

Understanding the Lord's dealings (Quality: Average)

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[0 : 00] seeking divine help I would ask your attention to the chapter the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Philippians and the twelfth verse the epistle of Paul to the Philippians chapter 1 verse 12 that I would ye should understand brethren that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel that I would ye should understand brethren that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel it is a word which the children of God only know it isn't a pathway nor an experience which a mere professor would know it isn't a word which shall in any wise be directed to anyone else but those who fear God because by the divine grace and mercy of God they are not their own and neither is their pathway of their choosing and neither is the experiences within that pathway also of their own choosing

I'm sure of this that there's many a time when whatever way you and I have been brought to walk there's been a desire that that pathway be sanctified and profitable and we've had to prove it otherwise but then surely too to the praise and honour and glory of God there have been those times when we've had to look back and say what a time of blessing I would not have anything changed now there was a union I'm sure you know between the apostle and the church at Philippi he was instrumental under divine leading to be there at the commencement of this church he was the subject of a vision and taught by that vision and believing also in an all wise God he went to Philippi to a place where prayer was wont to be made a few women by the riverside but it brought much blessing it also brought tribulation but it brought much blessing to the people of God and wondrous things was done in the name of the holy child Jesus but it formed a union between the apostle and then and it is

I was going to say you could almost describe the epistle as a spiritual love letter but let's look to and stay our mind if the Lord will help us upon these words leaving aside even that which the apostle experienced to be able to write such words he wrote as you know in the Romans for we know that all things work together for good to them that love God to them who are the called according to his purpose as we quoted in prayer the words of Hezekiah by these things men live and in all these things is the life of my spirit but to come to if I may be helped to bring out one or two things of which might be profitable to your soul under the spirit's blessing and also too that might be confirmation to your soul and to your pathway because sure of this my friends if you walk a pathway which nature cannot agree and rather is the means which brings your spirit into darkness it is a breeding ground for Satan and oh how he comes and tries to disprove the goodness of the Lord and indeed disprove the truth of these words now there's one word which has been on my mind for a long long time it is spoken in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ but I won't misuse the gospel

I should rather desire that in reminding you of this word you may see that there is eternal purposes in the text that we have now in the second chapter of the Acts the Apostle Peter preaching at the day of Pentecost speaking of the Lord Jesus and speaking to his pathway speaks like or spoke like this him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye have taken and by wicked hands of crucified and slain now my friends it's those words delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God and that applies to every saint of God every saint of God his pathway from beginning to end from the day he was born and brought into this world till the day he is taken home to glory every step of the way known or unknown by you or me is by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God none of the righteous shall ever be lost nor Satan gain victory over the people of God through their troubles and trials all things will work together for good but it's this understanding that is all important

I would you should understand we might just remember too where he was when he wrote this letter he was in prison he was prevented from preaching the word wherever he was found wherever the spirit led him he was prevented as you might say by the walls of the prison for communicating face to face with the church of Christ as he so longed and so indeed enjoyed doing but he took up his pen when he could not stand and preach in prison in the darkness the wickedness of of evil man here he was but it's this word and there's so many evidence of blessing in this word if the Lord would so help me and so help you to receive the word I would you should understand brethren and my friends to understand is the grace of God there is so much found in these words my mind went in thinking about these words back to the patriarchs you think of the words of Jacob for instance more than once more than once he viewed the ways of God with a natural eye he viewed the ways of God with a natural mind could not see any profit any benefit could not see well a hand's breath in front of him in spiritual things as far as his pathway of trial and trouble and loss was concerned

[8 : 03] I shall come down to the grave with grey hairs all these things are against me oh how he bemoaned his lot he could do nothing more my friends why could he do nothing more well there wasn't any understanding in it there was no spiritual understanding given to him I would you should understand brethren there was no light from heaven to shine on his path he was walking a path which was so opposite so opposite to nature one so dear he was learning something God took away his idol he was learning something God removed his idol for a season oh how he idolised his son Joseph above all his sons he idolised him he gave him a coat of many colours which brought such enmity and spite and hatred from those sons of

