

Rejoicing in Suffering

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Romans 5:3-10.

B. All Christians are called to experience suffering in one way or another.

C. Theme: how to handle Christian suffering.

II. The Christian is expected to experience suffering. (Philippians 1:29)

A. Suffering can range from minor annoyances to major disasters.

B. Every New Testament writer tells the believer that he must rejoice in suffering.

C. Rejoicing in suffering is not...

1. Simply stoicism.

2. Masochism.

3. Pretend happiness.

D. This is asking for a genuine sense of rejoicing.

1. This does not mean that this should happen right at the moment of hurt.

2. However, it should soon follow.

III. Rejoicing in suffering is caused by knowing...

A. That suffering produces...

1. Perseverance or steadiness.

2. Steadiness produces character or reliability.

3. Reliability produces hope.

4. Hope produces confidence.

IV. One rejoices in suffering by the love of God shed by the Spirit.

A. If one sees sufferings as evidence of the love of God, he will experience that love.

B. However, if one sees sufferings as God's wrath, he will be frustrated.

C. The cross of Jesus Christ helps the believer to see that he is helpless--we are the enemies of God.

D. The cross also reveals that God loves us. (Hebrews 12)

Application questions:

1. What is suffering not intended to produce?

2. Which product of suffering stands out to you at this moment? What strikes you about it?

3. How would you respond to a believer who claims that any trial is evidence of God's anger upon his or her life?
