

Study Questions - Week 9

Please read 3:1-13.

A. Can you summarize in 10 words or less what this is saying? (Pay particular attention to verse 13 so that you can incorporate suffering into your idea).

B. Let's make sense out of suffering from this passage

1. In verse 1, Paul calls himself **"a prisoner of Christ Jesus"**. By this time he had been a prisoner for 5 years. How does living with the conviction of being **Jesus Christ's** prisoner help us through our suffering? Give as many reasons as you can how Paul's imprisonment was used by God for good.

2. There are two kinds of suffering. There is a **just kind of suffering** which is what we get when do something out of God's will. There is also an **unjust kind of suffering**, one in which I am suffering for someone else's eternal welfare. What in this passage would lead you to the conclusion that Paul is experiencing the latter?

3. Paul is suffering **redemptively i.e. so that others might experience salvation**. How does the suffering of our Lord Jesus clarify our own? In particular think about **the degree** to which He suffered.

4. Does God equip us first for serving Him **and then** He tests and refines our dedication thru the fires of tribulation and trial? or does suffering for Jesus' sake **precede** being used greatly by God.

5. Someone has said "We do not trust God until we get to the end of ourselves. And that is precisely where suffering is leading us". Do you agree with that? Can you think of a time in your own life where this was true?

6. According to **verse 13**, those believers at Ephesus were losing heart and their faith had been shaken to some degree because Paul was suffering. What are some of the reasons why we lose heart? See also Isaiah 49:4; Jeremiah 20:18.

7. We tend to be ego-centric and see salvation and God's working only from our own personal experience and perspective. Why does a "Man-Centered Gospel" make losing heart when suffering a more likely reality?

8. The reduction of ourselves in light of God's powerful grace is yet another reason given for suffering. This is because suffering cuts away our pride and our dependence upon our own resources. How do we see that principle at work in Paul's life in these verses?

9. Still another reason for suffering is presented in **verses 9-11**. Evidently the angels (aka "the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places") learn from us. Any ideas what they learn and why this is important for us to remember?

10. Some teach that it is okay to be angry at God when we suffer and that we should be honest in expressing our feelings. Is this at odds with the Bible?

EPHESIANS

A GOD
CENTERED
GOSPEL

The Church: Why Marry It?

(This is the 8th in a series of messages entitled *The God Centered Gospel*)

Ephesians 2:19-22

Because of God's powerful grace, He is able to affect the quality of our relationships demonstrating His might by forming us into one invisible church so that we together can forward the cause of Christ (2:11-18).

Unfortunately there is a misconnect between what we know is God's agenda for His church and what is ours. A survey by Gallup found that while almost half the country attends church services, only 6 to 10 percent of all Americans are what he terms "highly spiritually committed". So why should we marry the church? Why not just date it?

Lessons

I. THE CHURCH IS A _____ (v 19a; cf 1 Peter 2:9)

A. As His _____, King Jesus grants us the same _____

B. Because we have the same status we share _____
in _____ and in _____

1. It is our privilege to share in the _____ of King Jesus

2. It is our responsibility to live under His _____
(see 1 Peter 2:11)

II. THE CHURCH IS A _____ (v 19b)

A. Our Father God has _____ Patria Potestas"

B. He has granted _____,
and _____

C. His household embodies the _____ of
the Father

III. THE CHURCH IS A _____ (vv 20-22)

A. The church is founded on _____ with
_____ central to everything (v 20)

1. The _____ is laid only once

2. The _____ ties it all together

B. The church is formed with each stone making its
contribution (v 21)

C. The church functions as a place for God (v 22)