Jacob he was indeed idolised but God took him in hand took Jacob in hand removed his idol from him for a season but in all this it was overruled for the good of Jacob and for the brethren that hated him there again you must look at the pathway of Joseph here too I would you should understand until the word of the Lord came the word of the Lord tried him I'm sure of this my friends he was brought into much doubts and fears sold as a slave the Lord was with him in the house of Potiphar unjustly dealt with put into prison the Lord was with him in the prison then came of course the dreams of the butler and the baker the butler was delivered the baker was life was taken from him but what was his words to the butler when it is well with thee think on me and then you read the next chapter after two full years sure of this the poor man's heart rose in the spirit he rose as in as he might have anticipated deliverance as that man went out of prison went back to the employment of Pharaoh oh he anticipated the key in the door as it might be two full years what understanding

I would you should understand but he came into that understanding the Lord ruled and overruled and he does in your path and mine my friends I don't care what you think today if you're a child of God you walk a path of affliction trouble or trial or cross or loss it shall work together for good and he undoubtedly shall do so because of the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God all appointed you can't see it my friends it's because you lack understanding and I would include myself in that pathway too you cannot see why it is how it is for what purpose it is you cannot see any gain or goodness why is the trial why is the trouble why is the unanswered prayer why is all these sufferings and troubles in the pathway contrary to what we would want

I would you should understand my friends it's God's divine purpose and will Christ I read the words of Christ in the closing chapter the 16th of John the closing chapter of his earthly ministry you know the last verse of that chapter is this in me you shall have peace in the world you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer I have overcome the world I would you should understand and my friends you and I shall walk in darkness we shall suffer the rebellion of our natural heart and mind and Satan will often gain the victory over our feelings until the day and the moment of time when we should be able to fall in submission to the mind and will of

God in the pathway it is a wonderful grace my friends but it doesn't grow on nature's barren soil it's God's gift to his people and it is a time my friends of great blessing when the children of God the church of Christ is brought under that grace to fall in submission you're not alone my friends with a rebellious heart the children of God throughout all generations suffer with it because it is the fruit of sin it's the fruit of the old Adam Paul my mind went to David when he was harassed chased by Saul Saul could have had his way had his life destroyed him in a moment but you know when you trace one or two steps of David's pathway the word came to my mind then one day I shall fall by the hand of

[13 : 57] Saul one day never David but he would say you're wrong one day I shall fall by the hand of Saul and then we read of something else which he did he took possession as you might put it of the city of Ziklag there will he dwell in the land of the Philistines Saul wouldn't find him there anymore what happened to Ziklag it was burnt to the ground no hiding place for David no refuge on this world of sin and woe Ziklag took the place of his God it was a refuge and God only is the refuge of his people I would that you should understand the Lord deals my friends with his people in love in love no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous nevertheless afterward it yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby

I would you should understand go back to Joseph read the 45th chapter of Genesis where he reveals himself to his people to his brethren it was not you that brought me hither but God my friends that's the overruling providence this is the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God some people in religion go to colleges to universities they take up courses of theology and they come out they think with degrees in this that they are suitable characters to stand in a pulpit they know the Greek and they know the history and they can argue doctrine and they can be filled up with the outward knowledge of God Christ takes his people and puts them in his school the school of Christ brings them into paths of tribulation my friends for what purpose to destroy them no this is the meaning

I believe of the word of the apostle Peter I quoted in my poor prayer but growing grace my friends this is how you're growing grace the Lord put his hand upon you and begin to teach you of yourself show you the wickedness of your own heart bring you under his divine teaching my friends it is more profitable than five years in the university because they think that from the university they come out as Christians my friends if grace isn't in their heart they're as bad as when they went in full of knowledge and emptiness we think the sword of Tarsus here when he was going on his way from Jerusalem when he banned the soldiers to apprehend believers in Jesus got instructions to do so from the high priest he had the authority all he needed he had the authority of the high priest he got not the authority of God mind you when he came to that outward part of

