

July 21
The Day Everything Changed

KD Hill
with
Tim Enochs & David Johnson

Every single day in your life matters, and you never know when a seemingly normal day will bring about a life changing event... July 21, 2023, was that day for me. This is the day I never saw coming, but I was prepared for the moment that everything changed. I didn't know it was coming, but I was prepared. I believe this moment on this date was predestined for my life. It all started the day before. It was Thursday, July 20th at 9pm when my alarm went off. You might be wondering if I had just slept all day. I guess you could say that; but it wasn't just because I had stayed in bed all day being lazy. Nope, that's not me. It was because I had worked all night the night before, and I was about to work all night this night. I was driving a delivery truck with my younger brother to earn a living for myself and my son while I was working out and training to fulfill my dream to play in the NFL. My days, or I guess you could say nights, consisted of driving a truck at night, working out in the mornings when I got off work, and being with my family. I was focused on two things: 1) earning a living for my family in the short-term, and 2) earning a spot on an NFL team.

So, this seemed to be just another day as usual. Like every day, I had worked out earlier that morning at Maximus Performance doing my normal routine. I believed I was in the process of taking the opportunity to become the man God wanted me to be. I was excited and had high goals and expectations. Each day for me was a blessing to just be here on earth doing the right things in the moment and chasing a dream for the future. There were no promises. There was no guarantee I would be on an NFL team, but I had hope. I had God given talent, I had worked hard, and I had teams interested in me. It wasn't easy, but I knew I was blessed and I was doing everything God allowed me to do to improve my chances. Driving a truck all night wasn't easy, but it was a blessing. Life wasn't easy all the time, but it was never promised to be easy. Balancing work and workouts wasn't easy. Finances were challenging. But I was making it. Even with all that I was going through at the time, I still considered everything to be a blessing because I was living in that moment that I had prayed for constantly growing up. I just wanted a chance, and I had it.

Although I wasn't in the NFL at that time, I knew that if I kept going it was coming. I could see it before it became a reality. I could taste it and it tasted so good! I was dreaming, yet still in an unfamiliar part of my life. I didn't care what others thought. I just saw the opportunity and I was taking it.

So, at 9:00 PM my brother and I woke up and prepared for another night on the truck. As part of my normal routine, I prayed before I left the house. My time in prayer with my heavenly Father is important to me. I believe with everything inside me that the relationship I have with God is what kept me alive in the circumstances that happened in the wee hours of the morning on Friday, July 21.

Some people may wonder why I was working driving a truck while at the same time working out to earn a spot on an NFL team. That's a fair question, and there's an easy answer. It was because I could, and I believed I should. You see, in every decision I was always thinking of how to make my baby boy's life better. I knew there was no guarantee of playing in the NFL, and I wanted to provide for my son. I knew one day, when he was old enough to understand, that he would be so proud of me. I knew that's what a great dad would do, and I was living my life to be a great dad. That was as important to me as my dream of playing in the NFL. So, although it was hard at times, it was actually easy to do both. There was simply no other option in my heart. We pulled up to the warehouse to pick up our load for the night, and immediately the switch came on.

It was Grind Time!

That night, we had a lot of inventory to deliver. We were delivering transmissions and other car parts to Kia and Hyundai in North Alabama every night. It would usually take us less than 30 minutes to load everything. We would have to load each item according to the location where it would be delivered. There was a method to the madness. I was focused on order and efficiency. I wanted everything organized and out of the warehouse on time. We had to make deliveries at certain times, and we were going to be on schedule.

I remember that day like it was yesterday. It was a warm summer night and I had the window cracked. My brother and I had our music on, we were laughing and

talking, and on our way to make our deliveries. Like I said, it seemed like a normal day. Just another day at the office so to speak. We did our work and did it right. We had delivered all the parts to all of the car dealerships and were ready to return home. It started to rain in the early hours of the morning.

At 4:40 AM, just outside of Cullman, Alabama, everything changed. We crashed into a tree. My life flashed right before my eyes. My leg was smashed by the dashboard of the freightliner. We were alone, yet God was with us. I was concerned about my baby brother, and relieved to see he was alive. He couldn't talk because his jaw had been broken in the crash, but he was alive. I couldn't move, and he stayed in the truck with me. We only had to wait about 10 minutes for the state trooper to arrive. I began to call on Jesus. Although I could not see Him, I trusted Him. I knew that in a time of trouble, He would hear my cries. He did. Once the state trooper arrived, he went to my brother's side of the truck first. He could not see me because my side of the truck was in a tree. Because of the condition of my side of the truck, he thought the driver would be dead. He asked my brother if anyone was on the other side of the truck. But he couldn't speak because his jaw was broken. I called out, "Sir, I am alive can you come over here? My brother cannot talk." Once the state trooper made it to my side of the truck, he asked me to stick my arm out and tap the mirror. I began tapping the mirror. Once I made eye contact with him, I said "Sir, hold my hand let's pray." At that moment all I wanted to do was to call on God. That's all I knew to do. I knew that *God is our protection and source of strength. He is always ready to help us in times of trouble.* (Psalm 46:1 ERV) The only thing I knew to do was to put my trust in the Lord. The only thing I needed to do was to put my trust in the Lord. In fact, the

