

The Life You've Always Wanted, pt.9, 5.29.05

The Road of Suffering

Intro.1. Stories of Christians who have lost everything and have no one to love them 3. 300 Christians will die today due to their faith in Jesus; 4. Unexpected loss; 5. 10,000 children today will die of malnutrition. 6.Common theme - suffering.

As long as there is sin, Satan & death in the world, you will suffer, hardships & setbacks.

It's part of our existence that if we can steward it correctly, it will take us further faster than almost any of the other tools God uses in our lives to form us into His Son's image.

"James 1.2-3"²Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. ³You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. ⁴So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

The road to maturity goes through the province of pain, county of calamity, and the state of suffering.

Review series: Conflict, Service, Silence, Fasting, Contemplative Bible Reading, Transformational Prayer

The New Testament On Suffering

- Matt.5.11
- Matt. 6.13
- John 16.33
- John 15.18-21
- Mark 14.35-41
- Acts 9.16
- 2 Cor.4.16-18
- Phil.1.29
- 2 Tim.3.12
- 1 Pet.1.6-7
- 1 Pet.2.19-21
- 1 Pet.3.14-15
- 1 Pet.4.12-19

The Negative Effects of Suffering

- Physically
- Soul – weary, burdened, depressed
- Spiritually – distant from God, cold, dead, empty, apathetic

Turning a (–) Into a (+)

- Listen to the Romans 8:28 stories of others
 - Quote Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together^[a] for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.
 - Who would say what you experienced during your suffering was both the worst and yet the best thing that’s ever happened to you?
 - Ask for those who have a story to come forward & share
 - Builds faith & increases perseverance ...the Jews constantly retold the stories of God’s power on their behalf...
 - For those going thru suffering now who in the past had a R.828 story...go back to it
- Deal with sin or strongholds that might be source of the suffering
 - God brings discipline to his wayward kids...could be experiencing the consequences of past sin. Turn from the sin.
 - Open doors...spiritual stronghold...you’ve given the Devil access into your life...confess, repent & renounce & rebuke...Freedom In Christ ministry
 - Not all suffering a direct result of sin
- Have a victory mindset
 - The biggest battle in suffering is inside your mind
 - The enemy speak lies & accuses you
 - It’s always going to be this way...never get any better...
 - You deserve this
 - You can’t approach God...he won’t listen to you...etc
 - You’ll never feel better...you’re going to fail...never redeem yourself...people will be disappointed in you
 - Die an awful death
 - Always be lonely...

- Live in Rom.8.31–38: God is for you!
- Hold on to those special words (man shall not live by bread alone...) that God has given you...that's why it's important to journal
- Turn To God And Seek The Support Of Others
 - David, Job & Jesus – sought for God's direct intervention on their behalf; Job & David complained, but they were looking to God rather than away from Him.
 - Let God vindicate you. God raised His Son; brought David to the throne; reestablished Job's household.
 - It's very easy, especially if you're being persecuted, to do your best to prove your antagonist wrong..."I'll show them."...
 - You need others during your time of suffering. The tendency is to turn inward...where did Jesus turn during the greatest crisis of his life...to his Father & friends; Job's friends would have been of great help had they remained quite; David's family came and encouraged him during a trying time.
 - It's been of great benefit to me...small platoons
 - God never intended for you to live the Christian life alone...we are a body and each part needs all the others. You need to be connected deeply with a body of believers.
 - Get professional help...don't let pride keep you from God's best.
 - Some try to be spiritual and say they'll only turn to God...yet the way God wants to demonstrate His love to you is through another person. You are negating God's best, b/c you pretend to be self-sufficient.
 - It's not good for man to be alone
- You can't rush the work of God
 - Job...his complaining didn't accelerate God's response...you just want to get over it...think you've learned the

lesson...don't see any point...like baking a casserole you just have to wait

- To Janis: Don't rush the work of the Lord.
- If you try to rush it – frustration, anxiety, anger will fill your life...like rushing three years old to an event...or worse trying to rush your wife...just go out in the car and honk & you know what's going to happen.
- You need to be persistent, but have a trustful persistence...constantly badgering God and working through every negative scenario, if God doesn't come through, won't help...you aren't going to provide God with some new info that he hasn't already thought about it which will cause Him to act quicker.
- Saying "it" doesn't seal it
 - Some are afraid that by stating they are going through a hardship they are sealing their fate...the doctors say I have cancer, but I refuse to believe it...the attorney says I need to file bankruptcy but bless God I reject that in Jesus' name...
 - Stating reality is not a negative confession; refusing to believe God for the answer or trust Him for the outcome is the problem. Stating the problem isn't the problem.
 - For some, it's almost superstitious...stating it is fateing it...really calls into God's goodness...like he's up in heaven keeping tally marks of all the negative statements
 - Being overcome with grief and confusion doesn't seal it either...it's what do you do when you get off the floor
- Being persecuted for Christ is a great honor.
 - Spouse, friends or employer have rejected you or antagonistic...count yourself fortunate
 - Today over 300 Christians will be killed for their faith
 - Acts 5.41
 - Matt.5.11
 - When we suffer in a God-honoring way it points people to Jesus

- Roman guard at the cross of Christ – “Surely, he must be the son of God.”
 - The story of how the gladiator games ended
 - Modern example: “Let’s roll”
- When it looks like God has done nothing, give Him praise that He has done the most important thing.
 - He reestablished a relationship with us through the cross of Jesus...I can know God...my life has purpose...and I have a home in heaven.
 - Like freeing a POW. The prisoner is beat, bleeding, broken bones, starving, filthy, no contact with anyone, but his most important need is to be released from prison...everything else is extremely small...(Application)
 - Consider the alternative

Conclusion:

- Give God praise
- Go through the list