

The Oologah Informer

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Dealing With Pain and Suffering

Jeremy Northrop

Perhaps one of the most difficult things for people to deal with is the presence of pain and suffering in our world. This issue is one that has both destroyed and strengthened the faith of Christians around the world. We all know the true stories of pain and suffering in our lives or in the lives of those close to us. Sometimes we can easily understand the purpose and meaning of these things and sometimes we cannot. Pain has always been a part of the world. Adam and Eve surely felt pain when Cain killed Abel (Genesis 4:25). Job felt pain when all of his earthly possessions were taken away and his children were killed (Job 1:13-19). Paul would speak of the “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7). The book of Acts tells us how the apostles, and some of the other first century Christians experienced pain and suffering. Yet, all of this seems very inconsistent with the idea that God is an all-loving God. Why would a God of love allow such evil and suffering to abound in the world? Why would Paul say “...we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28)? This passage and others can be troublesome for the people going through struggles and pain.

Pain and suffering can be attributed back to the beginning of time.

This is something that began in the Garden of Eden when Eve and then Adam chose to sin (Genesis 3:14-19). In the previously cited passage, we have an explanation as to why pain exists. One reason it exists is due to the poor decisions that Adam and Eve made in the beginning of time. Those poor decisions had consequences, and those consequences carry into today. God gave them the ability to choose, and they simply made a bad decision. This is true on the opposite side of the spectrum as well. Just as the consequences of a bad decision are passed on from one generation to another, so are the blessings that come from good decisions.

Understand genuine biblical joy. When dealing with pain and suffering and all that the issue entails, it is only appropriate that we consider joy for a moment. To do this, we need to learn from the apostle Paul. He instructed us to “*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*” (Philippians 4:4). How could Paul, in all of the pain that he experienced make such a command. The answer is that rejoicing is a choice. Paul was able to say “*Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need*” (Philippians 4:11-12). He chose to be content, and is able to tell us to be content or joyous because it is a choice. Joy is not determined by what happens to us, but rather by what we choose. We must choose to learn from pain and choose to have joy in the midst of pain.

Everything has purpose. Earlier, we looked at the verse in Romans 8:28, “*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*” From this verse, we learn

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Service Times

Sunday

Bible Class: 9:30 A.M.
Worship: 10:30 A.M. & 5 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7 P.M.

Preacher:

Russ Earl

AM Sermon:

The Sermon on the Mount
Lesson 13 (Mt 7:24-29)

PM Sermon:

From Selfish to Selfless

Sunday AM Bible Class:

The book of Joshua – D. Jackson

Wednesday Bible Class:

Summer Series – Dustin
McCrickard

In SEARCH of the Lord's Way

Tulsa KWHB TV 47
Sunday mornings at 7:30am

Radio Program (coming soon)

“The Minister's View” on
KTTRadio.org on Tuesday's
at 9am

that our pain and suffering in this life has purpose and meaning. This is perhaps a very difficult concept to understand . Based on things that have happened in our lives, this is something that we could question, at least in our own minds. There are some things in life and in religion that are very difficult to understand and analyze. Perhaps we are not to analyze in order to understand, but they are simple biblical principles that we are to believe through faith. Pain and suffering are very difficult to understand. Perhaps, this is an issue that must be accepted on faith in God and belief in His word.