

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING? (Job 3:23-26)

I. Suffering keeps this world from becoming too attractive.

- A. We are called strangers and pilgrims in this world.
 - 1. While we live in this world, it is not our true home.
 - 2. God has prepared something far better for us.
 - 3. 1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 13:14; John 14:1-3.
- B. If there was no suffering there would be reason to stay here.
 - 1. No one would want to leave this temporary home for our eternal one.
 - 2. We would not bother preparing for our eternal home because we would love our temporary one too much.
 - 3. We have a permanent home with none of these problems (Revelation 21:4).
- C. God devised things so that this world soon loses its allure.
 - 1. It doesn't take long once adulthood is reached for the new of this world to wear off for Christians.
 - 2. We can see how bad things are here and really begin to desire that better place.
 - 3. Young people may want to live forever but as we age we begin to desire something better.

II. Suffering can bring out our best.

- A. We see this all around us don't we?
 - 1. There are many reports of people helping others.
 - 2. We see this in the physical help, the preparation of meals and the giving of money to help people in need.
- B. We come together as a community and as a congregation in the face of trials and disasters that happen around or to us.
- C. The early Christians seemed to rejoice in trials, having great faith.
- D. They understood well the teaching of Paul (Romans 5:3-4).

III. Suffering gives an occasion to silence the enemies of God.

- A. Remember what Satan said about Job (1:9-11; 2:4-5).
 - 1. Satan thought that he could get Job to rail against God.
 - 2. Job's endurance put Satan to silence.
- B. God wants us to silence foolish men (1 Peter 2:15).
 - 1. These people ridicule Christianity as foolishness.
 - 2. Many of these people say that people are Christians only for what they can get out of it or because they are too weak.
- C. In times of trial, patient endurance and doing good for others shows the value of being a Christian and having a strong faith.
- D. We show the world our faith in handling the suffering and the love we have for mankind in the way we treat others who are suffering.

IV. Suffering makes us appreciative.

- A. We receive many wonderful and good things in this life.
 - 1. A lot of us begin to take these things for granted.

- 2. We fail to be thankful to the God who gave them to us.
- B. Suffering helps us appreciate our health more fully.
 - 1. We appreciate our health.
 - 2. We appreciate our friends and family.
 - 3. We appreciate our belongings.
- V. Suffering makes us more dependent on God.**
 - A. A lot of times we think we are self-sufficient.
 - 1. We believe we can do anything on our own.
 - 2. A man whose wife was in a horrific car wreck had his eyes opened to how much he needed God and said this: "But when a dozen of the most skilled men in their profession tell you they have done all they can and it is completely out of their hands you suddenly realize how much you depend on God."
 - B. It is just as Paul told the Athenians, it is in God that "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).
- VI. Suffering helps purify us.**
 - A. 1 Peter 1:6-7 - suffering can be like purifying gold.
 - B. James 1:2-5 - maturity develops through trials.
 - C. Suffering opens our eyes to who and what we really are, not what we think we are.
 - 1. We are very honest with ourselves in times of trial.
 - 2. We don't want anything to stand in our way to God, thus we seek forgiveness of whatever is amiss in our lives.
 - D. Suffering tends to weed out weakness and replace it with strength when we handle it right.
- VII. Suffering makes us sympathetic.**
 - A. We are better able to comfort others when comfort has been extended to us (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
 - B. We have seen that here.
 - 1. We were hit by a disaster and people came to our aid.
 - 2. Since that time we have reached out in a greater way than we ever did before.
 - 3. We have a great idea about that through which these people are going and we want to extend the comfort of God to them because at one time it was extended to us.
 - C. We are able to weep with those who weep in times like these.
- VIII. Suffering strengthens our prayer life.**
 - A. We are probably a praying people in a way.
 - B. But in times of suffering we really learn how to pray (Romans 8:26).
 - C. A suffering Christian wrote:
 - 1. "I have been a praying man since I became a Christian but never like this."
 - 2. "I have learned more about prayer in the past six weeks than in the previous twenty years. My prayers will be different for the rest of my life."

From a sermon by Mark Copeland