only thing I could do, at that time, was to put my trust in the Lord. My trust was, and is, in the Lord.

Above my bed I have Proverbs 3:5 posted. It says *Trust in the Lord*. At that time, I knew God and his angels were encamped around me and my brother. As we waited for the ambulance to arrive, I laid my head on the steering wheel as calm as ever. In all, I was pinned in the truck for 5 hours. Not once during that 5-hour period of time did I shed a tear. That's how powerful God is. He gave me comfort. He will comfort you in times of trouble when you put your trust in him. It's really that simple.

After I prayed with the Trooper, the paramedics arrived on the scene. They opened my brother's door first. I said to them: "Just get my brother out. Don't worry about me." They were talking to him and comforting him because he was crying and groaning. It was more important to me that they care for my brother first. I knew at that moment that God was with both of us. I believed my prayer was being answered. When you pray, you must believe. If you believe what you ask for, God will answer your prayer.

While working with my brother, they looked over him and saw that everything had collapsed on my right leg and that I was unable to move. They were unable to open my door because my side of the truck was smashed into the tree. This clearly could have been the end for me. But no, God had other plans.

The impact of the accident hadn't killed me, but my condition was dire. The windshield of the truck was smashed in and the steering wheel was bent like a taco on my chest. They knew they had to get me out of the truck and that I needed medical attention quickly. So many things could still go wrong. I was bleeding, and there was a danger that the truck could still catch on fire. The fire department had also been dispatched to the accident scene.

Once the firefighters arrived, they began working on getting my brother out of the truck. In an hour he was free. Once they got him out, the paramedics were able to get to me from my brother's side of the truck. The first paramedic began taking some debris off my leg to be able to see the extent of my injuries and how I might be helped out of the truck. At that moment he knew it was bad. He began asking me if I could move my leg. But I couldn't move because my foot was wrapped around the seat where my brother was sitting. He began taking pictures of it. Although that may sound strange, I believe it was so that they could use the pictures to discuss how they might free me from the truck. I remember a female EMT came to my side and was talking to me through my window. I asked if she could please call my son and mom. I just wanted my mom to know that my brother and I had been in an accident but were alive and that we were being helped. I knew my mom would be worried because she hadn't heard from me and we were late getting back. The paramedic replied, "you can't talk to them right now." While I was concerned about my mom being worried, the paramedics and other first responders were more concerned about keeping me alive so I could get back to my mom.

They began to see that my situation was critical. I was trapped and they had no way to get me out. They needed a wrecker to pull the truck away from the tree while I was in it, just so they could get me out. It took the wrecker an hour to arrive.

Once the wrecker was in position, they tried to pull the truck away from the tree. Each time they tried to pull the truck away from the tree, the front of the truck would spark. There was great concern that the sparks could cause a fire because diesel was leaking from the truck. Each time the firefighters sprayed something on the truck to prevent a fire. They said it was “a good thing it is diesel”. I believe it has something to do with the vapor pressure of diesel being lower than gasoline; sparks are less likely to cause a diesel fire. What I know is that God was watching over the entire situation.

Along with the threat of fire, even with diesel, there was concern I could be crushed or hurt more with every move of the truck. Because the cab was detached from the trailer, every move of the wrecker caused the cab of the truck to shift down. Thankfully, they were able to move it enough to give the room to cut the door of the truck open.

Once the door had been opened, I felt relief in my other leg because I had been so cramped in the truck. I was like a sardine in a can. I was wet with sweat. I remember when they opened the door, I felt cooler air and put my head outside just to breathe. While the door was open, I held onto the steering wheel until I

lost strength. It was because I was losing so much blood. I remember looking down and seeing blood on the floor of the truck under my left foot.

