


TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- According to 1 Peter 1:1-2, believers are: [1] chosen

Which one of these descriptors is most precious and meaningful to you—**and why?**

[2] according to God the Father's foreknowledge

[3] by the "setting-apart work" of the Holy Spirit

[4] to obey Christ and be sprinkled with his blood

- Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:1-5. "Rejoicing" and "exulting" in trials is *ludicrous*—unless you **know something** (which is invisible) and **value something** (more than comfort). **What?** Do you? How do you know?

How does our status as "resident aliens" make this **possible?** How does it make it **reasonable?**

Pastor Doug noted that "the only way to replace resentment with rejoicing is to see Jesus as the central piece of suffering's puzzle." **How** do you think that helps? Does it help **you?** Why or why not?

Read Luke 7:36-50 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

How do these passages help us "smile while suffering"?

Suffering? Biblical counseling can help.
For free hope and help, write to:
counseling@tcc.org

Application-Challenge

To those who are suffering: Realize that the only way to replace resentment with rejoicing is to see Jesus as the central piece of suffering's puzzle. God allows suffering for our good and his glory.

To those who are seeking: Jesus is your creator; trust and embrace him as your Savior.

Take One Step: What is one small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week?



Sermon Summary

Suffering is a universal language. Tears are the same for Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Sorrow comes to the young and to the elderly—to the rich and to the poor. Since pain is such a pervasive problem, we need a potent prescription. Peter's first epistle dispenses that prescription with advice that tells us how we can smile while suffering—but he didn't try to pump them up with positive thinking like we do today. Instead he gently lifted their perspective skyward—so they could see who they are in Christ and all that they have to cling to (1:1-12).

It is no accident that we are here today. Our status as a Christ-follower was known to God before the foundation of the world (1:2). That is what the word "foreknowledge means." God chose you to be the recipient of his grace. In fact, the entire Godhead: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit conspired together in eternity past to bring about a great salvation for us. It was a team effort! God the Father chose you, the Holy Spirit set you apart, and Jesus shed his blood for you on the cross. And God chose you for a very specific purpose: to obey Jesus and to be sprinkled with his blood. They are a package deal; our forgiveness and our obedience go together. We obey because we have been forgiven. Jesus once said, "He who has been forgiven much loves much." Obedience is the natural and expected response to the love, grace and mercy of God.

There are at least six reasons that Christians should rejoice:

[1] We rejoice because we have a living hope (v. 3).

[2] We rejoice because we have a permanent inheritance (v.4). Our inheritance is "imperishable" (indestructible), "undefiled" (not polluted by sin), "unfading" (permanently valuable), and "reserved" (taken care of) by God himself. We might lose everything we have here—but this isn't our home. We are only here for a short while. This is why, in the midst of our present suffering and persecution, we can rejoice.

[3] We rejoice because we have divine protection (v. 5). If you are a believer, your salvation, and the inheritance that goes along with that, is secure, protected by the power of God. God's seal on us (Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30) marks God as our owner, and guarantees our inheritance. No matter how difficult things may get here—we have our inheritance to look forward to, and we rejoice in that.

[4] We rejoice because we have a maturing faith (v. 6-7). Our joy doesn't depend on circumstances; it comes in spite of our suffering. Suffering and joy can go together. We must realize that...

(a) Trials serve a constructive purpose in our lives; God uses them to develop our character and to prove the genuineness of our faith. **(b)** Trials are distressing, and we don't rejoice in the trial itself, but in the good results God brings about in our lives. **(c)** Trials come in various shapes and sizes; they're not "one size fits all"! The purpose of these fiery trials is that we may come forth as purified gold, a shining likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

[5] We rejoice because we have an unseen Savior (v. 8). We may not see him, but our Savior is standing with us in that furnace (see Daniel 3:19-27 and Psalm 23:4).

[6] We rejoice because we have a guaranteed deliverance (v. 9). Those who have trusted Christ as savior already have been delivered from the penalty of sin (justification), we are being delivered from the power of sin (sanctification), and we one day will be delivered from the presence of sin (glorification).

Since we live after the cross and resurrection, we have a perspective that the angels and the Old Testament prophets lacked (v. 10-12). Living as we do in the church age, we have an incredible advantage. We know that we are living in this "in between time." We know that while we may suffer now, glory is coming—and that allows us to smile while suffering!

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage. Let's use it to learn a bit more about the critical role suffering plays in our growth...

Monday— Acts 5:27-42 (note v. 41)

Tuesday— Romans 8:16-25 (note v. 17, 18, 22)

Wednesday— 1 Corinthians 12:20-27 (note v. 26)

Thursday— 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Friday— Philippians 1:29; 3:7-11

Saturday— ***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord tomorrow with your church family,*** study 1 Peter 1:13-21.

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) is it found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text?