Damascus the Lord's authority brought him to a halt and brought him to a stand my friends what wilt thou have me to do brought him to a stand the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God and God laid on him affliction deep affliction it laid him low in Damascus three days and three nights could not eat nor drink and I'm sure he didn't sleep very well either what affliction sin that was the affliction God laid on him Ananias sent of God directed of God to the street to the house to the place to the person you'll find him he said behold he prayeth I would you should understand oh my friends when that glory of Christ broke in brighter than the noonday sun when it broke into his poor heart convinced him of his wickedness oh how he said in the seventh of the

Romans oh wretched man that I am who should deliver me from the body of his death my friends the Lord give you understanding the Lord give me understanding I would that you should understand brethren when he begins to convince his people my friends he never lets up on that work it isn't something it's not graduation day you know when God starts to teach his people they don't start at the bottom and get to the top and never achieve some distinction in the knowledge of the Trinity my friends if he once convinces you of your sin he'll continue to teach you the depravity of your old nature but this is the understanding the blessed poet had it you know and it was a sacred two lines I suppose you might say but he had an understanding I've seen and lead to

[19 : 35] Jesus blood that two lines my friends shows you the understanding that the man had I would you should understand let there be no doubt you members of the church of Philippi Paul would say I would you should understand it is not some blow to the church it is not some solemn divine hand in the matter which prevents the preaching of the gospel this isn't some great matter of dismay and distress we have no longer these visits from Paul my friends the church of Philippi's religion didn't rest on Paul if the Lord in his mercy took him home to glory as he did ultimately of course my friends the church suffered the loss of the apostle but the children of God did not the children of God does not suffer the loss when the

Lord takes his servants home to glory because he never takes away all himself he gives a steal I would you should understand and how will you understand how will I understand how will we become submissive to the will of God how can we fall down in the spirit of Jesus Christ and say if it be possible let this cup pass from me nevertheless not my will but thine be done how shall it be my friends it's easy to quote oh how many texts have you seen on the wall how many texts have you seen in birthday cards and anniversary cards so we know that all things work together for good this is the understanding that the apostle speaks about this knowledge it's a God given knowledge my friends it's a God given understanding he'll teach his people and by that teaching he'll bring them low at his feet there is a word and it's often contradictory in some people's way of looking at the scriptures but I feel it's not so the Lord

Jesus Christ had three very precious friends Mary and her sister and Lazarus and Lazarus died and they besought Jesus Christ to come whilst he was afflicted and he abode two days in the place where he was and then he came and Lazarus was dead in the grave well you might charge Jesus Christ with an unfeeling heart and one of the sisters said this and it is quite a remarkable word I believe and I believe there's gracious faith in it if thou hadst been here my brotherhood would not die but then she added this but I know that even now whatsoever thou would ask of God God will give it thee my friends it was still underneath that precious faith that clung to indeed the omnipotence an omnipresent omniscient

God a word you should understand well my friends when God deals with you in your pathway and brings you into the knowledge that you're a sinner before him and you condemn root and branch and the word of God condemns you and you feel as it were that darkness and distress of spirit my friends it's to teach you what what is it to teach you take the example of Jonah the disobedient prophet is there a soul here that's disobedient I tell you what my friends whoever you are if you're disobedient your path will be in darkness you won't know the smile of God you won't feel his approbation if you're walking disobedient to his commands it's a pathway of distress Jonah knew it plunged into the depths of the ocean in the whale's belly

I am cast out of thy sight yet when I look again towards thy holy temple my friends his understanding was returning to him not his natural his spiritual understanding he was brought to the ends of the earth the bottoms of the mountains he said he was inexperienced literally the weeds were wrapped around my neck all the hopelessness of the case yet will I look again understanding so he proved and the chapter ends salvation is of the Lord how will you and I know this my friends by that same gracious teacher by that same blessed teacher as he opens up the way the profitableness I quoted those words of Elihu that young man who spoke to

