

The Value of Suffering
Sunday, December 6, 2015
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Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Psalm 100:1-5

1 A Psalm of praise. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

3 Know ye that the LORD he *is* God: *it is* he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name.

5 For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations.

Thanksgiving Day has come and gone. Most of the leftovers of turkey and dressing and pumpkin pie have now been consumed.

We have moved on to other things; other issues and other crises have garnered our attention.

Yet, here it is, Sunday morning. It is the Lord's Day. Men and women who are thankful to God are meeting together all across this land and across the world to give thanks once again to God, from whom all blessings flow.

We have come to make a joyful noise unto the Lord;
and thus we have and thus we shall.

Our goal and our purpose is to serve our Lord. Our
privilege and our blessing is that we get to do so
with gladness!

Could you use some gladness in your life this
morning?

Some of you might say, “How can I be glad with all I
am going through?”

Some of you; perhaps many of you, are suffering
today.

You may be finding that serving the Lord with
gladness is very hard to come by right now.

I have good news for you.

There are things we know that give us gladness in
spite of any circumstance.

I. Even in the face of suffering.

A. We know that the Lord, He is God!

1. Our God is the self-existent One.
2. Our God is all powerful; He can do anything!
3. Our God has always been; He is Alpha and Omega; there is no issue or dilemma He has

place on a Roman cross that we could justly be saved from suffering once and for all.

We lost one of our own this week, yes; many among us are suffering grief.

Yet at the same time we are glad for her; she is set free and in the presence of the Lord; never to suffer again.

One of the greatest benefits of suffering is that it often causes us to realize what is important in life and what is not.

The wisdom and the change that comes through suffering is priceless.

Suffering on behalf of the Lord always pays off in the end.

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

not seen, there is no problem He cannot handle.

4. Our God is omniscient, our God is omnipotent, our God is omnipresent...and He loves us!

B. We also know that He hath made us and not we ourselves.

1. Not only did we NOT evolve from lower creatures...

2. Not only did we NOT somehow create ourselves through a made-up idea called natural selection...

3. God specially designed and created every last one of us to fulfill a purpose specific to each of us; we were made to serve the Lord; and to do so with gladness!

C. Not only that, we are His people; we are the sheep of His pasture!

1. Our God who made us has sent us His gospel and has saved us from our sins.

2. He has given us new life that is glorious and eternal.

3. He has led us to be baptized and become part of His Church; His pasture, where we go in and out and find nourishment for our souls.

D. We know that we owe Him everything!

1. Thus we will enter His gates with thanksgiving!
2. Thus we will occupy His courts with praise!
3. Thus we will be thankful!
4. Thus we will bless His name!

E. And we know that God is good!

1. For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations.
2. His goodness lasts forever.
3. God IS good all the time; even to all future generations.
4. Even my grandchildren; even my great grandchildren and theirs to come will be given the same truth that set me free from my sin and gave me a life worth living.
5. God is good all the time; even in the face of suffering.

When evil rears its head, when tragedy occurs or even when individuals face hardship; one question always arises...

II. If God is so good, why does He allow all this suffering?

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

5. Suffering is a part of God's will for your life.

1Peter 4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Conclusion:

Man's sin is the ultimate cause, either directly or indirectly, of suffering.

Very often suffering is the only thing that will drive us from it,

The only thing that will remove suffering is the removal of sin.

That is exactly the solution that God will ultimately apply to this particular problem.

"If God is so good, why does He allow all this suffering"?

Oh, God could solve the problem now; He could remove sin with one word...but that would also remove all the sinners as well and separate them from Him for all eternity.

Instead, our God, who is good all the time, has chosen to suffer for us; dying in our

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

2. Suffering removes sin.

1Peter 4:1-2

1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3. Suffering produces obedience.

Hebrews 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

4. Suffering glorifies God.

1Peter 2:19-21

19 For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God.

First of all:

A. Suffering is a part of life just like death is a part of life.

1. Ignorantly blaming God for it is not going to change it.

2. Everyone, including you, will experience suffering to one degree or another.

B. There is some suffering that is clearly deserved.

1. **1Peter 4:15** But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

Yes, from murderers all the way down to gossipers; evildoers will and rightfully should suffer.

2. Would you choose to eliminate all suffering in the world, even as a consequence for evil?

3. You might think you would, but you would soon change your mind.

4. There is evil in this world; there are evil people.

5. I have heard police and military men who have seen the atrocities of evil people say that there are just some people who need killing.

C. There are many kinds of suffering.

1. Physical attack, verbal abuse, sickness, injury, stress, emotional trauma; perhaps the break-up of a friendship or a relationship; a law suit, an IRS audit...there are hundreds of ways to suffer; some you may not have considered.

2. **1 Timothy 4:10** For therefore we both **labour** and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. For example:

3. Some of you, especially some of you younger ones, spend your days where you don't want to be doing what you don't want to do...you suffer this because you think you must; maybe so.

4. Where would you be and what would you be doing if you did not have to be on that job or in that school?

5. **Lamentations 3:25-27**

25 The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him.

26 *It is* good that *a man* should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

27 *It is* good for a man that he bear the yoke [the bondage of labour] in his youth.

6. You have the power to change it; maybe just not the motivation.

6. The power to change it is there if you will seek the Lord.

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

7. Suffering is often a great motivator; one that will move you when nothing else will.

III. Suffering can be of great benefit.

A. Throughout history thousands of great inventions and great innovations came about because someone got tired of suffering or seeing others suffer.

1. Medical advancements, safety equipment; seat belts, for crying out loud!

2. Innovations in industry; I used to drive nails with a hammer until I got my first nail gun.

3. Small business which is the cornerstone of our economy; most of which began because someone got tired of suffering in a dead end job.

B. For the believer, the benefits can be enormous.

1. Suffering produces patience.

James 5:10-11