

8-10-25 Message

 Tue, Aug 12, 2025 10:12AM  33:25

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Suffering, persecution, affliction, tribulation, trials, biblical lens, godly perspective, Christian martyrdom, American Christianity, suffering in faith, biblical response, suffering in context, god's goodness, suffering in church, suffering in life.

SPEAKERS

Pastor Dow Boyer

Um, that reminds me a therapist was making progress in a session, and he asks his client, when did you first realize that you're experiencing suffering? And he looked at therapist in the eyes and he said, Well, I got married 15 years ago. So as we don't I wouldn't talk about me believe I've been married a lot longer now, but we are going to talk more about suffering today and but last week was kind of the big picture, and it was kind of about in general as we look at kind of the world today. And the question people ask is, why do these bad things happen and, and we kind of gave some explanation about that last week. Well, we know that we live in a sin, cursed world, right? We know that their craving creation is cursed. We know that there's the god of this world, Satan. We know we're still carrying around our flesh, but we also know that there's the law of reaping and sowing. There's a lot of reasons why bad things happen in this life, but we did finish it by talking about Romans, five, seven through eight, and it says, For scarcely for a righteous man, will one die yet preventure for a good man, somewhat even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. So we finished by talking about, why did the best thing happen to bad people? That's probably the better question, and that question is answered with love. Love was what God was demonstrating when he sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins, and He paid the price for us, because we could never be good enough. And he was buried and rose again three days later, and he said, All who believe will be with Me in Heaven for all eternity and have a right standing with me. And that needs to be the bigger part of the discussion, because we have elevated mankind to think we're good, and that's not what the Bible teaches. This week, we're going to build a little bit on that. We're going to look more about how it works out personally in our lives, and this week and next week kind of will tie together. So hopefully that encourages you to come next week and bring somebody right but we think about the word suffering, it means undergoing pain, inconvenience or damage, pain, endured. And usually that word suffering is going to precede another word. And you see, it's a lot in the Bible. When I was looking through this this week, normally what's tied to suffering are words like persecution, affliction, infirmities, tribulation, trials. So when we're just taking a generic term and saying, suffer. What does that really mean? What are we suffering for or from? Persecution? Is a big one, and it means, essentially punishment due to belief. It gives the idea of being put to flight. There's a couple of things here that I think are pretty interesting, because we gotta detach our Americanism. If that's a word we got, we've got to detach that and see a little bit of truth here. And the first one is, you can find this on the Voice of the Martyrs website. There's a great article. It says what it means to follow Christ in the Central Africa, African Republic because of the civil war between rebel groups that publicly identify themselves as Muslim or Christian, some have