During that time on the scene, they gave me two units of blood. After giving me two units, they told me they didn't have any more blood on the scene to give. At that point, they wrapped a tourniquet around my leg and I felt a lot of unpleasant pressure. They also began giving me a fluid that clots blood. This is done for people who are bleeding excessively. Once I began to lose my strength, it took three men to hold me up in the truck. At times, they would have to swap out. Every time they swapped out, I would try with all the strength I had left to somehow lift myself up and try to free my leg from under the debris. I was doing my best trying to move, but I wasn't able.

I remember them asking me "what football team did you play for because you are big and strong?". By this time, they were able to reach my mom. I had been trapped in the truck for three hours. They were able to tell her that I was okay. You see, after losing all that blood and being trapped in that condition in the truck for three hours, I still had not shed a tear. There was one reason I was as calm as a slow flowing river. It was God. No one can tell me that God is not real.

I've been told that most people would have fainted or left this world had they been in my situation. Remember, at first, they thought any person on my side of the truck would be dead. But like I said, God had other plans for me. I believe part of that plan is the fact that I am here now, writing this book.

What God does or allows in our lives may be hard to understand at times. But in everything, as a believer, I know it is for my greater good. I hope you can see me sharing my story on stage. When you see me, you won't see a mangled man trapped in a truck. I don't look anything like what I've gone through. It was just like Joseph and the coat of many colors. Joseph went through 13 years of uncertainty but he knew that one day the vision that God had given him will come to pass. Surely it came to pass, and when it did his own blood brothers could not recognize him. He was a new man.

Once you've gone through storms in your life, God can make you look like you haven't been through anything. Sometimes it's on the inside, and sometimes it's inside and out. He gives new life.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ERV) says: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.* After the paramedics called my mom, they said: *Sir, we are unable to get you out. We are going to have to amputate your leg.* Once they said that, I did not think twice. I said: *Let's do it! I am ready to get out.* You see, during all of this, I wasn't thinking about football because we all know that football doesn't last forever. Of course, I had the dream to play in the NFL, but even with a long career that would just be a window of time in my life. I knew the impact I could make on other lives by sharing that the goodness of God will last forever. That is my true calling. I know that will help build His kingdom.

The entire time, my baby boy and my mom were on my mind. I continued reminding myself over and over to stay strong and that I was made for this moment. I was like a lion in the jungle. It is good to talk to yourself when you are faced with giants in your life. Know that the giants are not meant to harm you but can allow you to clearly see the gift God has placed in you. You are stronger than you think you are. I was just simply speaking truth to myself.

At this point, over four hours had passed. I was still calm and still hadn't shed a tear. I was still awake and was well aware of everything that had taken place around me. I remember the paramedics saying: *The surgeon has arrived.* His name is Dr. Reef. We made eye contact, and Dr. Reef asked: *Are you ready to get out?* I replied: *Yes sir!*

I was cut free from the truck and I remember waking up on the helicopter heading to UAB (University of Alabama – Birmingham). After being trapped in that hot truck for almost 5 hours fighting for my life, I felt relief. I knew that I was about to see my family. That day, after arriving at the hospital, I had another surgery. In reality, I had turned the corner and was on the mend.

After a few days in the hospital, my mom read a message to me from one of the EMTs. The note stated that on the day of July 21st they all (the first responders) felt a spirit and power they could not explain. When my mom told me that, I smiled because I knew God and His angels were right there holding me. In that almost 5-hour period of fighting to save my life, the people helping me could sense something special. They had help they couldn't see.

This chapter is about adversity and how we as humans should react when it comes in our lives. It will come. In scripture, we read: *We are all human beings. Our life is short and full of trouble.* (Job 14:1 ERV) I don't know of a single person who has never experienced trouble in life. We have all faced adversity. We just don't know when or how it will come next.

Adversity doesn't care who you are or how old you are. It just comes. We all have ways of dealing with it. For me, I see it as something that can make me stronger. Of course, that doesn't mean I like it. No one likes to deal with it. But consider this, how well have you handled adversity in your life? Have you learned something from it? Have you grown stronger after going through it? In workouts, I am breaking down muscle so it will grow back stronger. In a sense, I am putting my body through some type of adversity so I can grow bigger and stronger. That's why it's called resistance training.

We all have faced some type of adversity in our lives.

Consider this, it is just like a caterpillar during the cocoon stage. That stage is called *pupa* (it's the stage of transition or change in its life). During this stage, an organism is enveloped in what could be considered to be an ugly process. Concerning the caterpillar, this is the stage in life where it grows. Although it may not look like much is happening... it is! A caterpillar doesn't have a choice in how to deal with the process. It just happens. As humans, we do have a choice in how

we deal with it. During this time, it's best to trust the journey and not focus so much on the destination. You can find joy in the midst of your storms. I did.

