpetual anxiety. And sometimes it's even to the point that people think, well, what if I commit one sin? Or what if I commit a sin, and I don't have time for God and forgot to ask for God for repentance? I'm going to hell. What kind of thinking process is that, according to scripture? I don't find that in Scripture. I do find the God wants to confess our sins. And I do find that God wants us to repent of our sins. But this extreme measure of living in this perpetual state of anxiety, I don't see that at all in Scripture, not at all. And there are others who need to find comfort instead of this anxiety. You know, they just accept the idea of you know, what, I've been baptized, I'm good to go. And I think there's some of that. I think there's some of that to the point where any sin that I commit doesn't matter anymore. I'm good to go. I've been baptized. I remember when I did it. Everybody was so happy. So, I'm good to go. Just a live a life like, I want to live. And those are two extreme measures according to... extreme positions for sure.

What is the Hebrew writer telling us in these verses about being Christians and having sin and living in sin and doing it willfully and having this conversation? What's he trying to tell us? Well, I think there's the three major parts to that for us. But I want to I want you to think about that from an Old Testament perspective. First. I want you to think about it from the leaving Egypt. God's people left Egypt, they weren't bondage and they left, and they crossed through the water. And when they crossed through that water because of what God had done, and because he had saved them out of bondage, they began to wander in the wilderness for the 40 years, as we, I think, accurately say, and they go through various trials in the wilderness and then They ultimately enter the promised land. And even Moses as he appeared looking into the Promised Land yet because of his sin could not go in, he saw what it was, and he knew what it would be for them. So, what you have is, God's people in the Old Testament, doing what I think, ultimately, is what we do if there is this contrast between what Israel did and what we do, they were brought to life, through the water, at God's direction. They were in the wilderness for years. And were in the wilderness to transform their life to change who they were, they had been saved, they had been brought out, but yet they weren't in the Promised Land. And eventually, they found this type of rest in the Promised Land. And so, for us, the contrast is we're baptized into Christ. And we go through, if you will, a wilderness wandering to ultimately achieve or get this great reward that the Hebrew writer says has been promised to those who live with this confidence. And I want to suggest something to you. And here's the thrust of the lesson. What we're doing right now, in this life, is done to transform us. It's to change us. Look at these two passages. I've already read this last, the last verse of Hebrews 10 said, we're not of those who draw back to perdition, but we're those who believe to the saving of the soul. How does that happen? Well, look at the next verse, Hebrews 11 One. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for. The evidence of things not seen. How do you live your life from the time you cross out of the water to you reach the promised land, you transform your life by faith. That's exactly what the Hebrew writer says. He says, We are those who believed in the saving... we are those who believed in the saving of the soul - how do you do that? By faith. He spends the whole next chapter talking about that. That's how that's how we live life. We do it by faith.

But here's the point, I want you to think about -what do we think about the most of those three things? I've been saved. And I'm going to heaven. We're all about stage one. We're all about stage three. But I have a question for you. If baptism is the point, and the rest of our lives are only an opportunity to lose that salvation, then why would God leave us here? Knowing that we will sin after becoming Christian? Why not just why not just take us to Heaven as soon as we're baptized into Christ? If the point is reaching the Promised Land, why not? Why let us live? Why just baptize us, why not just have our sins forgiven? And Lord, take me on to heaven. That's what, that's what I want. I want to be with you forever, anyway. I don't even want to live this life anymore. That's not what he says. So often, we think about, we're baptized, and we want to go to heaven. And we missed I think the point. What ultimately is in terms of how we live our life, it's, it's what changes us. And that is our wilderness is an opportunity for transformation. The life that you and I live is lived so that we can transform ourselves from who we were to what He wants us to be. That's the whole point. You remember what Henry read for us from Romans 12? And we'll look at it later. He needs to be transformed. That's the whole point. That's the whole point. The answer is the wilderness. Why didn't he move the children of Israel into the promised land immediately after crossing the Red Sea? Don't you imagine as they're wandering in the wilderness go man, Lord, I thought we were coming out of bondage, you are keeping us in bondage. Matter of fact, we want to go back to bondage. This is worse than what we had. And what he's saying is, I'm doing this to transform you. So that you can prove that you trust me so that you can prove who I am in your life. That's what he wanted from them. And that's what he wants from us. Baptism is a beginning of that process. And I shouldn't, that shouldn't be devastating news, folks, that should be the greatest news ever. So, I want to say this to you every listen carefully to this. Every temptation is an opportunity for transformation. I want you to think about what I just said, every temptation is an opportunity for transformation.

My brother count it all joy when you fall into various trials, what? What James? Count it all joy. When you fall into various trials. Why? Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work that you might be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. In other words, transformation.

You look at you look at your trials like that? Or do you and I look at our trials, let Lord take this away from me so I can get to heaven? I'm not suggesting that there's, there's, there's something altogether wrong with saying Take it away, so I can be in heaven with you. But what I'm saying is understand why it's there. God doesn't put trials in your life and trials in my life so that we will lose faith, he puts trials in our life so that our faith will increase.