[25 : 06] Job brought understanding to Job's pathway must still know the balancing of the clouds my friends when those things come and especially in the spiritual because that's the all important part of the Lord's divine teaching the school of Christ is to bring you out of self trusting in self looking to yourself resting upon yourself righteousness delivering you from the spirit of the Pharisee bringing you hopelessly and helplessly lost my friends it brings understanding salvation is of the Lord and there is the teaching in these words before we go on there is the teaching I would you should understand my friends that deliverance mercy eternal favors the balancing of the clouds oh the atonement for sin offering of one sacrifice I think sometimes you know how poor the religion and how low and weak was the faith of those apostles or disciples as they were in those days of

Christ he preached to them three years told them of his pathway showed to them that there will be a day of suffering which he must walk through that he must die on a tree at Calvary that he shall rise from the dead they had this taught them they had it preached to them my friends they knew it but they couldn't understand it and that's where it went wrong you look at those two that walked to Emmaus and who were sad they couldn't get it straight they looked at those things that had happened the crucifixion of Jesus the resurrection of Jesus the two undoubtable foundations of salvation my friends if you get that wrong you get everything wrong and they couldn't lay it straight until until Jesus himself drew near and went with them and how he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself there was the others

Peter went fishing there was poor Mary Magdalene there was the women these godly gracious women who rested the Sabbath day according to the scripture what were they going to do on the first day of the week they were going to take the spices and ointments and anoint the body of Christ they were the hearers they were the believers in Jesus these were the ones that knew his salvation their understanding was darkened light from heaven was shined but they went forth with their spices and ointments and they talked about the impossibility of poor weak women moving the stone who shall roll away at the stone but the stone wasn't there it was rolled away but understanding was needed and then we read that Mary Magdalene that she came to the tomb she looked in and saw nothing whom seek ye whom seek ye the angel sat at the foot of the head of

Jesus Christ place in the tomb she turned away couldn't understand it there was the stranger tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away Jesus said unto her Mary there was the words my friends it brought understanding oh the cry from the upper room when he came the door being shut for fear the Jews came Jesus and stood in the midst fear not we've seen the Lord and there was understanding there was a light on the path we've seen the Lord his own precious son of the highest revealed to them he showed them his hands and his feet and his side the risen Christ my friends it took all that doubts and fears away removed all the unbelief how ashamed

I would feel they must have felt my friends but what a blessing it is I would you should understand and that's how understanding comes that's how it comes it's revelation there was an old pastor down the road at Staplehurst revelation and application was his two famous words he preached it every time revelation and application and by those means my friends understanding is granted a light shines on the path you can't see the way you wonder why oh may you and I ever be kept from trying to dictate to an almighty God the ways and purposes of God for the pathway but be sure of this my friends you'll live to see the day when you'll bless him you'll praise him for all these mercies and favours and you'll say not unto us not unto us but unto thy name give we glory

[30 : 36] I would that ye should understand brethren that the things which happened unto me the things which happened unto me all contrary to the thoughts and wishes and the desires there's a very sweet word you know in the acts of the apostles we have walked it out and I know the sweetness of it when the apostle Paul was indeed under divine teaching that he should go to Rome that was his place that he should come to and we find my friends in that that even godly men was at odds with him he was to go merely into a path of extreme suffering and in chapter 21 of the Acts of the Apostles we read that there was a man there named

Agabus when he was coming to us he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said thus saith the holy ghost so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles when we heard these things both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem you know we've got some gracious friends that would try and interpret you we've got some gracious people that would say now I don't think that's the way what Paul had but it was according to the determinate counsel of all knowledge of God now where was Paul in this they were lacking understanding and when then Paul answered what mean ye to weep and to break mine heart for I am ready not to be bound only but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus when he would not be persuaded we say sign the will of the

