

DATE OF MESSAGE: October 2, 2016

MESSAGE TITLE: Suffering for the Sake of Christ

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 1:27-30

KEY TRUTH

Suffering is a part of life on a fallen planet...even for followers of Jesus. Christ is not only strong enough to redeem us through suffering, but to even redeem suffering itself for His glory.

GETTING STARTED

Our willingness to suffer reveals that we believe Jesus is worthy of our sacrifice. As we come to the end of our study of chapter 1 in Philippians, consider these passages that also deal with the reality of suffering for believers:

Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:3).

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name (1 Peter 4:16).

For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly (1 Peter 2:19).

OBSERVATION

How did Paul encourage believers to respond to their opponents?

What has God granted to believers according to verse 29? Why might the use of the word 'granted' at first appear a little odd in this verse?

For whose sake does Paul say believers will suffer? Why?

What connection does Paul draw between believing in Jesus and suffering for Jesus?

What conflict does Paul reference in verse 30? Political, social, relational, spiritual etc.? How did Paul model suffering according to this passage? Was suffering a part of his life as he wrote this letter to the Philippians?

How did the Philippian believers know Paul encountered suffering when he lived among them? How did they know he still encountered suffering?

APPLICATION

Spend some time in your groups marinating over these questions:

- *Why must believers suffer?*
- *How should believers endure suffering?*
- *What does suffering say about Jesus?*
- *How does God receive glory from suffering?*
- *What kinds of suffering do believers endure?*

Google the 14 minute video entitled ‘David Platt on the Doctrine of Suffering’ to gain a fuller understanding of what the Bible teaches about suffering.

PRAYER

“For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations” (Psalm 100:5).

Dear God, please strengthen my faith to see You as good, loving and faithful whenever I experience suffering. Help me submit to Your perfect plan when you ordain that I should suffer. I want to remain fixed on You during difficulties, trials and life’s disappointments!

SHARE POINT

Read and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God’s Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

COMMENTARY NOTES

1:27 Philippi prided itself on being a Roman colony. Offering the honor and privilege of Roman citizenship, Paul reminds the congregation that they should look to Christ, not Caesar, for their model of behavior, since their primary allegiance is to God and his kingdom. They need to stand together with one another and with Paul in striving for the gospel. Paul’s emphasis on unity may suggest some division within the Philippian congregation. Perhaps the disunity is one reason he mentions the ‘overseers and deacons’ at the outset of the letter, for they are required to minister in a way that promotes unity.

1:28 As the Philippians maintain courage in the face of their opponents, these opponents will realize that such remarkable strength could come only from God, and thus anyone who continues to oppose God’s people will be marked for destruction. Destruction here means eternal destruction, hence

these are different opponents from those who antagonized Paul in verses 15-18, who seem to have been believers. A different city is in view as well, for here Paul speaks about what is happening in Philippi while in verses 15-18, his opposition is in Rome. But God's sustaining grace amid trouble will assure the believers of their own final salvation. Paul follows the teaching of Jesus here, reminding them that persecution is a sign that they belong to Christ.

1:29-30 Troubles will come, because the reality is that believers in Christ will suffer for his sake. Paul teaches that both suffering and faith are gifts of God; for both, Paul says, have been granted to you. Suffering for the sake of Jesus is a great privilege. Paul again holds himself out as an example of one who has maintained his joy while experiencing the same conflict.

SOURCES CONSULTED

ESV Study Bible

Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study