

Cycle Three: Misconceptions of Human Suffering

Job's Friends Offer More Inept Consolation

Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.

- Let's begin with our own observations. Was there a moment where God spoke to you, showed you something new, or reminded you of a familiar truth through the message this week?

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- Throughout our study of the conversations between Job and his three friends, we've seen the common theme in their council that all of Job's suffering was earned because of his iniquity, and deserved because of his unrepentant sin. Job has pushed back numerous times at this incorrect theological outlook and responded that in a fallen world, sometimes the righteous suffer. How has this study challenged your own understanding of suffering in your life and in the lives of others? When you have experienced your own suffering, or observed suffering in the lives of others, what has been your default perspective?
- One of the concepts that we discussed on Sunday was the idea that we are each one created to give glory unto God. The Christian life isn't about seeking our own glory...but it's about glorifying God in all things. We were challenged this week to consider the idea that glorifying God in all things includes glorifying Him in our response to suffering. Let's discuss this idea and put our reactions to the test? When we've suffered, has our response been a God glorifying response?
- We also learned that God may sovereignly allow suffering into our lives to serve a greater purpose. It may be that suffering as a Christian brings God more glory than living a life of ease. In Acts 5, the Apostles are arrested and beaten because of their Christian witness. Let's review that chapter, with a focus on verses 40-42. What can we learn from the Apostles about suffering...especially when we suffer as a result of our walk of faith?
- What would you say to a Christian who suggested that suffering in another believer's life was the evidence that they must not be genuinely saved?

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- 1 Corinthians 15:3-11
- Philippians 1:27-30

Dover

Job Chapters 22-27

- Romans 8:18-25

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

1. What have you learned about jumping to conclusions when you see someone else's suffering? How would God have you to rethink the suffering in someone else's life?
2. Is there a particular principle that we've discussed this week that the Lord would have you to lock into your own thinking about human suffering? Can you share this with the group?