struggled to distinguish between political violence and religious persecution. However, attacks targeting churches Christian families and pastors, because of their Christian witness and other activities of Biblical faith have become common in a four week period in 2017 five pastors were murdered by Islamist silica rebels and targeted attacks to eliminate their witness for Christ. And we don't see much like that here in America, when you go to the open doors us.org, website, it's where they will score nations as far as their safety to be able to go and share the Gospel. And earlier this year, in January, this was a quote says, when putting together this year's list, our researchers found that violence against Christians is increasing. In fact, an increase in anti Christian violence propelled significant score changes among several countries on the World Watch list, so they were explaining why these scores had gone up. The world in general, hates Christians more and more Christians are going underground. Algeria is becoming that way, and it didn't used to be. Afghanistan is so deeply underground today. And meanwhile, we will show up today and there won't be any threat, and we will go home and here. For about 20 minutes, you'll start wondering, is he going to shut up in time for me to get to lunch on time? I really think we have developed a really soft American view of Christianity, and the world doesn't quite look like we look. We've gotten really, really comfortable. I mean, we will leave over not liking the music, right? We don't really care about doctrine. If this church has a slide, we'll go there. I mean, it is amazing. But there are places in the world today where they would, they would die to be able to have the freedom to do this. But instead of having this, they die period. It's crazy. It's like 5000 people have been murdered for their faith in this last year alone, and we don't really have to worry. So it got me thinking a little bit that maybe next week, we'll deal a little bit more with a couple of these other words. But what does the Lord talk about in this word when he's talking about suffering, and specifically to persecution? But there are a couple of these other words, infirmities, those tend to deal with the state of the body and weakness or being unsound, or there's affliction, which that's usually the body, and that's pain or distress, grief in the body or mind, there seems to be some confusion today, I think, when hardship happens and it's going to happen, and some of you guys are going through the ringer, and none of this today is meant to be insensitive, but it is to challenge us. Are we looking at our difficulties through a biblical lens, and are we looking at it through this dispensation of grace, because I think it's very important that we are having a godly perspective on our churches. I think often we will think that if we are going through something difficult, we just need to try a little harder. We're bargaining with God, maybe I'll come to church, I'll start coming to church again, and then maybe my finances won't be so bad. Maybe, maybe we'll have a good health diagnosis, if I just start giving more to church, right? If I just start being more faithful, then then God's going to be there for me, and God's going to give me this blessed life, the white picket fence and all. But that's not promised in Scripture, and it can really lead to a real deterioration of your faith. When you're thinking, I'm doing more, Lord, why is the pain not going away? And this becomes very dangerous, because I think a lot of people quit. They quit on God. They tried God, but they were sold. They were sold a bill, right? That basically said, you can have the blessed life if you just turn to Jesus. And then that didn't happen, and then they got out. The reason they got out was they were given bad doctrine. What if we set the right expectation upfront? You're never going to hear me promise anybody that, hey, your life's going to 100% Turn around. You're going to have the most blessed life period, if you just get saved. What I'm going to tell you about is the next life, because there are no guarantees in this life, and we need to look at that through Scripture. And I think part of this maybe we're just reading in the wrong places. Maybe you read a Psalm of David in Psalm 34:19 that says, Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. Well, there's a reason. I mean, he was king of Israel. God made a promise to Israel. They were his covenant people. We're not promised that we will be delivered from all infirmities today and all afflictions, and that may not make any friends today. But I would rather be true to Scripture and tell you the truth God's goodness is not predicated on favorable outcomes. I remember a few years ago during covid, and it was a very tough time for our family, my wife, my wife is was sick, I think, for like 21 days, and we were our family got exposed to covid Very early on, when there were no answers. My mom and dad were both in the hospital at the same time. My mom's on event for think,

like 11 days. My dad's in the hospital. I can't get to either one of them, and I'm giving updates on Facebook daily. And then there was a time when mom came home, and I was so excited about that, and but the response is, as I was updating everybody on Facebook, was, God is so good. God is so good. And I'm like he is. And even if mom didn't come home, guess what? God's good. He wasn't good because of the favorable outcome. He's good because He's God. And I think that helps us to kind of understand the right framework when we're talking about the goodness of God. Now I praise God that that mom came home. For that, but God would have been good, and I would have been praising him, even if she went home to be with the Lord. And sometimes that's difficult. It was difficult when my dad a few three years ago, when when we were catching him at the very end of his life, and he was suffering, but it was hard to say goodbye. But he is not suffering anymore, and now he is great for all eternity, and I will go to see him one day, and I can comfort our family with that truth in Scripture. And God could have reached down, if he want to, and have healed him at that moment, but God was good even when my dad went to be home with the Lord. So let's talk through this a little bit today, and hopefully we have the right framework. And next week, we'll look at, how do, how do we kind of change our mind to how do we deal with this day and age, the suffering that we experience? What is our biblical response to that? But let's build a little bit this week to get to that point, even Jesus as he was writing, or as he was reading, as he was saying, We're reading in John chapter 15. He says, if the world hate you now, he's talking to the disciples. Remember that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John was written to the lost sheep of the house of Israel to help prepare them for tribulation and Jacob's trouble that would have been coming. So in preparation for that, this is what Jesus says, if the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. Now listen to this. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also, even in the beatitudes in Matthew 510, he says, Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, and this was preparing them to go through tribulation. Peter says this in first, Peter chapter two, starting in verse 19, he would have been present in John 15, and listen to what he says, For this is thank worthy of a man for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it? If, when you are buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently. But if, when you do well and suffer for it, you take it patiently. This is acceptable with God. For even here unto were you called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps, Peter even took it a step further, and he was like, big deal if you suffer when you've done something wrong. He says, Really though, can you endure it patiently when you suffer and you were innocent and you didn't do anything wrong? But at no point, even for these Jewish epistles or through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, are they saying that persecution or suffering wasn't going to be possible? What about our apostle today? We're all pretty well aware. I think of Second Corinthians, chapter 11, starting, verse 23 the Apostle Paul says this, are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more and labors more abundant, and stripes above measure, and prisons more frequent, and deaths oft of the Jews five times received. I 40 stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once Was I stoned? Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep and journeyings, often in perils of water and perils of robbers and perils of mine own countrymen and perils by the heathen, and perils in the city and perils in the wilderness and perils in the sea and perils among false brethren, and weariness and painfulness and watchings often, and hunger and thirst and fastings often, and cold and nakedness, that's the blessed life, isn't it? I ran out of breath just saying it all. But then he says this in verse 28 besides those things that are without that which cometh upon me daily the care of all the churches, even midst all the suffering, all the persecution, all the affliction, he kept going for the church, for the gospel, so often today, our sufferings derail us from why we were left here, and that is to see all men saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. In fact, more often than not, through our sufferings, we have great opportunities to have conversations with people, to point them towards the Lord, but more often than not, we paint we point them towards us, and the woe is me and the

