

How Do We Deal With Suffering and Discouragement?

➤ = next PowerPoint slide

➤ Intro:

- everyone has suffered to some degree
 - illus.: Dawn, birth, suffered, undergoing an unpleasant experience, pitched a fit immediately out of the womb to make sure we knew how she felt about it
- as human beings, we have to learn to deal with suffering
- lesson: How do we deal with suffering and discouragement?

➤ Definitions

- define “suffer” - physical, mental, and emotional pain – sometime our own doing, sometimes not
 - “to undergo, endure” (pain, death, punishment, judgment, grief) (*Online Etymology Dictionary*)
 - “to undergo, be subjected to, or endure (pain, distress, injury, loss, or anything unpleasant)” (*Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc.*)
 - illus.: **Matt. 4:24** suffer from physical ailments
 - illus.: people in the congregation battling illness
 - illus.: ailments of old age
 - illus.: suffer, anything that causes us pain – physical, mental, and emotional pain
 - illus.: career stagnation, may not be advancing as fast in your career because not carouse
 - illus. others: parents move and you have to leave your friends, lose job, live in poverty, orphaned at a young age, etc.– endless list
- - define “discourage” - loose courage (confidence, hope) – attitude
 - “to deprive of courage, hope, or confidence; dishearten; dispirit” (*Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc.*)
- suffering is part of God’s plan for us, but not discouragement
 - God wants us to have the right attitude even when suffering

- **Suffering is part of God's plan for His children** – part of Christian life
 - **Acts 3:17-18** suffering was part of God's plan for Jesus
- - **2 Tim. 3:12** all who live godly in Christ **suffer** persecution – Christians
 - **2 Tim. 1:8** we **suffer for the gospel**
 - **illus.: R - Acts 5:40-41** apostles, **flogged** (Jews, usually 39 lashes) for preaching, **rejoiced** that they had been **counted worthy to suffer for name of Jesus**
- - **1 Pet. 3:17; 4:19** suffering is part of God's plan for His children
 - **1 Pet. 4:1-2** arm ourselves for the same purpose as Christ, **suffer, having ceased from sin**
 - **1 Pet. 2:19-21a** we were called for this purpose, bear up under trials when **suffering** unjustly
 - **1 Pet. 2:21-25** Jesus, **suffered unjustly**, to save us
- - **1 Pet. 1:6-9** suffering: **testing and refining of our faith**, praise and **glory and honor** at revelation of Jesus, **rejoice with joy** inexpressible and full of glory, **obtaining the outcome of your faith the salvation** of your souls
 - **illus.: R - Rev. 2:9-10** Christians, 1st century, Ephesus, **tested, tribulation, 10 days**
- - **1 Pet. 3:14-15** **blessed when suffer for righteousness sake**, opportunity to **teach the gospel**
 - **illus.: R - Rev. 6:9; 12:17** **persecuted, suffer, testimony of Jesus, keep commandments**
 - **illus.: persecution of early church**, scattered, gospel spread to whole world. ca. 30 years
- - **1 Pet. 4:12-14** don't be surprised when suffer, keep on **rejoicing when suffering** so we'll rejoice when Jesus is revealed from heaven

- **summary / application:**

- **God made the universe and humanity so that suffering is part of life**
 - we grow **spiritually** when we suffer
 - **glorify God** when we suffer
 - **have an opportunity to teach** people when we suffer
 - we should **glory and rejoice** in our suffering, not because they're fun, but because of the benefits we receive
- **child rearing (normal, healthy circumstances)**
 - it's **profitable to let our children suffer**, to an extent that's healthy
 - **allowing them to be in situations where they have to struggle**, is good for them
 - **giving them everything they want, is not good** for them
 - **making life easy for them, removing trials and adversity, is not good** for them
 - **removing most or all trials and adversity:**
 - **takes away opportunities to grow and mature** spiritually – **slows spiritual growth**
 - **takes away opportunities to teach** others the gospel
 - **illus.: more affluent society, more parents shelter and coddle, more young people fall away**
- **husband / wife relationships (normal, healthy circumstances)**
 - ditto
- **employer / employee relationships**
 - ditto
- **elder / congregation**
 - ditto

- **suffering is part of God's plan for us:** may not have a choice about suffering, but we always have a choice whether to be discouraged

