

THE PROBLEM AND POWER OF PAIN

WEEK 2 • DAILY BRIEFING 2 • TRIAL AS TESTIMONY

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

This week follows Sunday's sermon, "A War Without Answers," from the book of Job. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, my hardest seasons are not happening in private. Help me trust You in front of the people who are watching, and give me the courage to tell them why I still hope in You. Use what I am going through to bring others to Yourself. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

On Sunday we looked at the end of Job's story. Job's three friends spent most of the book insisting that his suffering had to be punishment for some hidden sin. God eventually confronted them and sent them to Job, and then He accepted Job's prayer on their behalf. Job's trial exposed their bad theology, and God used it to bring them back to Himself. That was the third principle from Sunday: God can use our faithful suffering to bring others to Himself. Here is today's idea in one sentence: your hardest season is not happening in private, and God can use how you walk through it to bring the people around you to Him.

This is not just an idea from an ancient book. On Sunday, Pastor Brad told the story of a young woman he once planned to marry. A couple of years before she was killed by a car, her mom was diagnosed with breast cancer and came to Christ during that trial. Her mom eventually died from the cancer, but her daughter came to faith in Christ by watching her. Her mom's suffering did not save the daughter; Jesus did. But God used a dying mother's faith to point her daughter to Christ, so when the daughter was killed before she turned 30, death was not the end for her.

God brings people to Himself in more than one way, and your trial can be one of them. Some people come to faith because they are moved by watching someone trust God through pain. Others come because a tragedy forces them to face their own mortality or raises questions they never thought to ask. The people around you frequently pay attention when life falls apart.

Today's first passage comes from the book of Acts, which tells the story of the early church. Paul, one of the first Christian missionaries, traveled with a partner named Silas to Philippi, a Roman city in what is now northern Greece. While they were there, they freed a slave girl from an evil spirit, and her owners had been using her to make money by telling fortunes. Her owners lost their income, so they dragged Paul and Silas in front of the city officials. The officials had them beaten with rods and locked in the inner prison with their feet in stocks (Acts 16:16–24). Today's passage picks up that same night.

The second passage comes from a letter Paul wrote about ten years later to the church in that same city. The jailer you are about to read about and his family were among the first Christians in Philippi (Acts 16:33). When Paul wrote this letter, he was a prisoner again, probably in Rome, and he wanted the church to know how God was using his chains.

Acts 16:25–31

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. ²⁷When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." ²⁹And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Philippians 1:12–14

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. ¹⁴And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

As you read, keep track of who is watching Paul in each passage and what happens to them because of it.

REFLECT

Answer these honestly. This is between you and God, and nobody else needs to see what you write.

Paul and Silas had just been beaten and locked in stocks, and they did not spend the night complaining.

1. Fill in the blank from Acts 16:25: "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and _____ hymns to God, and the prisoners were _____ to them."

Why do you think the other prisoners paid attention to two men singing after a beating like that?

The jailer assumed every prisoner had escaped and that he would be held responsible for it.

2. According to verses 28 through 31, what did Paul and Silas do for the jailer, and where did they point him?

Notice what Paul and Silas did with their pain that night. Instead of cursing their situation, they prayed and sang hymns to God. When the watching jailer asked how to be saved, they pointed him straight to Jesus. Their worship got his attention and opened the door to an eternity-shaping conversation.

3. Fill in the blank from Philippians 1:12: "what has happened to me has really served to _____ the gospel."

According to verses 13 and 14, who was affected by Paul's imprisonment? (The imperial guard was the group of elite soldiers who served the Roman emperor.)

What does this passage say about God's ability to use circumstances Paul would never have chosen?

Most Americans will never be beaten for their faith, but almost everyone eventually gets a diagnosis, a layoff, a betrayal, or a phone call nobody wants.

4. Who is watching you go through your hardest trials right now?

Based on how you have handled those trials so far, what are those people learning about Jesus and the hope of the life to come?

The apostle Peter wrote to Christians who were being mistreated for their faith, and he told them to always be "prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). Some people hide their struggle so well that nobody ever hears why they still trust God.

5. If someone asked you this week how or why you are still holding on to God, what would you tell them?

Is there anyone watching your trial who has seen how tough you are but has never heard you talk about the difference Jesus makes in the pain you are hiding?

Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Romans 8:18 from memory.
