



"Purpose In The Pain" | Jessie Davis | 2.04.18

LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

What do you think has been the greatest invention in your lifetime and why?

SHARE

As we set sail into the new year, we all have hopes and dreams for how this year is going to be different than the last. Some of us start this year apprehensive of what is to come since last year was full of difficulty and trouble, while others are optimistic and driven to make the most of what's next. What do you think God thinks of your plans, aspirations and resolutions? What do you think His hopes and plans are for your life?

At Red Rocks Church, each year we seriously pray that God would give us a very specific verse which would encourage every person towards living a more full, rich and surrendered life to God; a timely word that would spark a fire and ignite the body of Christ to live to its fullest potential.

The apostle Paul challenged and encouraged the church in Galatia with this, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1

Red Rocks Church, we need to stand firm and not allow ourselves to go back to what once enslaved us. Jesus set us free to live in freedom with him. The boundaries God has put in our lives through God's word is for the sake of our freedom. Though it seems counter-intuitive, God puts boundaries in our lives to keep us free. He is not trying to hold something back from us, but wants to give us abundant life here in the present!

We all desire freedom and we all need it. God promises freedom and wants all of us to experience it in and through Him. Freedom from addiction. Freedom from selfishness. Freedom from fear. Freedom from anxiety. Freedom from comparison. But it will take courage to trust God at his word and in the leading of our lives. It will take self-discipline and accountability to take on that which wants to enslave us. It will take a willingness to trust God who perfectly provides all we need to live a holy life through him.

We can live free through Christ who set us free!

Read Genesis 37:1-11

As we read the story of Joseph, it is obvious that the Father had a favorite and made it obvious. How do you think this dysfunction contributed to Joseph's problems?

When you think about your family background, do you think there was any dysfunction that contributed to obstacles you have had to face in life?

Joseph had some issues early on in life to face, what do you think got him into trouble?

GROW

Read Genesis 37:18-36

Jesus knows suffering and affliction far greater than any other human that has walked the earth. He embraced His suffering out of His love and obedience to His Father God, so that we could be set free! As Christ followers, why do we expect our lives to be any different? We will endure suffering and it is always uncomfortable. We just need to view our suffering from a different perspective. Even though our spirit may be wounded, we have to choose to lift our

eyes because we know that's where our help comes from (Psalms 121:1). We must fill our minds with God's promises and stand firm on His truth. God says, He is the comforter (2 Corinthians 1:4). He brings peace (2 Thessalonians 3:16). He will never leave us (Hebrews 13:5-6). Even through the pain we endure, we are able to stand on these promises.

John Piper said, "Not only is all your affliction momentary, not only is all your affliction light in comparison to eternity and the glory there. But all of it is totally meaningful. Every millisecond of your pain, from the fallen nature or fallen man, every millisecond of your misery in the path of obedience is producing a peculiar glory you will get because of that."

Paul knew that we the church, would need to endure suffering at times, "...strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" Acts 14:22. The Apostle Peter says, "do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you" (1 Peter 4:12). The question isn't if we suffer, but how to deal with life when we suffer. Our pain has a purpose. How often, as Christ followers do we fill our minds with the knowledge of God as we hear about Him and then realizing we don't truly know Him? This is where Job found himself. After several months into Job's physical body suffering and his spirit being wounded, Job finally says to God, as a surrender of sorts, "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you" (Job 42:5). Job was stripped of every comfort he had ever received. His health. His family. His fortune. He had nothing. Job had been known as a righteous man, honoring to God, but really got to know the Lord through his pain.

This is where Joseph found himself, sold into slavery by his brothers, wrongly accused of a crime he didn't commit, and imprisoned for an extended period of time. God where are you? God, where are you in all of this? God's response? We see it over and over again throughout Joseph's story; "But the Lord was with Joseph." Slavery; God was with Joseph. Wrongly accused; God was with Joseph. Imprisoned; God was with Joseph.

Years later, only God knew that Joseph would eventually become second in command in the most powerful empire on the planet at the time. Joseph then proclaimed, "as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good..." (Gen. 50:20). Deep and profound purpose in pain.

Do you believe your pain has purpose that God can use?

We have the privilege of “hindsight” when looking at Joseph’s story. But we are experiencing suffering and pain now. As you look back on your own story, how do you see God with you through it?

MOVE

While experiencing suffering and affliction, one thing we do know, is that it doesn’t feel good. As humans, we sure like to feel good. We like the comfort of knowing we are healthy and that the ones closest to us are as well. We find comfort knowing that there is money in savings as a buffer. We like the comfort of good food and drink. Many of us like the comfort of being in our own homes. We like comfort. We like convenience. We tend to like neat and tidy over chaos and confusion. When things don’t feel good it brings so much discomfort and unease that it has the tendency to distort our perspective.

As we see in the life of Jesus, He never promised us comfort and ease. Quite the contrary. Jesus promised suffering. Jesus walked throughout His life on earth in constant affliction and suffering. The prophet Isaiah refers to Jesus as the suffering servant. The way of Jesus is not the easy road to be traveled but the road less traveled (Matthew 7:13-14). The road requiring sacrifice, and suffering...Yet, it is the road that Jesus promised freedom and an abundant life here on earth (John 10:10). There is deep invitation on this road. To be with Him. To live free. Yet, a lot of us choose to remain in the prison of our pain.

Where in your life do you find that you desire comfort over the purposes of God which can require some discomfort?

In this week’s message, Jessie read an article published by the New Yorker that claimed that ‘the children who assign purpose to their pain thrived’...Can you go back and look at your life experiences and assign meaning to your pain?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

TO GO

Deuteronomy 30:19

"This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."

