

Speaker: Pastor Buster Brown

Today's Message: Called To Endure Suffering

Today's Text: I Peter 2:21-25

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” **1 Peter 2:21-25**

In 1 Peter, we are told the believer is **called** out of darkness into his wonderful light (by the grace of God)(1 Peter 2:9), **called** to obtain a blessing (1 Peter 3:9), and **called** to eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10). In this section, we are told we are **called** to endure suffering.

How Firm A Foundation

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Dross=Waste that forms on molten metal.

Why do have strength in the journey in the midst of suffering?

1) Christ is our m_____ and forerunner.

“Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.” **Hebrew 5:8**

2) Suffering is i_____ in a less than perfect/fallen world.

Christians in the 1st Century were distinctive because:

- No gladiatorial games.
- No proclamation that Cesar was the ultimate lord or swearing allegiance to him.
- No abortion/infanticide.
- Women were protected and empowered.
- The good gift of sex was seen as that which was excersized only in marriage between a man and a woman.
- Sexual activity outside of marriage was condemned.
- The poor were befriended and cared for.
- All races and classes were mixed together in common worship.
- Christ was proclaimed as the only way to salvation, as opposed to the multiple gods of polytheism.

3) Abba Father uses suffering to s_____, b_____ and get our attention.

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.” **James 1:2-3**

“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.” **James 1:12**

“We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world....No doubt pain as God's megaphone is a terrible instrument; it may lead to final and unrepented rebellion. But it gives the only opportunity the bad man can have for amendment; it removes the veil; it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of the rebel soul.”
CS Lewis, The Problem of Pain

“In the intoxication of youthful successes I felt myself to be infallible, and I was therefore cruel. In the surfeit of power I was a murderer and an oppressor...it was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good...that is why I turn back to the years of my imprisonment and say, sometimes to the astonishment of those about me: ‘Bless you, Prison!’ I nourished my soul there, and I say without hesitation, ‘Bless you, Prison, for having been in my life!’”

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956

4) We walk through difficulties and sufferings as we c_____ e_____ ourselves to the goodness of the Father.

5) We entrust the One who j_____ justly.

6) In our sufferings and hardships, the power of the shepherding Christ and his work upon the cross must always be c_____ in our thinking and living. v. 24-25

ANSWER KEY: model, inevitable, shape, build, continually, entrust, judges, central

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is the affirmation that “the living God became a man in the person of Christ” a great comfort to those who walk through difficulties and sufferings? (Note the spiritual song made famous by Louis Armstrong, “Nobody Knows the Troubles I’ve Seen”)
2. Why should we expect to be socially marginalized, misrepresented and mocked in a culture that seems to be reverting to the sexual ethics of the 1st Century?
3. How does God use suffering to shape our character and build us? (Note the quote by CS Lewis) And, how have you experienced that to be true in your own walk with the Lord?
4. Why does the continual entrusting of ourselves to the Father who judges justly free us to be agents of reconciliation as we trust the Lord for ultimate justice?
5. Why must the shepherding grace of Christ and his work upon the cross always be central?
6. How does the knowledge of sins forgiven and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit blunt and eventually take away thoughts of retaliation, callous speech, incivility and accusations?

BONUS

How do we display a Christ-like civility and kindness in the 2020 General Election?