

Viewpoint Church

CG Weekly

Love, Grow, Serve

Community Group Weekly Outline

Your Community Group: A place to Love, Grow, and Serve.

Sermon Date: May 6, 2018

Sermon Title: Experiencing God Through Suffering

Sermon Speaker: AJ

What does it look like to experience God through suffering and pain?

1. We will experience God in difficult seasons if we suffer well.

We need to be a people who suffer well! Jesus, Paul, Peter and Moses all suffered. If these giants of our faith suffered, we can expect to suffer too. Jesus himself came to this earth and suffered, but the difference is that He suffered well. When we suffer well, we experience God because we become more and more like Him.

In our culture, we seem to experience God in the highs of our life. We experience God when the money is coming in, when we are healthy and when everything is comfortable and easy. But when we have external problems that occur to us (sickness, bullying, finances, relationships, etc.) and we do not deal with them in a healthy way, we sin. We then cause unnecessary oppression to ourselves and to our souls! It causes our souls to suffer because we did not deal with our suffering in a right way. We are then adding unnecessary pain and suffering!

Attitude of Christ: to embrace suffering, not ignore it. We must look at suffering not as an excuse to do the things that we might be tempted to do (gambling, pornography, addictions, anger, lie...). Suffering like Jesus says "No, I am going to go through suffering and I am going to embrace it." The enemy knows that when we are suffering, we are most susceptible. External suffering leads to internal suffering if we do not suffer well.

DISCUSSION TOPIC: What does it mean to you to experience God through suffering and pain?

QUESTION: Describe a time where you experienced God through pain?

2. In the midst of our suffering we are called to choose joy and faith.

Choosing joy in the midst of suffering does not deny pain. To choose joy is living in the tension between joy and suffering. That is why it is a choice! When suffering comes, we need to be a people who take the heart position of rejoicing in suffering. There is an enemy who seeks to devour. We must stand firm, knowing that God is good and that He is faithful to his promises. He tells us that we can cast all of our anxiety on Him. When we are ready, He will restore us. He promises this to us!

So, why must we suffer? Because we are made in His likeness and we are becoming more and more like him. Suffering is a refining process. Faith is standing in the promises of God like they are already a reality, because they are.

QUESTION: Have you personally experienced suffering as part of God's refining process? How? When? Did it work? Did it last or is it something that God must repeat over and over? Why?

3. In our weakness we experience the sufficient grace of God.

Our weaknesses allow God's power to work. Paul approached Jesus with the attitude of "take this from me" (Paul's Thorn). God says no and Paul still rejoices. Why? Because when we are weak, the power of God rests on us. Humility and weakness allow God's power to be displayed. God wants us to stand firm in suffering so that his power can be displayed on earth. When we suffer well, people around us will take notice!

This applies to both physical and emotional suffering. In both cases, we choose joy. Practice choosing joy. It will become a real thing in you! Regardless of what we are going through. In a real way, when we choose joy, we experience the sufficient grace of God.

Heart position: God, you are good. I am weak. I need you.

In conclusion, stop trying desperately to pull ourselves out of suffering. Embrace it, get weak and let God work! When we are weak, He is strong. In this embracing, we will experience God.

QUESTION: Describe a time in your life when you finally “got weak” and “surrendered” to God. What was that surrendering moment like for you? How was God’s power displayed?

P R A Y E R

Please end your time praying together. Pray for one another and remember to continue to pray for each other throughout your week. Write them down and take it with you during your quiet time. Please also pray for:

- Community Group serving - that we would make an impact!
- Pray for our Experiencing God series - that people would truly experience God in remarkable ways and share their testimony!

Love you all!
-Val and the VP Staff