End Part I

- as Christians we have the peace of God that surpasses understanding, because we are strengthened with power from God in the inner man
 - hard times are not pleasant, but we rejoice, knowing the good that is produced, all to the glory of God
 - even when times are hardest are we're weakened, we take courage from God, and don't lose heart
 - illus.: Jesus, garden, prayers and supplication with loud crying, yet not discouraged because He never lost faith and hope and courage to obey His Father
- inv.: if not a Christian, you can enjoy the strength that comes from God, to glory in your tribulations

➤ **Intro. Part II**

- **How do we deal with suffering and discouragement?**

➤ - **definitions**

- **suffering** – physical, mental, and emotional pain – **sometime our own doing, sometimes not**

- **“to undergo, endure”**- physical, mental, and emotional pain – sometime our own doing, sometimes not

- **discourage** - loose courage (confidence, hope) – **attitude**

- **“to deprive of courage, hope, or confidence; dishearten; dispirit”** (*Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc.*)

➤ - **suffering is part of God’s plan for His children**

- **part of God’s plan for Jesus and apostles**

- **part of God’s plan for us** – His will

- **suffering tests and refines** our faith, the outcome is salvation

- **we rejoice and count it as joy** when we suffer, knowing the good it produces

- **suffering often provides opportunities to teach** the gospel

- **so we shouldn’t be surprised** when we suffer

- **we may not have a choice about suffering, but we have a choice about how we deal with it**

➤ **We may not have a choice about suffering, but we always have a choice about discouragement** (attitude)

- **Ja. 1:2-4; Rom. 5:3-5** count all joy, trials, suffering results in spiritual growth and salvation

- **2 Cor. 12:10** when weak (physically), we’re spiritually strong – sickness, trials, etc.

- **gain courage** (faith, hope) **not lose courage when we suffer** (not discouraged)

➤ - **1 Pet. 1:5-10** we’re protected by the power of God to the praise of His glory

- **discouragement is not profitable**, it’s nor according to the power of God, not praise Him

➤ - **illus.: discouragement displeases God** – bad attitude

- **Num. 32:7** tribes of Reuben and Gad, wanted to settle east of Jordan, **discouraged** children of Israel from obeying God and conquering nations west of Jordan

➤ - **illus.: we have a choice whether to be discouraged or not** – good attitude or bad attitude

- **Lk. 8:43-48** woman suffering (Matt. 9:20), hemorrhage 12 years, **not lose faith or hope or courage to go to Jesus**, faith made her well

- **didn’t have a choice whether to suffer, but had a choice whether to be discouraged**

- **when we suffer as God ordains in His word, we increase in spiritual strength, faith, hope, courage**

- to become discouraged, we have to lose faith and hope in God

- **What can we do to prevent discouragement, and suffer to the glory of God? - part II of lesson**

- **Rejoice in the Lord to avoid discouragement** – prepare for suffering during the good times - don't wait
 - **Phil. 3:1a rejoice in the Lord** - the things associated with the Lord, right with Him
 - **What must we do to rejoice in the Lord?** - Phil. 3-4
- - **Phil. 3:3b not put confidence in the flesh** – not discouraged
 - **illus.: Paul** (Phil. 3:4-6)
 - **Phil. 3:7-14 expound**, what we must do to rejoice in the Lord and avoid discouragement
- - **Phil. 3:17 observe** those who **walk according to the pattern**, as we also walk by the same pattern - not discouraged
 - **Phil. 3:18-19 not have mind set on worldly things**, like false teachers
 - **Phil. 3:20-21** because of our citizenship, salvation, future transformation
- - **Phil. 4:4-7 rejoice in the Lord, pray, have the peace that surpasses understanding** - not discouraged
 - **expound on text: how this is obtained**
 - **Jn. 16:33** Jesus: “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”
- - **Phil. 4:8-9 think on the right things** – **Phil. 3:18-19**
 - **expound on text** – things “in” the Lord – **Phil. 3:1; 4:4**
- - **Phil. 4:11-13 learn to be content**, when suffering and not, can do all things through Christ, strengthens us
 - suffering is one of the ways we learn to be content
 - **when we are rejoicing in the Lord, there is not room for discouragement** – attitude
 - our confidence is in God, not in ourselves or other men

