

COURAGEOUS SERIES

Week 6 outline

October 25, 2020

1 Peter 3:8-22

Seeing the Difference Between Evil and Suffering

I. Is Suffering a Curse or a Blessing?

A. Underestimating God's Blessing

1. We sometimes think God's blessing equals:
 - comfortable lives
 - close friends
 - healthy bodies
 - disposable incomes
2. We sometimes think God's blessings are earned by our good behavior

B. What a mistaken understanding of blessing means for suffering:

1. This wrong understanding of blessing causes us to treat suffering and evil as synonymous and suffering and blessing as antonyms
2. When we suffer, it means we are forgotten by God, or worse, forsaken by God
 - we walk down the path towards a crisis of faith
3. It makes us arbitrary victims of evil or sinners under the scorned judgement of God
4. We treat others experiencing this kind of "blessing", or "suffering" with:
 - a. Hostility (they've got it and I don't)
 - b. Apathy (I'm good, they deserve it)
 - c. Hatred (I'm jealous)
 - d. Indifference (I only need to worry about me)
 - e. Pride (well, at least I'm better than that person)

WE DON'T BEGIN TO MAKE SENSE OF OUR SUFFERING
UNTIL WE BEGIN TO RIGHTLY UNDERSTAND GOD'S BLESSING.

II. Our Calling, Inheritance, and Hope in the Midst of Suffering

A. Our Calling: Blessed to be a Blessing (vs 8)

1. Harmony (like-minded)
 - A common understanding of our new identity and position as followers of Christ
2. Sympathy
 - a readiness to rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn
3. Love as Brothers
 - loving the family of God as siblings under God's rules and Jesus' reign
4. Compassionate (tender-hearted)
 - moved to courageous action by God's love and grace
5. Humility
 - not thinking less of yourself, but rather thinking of yourself less

JESUS CALLS US TO THE COURAGEOUS:
A LIFE GIVING AWAY THE BLESSING HE HAS GIVEN US.

B. Called to Bless, Out of Our Inheritance of God's Blessing (vs 9-12)

What Jesus says "blessed by God" really looks like (Mt 5:1-12)

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| 1. Citizenship in the kingdom of heaven | ...in our poorness of spirit |
| 2. Comfort | ...in our times of mourning |
| 3. His Inheritance | ...in our meekness |
| 4. His Righteousness | ...as we thirst for it |
| 5. Mercy | ...as we are merciful |
| 6. Encountering God | ...as we are the pure in heart |
| 7. Being called Children | ...as we are peacemakers |
| 8. Reward in the kingdom of heaven | ...as we are persecuted |

RATHER THAN TOKENS WE EARN THROUGH OUR OWN GOOD BEHAVIOR;
BLESSING IS AN OVERFLOW OF THE INHERITANCE WE RECEIVE
AS SONS AND DAUGHTERS THROUGH CHRIST.

C. Blessing in the Midst of Suffering (vs 13-22)

1. *"Even if you suffer for what is right, you are blessed"*
-Rather than forsaking and forgetting, we are blessed in the midst of suffering
2. *"Do not fear"*
-we still live in a fallen world as followers of Christ,
that means we don't ask for suffering, but are ready when it comes
3. *"Be prepared"*
-with gentleness, respect, and a clear conscience
-we respond in the context of a calling to bless in the midst of our suffering
4. *"It's better if it's God's will"* -vs17
-to suffer for good than evil
-if there isn't room for suffering in our theology, there isn't room for
real blessing either
5. *"For Jesus also suffered..."* (vs 18-22)
-In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he gives the blessing of
forgiveness, righteousness, restored relationship, justification, hope.

III. Seeing God's Blessing in the midst of Life's Sufferings

- A.** In it we witness His glory
- B.** Through it we experience our sanctification
- C.** By it God builds depth to our character
- D.** Out of it births joy, compassion, and hope

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." -Romans 8:28