

KESSID SERMON NOTES



Sermon

"Singing in the Dark"

Date

7-1-18

Speaker

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Now as we join Paul and his different ministry companions on their missionary journeys, perhaps one theme begins to stand out above the others...

- Paul was a man of great perseverance...His ministry is one of multiple hardships and setbacks!
- Example... (Vs) Acts 14:8-15, 18-20 – He rose up and went on. Allow this to really sink in... A Man is healed, and God's Glory is misused.
- He was stoned for the bringing of healing and hope, and yet he just kept pressing on.

Remember when Paul was first called?

- (Vs) Acts 9:13-16 - Ananias and the future suffering of Paul
- God is recognizing for Paul that things are going to be very difficult
- Suffering will be what His ministry is about!

Paul himself... clearly recognizes this reality as part of his calling...

(Vs) 2nd Cor 11:23b -30 – "...I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness."

"Biblical faith will never require that you have to deny reality." – Paul Trip

(Vs) Acts 14:22 – "... strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

"All Christians suffer – Either you have, you are, or you will."

Suffering is multifaceted.

- Suffering has many faces.
- Paul wrote... (Vs) 2nd Cor. 4:8-9 – “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed...”
- In these two verses, Paul lists several types of suffering – mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual.
- Each of these are different ways that we can suffer, and when suffering comes, often several of these types of suffering are involved.

Suffering happens in community.

- Christians still suffer as we wait for Jesus to return, but none of our suffering is random or without purpose.
- Suffering pulls us together!
- Paul confronts that type of thinking when he writes...(Vs) Gal 6:2 “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

“The church is meant to be a refuge for those suffering.”

- When a member is hurting, the church applies the bandages.
- When a member is down, the church encourages.
- When a member is in need, the church comes alongside to help.

Suffering equips us for ministry.

- Firsthand experience in suffering is essential in equipping us for ministry.
- Paul writes that God... (Vs) 2nd Cor 1:4 “... who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”
- There has always been a link between experiencing suffering and being equipped for ministry. David Powlison answers this way...

“When you’ve passed through your own fiery trials and found God to be true to what He says, you have real help to offer. You have firsthand experience of both His sustaining grace and His purposeful design. He has kept you through pain; He has reshaped you more into His image. . . What you are experiencing from God, you can give away in increasing measure to others. You are learning both the tenderness and the clarity necessary to help sanctify another person’s deepest distress.”
-Suffering and the Sovereignty of God

Suffering is a battleground.

- Wherever there is suffering, there is a battle – a battle for your soul.
- One that curses God because of suffering.
- One that praises God, even in the midst of suffering.

(Vs) Phil. 3:12a-14 – “...but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Suffering prepares us for more glory.

- God says a lot about suffering in Scripture so that you know where to look when the pain comes to you.
- One of the counterintuitive truths about suffering is that it prepares Christians for more glory.

Paul writes... (Vs) *2nd Cor. 4:17,18 – “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”*

I know these verses are like sandpaper on our modern sentiments about suffering because we naturally try to avoid suffering at all costs...

- But... “God allows suffering in our lives for the sake of our eternal joy – yes, even glory!” (Vs) *16:20-26 - Paul and Silas Persecuted*

We are all called to sing in the dark...Persevere

- Communion points toward the ever-comforting truth Jesus understands.... For no one has ever suffered more for those they love than God did for you and me...

(Vs) *Isaiah 53:5 – “But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed.*