End Part II

- as Christians we have the peace of God that surpasses understanding, because we are strengthened with power from God in the inner man
 - **hard times are not pleasant**, but we rejoice, knowing the good that is produced, all to the glory of God
 - **even when times are hardest are we're weakened**, we take courage from God, and don't lose heart
- **inv.:** if not a Christian, you can enjoy the strength that comes from God, to glory in your tribulations

➤ **Intro. Part III**

- **How do we deal with suffering and discouragement?**
- - **definitions**
 - **suffering** – physical, mental, and emotional pain – **sometime our own doing, sometimes not**
 - **“to undergo, endure”**- physical, mental, and emotional pain – sometime our own doing, sometimes not
 - **discourage** - loose courage (confidence, hope) – **attitude**
 - **“to deprive of courage, hope, or confidence; dishearten; dispirit”** (*Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc.*)
- - **suffering is part of God’s plan for His children**
 - **part of God’s plan for Jesus and apostles**
 - **part of God’s plan for us** – His will
 - **suffering tests and refines** our faith, the outcome is salvation
 - **we rejoice and count it as joy** when we suffer, knowing the good it produces
 - **suffering often provides opportunities to teach** the gospel
 - **so we shouldn’t be surprised** when we suffer
- - **we may not have a choice about suffering, but we have a choice about how we deal with it** – attitude
 - **we’re protected by the power of God**, so we rejoice when suffering, know the good it produces
 - **we have a choice regarding our attitude**
 - **discouragement** (etc) that displeases God
 - **take courage, endure to the glory of God**
- - **1st of 5 suggestions how to handle suffering as we should** (discussed last Sunday night)
 - **rejoice in the Lord always**
 - **Phil. 3:1** **rejoice in the Lord** - the things associated with the Lord, right with Him
 - **Phil. 3:3b** **not put confidence in the flesh** – not discouraged
 - **Phil. 3:7-14** **expound**, what we must do to rejoice in the Lord and avoid discouragement
 - **Phil. 3:17** **observe those who walk according to the pattern**, as we also walk by the same pattern - not discouraged
 - **Phil. 3:18-19** **not have mind set on worldly things**, like false teachers
 - **Phil. 3:20-21** because of our **citizenship, salvation, future transformation**
 - **Phil. 4:4-7** **rejoice in the Lord and have the peace that surpasses understanding** - **prayer**
 - **Phil. 4:8-9** **think on the right things**
 - **Phil. 4:11-13** **learn to be content**, when suffering and not, **can do all things through Christ, strengthens us**
 - suffering is one of the ways we learn to be content
 - **when we are rejoicing in the Lord, there is not room for discouragement**
 - our confidence is in God, not in ourselves or other men
- **this lesson: 4 suggestions to handling suffering as we should** – not discouraged

- **Trust in God to deliver you from trials, to avoid discouragement** – not give us more than we can handle
 - **2 Cor. 1:8-10; Phil. 1:18b-20** we have confidence in God's deliverance, just as Paul, as we imitate the apostles
 - illus.: song #279, He Is Able To Deliver Thee
 - illus.: 3 guys commanded to fall down and worship an idol
 - refused to do so, know they'd be put to an excruciatingly painful death in a blazing furnace of fire
 - told the one persecuting them
 - "our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."
 - Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego
 - God can deliver us from anything
 - if God wants us to suffer through something, we will – and be better for it
 - if God wants us to be delivered, we will
- - **1 Cor. 10:13** God always provides a way of escape, temptation, able to endure it
 - suffering can become a temptation, as Job and his wife - God always provides a way to deal with it
 - way of escape may include death
 - illus.: Cassie Bernall
 - 2 years before she was shot and killed for confessing her faith in God, she was dabbling in black magic
 - parents found out, showed touch love, able to get her away from it
 - April 20, 1999, two classmates were shooting up the school and killing kids
 - in the library, moment of truth, boy pointed a gun at her and asked if she believed in God
 - she took a deep breath, knowing the cost, and answered "Yes" in a clear breath
 - boy asked "Why," but before she could answer he shot her to death
 - there is always a way of escape, even if we have to die to take it
 - Heb. 12:4 you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin
- - **Ps. 46:1-3** God is our strength and refuge, we cast our burdens on Him and He deals with them
- - **1 Pet. 5:6-7** put your anxieties on God and trust Him to handle it for you, prayer
- **Matt. 6:33-34** stay in your priorities and don't get distracted - seek first God's kingdom and righteousness
- God provides us with everything we need, and will always deliver us from trials (suffering)
 - believe it, rejoice in the Lord always

