

WELCOME TO THE PARTY

Sunday, February 5, 2017

I. Introduction- Romans 5:3-5

1. *God's Word often challenges us to live lives contrary to what comes natural; contrary to how the culture says we should live:*

Matthew 5:44 "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."

Ephesians 5:3 "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed..."

Ephesians 5:4 "Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking..."

Ephesians 5:21 "Submit to one another out of reverence to Christ."

Colossians 3:13 "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another."

Colossians 3:23 "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."

Acts 1:8 "...you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth."

James 1:2 "Consider it pure joy, whenever you face trials of many kinds..."

2. *Adversity always reintroduces a man to himself.*

II. The Value of Suffering

1. *Suffering Produces Perseverance*

A. Perseverance - steadfast endurance - fortitude.

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28: Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the

city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

B. Go over, go under, go around or go through, but never give up; never stop running!

C. There are a lot of great starters in the race, but not as many great finishers.

Galatians 5:7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?

D. Perseverance is often our greatest revenge on hell.

2. *Suffering Produces Character*

A. Character - tested value.

Job 23:10 (NASB) "When he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

B. When trials and troubles are met with perseverance, out of the battle a person emerges stronger, purer, better and nearer to God.

C. When we stand in the presence of God, all material possessions will have been left behind, but all that we have gained by way of trials and trouble will remain.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18: Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

D. Pain is temporary. Character is permanent.

3. *Suffering Produces Hope*

Romans 5:1-2: Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

- Justification, peace, access and grace are available no matter what struggle or trial we face.

III. Getting Through The Storm

1. *God is closer than you think.*

Mark 4:35-38: That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion.

- God never promised we will never see a storm in life; rather, He promised that He will be with us in the storm.

2. *God can handle your questions.*

Verse 38 "...The disciples woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

- Our sufferings, the storms of our lives, even our questions, do not separate us from Christ.

Romans 8:35: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

3. *Submit yourself to the process.*

- Rejoice – I am a child of God despite this trial.
- Persevere – Keep your eyes on the prize and do not look back.
- Character – Allow the Holy Spirit to transform you more into His image.
- Hope – It will be worth it all!

Psalms 32:8: I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

4. *Go there, but don't stay there.*

Psalms 88:1-2: O Lord, the God who saves me, day and night I cry out before you. May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry.

Vs. 14 & 18: Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me? You have taken my companions and loved ones from me; the darkness is my closest friend.

Romans 8:28: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.