poor, poor, painful, pitiful me. Paul spent his time focusing on the cross through the. Most difficult things. He says this a couple verses later, if I must needs, glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine, infirmities. He didn't say complain. He said, glory. It's quiet. First Thessalonians three, two through four, and sent Timotheus, our brother and minister of God and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, to comfort you concerning our faith that no man should be moved by these afflictions. For yourselves, know that we are appointed there unto for verily, when we were with you, we told you before that you should suffer tribulation even as it came to pass. And you know, see, I get the I get the feeling like, when you see all these people that came to faith under Paul and under this gospel of grace message, I feel like, if we were right there for those meetings, right there for those conversations, Paul would always probably put a disclaimer, you're going to suffer, but it's the best decision you can make, placing your faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, Christ alone. He didn't write a book saying, This is how you have the blessed life. He says, if you choose this path, it will be a path of suffering. It's not popular, but it is truthful. Pretty much all of his writings deal with the idea of suffering. How about Galatians? Chapter four, verse 13, you know how, through infirmity of the flesh. I preached the gospel unto you at the first so here he was dealing more kind of with an affliction. Something was going on with this flesh. And we'll talk about this more next week, with the thorn in the flesh in second. Corinthians, chapter 12, even amongst those physical things were happening to him, he says, I preached the gospel chapter five, verse 11, and I brethren. If I preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased? So for Paul, he was saying things we say as believers, is going to cause us some difficulties. If we preach the truth, there will be some persecution that comes along with it, and we can't just speak a word to see our or to suit our needs. Later, in Galatians six, he says, as many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only less they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. Few verses later, he says, From henceforth, let no man trouble me, for I bear in the body the marks of the Lord Jesus, the blessed life of the great Apostle Paul. Yet we don't have 13 books of complaints against God. We don't have 13 books of him saying how bad my life is, but the constant instruction that my life was hard, but my focus was always on something much bigger. And I think it is the model for us today. First, Corinthians, four, one of his other epistles, starting verse nine, he says, For I think that God has set for us the apostles last, as it were, appointed to death, for we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, But ye are wise in Christ. We are weak. You are strong. Ye are honorable, but we are despised, even under this present hour. We both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place. Is that what we sign up for? When he says spectacle in here, it gives the idea of a theater and kind of the end, like at at the Coliseum, after, at the end of the battle, and then, and then whoever's left, the lions being left out to devour those who are left. You. That he says we were appointed unto death and made a spectacle unto the world. In his second book that he wrote to the Corinthians, in verse four, he says we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed. We are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. The question starts becoming is, was this always the case with. With Paul. Like, when did the suffering start? Right? When did the journey of suffering begin? Because we know kind of where was at the end. You know, we're reading some of these, like even the his prison epistles or pastoral epistles. Like even Second Timothy, one of the last guest books that he wrote. He says this in second, Timothy one eight, he says, Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God. Young Timothy, as Paul's getting ready to go off the scene, probably in the same way in John 15, that Jesus is saying, hey, the world hates me. You 12. I'm not going to be here. You're going to have to know moving forward, just as they persecuted me, they're going to persecute you. Paul's now telling Timothy, I'm not always going to be here, but as I've been a partaker, as I've been afflicted, for the gospel sake, you must be a partaker of the affliction as well, which leads to Second Timothy 312 persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch and Iconium and Lystra, what persecutions I endured. But out of them, all

