

The Whole Story: Intercession

Day 1

Glory & Suffering

In our text on Sunday, Jesus said that he was not praying that we be taken out of the world, but that we be kept safe from the evil one. In his usual way, Jesus was not doing what we would have expected Him to do, namely remove us from our suffering. Instead, he was praying that our suffering does not end in destruction but in glory. To understand why he does not pray for us to elude suffering, check out this great and very informative article:

<https://www.modernreformation.org/resources/articles/suffering-as-the-path-to-glory>

Verses: Psalm 32:1–5, John 10:10, Romans 3:25

Prayer Topics: Adversity, Difficulty, Challenges

Day 2

Focus

Nothing focuses us on ourselves more than pain. When pain and suffering hits, it can seem impossible to focus on anything else, and we often convince ourselves that anything that brings relief is licit. Is this the best way to navigate suffering? Check out this article to find out:

<https://www.wisdomhunters.com/glorifying-god-when-suffering/>

Verses: Isaiah 61:3; John 17:4; Romans 4:20

Prayer Topics: Glory, Determination, Longsuffering

Day 3

Shortcuts

When I was a kid living in Colorado, I would roam all over the old part of town, spending hours exploring, looking around, and doing stuff with my friends. Behind our house there was a small alley that separated our property from a very small apartment complex. There were many times that I cut through that complex coming and going on my journeys, but I could never do that with my father around. My father insisted that I go the long way around because there was a private property sign on the apartment complex, and he was adamant that I respected it. To me it was no big deal, and the shortcut saved me at least a couple of minutes, and in my childish mind that settled the matter. As I grew up I started to realize the problem of shortcuts, and I think it is fair to say that we all are seeing this problem in many ways in our modern society. When we were young, we had to wait for our TV show to come on and hope that we did not miss it. A little later when VCRs became common, you still had the trouble of programming them. We now live in a time where media like movies and music are unlimited, and it has created as many problems as it has solved. Now that there is no sacrifice or "suffering" required to have them, they have lost some of their value and appeal. There is a spiritual dimension to this truth, and you can read more about in this great article:

<https://matthew59.org/the-beautiful-connection-between-suffering-and-glory/>

Veres: Luke 9:21-36, 2 Timothy 3:16, Acts 17:11

Prayer Topics: Effort, Righteousness, Rewards

Day 4

Others

Paul had a life that was familiar with suffering. He was shipwrecked, beaten, and imprisoned, and he often knew physical privation of the kind that most of us will never know. In the book of Ephesians, Paul tells the believers that his suffering is for their glory, which is surprising given what many of us would expect him to say. If he told the believers that his suffering was for his own glory, we could understand how that might work. Science tells us that when we face things that are difficult or painful by choice, we gain a dopamine reward and we grow in courage and traits like perseverance and toughness. If Paul said that his suffering was for the glory of God, we would likewise see the point. God is revealed as of the highest worth when someone like Paul is

willing to pay the ultimate price. When you go to an art auction and a painting is for sale that has previously been sold for millions of dollars, you shouldn't expect to get it for hundreds of dollars. Someone else paying the high price has given people a data point about the value of that piece, showing its glory. But Paul tells the Ephesians that his suffering is for their glory. How could this be? Give some thought today about this truth, and see what glory can be given to others through your own sufferings for Christ. Check out this article for more:

<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/suffering-and-glory>

Verses: 1 Peter 4:10-11, Acts 20:35, Galatians 5:13-14

Prayer Topics: Community, Sacrifice, Joy

Day 5

Thanks to Sylvester Warsaw, Jr for our devotional today

In Matthew 20:20-28 and Mark 10:35-45 there's the recorded account of the sons of Zebedee, John and James, going to Jesus to ask Him can they sit on each side of Him in His glory. Jesus responded to their request this, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Until people come into the knowledge of God and He opens their eyes people will always glamorize and romanticize about what it means to pick up our cross daily and follow Christ Jesus. When people choose to be ignorant of God's Word or people allow themselves to be misled by wolves in sheep clothing their understanding of God is what can God do for them meaning materially especially here in the western world. People are looking for prominence like the Pharisee boasting about what he does and how he's not like others, Luke 18:9-14, even if living in poverty. It's the classic us versus you syndrome.

When Jesus said to Peter, "Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me" (John 18:11) He wasn't talking about something glamorous after this world order. Jesus was talking about redemption not perpetuating the kingdom of fallen man under the rule of the evil one. Jesus was talking about life and death and even in death He taught about life only in and through Him given to Him by Father God. In John 17 we can see the gravity and weight of God's love for man in and through Christ Jesus. The power and truth of His

Word not returning to Him void empty handed. Even in the face of death, willingly laying down His life, Jesus chooses to teach and intercede not only for His disciples but all who will believe because of their/our testimony, John 17:20-21. When we are unapologetically His we're invited by God to participate with Him in His plan of redemption leading people to the cross knowing He has already prayed for people to believe by our boast in Him and Him alone. Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work," John 4:34-38.