

The Christian and Suffering

Correcting Misunderstanding

- ▶ Health and Wealth Gospel
 - ▶ Millions of followers based on false hope
- ▶ Health and Wealth ideas can sink into our thoughts and language
 - ▶ We can come to expect that God will answer our wants and desires as long as we are faithful, and when something bad happens, it tests our faith.

Correcting Misunderstanding

- ▶ If we expect being a child of God to be easy, we aren't reading the scriptures correctly.
- ▶ Suffering is common theme among God's servants
 - ▶ Joseph
 - ▶ Job
 - ▶ Moses
 - ▶ David
 - ▶ Daniel
 - ▶ Apostles
 - ▶ Jesus
 - ▶ Not an exhaustive list
- ▶ Hebrews 11:36-38

Correcting Misunderstanding

- ▶ Why does God allow suffering?
 - ▶ Creation was “very good” (Genesis 1:31)
 - ▶ Suffering exists because of man’s choice to sin (Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 8:19-23)

Dealing with Suffering

- ▶ Suffering can lead to good outcomes
 - ▶ God has an understanding of the world that we don't
 - ▶ Joseph's suffering is a prime example of this (Genesis 45:4-8)
 - ▶ God used (even guided) Joseph's suffering in order to save life
 - ▶ Joseph was not bitter towards God about the terrible things that happened to him
 - ▶ We are often able to look back at our lives and see growth or benefit from something we have been through (Proverbs 17:3, 1 Peter 1:6-7)

Dealing with Suffering

- ▶ What about when we can't see a benefit of our suffering?
 - ▶ Job is a prime example of this
 - ▶ Job underwent tremendous suffering- he lost his wealth, his servants, his children, his crops (Job 1-2)
 - ▶ His wife encouraged him to curse God (Job 2:9)
 - ▶ His friends accuse him of sin (throughout the book)
- ▶ What is God's response to Job and his friends?
 - ▶ Demonstrates his power and wisdom (38-41)
 - ▶ He does not explain why Job suffers- He never tells Job of the events involving Satan
 - ▶ Job repents for not trusting in God (Job 42:1-6)

Dealing with Suffering

- ▶ What can we learn from Job's example?
 - ▶ We won't always understand why we suffer, but we serve a wise and powerful God.
- ▶ Jesus is God's ultimate answer to suffering
 - ▶ The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus puts us in an even better position than Job to deal with suffering

Jesus- God's Answer to Suffering

- ▶ Jesus' life on earth shows us God can relate to our suffering
 - ▶ Jesus was God incarnate yet took the form of a servant (Philippians 2:5-7).
 - ▶ Jesus endured normal human suffering
 - ▶ Homelessness (Matthew 8:20)
 - ▶ Rejection from His hometown (Luke 4:14-30)
 - ▶ Loss of loved ones- John the Baptist and Lazarus (Matthew 14; John 11)
 - ▶ Incredible physical pain
 - ▶ Death

Jesus- God's Answer to Suffering

- ▶ Jesus' death shows the incredible penalty that had to be paid for sin
 - ▶ We've already discussed that sin is the reason suffering exists (Romans 8:19-23).
 - ▶ Sin requires sacrifice- Jesus was the only sacrifice that once and for all could cure sin (Hebrews 10:4-10)
 - ▶ This is how God shows his love for us (Romans 5:8)

Jesus- God's Answer to Suffering

- ▶ Jesus' Resurrection is the victory over death and suffering
 - ▶ 1 Corinthians 15 summarizes what Jesus' resurrection means
 - ▶ Jesus is the first fruits for those who have died (v. 20, v. 23)
 - ▶ Because he is raised, those who are in Him will be raised
 - ▶ Our perishable bodies, which are subject to death and suffering, will become imperishable because of His resurrection (v. 42, 50-51)
 - ▶ His Resurrection takes away the sting of death (54-57)