

Deep Dive into Ken's Message from 5-19-25 "The Purpose of Suffering"

Bible Study Questions

1. **Biblical Perspective:** Isaiah 53:3 describes Jesus as a "man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." In what ways did Jesus suffer during His earthly ministry, and how does His suffering give meaning to our own?
2. **Personal Application:** In Philippians 1:29, Paul writes that it has been "granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake." How have you experienced suffering as part of your Christian walk? How did you respond?
3. **Character Development:** Romans 5:3-5 explains how suffering produces endurance, character, and hope. Share a time when suffering developed your character in a way that prosperity could not have.
4. **Christ-like Suffering:** 1 Peter 4:12-16 instructs believers not to be surprised by suffering but to rejoice in participating in Christ's sufferings. How does suffering for Christ differ from general suffering? How can we distinguish between the two?
5. **Learning Obedience:** Hebrews 5:8-9 reveals that Jesus "learned obedience from the things he suffered." What does it mean to learn obedience through suffering, and how have you experienced this in your own life?
6. **Communal Support:** The sermon concludes with an invitation for congregants to share their burdens with others for prayer. What barriers prevent Christians from sharing their suffering with others? How can we create safe spaces for vulnerability in our community?
7. **Joy in Suffering:** James 1:2-4 instructs believers to "count it all joy" when facing trials. What practical steps can we take to maintain joy during periods of intense suffering?
8. **Eternal Perspective:** According to 2 Corinthians 4:17, our "light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory." How does an eternal perspective transform our experience of present suffering?
9. **Purpose in Pain:** The sermon suggests that suffering has redemptive purpose. How would you respond to someone who believes their suffering is meaningless or that God is punishing them?
10. **Types of Suffering:** The sermon lists many forms suffering can take (physical, relational, emotional, etc.). Which form of suffering do you find most challenging to endure with faith? Why?
11. **Fellowship Through Suffering:** Hebrews 2:10-11 suggests that suffering creates a fellowship between Jesus and believers. How has suffering deepened your relationship with Christ or with other believers?
12. **Praying Through Pain:** The closing prayer asks God not just to remove suffering but to "accomplish his will in the suffering." How does this approach differ from how we typically pray about difficult circumstances? How might this change your prayers?

Discussion Questions

1. The sermon begins by highlighting that Jesus' life was marked by suffering from birth to death. How does seeing the full scope of Christ's suffering change your perspective on His ministry and mission?
2. According to the sermon, "Jesus learned obedience through suffering." In what ways has suffering taught you obedience to God that ease and comfort could not?
3. Ken states, "If you follow Jesus, you should expect to suffer." Do you think this message is adequately emphasized in modern churches? Why or why not?
4. The sermon lists various forms suffering can take—physical, relational, emotional, psychological. Share about a time when you experienced one of these forms of suffering and how it shaped your faith.
5. Paul prayed to share in Christ's sufferings (Philippians 3:10-11). What would it look like for you to have this same attitude toward suffering in your life?
6. The sermon suggests that without suffering there is no joy, without weeping there is no laughter, without death there is no life. Do you agree with this perspective? How have you seen this principle play out in your own experience?
7. How do you typically respond when suffering enters your life? Do you tend to ask God to remove it immediately, or do you consider what God might be teaching you through it?
8. Ken mentioned sitting with friends who lost their son in a tragic accident. How can we support one another during times of intense suffering without offering empty platitudes?
9. Romans 8:18 states, "The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." How might keeping an eternal perspective change how we endure current hardships?
10. The sermon emphasizes that suffering produces perfection and character. Can you think of someone whose character clearly reflects being refined through suffering? What qualities do you admire in them?
11. The closing prayer asks God to "accomplish his will in the suffering" rather than just removing it. How would shifting your prayers in this direction change your approach to difficult circumstances?
12. Ken encouraged those who are suffering to share their burdens with others. What prevents you from being vulnerable about your suffering with fellow believers? How might we create a safer community for sharing our struggles?