

The Problem of Suffering

How Can We Prepare for It?

TEXT: Job 5:6-7; Psa. 88:9

INTRODUCTION:

- A. IN OUR LESSONS WE HAVE LOOKED AT WHY GOD ALLOWS SUFFERING AND WHAT ITS CAUSES MIGHT BE.
- B. HOW CAN WE PREPARE OURSELVES FOR SUFFERING.
- C. WE CAN PREPARE FOR SUFFERING BY DEVELOPING:

I. TRUST IN GOD THROUGH AN BIBLE STUDY.

- A. SCRIPTURES ABOUND WITH PROMISES THAT GOD IS WITH US.
 - 1. In the Old Testament(**Psa. 46:1-3; 55:22**).
 - 2. In the New Testament(**Rom. 8:35-39; 1 Pet. 5:6-7**).
- B. BUT WE MUST TRUST HIS PROMISES(**Nahum 1:7; Isa. 26:3-4**).
- C. HOW DO WE DEVELOP SUCH TRUST?
 - 1. Trust comes through the Word of God!(**Rom. 10:17**).
 - 2. The Word develops trust which sustains in all things(**Psa. 119:165; 1:1-3**).

II. COMMUNION WITH GOD THROUGH PRAYER.

- A. WE ARE TO PRAY IN TIMES OF SUFFERING(**James 5:13**).
 - 1. Jesus certainly did during His greatest trials
 - a. In the garden of Gethsemane(**Matt. 26:36-44**).
 - b. While on the cross at Calvary(**Luke 23:34, 46**).
 - 2. The early church prayed when they were persecuted(**Acts 12:1-5, 12**).
- B. THIS IS BECAUSE IN PRAYER
 - 1. We receive the inner peace necessary to sustain us in our trials(**Phil. 4:6-7**).
 - 2. The time to start praying is NOW before suffering comes(**Jer. 12:5**).
 - 3. God will already be a FRIEND with Whom we are close, and not a stranger!

III. FELLOWSHIP THROUGH CHURCH ATTENDANCE.

- A. SOLOMON WROTE OF THE VALUE OF HAVING FRIENDS (**Ecc. 4:9-12**).
 - 1. They can help each other in their troubles
 - 2. But "woe" to those who must face suffering alone!
- B. THE CHURCH PROVIDES THIS KIND OF MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT
 - 1. We are to have the same care for one another(**1 Cor. 12:24-27**).
 - 2. The strong are exhorted to help those who are weak(**1 Thess. 5:14**).
- C. THE BEST WAY TO DEVELOP SUCH HELPFUL RELATIONSHIPS
 - 1. Be active in the local church, become involved, make your presence felt.
 - a. By frequent and consistent assembling with the church
 - b. By voluntary participation in the work of the church
 - c. Visit sick, help the needy, encourage the weak, welcome new members.
 - d. So become more than just a "pew-warmer"!
 - 2. Those who do such things never lack support in their time of trouble!
(**Psa. 37:25; Matt. 6:33**).

CONCLUSION:

- A. BY DEVELOPING THESE THINGS WE WILL BE BETTER PREPARED FOR SUFFERING.
- B. BURDENS CAN EITHER SHATTER OR STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH.

1. Do we have trust in God(**Psa. 55:22**).
 2. That trust comes from hearing and believing his promises.
- C. THE TIME FOR SUFFERING WILL COME (**Ecc. 3:1-8**).
- D. STILL WE WILL RELY UPON GOD THROUGH JESUS (**Heb. 4:14-16**).
- E. MERCY AND GRACE IS OURS IN TIME OF NEED.