

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Conversion of Saul: A Lesson on Suffering, Pt 2

Acts 9:23-31

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PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: Building off of the reality of suffering for the name of Christ, this second sermon is designed to address the other forms of suffering a Christian may encounter. We are sinners and therefore we sin. We live in a sinful world and therefore we are sinned against. But what about suffering due to foolish and sinful choices? Christians are still sinners and can give into sinful desires that bring unpleasant and even life-altering consequences. How are we to view those situations? This sermon addresses this very issue and we devote our attention to a Christian's view of suffering.

I. Introduction.

- A. Turn to Genesis 3.
- B. When we were last in the book of Acts we considered nine lessons on suffering for the name of Christ.
 - 1. One of the key lessons is that suffering for Christ is not reserved for a mature believer.
 - 2. We also learned that though we can seek to avoid suffering we cannot compromise the gospel to do so.
 - a. Grayson made the point in his sermon Sunday on how we all live our lives trying to mitigate the effects of sin—and suffering is certainly a part of those effects.

II. A Christian's View of Suffering.

- A. First, understand the root of suffering—sin.
 - 1. When Adam and Eve rebelled sin entered the world. But it is more than merely entering. Sin became the dominant master over all of creation.
 - a. When Adam willfully chose to follow his wife rather than God and ate the fruit forbidden, everything warped and twisted under the presence and power of sin.
 - b. The third chapter of Genesis describes this event.
 - c. Consequences were given by God (8-19).

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2. So Paul explains this theologically in Romans 5:12, *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”*
 3. *“For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies so dies the other; indeed, they all have the same breath and there is no advantage for man over beast, for all is vanity. All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust”* (Eccl. 3:19-20).
 4. Suffering is something all people understand for it is common to all people. Sin, sickness and death dominate our lives until eventually we find ourselves facing that specter of death ourselves.
 5. But sin in this age also means that through no fault of our own, we can be sinned against.
 6. But the bible also talks about other ways suffering occurs and how a Christian is to respond in those times. These are the focus of the next two messages.
- B. Suffering for wrongdoing.
1. 1 Peter 3:17.
 - a. Two quick points to consider:
 - (1) When you do wrong and you suffer for it, the church is not to hurt with you, feel badly for you, come alongside to help with the burdens placed upon you or anything else in the way of being of an aid.
 - (2) At the same time, though no sympathy should come your way, no invectives should either. We don't mock or hate one who has done wrong. But we also are not to come along side to help ameliorate/make better/fix the consequences of their folly.
 - b. It is worth noting that suffering is a major part of Peter's letter. **But he makes a strong distinction** between suffering that comes as a result of your faith in Jesus Christ and suffer due to your sinful choices.
 2. 1 Peter 4:14-16.
 - a. Now he builds on the previous statement. In vs 14 and 16 the point is that if you suffer because of your faith you are blessed, there is

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- no cause for shame. Rather, as he says at the end of vs 16, “. . . but is to glorify God in this name.”
- b. Note how he starts in vs 15 with murder and ends in being a troublesome meddler. That captures the whole range of foolishness and sin that we should not have named in our lives.
 - c. You will find that the leadership at Missio Dei will be aggressive with members who seek to be known more for trouble-making than living out a humble, quiet and godly life. .
3. 1 Timothy 5:11-13.
- a. Exceedingly strong words in vs 12. Condemnation! Why? Because they are not keeping their pledge.
 - b. Paul’s answer is simply to Timothy is to be perceived as being “mean” and refuse to put them on the widows list.
 - c. And then he adds, “at the same time . . .” in vs 13. The widows who are younger need to be quiet, self-controlled and not gossips and busybodies.
4. 1 Timothy 5:19.
- a. So God protects this office by making it clear that if you have a concern about an elder you make sure you have two to three witnesses before you decide to talk.
 - b. Accusations against elders come in all shapes and sizes and flavors..
 - c. But the statement given in our passage is an actual command. It is not a suggestion, it is commanded by God.
5. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.
- a. Is this your goal? Is this the reputation you have online and offline?
 - b. But break down this passage and let it be a window to your soul and life.
 - (1) A quiet life.
 - (2) Mind your own business.
 - (3) Work with your hands.
 - (4) vs 12 gives two reasons for this:

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- (a) It is to not detract from the gospel and a gospel-dominated life.
 - (b) But second, it is so that you would have no need.
6. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11.
- a. Consider this statement coming from a pulpit today in America.
 - b. You can almost hear people saying that this person is not a Christian. Or that Jesus would never say these sorts of things.
 - c. But this is a divine command.
 - d. In vs 12 he gives the positive command to work quietly and eat your own food. So simple.
- C. A few more passages to merely quote for you to think about the idea of not being a man or woman who is suffering for wrongdoing:
- 1. Proverbs 18:6-7, *“A fool’s lips come with strife, And his mouth calls for beatings. A fool’s mouth is his ruin, And his lips are the snare of his soul.”*
 - 2. Proverbs 13:3, *“The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.”*
 - 3. The next proverb, 13:4, *“The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat.”*
 - 4. Finally, turn to Proverbs 1:20-31.

III. Conclusion.

- A. In our day of exalting victim status it is easy for us all to fall into it. We foolishly believe that bad things should not come our way and we are slow to consider how our words or actions and choices contributed to our situation.
- B. The Church is a present witness to a dying but watching world, what it looks like to live in the fear and admonition of the Lord.
 - 1. We are to be a quiet people.
 - 2. We are to be a gentle people.
 - 3. We are to be hard workers.
 - 4. We are to be generous with our lives to those in true need.
 - 5. We are to adorn the gospel with our good works.

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6. We are not to be named among those who do unrighteousness. Our lives are not to be a contradiction to our statements of faith.
- C. We live in a fallen world and will be sinned against.
1. We must not react as the people of this age do.
 2. We must take on a gentle spirit and repay evil with good.
 3. We must live in such a way that forces the unbelieving world to lie about us to bring charges to bear.
 4. Let us be the hardest workers. The most faithful citizens. The best of neighbors. The most diligent of students.
 5. In other words, let us be a blessing to our community.
- D. Do not let sin be the cause of your shame. But if it is the cause of shame, then own it, endure quietly the consequences and do not seek to get relief from it as if you are a victim.

Benediction

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing the good news of Jesus Christ, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen