



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC It's OK to Not Be OK

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THEME Hope in Hopeless Times

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

"If God loves me, why would He allow this suffering to happen to me? ? I can't feel His goodness right now – is God good all the time? How can God remain silent in my suffering? Doesn't He care about what is happening?"

Sufferings comes in different forms – physical and/or mental. Nobody likes sufferings but they are a part of every human journey. There are two types of suffering: Suffering for doing bad (consequences) and suffering for doing good. A principle in life is that we reap what we sow. There is suffering where we reap the negative consequences of our wrongful sowing of thoughts, speech and actions and suffering for good when we choose to make a stand for God and live by the values of the Christian faith.

We are to expect this suffering for the faith and righteousness' sake in our Christian journey, but we are not alone in this: God is with us.

As Christians, we need to hold unwaveringly to the foundational truths that that **God is love (1 John 4:16)** , **God is good (Psalms 145: 9)** and **God cares for us (1 Peter 5:7)** all the time even when we can't see it and feel it at the moment. God's character is always unchanging. He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. In this sermon, we look at how we can find hope in Christ during our suffering for righteousness' sake.

It's OK To Not To Be OK

WHAT DO WE MAKE OF TRIALS AND SUFFERING?

- **Suffering is to be expected.**

1 Peter 4:12 reminds us not to be surprised with the fiery ordeal that has come to test us. We are to be prepared and expect these sufferings to come and not as though something strange are happening to us. James 1:12 urged us to consider it pure joy *whenever* we face trials of many kinds. These events of suffering are not a question of "if" but "whenever".

- **Suffering reveals the real condition of our faith**

Trials reveal to us what we are made of and what is really in our hearts. Trials have come to prove genuineness of our faith (1 Peter 1:7). This testing of faith produces perseverance (James 1:3). In times of difficulties, do not throw in the towel and give up yet, let perseverance finish its work so that

we may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. God's goal for us is to conform more and more to the image of Jesus Christ and walk in the way of His holiness. This journey to pursue holiness requires personal sacrifices of denying our comfort and happiness at times.

BIBLICAL HOPE IN SUFFERING

- **Means waiting in confident expectation:**

Faith is living in advance what we will only understand in reverse. Faith is trusting and believing in what is to come instead of what is happening right now. Often, it is only when we look back that we understand that God's hands have always been with us even in our difficult moments.

- **Is based on the promises and character of God**

The difference between a worldly hope and a biblical hope is that biblical hope does not change. It is based on God's word and His character.

APPLICATION: WHAT NOW?

1. Revere Christ as Lord (1 Peter 3:15)

God is either the Lord OF ALL or *not at all*. This means that we should place God as the First where He has control over our lives. We need to give Jesus the access to every area of our lives such as our finances and our family etc.

2. Recall the promises of God

Let's cling onto God's words because His words endure forever (1 Peter 1:24-25). This will only be possible if we first know God's words through a regular word intake of hearing and reading the bible. Then we can memorise the word of God and put it in our hearts and minds. David found strength in the Lord his God during a distressing situation. (1 Sam 30:6) Instead of listening to his downcast soul, the psalmist spoke to his soul and reminded himself to put his hope in God (Psalms 42:11).

3. Respond in the opposite spirit

1 Peter 3:9 teaches us to repay evil with blessing and do so with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15-16). It is having this controlled strength to be able to respond to the challenging situation with the grace, confidence, and the authority that God has given us.

4. Remember the ultimate prize

Look forward to the crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4), also known as the crown of life (James 1:12), that we will receive from the Lord. Remember that our suffering on earth is only temporal, we have the crown of glory in eternity. The ability to see future consequences and payoffs can help us to gain victory over our temptations and not succumb to the current pressure.

CONCLUSION

"Everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end."

We may not fully understand everything right now, but we can have this assurance that God's plan is greater than our plan. We can put our trust and hope in God because we have a good God who loves and cares for us and an all-powerful God who protects, provides, and delivers us from all our troubles.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the three foundational truths we must remember about God?

2. Sufferings reveal the real condition of our faith. Have you ever persevered through a challenging situation and emerged stronger in faith with God? Share how you went through the experience and the lessons which you learnt from it.

3. The events of suffering are not a question of “if” but “whenever”. We are called to be prepared for them. This week’s sermon gives us 4 practical applications. How you would intend to apply the four application points in a specific situation in your life and how you would like them to support you in prayer?