After a caterpillar has gone through the various stages, it becomes a beautiful butterfly. Instead of crawling everywhere, at this point they can fly! Just like that caterpillar we all have to go through some type of adversity or change we aren't comfortable with in life. We never know how long this can last, but if we adapt to change and become comfortable being uncomfortable, we can begin to soar through life. I want you to know you may have to go through adversity to get what you want in life. Eventually, everything will begin to flow. We may not understand when or how this works, but it does.

Just remember, when you go through adversity, your success is on the other side! That which took you to your breaking point can be your breakthrough point. Read that again... That which took you to your breaking point can be your breakthrough point. You see, God has a way of moving us through trouble. I love that word, "through". In the 23rd Psalm, we read: *Even if I walk through a valley as dark as the grave, I will not be afraid of any danger, because You are with me.* (Psalm 23:4 ERV). It is a way that may be hard to understand because some things are not for us to understand. That's why we walk by faith. We believe, even when we can't see clearly in the moment.

The lion is known as the king of the jungle. They are not the king because of their size. There are many animals bigger than a lion. They are king because of their mentality and resiliency to live each day as if it is their last! They are not just

fighting for territory for themselves but their descendants as well. No matter the storm, they fight. They are always willing to hunt. They don't just hunt on the most pleasant days. They hunt because they need to hunt to survive. The heart of a lion is something that has to be in you. It's not something that is bought. You can have the heart of a lion in your life!

You may have felt that you are different from others. You are! I felt the same way growing up. I knew that God had a calling on my life. I didn't know what it was at the time, but I do now! Every day, while in the hospital, I would document my status and how I was doing. One day I made a video, and in that video, I said: *I have the heart of a lion. You don't stop because it's bigger than you.* That represents calling, or purpose, in life. You have it too! You just have to discover it.

There are two groups of people in this world concerning adversity. There are the *Why me?* group, and the *Try me!* group. The difference between these two groups of people is that one is going to stay resilient through the testing of their faith, and the other will question and complain. The *Try me!* group is willing to claw and scratch for that opportunity they want for a better life for themselves and their family. Although they don't like adversity, they won't expend their energy to just complain about the obstacle that is ahead of them. They will endure the hard times and cherish the good times. The *Why me?* group will generally apply more of a victim mindset than the mindset of a victor. The victim mindset will prevent a person from overcoming. All they have is an excuse based off their situation. Do not have that mindset. Rise up and take advantage of the opportunity that is in front of you. It is much better to have the mindset of a

victor and be prepared for opportunities which come clothed with adversity, than to have that of a victim's mindset and not be prepared. This is a time where you should run to God, not run from Him.

This is the testing of your faith. You may have been telling people how strong your faith is and how good God has been to you. When adversity strikes, you and everyone else will see how you respond. Sometimes, it's only after you have passed the test that you will see the reason behind the storm. Every storm has a reason. It might be to isolate you so you can become what God wants you to be. I believe that's why I had my accident. God saw that it was best to isolate me so I can truly understand the things He wants me to do in life. I believe He wanted me to tap into my full potential. I believe this storm was meant for something greater in my life.

Many times, adversity will take you back to the original vision which God had given you. Sometimes it reveals something you have never considered before. Sharing my story with you is part of my calling, and I will do it to the best of my ability to glorify Him.

There is a quote by William Shakespeare: *sweet are the uses of adversity*. In other words, he is saying that when you are going through adversity, don't panic or be negative about the situation. Use that situation for a positive result to produce something good in your life. Shakespeare understood the truth that I am sharing with you.

You may question: *How do I even respond to adversity in my life?*

We've all been through it. Someone once said: *Either you are going through a storm, just got out of a storm, or about to enter one.* We are all at some stage of dealing with adversity. You already know how you have responded before. You know if your response was beneficial or detrimental. We all know it isn't comfortable. But now, you know you are armed with a choice. You can have the mindset of a lion, or that of a victim. You can take advantage of the opportunity adversity offers or, you can run and hide and hope it just goes away.

Take a minute and assess how you have faced adversity, or how you are currently facing it in your life. Is there anything you need to change concerning your mindset or your approach to dealing with it?

When it's all over, our lives will have been filled with wins and losses. The enemy of your soul will want you to focus on your losses, but God will help you focus on the many times you have won in life. Just think back on how far you have come in life. Most people will look at adversity as a negative. It can be the best thing that will ever happen to you! You know why? Because when it happens, most people will quit. But that doesn't have to be you. It can be something that can help bring you closer to fulfillment of your dreams.

