

THE ORIGINAL JOE

PART 4: FRUITFUL IN SUFFERING

Sermon Notes

Text: Genesis 41:41-57

Introduction

“Manasseh” sounds like the Hebrew word that means “Forget”
“Ephraim” sounds like the Hebrew word for “Twice fruitful”

v. 52 “God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.”

Testimony: Irwin Hobden

Romans 5:1-5

In the New Testament, suffering is viewed as “the normal Christian experience”

We often rightly emphasize the power of God to deliver us from suffering, but we sometimes forget to emphasize the power of God to bolster our endurance during suffering.

“In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won’t find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no other good. Nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music” ~Richard Dawkins

“If you have a God great and transcendent enough to be mad at because he hasn’t stopped evil and suffering in the world, then you have (at the same moment) a God great and transcendent enough to have good reasons for allowing it to continue that you can’t know.” ~Tim Keller

Even though the Christian worldview doesn’t explain or give reason to every individual instance of pain and suffering it does offer incredible resources.

Romans 8:28

God doesn’t cause our suffering, but he can use it and transform it into fruitfulness.

To be fruitful in suffering, ask yourself these questions:

1) What good has come out of my suffering?

1 Peter 3:7

2) How can I use my suffering to help others?

“God intentionally allows you to go through painful experiences to equip you for ministry to others.” ~Rick Warren

3) Who around me is suffering, and how can I help them?

Conclusion:

Life Group Discussion

Warm up:

1. Reflect on Irwin Hobden's testimony. What stood out to you? Were you challenged to live differently in light of his perspective? Why is he able to be so positive?

Study & Discussion:

1. Read Romans 5:1-5. What does it mean to "glory in our sufferings"? Have you experienced increased perseverance and character because of suffering? Explain. How does suffering produce hope?
2. Read Romans 8:18-30. We have repeated Romans 8:28 every Sunday during this series, but 18-27 provide the context for that verse. What stands out to you? What does it say about suffering? What does it say about hope? What role does the Holy Spirit play as we endure suffering?
3. Consider the following quote from Tim Keller. What is he saying? Do you agree with it? Why is it hard for us to not know the reason for our suffering?

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Application:

1. Consider the three questions from the end of the sermon. If you have time, discuss them as a group. Otherwise, set time aside this week on your own or with a friend/spouse.

Prayer:

1. Pray for God to help you be fruitful in suffering.
2. Other requests
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