Lord be done my friends when you come there when I come there when we're brought under submission to the holy mind and will of God when we can fall absolute in submission to his mind and will my friends then understanding comes understanding this is the spirit of Jesus Christ that we might know it more but maybe seek it more the apostle had to learn it a hard way in another form you look in the second epistle to the Corinthians he speaks there about his thorn in the flesh and he speaks about a vision a blessing rather to his soul which was well it was too great a blessing to be able to explain to anyone else but then the Lord laid upon him some ballast lest I should be exalted above measure there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh thrice did

I pray thrice did I pray I wonder he only prayed three times he was lacking understanding you say he certainly was and you and I are as guilty as the apostle but he said unto me my grace is sufficient my friends did he pray again that made the crooked stretch you know that made the rough places play oh how he so is so brought under submission to the mind and will of God he looked not for the grace of God to endure the path but he looked rather to be out of the path to be rid of it because no doubt he felt he could do well without it or do better without it whatever the thorn in the flesh was it was something my friends which was so opposite to the grace of God and the spirit of truth within him most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmity that the power of

Christ might rest upon me I would you should understand that the things which happened unto me what is the purpose of it my friends I was going to say if you'll forgive me 101 purposes I'm not trying to belittle the mind and will of God my friends God has an eternal purpose in his people whatever their pathway is it's decreed and ordered but the benefits that are gained out of the pathway my friends when there's a godly understanding given where there is a sacred knowledge that we do and shall do the will of God something which we must never forget you know but the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God my friends is not a changeable expression the will and purposes of God for his people are not changeable will and purposes when God determines my friends put that word against salvation put that word with a poet put it determined to save he watched all my path when

[36 : 06] Satan's blind slave I sported with death the same determination of God my friends and the prophet of your soul and mine is this that he wills and purposes what is for us to walk in the spiritual in the providential but oh the lack of understanding oh that that filled day that Satan has oh he would indeed show unto us the foolishness of what it is to be a follower of Jesus all the trouble it brings to us my friends but there's an afterwards you know nevertheless afterwards it yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby I would you should understand brethren that the things which happened unto me very grievous things you know the poet in one of our hymns takes up the same subject as it were when he begins to look at the path is this dear lord that thorny road which leads us to the mount of god are these the toils thy people know while in this wilderness below tis even so thy faithful love as all thy children's graces prove tis thus our pride and self misfortune that

Jesus may be all in all where is the fruit of these things where is the benefits I would you should understand brethren the things which happened unto me what is it caused what could you say is the benefit where is this balancing of the clouds what are these things which have come out of this state and condition whether it's your own soul or convincing of a sinner that he's a sinner or the cross-handed providences of God the unanswered prayers where is the benefit my friends look back to Acts chapter 9 again behold he prayeth look at the state of the Laodicean church richly need of nothing what an unexercised church nothing to pray for they've got all they want nothing to pray for and what did Christ say of their spiritual state lukewarm my friends you wouldn't want to be a Laodicean member of the church would you and God will not have his people in that place in his mercy and his goodness he'll shake us out of such comfortable situations and circumstances he'll bring something to bear as the line of hymns comes to me

I remember an old pastor in Kent used to say it he loads their shoulders well with woe and thus obtains his end that's what he'll do he'll do it in love for love's sake not contrary contrary to what you may think he'll do it for love's sake he'll draw you by these things dependent more upon him think of those words which are often spoken in prayer meetings and often we're reminded of them in the preaching of the word also how will you and I come to experience what Moses desired for the children of Israel how will we come to know it my friends this is not some academy lecture when you come into the school of Christ he'll teach you the truth but he'll teach you not by the letter but by the experience of it what did he say to them the eternal

God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms my friends and how will you learn that how will you learn it there was a dying saint that wrote to by her pastor and the pastor said this you've heard about the everlasting arms this is the time to rest on them this is the time to rest on them I would you should understand brethren the things which happened unto me contrary to my experience of what I felt the pathway was to be you know there's a hymn isn't it it says he answered prayer in such a way that almost drove me to despair have you ever been in there I remember one on occasion in the early days I hope of spiritual teaching and what was my prayer put me among thy children put me among thy children numbered with them may I be now and through eternity he answered prayer in such a way that almost drove me to despair the things which happened unto me and the things which happened my friends are not haphazard happenings if you read the second chapter of

