

Suffering, Mystery, and the Call to Be Doers of the Word

Overview

This sermon explores the biblical understanding of suffering, the completed work of Christ, the revealed “mystery” of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the vital relationship between faith and works. The message draws from Paul’s letters and the teachings of Jesus to encourage believers to embrace their calling, endure trials with hope, and actively live out their faith.

Core Scriptures

- Colossians 1:19, 24-29
- Ephesians 2:7-10; 3:3-7
- Matthew 5:10-12
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 11:22-31
- Mark 4:10-11
- 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
- James 1:22-25; 2:14-26

Key Themes & Teachings

The Completed Work of Christ

- The idea that believers must “work off” their sins or suffer to be worthy of heaven (as in purgatory) is contrary to Scripture.
- Christ’s work on the cross was complete—when He said, “It is finished,” nothing more was needed for salvation (Colossians 1:19; Ephesians 2:7-9).
- Salvation is a gift of grace through faith, not by works, so that no one can boast.

The Purpose and Value of Suffering

- Suffering for Christ is not about earning salvation, but about sharing in Christ’s afflictions and growing in faith.

- Jesus and Paul both teach that there is blessing and purpose in suffering for righteousness' sake (Matthew 5:10-12; Colossians 1:24).
- Suffering often pushes believers beyond their own strength, leading them to rely on God's comfort and power (2 Corinthians 1:3-7).
- In trials, God proves Himself faithful, building faith, hope, and understanding.

Paul's Authority and the Mystery Revealed

- Paul's authority as an apostle comes from God, not himself. His ministry is marked by suffering and the evident power of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 11:22-31).
- The "mystery" now revealed is that Gentiles are fellow heirs with the Jews—Christ in us, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:26-27; Ephesians 3:3-7).
- This mystery was hidden for ages but is now made clear through the Spirit to those who seek and follow Christ.

Seeking God's Revelation

- Jesus explained spiritual mysteries to those who stayed with Him and asked (Mark 4:10-11).
- The Word of God contains both general and personal revelation; believers are encouraged to seek, ask, and meditate to receive what God has for them.
- Spiritual understanding comes through pressing in, not settling for surface knowledge.

Faith and Works: Living Out the Gospel

- Salvation is by grace, but genuine faith produces action—believers are created for good works prepared by God (Ephesians 2:10).
- James teaches that faith without works is dead; true faith is evident by the fruit it produces (James 1:22-25; 2:14-26).
- Believers are called to be doers of the Word, not hearers only—allowing Scripture to shape and correct their lives.

The Call and Purpose for Every Believer

- Each believer has a unique calling and purpose, prepared by God before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4; 2:10).
- God uses ordinary people to accomplish His will; every member of the body of Christ is needed.
- If you feel lost or purposeless, seek God—He has work for you as long as you are alive.

Encouragement in Obedience and Service

- Stepping out in faith may feel uncomfortable or overwhelming, but God promises His consolation and strength.
- The fruit of faith is seen in the works we do, not to earn salvation, but as evidence of the life of Christ within us.
- The church is called to encourage, correct, and support one another in living out God's Word.

Closing Prayer Highlights

- Thanksgiving for God's presence and the opportunity to be changed by His Word.
- A plea for believers to be doers, not just hearers, of the Word.
- Confidence that God will carry and strengthen His people through every trial and calling.

Takeaways

- **Rest in Christ's finished work—nothing can be added to His sacrifice.**
- **Embrace suffering as a means of growth and deeper reliance on God.**
- **Seek out God's specific calling for your life; you have a purpose.**
- **Let your faith be visible through your actions—be a doer of the Word.**
- **Trust that God's comfort and strength will meet you in every challenge.**

Be encouraged and bold—God has prepared good works for you, and He will be faithful to accomplish His purpose through you.