the Lord delivered me, yea, all that will live godly in Christ, Jesus shall suffer persecution. It's interesting that he mentioned those three places because Timothy would have been there for those. Timothy was from Lystra. That was his hometown. This is like Paul was reminding him, hey, remember what we kind of went through, remember what I went through. But at this moment in time when he's writing this, even with that long list in Second Corinthians, he could say, The Lord hath delivered me, because he was still here. He was still preaching the gospel. Didn't mean he didn't go through stuff, but he was still here. But then he tells him, you just need to know, Timothy, what we signed up for. You live godly in this life, you will suffer persecution. I don't know why we happen to be here in America today, in this building and this be where we chose to worship. I don't know why my family chose to, at some point, probably to immigrate over here and but this is where we're at today, and so much of this written in first century. We're like, how does this make sense? This day we don't have Nero beating down on us. We're not. We don't have the threat yet of the government when none of us in here were at risk of dying by coming in this building today. So where is our persecution? What does it look like for us today? Does it look different than as Paul was talking with such urgency at that point, like what he says to the Philippians in chapter one, verse 28 he says, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them, an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation and that of God. For unto you, it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for his sake. It's in that same line of believing. I mean, it's like, all right, trust in the gospel and you're going to suffer. And he's in prison when he's writing this one. So if that's kind of the end of his life, it's like, was His whole ministry, one of suffering. Well, yes, it was in Acts, chapter nine before he did anything. Right after on the road to Damascus and his conversion, starting in verse 13, says, Ananias answered, Lord, have I have heard by many of this man how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem, and here he hath authority from the chief priest to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel, for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake, before one day of ministry, he was going to be a man of suffering, and when he's able to look at the end here, what an example to say. I have fought a good fight. I have finished the course, and I have kept the faith in the midst of all the suffering, he kept going, and it was hard on him, and you see his heart in Scripture, when Alexander the Coppersmith does much evil to him, and how much that hurt him, and how everybody forsook him, but nevertheless, the Lord stood with him. There was such loneliness. There was such despair, but the high calling of Jesus was more than anything he was going through. I love this in Philippians three eight, it says, yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them, but dung that I may win Christ. I think when I look at things going on in the world, and there's certain places in nations in Africa who have who it's a death sentence to convert to Christianity. I mean, there literally are records of people thinking they maybe have 30 days to live. Whether or not that is true, they think that, and there are certainly some that have died. But how do you how do you place your faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, knowing most likely that within 30 days you may die for that, and here in America as a whole, as a whole. So I'm not calling out any individuals, but I feel like we will neglect coming to this place because there's a football game on, and I love the Colts. It's probably gonna be another heartbreak here, but I love them, right? But, but it's kind of our heart here is filled with in America, probably with so much idolatry that we cannot keep our eyes focused on the thing that truly matters. So when suffering happens and we've been told we are the God of our lives, everything revolves around us. It's really hard for us to get our minds off ourselves and put it on the cross and put it to where it belongs. And what does that persecution look like today? I mean, mainly it's, it's cancel culture. You may lose friends and loneliness is a terrible thing, right? We're not really to the point of physically being harmed. You could maybe lose a job or lose opportunities. I remember when we were looking at scholarships for Cole at IUPUI a few years ago, and they sent this real long list of all these scholarships. And I'm like, hey, this kid's like, an honor student. We ought to be able to apply for something, and we're just going down the list. I'm like, man, there's just, yeah, all these scholarships

