

Scott. A. Wood 3-10-2019
SERIES: DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE?
PART 8B: I AM AFFLICTED

Last week, we began this teaching with Part A of “I Am Afflicted.” I’m continuing today with part B as we look again at this subject on suffering. We will be looking from our scripture passage in Ephesians 3:1-13:

How to understand suffering and grow through it:

“When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles . . . ²assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending His grace to you Gentiles. ³As I briefly wrote earlier, God Himself revealed His mysterious plan to me. ⁴As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. ⁵God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by His Spirit He has revealed it to His holy apostles and prophets. ⁶And this is God’s plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God’s children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus. ⁷By God’s grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving Him by spreading this Good News. ⁸Though I am the least deserving of all God’s people, He graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures

available to them in Christ. ⁹I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning. ¹⁰God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display His wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was His eternal plan, which He carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²Because of Christ and our faith in Him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. ¹³So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored." Ephesians 3:1-13

Embrace the fact that you will experience suffering in this life:

I. Suffering from sin

II. Suffering from punishment

III. Suffering from consequences

IV. Suffering from demonic influence

V. Suffering from victimhood

VI. Suffering from being a part of a group that is victimized

VII. Suffering from discipline

God disciplines, chastens, rebukes and corrects us because He loves us, and He wants us to grow and mature in our understanding of who He is and His purposes and plans for our lives and our roles and function in His Kingdom.

Examples of suffering from discipline can be found in the book of Proverbs, the Prophets and the New Testament. The Scriptures are very clear that Father God is our perfect Father and He corrects us to mature and save us from the destructive harm that sin causes. It is true that this kind of suffering is painful, but the Bible tells us that we will see the effectiveness of God's loving discipline that continually works for our growth in holiness and fruitfulness. Hebrews 12:5-11, **“And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as His children? He said, ‘My child, don’t make light of the Lord’s discipline, and don’t give up when He corrects you. ⁶For the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes each one He accepts as His child.’ ⁷As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as His own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? ⁸If God doesn’t discipline you as He does all His children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really His children at all. ⁹Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn’t we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? ¹⁰For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in His holiness. ¹¹No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.”**

VIII. Suffering that comes from the ungodly

There is a suffering that can come with the ungodly, those who are committed to rebel against God to those who represent Him. The examples include the O.T. prophets and the N.T. apostles as well as those who believe and live their lives for Jesus Christ. The diversity of suffering ranges from opposition to persecution. It can be seen in physical persecution that can cause some to die for Jesus. There are those who can experience verbal opposition by being maligned, lied about, falsely accused, mocked and harassed. This is what happened to Zayan who was born into a culture hostile to the gospel and suffered by virtue of his devotion to Jesus in a family that opposed him and disowned him.

IX. Suffering that comes when someone we love suffers

The Bible tells us this will be common in the church, because when people we love suffer, we will suffer as well. A week ago from last Thursday during the celebration of Ken Voelker's life and at the reception, I saw one of the most powerful testimonies to the power of how God's love can impact those who don't even know Jesus by the way Ken's CVCHURCH family came around his family by sharing just how much every one of us here loved him and expressed their care and support of him and his precious family.

X. Suffering that is meant to be preventative

There are times when suffering warns us of a greater tragedy and pain that will happen if we don't heed God's warnings.

This type of suffering demonstrates the loving nature of our God. Often you might experience a pain in your body, and if you pay attention to it and investigate it, you can stave off something worse. We have had many people go to the doctor for their regular check-ups, or they went in because something wasn't quite right, and they found a cancer or some other kind of symptom that could lead to a devastating end. I know people have come to me, and I have warned them that if they continue down the path that they are going it is not going to be good. What I said hurt them, but they didn't listen to me and to what God was trying to say to them to prevent where they were headed, and negative things happened. This preventative type of suffering ties in with suffering that can occur from discipline.

XI. Suffering that is part of the end times before Jesus comes back

The Bible declares that there will be increased suffering that will signal the end of this age, as seen in the prophecies of the Old Testament and in Jesus' teaching. It is true we don't know when the end of this age will be or when Jesus will return, we do know that Christians living in the final chapter of human history will suffer greatly because of being followers of Jesus Christ. As I close this morning (afternoon) I would like you to think about how you have experienced suffering in your life. Taking these 11 categories I have presented to you today, what do you believe is the cause of your suffering, what could God be teaching you through it? How are the people around you experiencing suffering, and in

what ways could you comfort and give them guidance if they ask for it? In what ways have you wrongly understood your difficulties and misunderstood God in the midst of your suffering? For some of us, being honest about what I have taught this morning (afternoon) could very easily cause some spiritual, emotional, relational and intellectual pain. I ask that you prayerfully study the Scriptures I have shared today and that those who facilitate our small groups will prayerfully discuss what I have taught today for the promotion of all of our ability to embrace the fact that you will experience suffering in life and how we can best submit to the truth that says that God's discipline is always good for us, that we might share in His holiness. Let's pray.