

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



Facts To Remember About Suffering

Psalm 119:67

Sunday, December 27, 2015

There are keys to understanding your times of trouble and pain. Though we cannot know everything about them, we can have an idea of how they start, why God allows them, and what He is doing in the midst of it all.

SATAN INITIATES AFFLICTION

Notice that in the story, Satan comes up with the idea of causing all of the problems in Job's life. We are so quick, however, to assign responsibility for our problems and pains to God. But when the Lord made the world, He did not make tragedy and disaster into it. He did not make disease or anything that would produce painful results.

Genesis 1:31

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Job 1:9-11

⁹Satan replied to the Lord, "Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. ¹⁰You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is! ¹¹But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!"

Although Satan is the initiator, pain and suffering grabbed a foothold when we, the human race, rebelled against God.

SUFFERING IS AN ATTITUDE ADJUSTER

God uses time of adversity to refine us. Most people do not change unless motivated to do so by tough times.

Steven Hawking, who was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, saw no meaning in life before his illness. That all changed afterwards.

He is quoted as saying, "When one's expectations are reduced to zero, one really appreciates everything that one does have."

Contentment in life is determined by what a person anticipates from it. When Mr. Hawking thought he would die soon, everything took on meaning. He became deeply sensitive to all things - a sunrise, a walk in a park, and even the laughter of children. Suddenly, each small pleasure became precious.

Contrast this with those who believe life owes them a free ride. They are often discontent with its finest gifts and the greatest opportunities.

Psalm 119:67

Before you made me suffer, I used to wander off, but now I hold on to your word.

This is the way God works with us to make us better people who love Him for Himself alone.

Malcolm Muggeridge once said that contrary to what might be expected, he looked back on experiences that at the time seemed especially discouraging and painful with great satisfaction. He found that everything he had learned in 75 years of life that had truly enhanced his experience had been through affliction and not through happiness.

GOD IS IN ABSOLUTE CONTROL

What we must remember is that His plans and purposes, alone, will be accomplished when all is said and done.

Even though God permits evil, He limits and overrules it. He allows Satan to inspire evil to give him every opportunity to see that he will always fail. In other words, He gives him just enough rope to hang himself.

We quite often curse the rain for the inconvenience it may cause us. Yet, without that rain we would surely die.

When we get frustrated that things aren't working as we planned, it is a sign we have lost focus on God and His plan.

Job, under extreme adversity proclaimed: **"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." (Job 13:15).**

It is easy to praise God when things are going our way, but people really take note when we still praise God as things are falling apart around us.