

Rejoice When You Suffer!

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➤ Intro:

- **temple Crest congregation, meeting:** Following in the Footsteps of Jesus / Following in Suffering
- **2 Tim. 3:10-12** all Christians suffer — **cost, fact of being a Christian**
 - **Jesus suffered:** poor, criticized and reviled for His teachings, hated by religious leaders, spit upon, slapped, mocked and humiliated with a crown of thorns and a purple robe, scourged, crucified although was innocent of all wrongdoing
 - **1 Pet. 2:21-23** Christ's example., suffering, entrusted Himself to God who judges righteously
 - **apostles suffered:** hated and reviled by men because they were followers of Jesus, were mistreated by others, all were persecuted for their faith, all were martyred for the sake of the gospel except one
- **This lesson:** ways we commonly suffer, benefits, we should rejoice when we suffer

➤ What are some ways we commonly suffer in our day and age?

- **people call us names:**
 - **illus.: Pam at work**, some guys call her, “goodie-goodie-Christian-girl” - cf. “bag-bad-devil-girl”
 - told her don't want to be popular with people lie that, be a person they would praise, it's part of being a Christian and suffering for the name of Christ — **if sinful people not persecuting us, need to worry**
- **not one of the most popular people at work or school**, because not imitate wild and licentious behaviors in pop culture, dress and talk
 - **illus.: Allan, growing up**, a little over weight, local farmer belovedly called me heavy-set, some kids called me “fat-turkey-gobble-gobble” - to act like a Christian I didn't fight but turned the other cheek
- **career stagnation**, may not be advancing as fast in your career because not carouse (drink, party, tell nasty jokes) with the boss and other employees
 - **illus.: hear of women (and occasionally men) who are offered a promotion for sexual favors**
- **religious beliefs ridiculed - made fun of:** some beliefs criticized for: no mechanical instruments in worship, reject denominationalism, baptized to be saved, observe Lord's Supper every Sunday, etc.
 - **illus.: took car to shop**, man started talking to me about religion and miracles, I shared with him that I didn't believe people could do miracles today, be briskly walked away calling me the devil
- **we experience illness, sometimes death** — **illus.: flue**
 - **reasons for illness:** hereditary, result of living in a natural world, old age, sin, personal choices
- **many more types of suffering:** — **what suffering are you experiencing**
 - **e.g.**, lose job, parents move and you have to leave your friends, have a bad teacher at school, live in poverty, not well educated, not raised in a godly family, orphaned at a young age, etc. — **endless list**
- **note: these pale in comparison** to what Jesus, apostles, early Christians, and other people in other places today — **but they are things we still have to deal with**
 - **pict.:** child, Cambodia, easy to see he's poor and hungry

➤ **Benefits of Suffering: — how it makes us better**

- **Suffering helps us get closer to God**

- **Ps. 119:71-72 (David) afflicted and learn God's statutes**, become better than silver and gold to us
 - **suffering motivates us to learn about God from His word, we cannot get closer to Him**
 - **rf - Ec. 7:2-3 (Solomon)** better to go a house of mourning, because happiness and wisdom are learned in sorrow

➤ - **Ja. 4:6-10 suffering and sorrow make us humble**, draw near to God and obey

➤ - **Acts 17:24-28a** Paul's sermon Mar's Hill, we **depend on God for everything** so seek Him, obey, saved

- **Matt. 5:6** blessed, hunger and thirst for righteousness, filled
- **Matt. 7:7** ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened

- **illus.: Mk. 5:25-34** woman with hemorrhage for 12 years, sought out Jesus to be healed, after healed fell down and worshiped Jesus as she told Him that she had touched His garment - faith healed her

- **suffering motivates us to seek God for help - solutions, better life now and eternity**

➤ - **Suffering disciplines us**

- **Heb 12:5-7** God chastens His children, as their Father

- **illus.: if father not disciple child**, not love, doesn't care if grows up to be bad person and have bad life

➤ - **Ja. 5:14-15** sometimes when sick (not all), it is because of sin in our lives - God chastening us

- **illus.: some sins bring illness upon the sinners — rf. Rom. 1:18ff** physical penalty for homosexuality

➤ - **Suffering builds character**

- **Ja. 1:2; 5:13a** joy when suffer trials, complete, through prayer

➤ - **2 Pet. 1:5-8, 10-11** suffering is necessary to develop perseverance (vs. 7)

- **perseverance: "an abiding under" (illus. heavy load)**

- **implication, abiding under pressures of suffering as a determination of will, not just of necessity**
(Copeland, ISBE)

- **illus.: martial artist, break boards and blocks**, proven that bones get stronger when breaking

- **warning, not try at home**

➤ - **Suffering helps us reach the lost**

- **Col. 4:5-6** because suffering makes us humble, we're more gracious toward others - merciful, neighborly

- **we're nicer to people when we are aware of God's grace toward us when we were sinners**

➤ - **Rom. 12:17-21** do good toward those who wrong you, heap coals on their head - make them ashamed and want to turn to God

- **illus.: Jesus, feed enemy and give drink — can show more of God's love to people who treat us the worst**

➤ - **1 Pet. 3:1-2** teach them through our behavior when suffering

- **1 Pet 2:18-20** even when harsh

- **illus.: Jesus, enemy slaps you, turn the other cheek — teach when persevere when suffering**

➤ - **Suffering helps us learn to be happy and experience full and complete joy**

- **Phil. 4:12-13** learn to be content, whatever state, then completely happy - based solely on spiritual

➤ - **1 Jn. 1:4; 5:13** joy is then full, confidently trusting in God, know saved and that God is in control

- **illus.: people who live in the worst situations**, are often the happiest — **not live to gratify worldly desires, flesh - have less pulling them away from God - have to depend more on God**

- **pict., illus.: impoverished poor boy, Shuar villages in Ecuador having fun with a sucker**

➤ **Rejoice When You Suffer!**

- rejoice when you suffer

- **Rom. 5:3-5** “. . . we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint. . . .”

➤ - because God is blessing you — as above

- **Matt. 5:10-12** great reward in heaven, like the apostles and prophets

- **illus.: Acts 5:41** apostles rejoiced when flogged by Jews, they were considered worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ

➤ - be a faithful Christian

- **inv.:** be blessed by God today, become a Christian, cost is suffering for name of Christ, but blessings are great