That's easy to preach. I know. Sometimes while I'm preaching, I think Man, Kenny, you're making that point awfully strong. Now you got to get now you got to live it. So, there's a part of me that loves preaching and there's part of me goes, you really got to do that. You can't just say that to those folks. When those things happen in your life, you've got to allow the purpose of your trials to do the very same thing you're telling them that the purpose of their trials need to be doing. And as I'm standing here, saying it to you my heart rates going up, because I know how hard it is.

I use this phrase a lot and I'm going to say it again. Listen, my good friend, God doesn't want to condemn you to hell, he wants to save you. He's not trying to send you to hell, he's trying to help you get to heaven.

I had a conversation this week in which some people said to me I feel like for a long time in my life, all I heard was if you sin God's going to send you to hell and their reaction that was I get tired of hearing that? Well, I'll tell you principally. It's, it's, it's sin. That's the very thing that is going to send you to hell. So, there is there is a part of that kind of language that says no, if, if you sin - we just read it. If you sin willfully, no, you're going to hell. That's, that's what that language says there. So, there's part of it. But sometimes, I think, and I think sometimes it is the case that the stress has always been on Hebrews 10:26 to 31. And it's not been on the latter part of that chapter. Somebody said, Well, Kenny, they're both true. They are both true. they're both true. And I'm not going to stand before you this morning, say one is less important one is more important, but I am saying this to you, if heaven is our goal, if the Promised Land is our goal, then we must not be those who sink back into perdition. That's why the Hebrew writer says, we're not going to do that. We have faith to the preserving of our souls.

And in this conversation that I had with these folks, they said to me, they said to me, I'm glad to hear you say that, which doesn't make it right. They said, I'm glad to hear you say that, because that's not what we heard growing up. And I said to them, you may not have been listening quite as carefully. It's not a statement about the preaching that has been or the preaching it will be. It's just a statement in my judgment about what the Bible says. And I said that to them, I said that to them. There is, there is something to be said, for being fearful of God. And if any of you this morning, don't understand what that is, then go back and read those verses beginning in verse 26, of Hebrews 10. And then, after you read those four or five verses, then read the last part of that chapter. And then you decide, are you willing to transform your life in the wilderness of your life, to become what God wants you to become that none of this is to say that there's no place for fear or that there's no place for warning. Because our wilderness does create the opportunity to fail. I want to say that very plainly, there can be no opportunity to succeed if failure is not a possibility. You understand that right? There is no opportunity to succeed if failure is not a possibility. And there is judgment he says that. And there is failure, he says that. And there are consequences, and he says that. But he also says, You have a choice. Your role is to be transformed. Your role is to be transformed into what God wants.

After he finishes that great chapter on faith, Hebrews 12. Therefore, we also were surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, you see what he's saying, He's talking about these temptations. Let us put that let us lay aside every weight and the sin that ensnares us and let us run with endurance. How about that language you heard that before? Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. When does that take place? When we obey the gospel, there's that race that's now set before us to transform looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. That's exactly what he wants us to do. Look to Him and during the race, and eventually be with him, forever. We must embrace our wilderness stage. I do think that if I had my choice, I do think that if I knew heaven awaited me, as I think back in my life, I do think that as a 13 year old boy who told my dad I'm ready to become a Christian. If, in retrospect I thought that coming up out of that water and going straight to heaven was an option I think I would have taken it. That wasn't an option. It's rarely an option for you. For most of us, the option is you live your life, you cross the water, and you await your time to go into the Promised Land. But while you're waiting you transform your life to please Jesus and to become more like Him so that when you're with him it means the most to you and to him.

And I would close then by looking at this passage that Henry read for us, we get over to it. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Don't be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. So that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. We have a, we have an opportunity to be transformed and I don't always do that as well as I should. I'll be honest with you and my guess is you don't either. The difference, I think in us and the difference in those that the Hebrew writer talks about is it didn't bother them. Bothers me. I think it bothers you. I think that's exactly what the Lord wants. He wants it to bother you to the point that you will confess that you will seek his forgiveness ongoingly. Too many passages in Scripture that say that's what we need to do. But I don't live in fear. I live in confidence that he is faithful and that He is just and that he will forgive my sin. Let me let me just remind you of what I said earlier, if you're in this audience and you're not in Christ the news couldn't be worse. But if you're in Christ, the news couldn't be better. And the choice is yours. That's as clearly as I know how to make it because I think that just clear as the Bible makes it. Could we help you this morning? Begin your relationship with Jesus Christ. Or could we in some way, encourage you to a greater relationship to a stronger maybe even to a different kind of relationship. We're here to encourage and help and if you have any need that relates to your spiritual well-being. Let us know that by coming forward as we stand and as we sing.