are you don't meet the qualifications, buddy, and not one of them was faith based, at least not Christianity. So maybe there's that kind of persecution here today. Sometimes it'll cost you friends. You're in school today, you take a stand, yeah? I mean, you're you may get bullied a little bit, but you're physically at this point, not going to get harmed, and still, the cost is so great for us that we will often keep silent. But we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, and we can't be because it might get a little tough. I want to encourage you though today that through all of this weakness, if you will, that Paul went through, he was told that God's strength is perfect in his weakness. He tells us, in second Corinthians chapter one, that the God of all comfort comforts us in our tribulation. You are not alone. You have the Holy Spirit, you have the body of Christ, and you have the word of God. He has given us helps when those difficult times, and he's given us the hope of something much better, which is what we're going to talk about next week. Suffering is normal for the believer. It is a calling, if you will. We are kind of called to believe on Him and to also suffer. But God is bigger than our suffering. And I want to challenge you guys today, no matter what you're going through as we wrap this up, you are not alone. We are praying for you, even as a church that prayer list that is basically taken, and a lot of knees hit the ground, and a lot of concerns are taken to the Lord for the infirmities of the people in this room and who are listening and who are watching later, even on live stream, we are praying. There's to be no schism in the body of Christ. We're supposed to have the same care, one for another. A lot of the responsibility of helping people get through sufferings today is us believers towards other believers, and so are we helping people? Are we praying for people? Are we leaving people in their suffering? Are we reminding them of the truth of Scripture? Those are some things we can do. Next week, we're going to talk about what we should. Focused on. So if you need to read ahead a little bit, Second Corinthians, chapter 12. Second Corinthians chapter four and Romans eight are where we're going to spend a lot of time. Next week, we're going to see that God can even use our suffering for something much bigger than what we could even imagine on this earth, and that our hope is something way bigger than anything on this earth as well. So I hope it wasn't discouraging for you. Anybody today. I hope that you guys understand that there's a reason scripture talks about so much about suffering. It's because we live in this world all the things talked about last week, there's going to be pain, there's going to be distress, there's going to be suffering, there's going to be affliction. And if we can at least know that upfront and that God isn't distant by leaving us in these situations, but there's something much greater going on, I think it will help us quite a bit. So I'm going to have everybody stand right now, bring somebody next week. As we wrap this up, we'll go talk about something else after next week. But as we stand up now, we're going to pray in a moment. But if maybe you've been coming and you'd like to join the church, then we'd love to have you come forward and talk to us up here in the front. We'll have a couple of workers up there. Or if maybe you have recently been saved and you've placed your faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that shed blood to wash away all your sins and that not of yourselves. And you're curious about what the next steps are, or what should be the first thing that you should start studying or reading. We want to be an asset to you. We want to assist you. So we'd love to come forward and talk to you about that and give you some direction. Or if you just want to come up and say hi afterwards, that's okay as well. We're going to pray, and then we're going to have Stan sing a song, Dear Heavenly Father, thank you so much for your grace and mercy. Lord, I am thankful that You are the God of all comfort, and you comfort us in all of our tribulations. I am thankful Lord that you are with us and that you don't forsake us even in the midst of our trials. Lord, I am thankful, Lord that You that Your strength is made perfect in our weakness. And as Paul says, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, the thing that got Paul through all the difficult things wasn't his own strength and willpower. It was your strength. It was your power and Lord, that is what we have as believers today to get through our difficult times. Lord, I pray you'd be with each and every person in here who's struggling with something today. Please don't let them be discouraged as they leave. I pray that their hope would be in you and that you are working something far greater than what they're going through right now. More importantly, Lord that it's not about this life, it's about the next life for all eternity. And we look forward to that, Lord just comfort the people today. I know that there's a lot of things going on

we do. Thank you for for Darlene Lord and and that good report, Lord. We thank you for several others in here that have had good reports, good health diagnosis so far, but some have not, and we lift them up right now, Lord, and we encourage them. Lord, we we want to let them know that we love them and we are praying for them, and Lord, I know that you are with them. I pray that you would lift them up as well. Lord, just be with us now, as a congregation, as a family, Lord, as the body of Christ. Lord, I pray that we'd have the same care, one for another, and that there'd be no schism in the body of Christ. We love you and praise you in Jesus name amen.