

# VALLEYS

"THE VALLEY OF SUFFERING"

SPECIAL GUEST: HOLLY SNELL

MAY 12, 2019

God allows suffering because...

**1.** ...of what it accomplishes for **YOU PERSONALLY**.

<sup>2</sup> Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. – James 1:2-4

**2.** ...of what it accomplishes for **OTHERS**.

**a.** Suffering equips you to **ENCOURAGE**.

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. <sup>5</sup> For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. – 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

**b.** Suffering equips you to **EVANGELIZE**.

<sup>12</sup> Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. <sup>13</sup> As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. <sup>14</sup> And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear. – Philippians 1:12-14

**3.** ...it helps us see **JESUS** more clearly.

<sup>5</sup> My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. – Job 42:5

<sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. <sup>26</sup> My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. – Psalm 73:25-26

## NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

### REFLECTION

- In what ways have God brought you through times of suffering in the past?
- How would you describe God's character? How did you learn about his character? How does this help you through suffering?

### DIGGING DEEPER

- Turn to **John 11**.
  - Read **v. 1-6**. How did Jesus react to the news that his friend Lazarus was sick? How do you think Mary and Martha felt after hearing Jesus's response?
  - Can you think of any other times in the Bible when Jesus acted differently than people expected, perhaps causing people to feel disappointed?
  - Similarly, have you ever felt the same way after asking God for help? What did you do?
  - Read **v. 4 & 14-15**. What two reasons did Jesus give for Lazarus's sickness/death? How are these two reasons related?
  - Read **Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 8:28**, and **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**. What promises does God give us about the ultimate purpose and ending to anything we are going through? Are these promises comforting when we are going through suffering?
  - Read **v. 17-27**. After her brother died, what did Martha do? Was her faith in Jesus affected by the disappointment and grief of her brother's sickness and death?
  - How you react to disappointment or suffering? How can you encourage yourself and others to react like Martha did?
  - Read **v. 32-37**. Why did Jesus weep, especially considering that Jesus knew that he would soon raise Lazarus from the dead? What does this reveal about God's character and how is this comforting when you go through suffering?