

Living the Christian Life

Sundays@9 – November 6, 2022

Week 2 – Understanding Suffering, part 2

The Reason for Suffering

- God's suffering had meaning and purpose – and so does ours.
- Christians participate in Christ's suffering (1 Pet 4:12-13; Php 3:10-11)
- God intends a good outcome from our suffering (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28; 5:3-4)
- Our ultimate purpose in life is _____.
Therefore, the first purpose for our suffering is _____.
 - What is glory?
 - How might my suffering glorify God?
 - How might glorifying God in suffering be for my good?
 - Glorifying God to others (2 Cor 4:7-10; Acts 26:14)
 - Glorifying God when no one sees (Luke 15:10; Eph 3:10; Job)

Productive Suffering

- God's glory is infinite, so cannot increase; however we can magnify His glory.
- Suffering can increase *our* glory (2 Cor 4:17; Matt 5:6; 10:39)
- We need to learn to see suffering in a new way.
- Suffering does not automatically improve one's life. What is needed?



Productive Suffering (continued)

- God uses our suffering to remove our weakness and build us up
(See Heb 12:1-17; Rom 8:18-30; 2 Cor 1:3-12; 4:7-5:5; 11:24-12:10; much of 1 Peter)
 1. Suffering transforms our attitude toward ourselves
 2. Suffering changes our relationship to the good things in our lives
 3. Suffering can strengthen our relationship to God as nothing else can
 4. Suffering is almost a prerequisite if we are to be of much use to other people, especially when they go through their own trials (2 Cor 1:3-7)

- God's Gymnasium
 - Heb 12:11
 - "discipline" – Greek *paideia* – instruction, training, the raising of a child
 - "trained" – Greek *gymnazō* – to experience vigorous training for the purpose of increased physical and/or moral strength

 - God is the Good Coach
 - He administers *paideia* as a loving Father (Heb 12:7)
 - His *paideia* has a purpose – that you may share His holiness (Heb 12:10)
 - There are limits – God uses suffering to train us, not destroy us (1 Cor 10:13)
 - Our Divine Coach is grieved when we grieve (Isa 63:9)
 - Do not despise His discipline nor faint under it (Heb 12:5)
 - Remember His own suffering on our behalf (Heb 12:2-3)

- How might we prepare our hearts and minds for suffering?

Varieties of Suffering

- The suffering of Jonah and David

- The suffering of Paul and Jeremiah

- The suffering of Mary and Martha

- The suffering of Job

- One size *does not* fit all