

Women of Character and Calling

Philippians 2:12-16

Key verse: “*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God at work in you both to will and to do according to His good pleasure*”

Last of the 4 Biblical calls: **The call to suffering**

3958 *pásxō* (a primitive verb) – properly, to feel *heavy emotion*, especially *suffering*; *affected*, experiencing feeling (literally “*sensible*” = “*sensed-experience*”); “the feeling of the mind, emotion, passion” (J. Thayer).

Cognate: 3804 *páthēma* (from 3958 /*pásxō*, “the capacity to feel strong emotion, like suffering”) – properly, the capacity and privilege of experiencing strong feeling; *felt*, deep emotion, like agony, passion (ardent desire), suffering, etc.

Suffering is Universal and Inescapable:

The 3 crosses show us this:

The bad – the unrepentant thief

The Penitent – the repentant thief

The Perfect Son of God

There is no Gospel without suffering: Following Jesus should cost us everything

Snapshots of suffering

- I. Suffering occurs because of wicked and evil people in the world
- II. The Glory and Power of God made manifest
- III. Some suffering is for righteousness’ sake
- IV. Suffering permitted by God

Our response to suffering - **Approach Suffering with Humility**

1. You can’t pass judgment on others
2. You can’t answer why

- a. Bad choices don't always result in equally bad consequences
- b. Sin is alive and well - the created world is captive to it

Conclusions we can draw:

- ~Life is not always rational – it will not always make sense
- ~Suffering is beyond our comprehension – we cannot know all things
- ~The character of God remains unchanged
- ~God uses Brokenness

The 4 biblical callings- 4 areas in which we “work out our salvation.”

1. **The call to salvation** – rescued from death- granted new purpose, new identity.
2. **The call to sanctification** – which means “set apart” – the holy things and people that were set apart by God for special use- called *TO* God- signifies worth/value/purpose
3. **The call to service** – This is the activity of the spiritual life lived out as a response to His call of salvation and sanctification. It is the natural offering prompted by love.
4. **The call to suffering-** to encounter opposition, inconvenience, trials, persecution – sickness, loss, emotional turmoil

What do these 4 callings have in common?

1. Each are from God
2. They are calls for blessing or cursing
 - a. Salvation or condemnation – The call to Salvation
 - b. Spirituality or carnality – The call to Sanctification
 - c. Growth or death- because if the call to service is ignored, it will no longer find our ear – The Call to Service
 - d. Peace or turmoil- drowned out by anger and depression - The Call to Suffering
3. They are urgent – the calling is gentle, direct and at times dramatic but will not always be there