Ruth where Ruth goes to glean and her haphazard to glean in the field belonging unto Boaz divine order divine leading her haphazard go not to glean in another field my friends it has spiritual interpretation where the Lord leads you the Lord establish you the Lord make his house a home to you go not to glean in another field neither leave the handmaidens the things which happened unto me but oh my friends when he comes what's the prophet you must not lose sight of that question what's the prophet where is the benefits where is the mercy in all this when he draws you nearer to himself when you find access in by divine grace to the throne of unchanging grace what's the purpose my friends of the

[42 : 46] Holy Spirit's divine teaching the psalmist David comes to mind what he wrote in the 55th psalm cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee not he may call upon me in the day of trouble I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me commit thy way unto the Lord trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass you can't see a hand's breath in front of you in spiritual things at times my friends for the Lord's purposes are eternal purposes you know and would you should understand brethren the things which happened unto me when he loads your shoulders well with woe and thus obtains his head there's another blessing here you know these aren't negative blessings people talk about negative blessings as if they're unimportant but this isn't one the apostle

Peter wrote and let me remind you as we come down to the end of this discourse though now for a season if needs be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation the Satan will say now there you are he's left you there you are you're plunged into trouble that you can't manage my friends if you're a child of God you'll have a lot of things you can't manage what does it say though now for a season if needs be ye are in heaviness so manifold that the trial of your faith be it much more precious and of gold that perisheth though it be tried with fire shall be found unto praise and honour and glory of the appearance of Jesus Christ there's a word in the first of Corinthians chapter 3 comes to mind the apostle said this the fire shall try every man's work and what salt it is and I know this my friends every child of God in his right mind does not want to be deceived on the matters of their own soul does not want to be deceived in the matters of their own salvation and though it costs them dear nights days tribulation my friends it is to have what is right revealed to you and to me the things which happened unto me not the things which incidentally happened you know what the world called it luck and there's two sorts of luck according to that bad and good my friends may you ever be delivered from such rubbish but my friends see it too as a determinant and the purposes of

God the purposes of God are in it because there's an outcome because there shall be a dire blessing wonderful mercy my friends Job was plunged into deep trouble deeper trouble than you've ever lived to say ever will or me deep trouble the Lord gave the Lord has taken away blessed be the name of the Lord what was he brought to behold I am vile that's what he was brought to was not a little looking at sin it's not some distasteful affliction that can be remedied by this or that my friends sin undoubt with will send a sinner to hell but in the teaching of the gracious spirit of truth my friends it brings you and me to hate sin and to seek for that true repentance of sin and to seek for that deliverance from sin and that's in the blood of

Calvary a word that you should understand brethren that the things which happened unto me the things that are in the path and I almost forgot but you know in that commission there was also a reminder there was also a reminder we read this but the Lord said unto him unto Ananias go thy way for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my namesake it was appointed decreed from all eternity what a sacred sacred thing it is my friends to see there's an overrule in hand that the decrees and purposes of God are not for the overthrow but rather for the establishing and the strengthening and the settling of the people of

God look at the promises I don't know what words were given to those who are members but look to those words and it may be there was an intimation of the Lord's will and purpose when you was received into the church or when you was brought into the pool and the Lord's servant gave you a word had it any bearing on your pathway the word that was given me at the pool at Hanover was this thy shoes shall be iron and brass and as thy days so should I strengthen thee and that's proven all every time that the times God I would he should understand brethren that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel amen glad

[48 : 59] Let us close this morning by singing hymn number 593.

The tune is Mannheim 679. Hymn number 593.

Jesus is a mighty saviour. Helpless souls have here a friend. He has borne their misbehaviour. And his mercy knows no end.

O ye helpless, come and on his grace depend. Hymn number 593.