

Acts of Jesus 48 A Reason to suffer notes

Last time we saw that Paul got some bad advice from some very good people and we looked at the subjects of both giving and receiving advice.

--This week we're going to be looking at a question that is begged by the whole entire scene of Paul going to Jerusalem.

--**How is it that Paul, going in obedience to God to Jerusalem, suffers abuse and imprisonment?**

--**Do Christian suffer even though they are right in the middle of God's will for their lives?**

--Since the answer is yes, then the question is "why do believers suffer even though they are doing God's will?"

Acts 21:8-14

--Paul goes up to Jerusalem in obedience to the Spirit of God.

--He then in obedience to the elders and to God helps some Jewish believers perform their vows to God in the Temple in order to dispel a rumor that he was against Temple or the Jewish practices as commanded in Scripture.

--As a result of all this, he is attacked by people who intended to kill Him, only to be rescued by Roman soldiers who imprison him for over 2 years.

--What gives?

--**"I thought that if you obeyed God, everything would go well for you and you would prosper"**

--You, apparently, have not read your Bible which tells us: **II Tim. 3:12, Jn. 16:33b**

--Jesus is the only one who obeyed His Father in everything, and look what happened to Him!

1. Back to our question: "Why do believers suffer even though they are doing God's will?"

1. We suffer for the purposes of God. **John 9:2-3** (just say that over whatever you are going through)

--We exist to bring God glory in our lives.

--Paul's imprisonment brought us the books of **Philippians, Ephesians, I & II Tim., Titus, Philemon** which bring God glory to this day.

--**I Cor. 6:19-20, Rom. 14:7-8**

--Life is short, and if you expend it for just yourself, you have truly wasted it.

--Are we willing to live for the glory of God? That is what you are here for.

--Are we willing to suffer, be lied about, be mistreated, if it brings Him glory.

--God knows best how we should bring Him glory so we should allow Him to direct us.

--How was God glorified in His Son, Jesus? In His death.

--Jesus says to us, "take up your cross daily and follow Me" – remember, we don't drag a cross to a party!

2. We suffer so we can see ourselves. **James 1:2**

- Notice: the test is not for God's information but for yours!
- Tough times have a way of introducing us to ourselves.**
- We have a lot of faith in God that has never been tried** or put to the test.
- Trials accomplish that.**
- The apostle Paul had had many of his beliefs tried, but I can assure you he found out even more about the God he had faith in through his over 2-year ordeal.**

On the night in which Jesus was betrayed there was quite a lot of confidence among the disciples. They all vowed to follow Him to the death. Peter swore that even if all would fall away, he would never. Within 24 hours the trial of Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion came upon them and they all fled...especially Peter. That trial revealed their hearts and their need for further refining.

- Persecution** may reveal whether you prefer the affirmation of God rather than the approval of men.
- Tough financial times** may reveal if you truly believe that God is the one who supplies your needs.
- Illness** may reveal whether or not you intend to glorify God no matter what He allows you to go through.

3. We suffer so we can learn and grow: **James 1:2-3, I Pet. 1:6-7**

- One of the clearest episodes of the godly suffering** for doing what is right is in **Daniel 3**—they did right and were thrown into the furnace.
- You need to know that God still allows His faithful** to be put into a furnace.
- There are some things that can only** be learned when things get hot.

When a silver smith puts silver into a furnace, he does it for only one purpose: to refine it. He puts in there, but he doesn't leave in indefinitely. No two lumps of silver are the same either. There is no set time for the testing to end. It ends when the silver smith decides. He watches it carefully and does not take his eyes off of it once it enters the flame. Too long and the silver will be ruined. Too short and the silver will not be purified. So he watches carefully until the time is just right. Guess when he knows that the silver is ready? When he can see his reflection in the molten metal!

- God does the same with us: Not too long or too short but until His likeness can be seen in us.**
- If you are in the fire right now begging for some relief,** remember, God more often works not as a quick rescue mission but as a purifier

He's never too early, never too late-----always on time!