- **Be strengthened by God, to avoid discouragement**
 - **Acts 15:30-31, 35** strengthened with the word of God
- - **Eph. 1:18-19, 20-21, 22-23; 3:14-21; 6:10-18** strength God gives to all who are faithful member's of Christ's church
 - **obedience to God's word, prayer**
 - **1 Th. 2:13** the word of God performs its work in those who believe
 - **Ja. 5:13** if anyone is suffering, he must pray
- - **Rom. 8:26-27** the Holy Spirit interceding for you when things are so bad you can't pray about it as you should
 - **illus.: severe pain or grief**, can't think clearly, maybe all you can say is, "God help me!"
- - **Rom. 8:28** God making all things work together for good, for those who love the Lord (**1 Jn. 5:3** obey)
 - **illus.: Joseph**
 - sold into slavery as a young boy, because of jealousy
 - then as a slave, falsely accused of attempted rape and thrown into prison
 - there he gained a reputation to interpret dreams, and after a couple of years was called by Pharaoh to interpret his dream
 - as a result, he was made governor over Egypt
 - as governor, Joseph was in a position to move his family to Egypt so they could survive a famine
 - then because the Israelites had moved to Egypt, God fulfilled the prophetic promise made to Abraham that his people would come out of Egypt after 400 years
 - after Joseph's father died, his brothers came to him and asked forgiveness, supposing he may not be harsh toward them
 - **Joseph replied:** "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (**Gen. 50:20**)
 - **Joseph suffered, according to God's will**, so that His will could be accomplished during Joseph's life, and for generations to come – **God worked all things together for good**
 - **to help you suffer with the right attitude, anticipate the good that will come from suffering, helps us not become discouraged**
 - **illus.: Joseph, apostles, early Christians**
- - **Rom. 8:31-32, 37, 38-39** more than conquers, nothing separate us from God
 - **if we are fully committed to God in every way (love), He will give us abundance of strength** to endure whatever hardships come our way
 - **rejoice in the Lord**
 - **not discouraged** – rather encouraged, made strong, victorious
 - **1 Pet. 4:16** "but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name."

➤ **Call on brethren for help when you're struggling, to avoid discouragement**

- **Ja. 5:13a, 14-16** sick (suffering), call for the elders, prayer

- responsibility of each Christian, not expect elders to be mind readers

- **illus.:** bell we give kids to ring when they're sick, to call us, in case they can't say anything (e.g., vomit)

- their responsibility to call

- story, Dawn when got her wisdom teeth out, frantically ringing the bell but I didn't hear, Allen Michaels, came to my room to let me know

➤ - **1 Cor. 12:26** each member suffers with other members who suffer – help each other

- **Gal. 6:2** "Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."

- **illus.:** hurt right hand, the left hand comforts it and tries to make it feel better (Jerry Flatt)

- **illus.:** if have stomach ache, the legs and feet take it to the doctor for help, treatment, medicine

- brethren must tell each other about their struggles, so we can pray for each other

- when we're suffering, we can't keep it to ourselves – pride

- we have to tell brethren (esp. elders), communicate what we need, so others can help – pray

➤ **Don't grow weary in doing good, to avoid discouragement**

- **Heb. 12:3-4** don't grow weary and lose heart, you're not suffering as much as Jesus did for you (death)

- **Gal. 6:9** "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."

- application:

- self pity often sets in when we're suffering

- not assemble with saints as much because not feel good

- not do good for others because we feel sorry for ourselves

- worse thing we could do

- we feel better if we focus on others and their needs, rather than ourselves

- busy doing good for others, not have time to drown in our own sorrows

- **Acts 20:35** more blessed to give than receive

- this life is short, we need to make the most of every moment, not discouraged, but working every moment for the Lord

- dies soon, rest from our labor, with the Lord, if not grow weary in doing good

- not lose heart, die trying and doing your best

- to glory of God

Summary / Inv.

- suffering is part of God's plan for His children

- discouragement is a choice, and not something that pleases God

- review PP: suggestions to overcoming discouragement

- inv: God is the only one who can give you strength to overcome adversity, and rejoice when suffering