

In the Stretch

Gregg Brenes

Growth in life happens when we are stretched.

Sometimes God's preparation comes packaged as pain.

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Luke 22:31-32

- **God may be doing something in you before He does something through you.**

Instead of looking at my life through the lens of loss and pain, I need the wisdom of God to see the purpose of God in this season.

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1-3 NASB

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. Romans 8:28

Prayer of persevering faith... (Mark 14:32-36)

- **Jesus gives God His feelings.**
"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death..." Mark 14:34
- **Jesus gives God His desires.**
"Take this cup from me." Mark 14:36
- **Jesus gives God His trust.**
"Yet not what I will, but what you will." Mark 14:34-36

Let's Connect

How did you respond when you heard about the extended stay-at-home order?

Let's Talk About It

Often, it's seasons of uncertainty that God uses to stretch and shape us. Sometimes God's preparation comes packaged as pain. Instead of looking at our life through the lens of loss and pain, we need the wisdom of God to see the purpose of God in this season. When you're feeling stretched and don't understand what God is doing, pray the prayer that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane – Jesus gave God His feelings, His desires and His trust.

Luke 22:31-32; Hebrews 12:1-3; Romans 8:28; James 1:2-4; Mark 14:34-36

- Which part of the message made an impact, caught your attention or challenged you?
- Read Luke 22:31-32. Pastor Gregg said that sometimes God's preparation comes packaged as pain. What do you think about that?
- Read Romans 8:28. How have you seen God use a difficult situation for good in your life? In the life of someone else? How might seeing God's purpose behind your pain change your experience of pain?
- Read Hebrews 12:1-3 and James 1:2-4. What can you learn about building perseverance and endurance from these verses? From Pastor Gregg's interview with Pastor Randy?
- Read Mark 14:32-36. How can you incorporate this *prayer of persevering faith* when you're in pain and struggling to understand what God is doing? "God, I give you my feelings, my desires and my trust."

Take a Step

- Spend time reading the Bible and applying SOAP this week: **Day 1:** Psalm 19, Acts 8; **Day 2:** Psalm 37, Acts 9; **Day 3:** Psalm 84, Acts 10; **Day 4:** Psalm 103, Acts 11; **Day 5:** Psalm 130, Acts 12; **Day 6:** Psalm 139, Acts 13; **Day 7:** Psalm 145, Acts 14.

Here's My Prayer

- Lord, Thank You for giving me purpose and opportunity to participate in Your mission. Help me to see my pain through the greater lens of Your purpose. I give You my feelings, I give you my desires, I give you my trust. In Jesus' name, amen.