Consider my story before the accident. After completing my college football career at Ole Miss, I attended an NFL Pro Day on campus. A Pro Day is a specific day normally hosted by schools for pro scouts from various NFL teams to attend.

They can watch players showcase their football related skills. That day, there were scouts from every NFL team. It was a great day for me. After my Pro Day I began to train again for NFL camps. The camps were held at specific team locations. Although I was training for the NFL, I still needed to earn money for my family. I would work from 9pm at night until 8am in the morning and then go to the gym and train after work. During that time, I would only have 4 to 5 hours of sleep a day! It was a long drive to the gym and a long drive home after a hard workout.

At one point my mom and I discussed the distance I drove to the gym. She said: *Son, you must really want it.* I said: *I still do mom.* It was a sacrifice that would make most people tired. I was tired, but remember, great goals require the heart of a lion. Till this day I still train like I did when I had two legs. It has to be something in you that keeps you going. I was hungry for success, and I still am. You have to be hungry!

You also have to believe that you have greatness in you. You have to believe you have purpose and that you are being blessed and favored. Manifest yourself being successful. That just means to focus yourself on the outcomes you desire.

It was hard for me after my accident happened and I was in the hospital with no income coming in. All I had at the time, and all I needed, was faith in God! Faith is important, but you may have also heard that faith is dead without the work being done. You have to believe, and you have to do what you can do. I envisioned

myself doing the things I am doing today. Something powerful happens when you begin to put your vision to work by working towards your goals.

In the past, I was told I would never be successful. I was told I wouldn't play in the SEC and wouldn't make an NFL team. I did not stop working! Guess what? I played in the SEC! I earned the highest internal award you can earn as an Ole Miss Rebel! I won the Chuckie Mullins Award and got to wear #38 at Ole Miss! I also attended two NFL rookie mini camps! I envisioned myself accomplishing all those goals and I did the work necessary to see them come to fruition.

Do not let your circumstances or other people define you... BUT you define your own circumstances. You have to love the fruit of adversity, but in the beginning, there will be heat. It will be hard. Jim Rohn once said: *Don't wish for things to be easier, wish for yourself to be better.* Along with that wish comes work.

There may be a certain type of pressure in your life where you may be stressing and don't know why it is happening to you. Do you know what pressure and a certain temperature create? It creates diamonds. The first step in creating a diamond is putting it under heat... a certain temperature. Then comes pressure to form the diamond. Then diamonds can be cut and used in beautiful jewelry. You are cut from a different cloth. You have to believe that! You are special! We are all special in God's eyes. So, in a world full of pressure, you must set your own temperature, and be the diamond that stands out.

You get to turn the heat up! You have to go through adversity to achieve the things you want in life. You will never be a diamond if you quit or break. You must not give in. If you do, you will be stuck for the rest of your life. If you always choose comfort, you will never get through adversity. You just can't flip a switch and be successful. It is something you have to train for so you will be ready when it comes. You have to be put in difficult and uncomfortable situations and know that you were created for this moment. It's that type person who will win the game of life.

Eventually, you will be able to take and deal with whatever is thrown at you in life, school, or work. You will be ready to conquer. The unexpected can happen and you have to be prepared. You have to be grateful for those times because they represent an opportunity to get stronger. One of the best things that ever happened to me was my accident. You know why? Because God tested me and I believe I came forth as pure gold. I was able to walk into my destiny as well; and that destiny is greater than anything I could ever accomplish on the football field.

My accident only served to make me stronger mentally, physically, and spiritually. It didn't break me. Before, I didn't know that all my life I had been training to survive an accident rather than to play in the NFL. Sometimes experiencing the real challenges of life helps us walk into our destiny! It did for me!

When you get knocked down, you have to be thinking about how you will you get back up. You have to have a strong foundation. You have to have something to fall back on. You have to talk to yourself while you are in the valley! There is a

spirit far greater than you can imagine that is in you that you have to unlock. When you do, you can see how strong you really are. Adversity can help create the heart of a lion inside of you if you keep going. It may not be pretty, easy, or fun... but the end will be beautiful. There are some things in life you can't get without perseverance. You have to stay in the fight. Have you seen the picture where the two men are digging in a tunnel? Sometimes people quit digging too soon. If the one had kept going just a little bit farther, he would have the diamonds. Rather than persevering, he quit digging and turned around. The other guy had made up in his mind that he would not stop. He got the diamonds. You never know how close you are to victory. That is why you have to continue. You have to persevere. Be the person who doesn't quit. Be the person who gets the diamonds. Just remember, the race isn't given to the swift, but those that endure to the end. You have to run a good race and finish the course. Come join the race with me!