

PAIN IS THE GIFT NO ONE WANTS

Sermon Outline & Devotional Guide

1 Thessalonians 3:1-8

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Kelly Stanley

- + *Philippians 1:29*, "For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for Him" (NLT).
- + *1 John 1:5*, "This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in Him at all" (NLT).
- + *Romans 8:20-22*, "Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, ²¹the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. ²²For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" (NLT).
- + See *1 Thessalonians 3:1-8* in your Bible. Thank you.
- + *Acts 17:1-9*, "Paul and Silas then traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As was Paul's custom, he went to the synagogue service, and for three Sabbaths in a row he used the Scriptures to reason with the people. ³ He explained the prophecies and proved that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead. He said, "This Jesus I'm telling you about is the Messiah." ⁴ Some of the Jews who listened were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with many God-fearing Greek men and quite a few prominent women. ⁵ But some of the Jews were jealous, so they gathered some troublemakers from the marketplace to form a mob and start a riot. They attacked the home of Jason, searching for Paul and Silas so they could drag them out to the crowd. ⁶ Not finding them there, they dragged out Jason and some of the other believers instead and took them before the city council. "Paul and Silas have caused trouble all over the world," they shouted, "and now they are here disturbing our city, too. ⁷ And Jason has welcomed them into his home. They are all guilty of treason against Caesar, for they profess allegiance to another king, named Jesus." ⁸ The people of the city, as well as the city council, were thrown into turmoil by these reports. ⁹ So the officials forced Jason and the other believers to post bond, and then they released them" (NLT).

What Biblical Lessons Does God Want Us To Learn From Our Pain?

1. In the church, pain is never to be experienced in a _____ or _____ (vv. 1-2)

- + *1 Corinthians 12:25-26*, "This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it . . ." (NLT).
- + *Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*, "Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. ¹⁰ If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble" (NLT).
- + *1 Thessalonians 3:1-2*, "Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, ² and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith" (NASB).

How Do We Help People in Pain Not To Experience It in A Vacuum or Alone?

(a) We are to _____ the one in pain.

- The word translated as "strengthen" in verse 2 is the Greek New Testament word [στηρίζω; stērizō]. This word is a _____ term and it was used in other contexts with the idea of buttressing or supporting a structure
- + *Exodus 17:11-12*, "As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage. ¹² Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset" (NLT).

(b) We are to _____ the one in pain.

- The word translated as "encourage" in verse 2 is the Greek New Testament word [παρακαλέω; parakaleō]. This word literally means "to come along side of to help, to cheer up, to assist, to comfort, to advocate, and to encourage." In the New Testament, Jesus used this same word to

refer to the promised _____ to His disciples in the Upper Room just hours before His arrest, scourging, crucifixion and death.

- + John 14:16, "Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby), to be with you forever" (AMP).
- + Revelation 12:10, "Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, 'It has come at last—salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth—the one who accuses them before our God day and night'" (NLT).

2. We have to help people in pain handle it in a _____ way (vv. 3-5).

- The Greek New Testament word Paul uses for "disturb" is [σαίνω; sainō]. The term originally was used of the wagging of a dog's tail and then metaphorically of fawning or cringing by humans. Earlier commentators took the verb to mean "be beguiled" in this passage. In contrast to this interpretation, all of the ancient versions as well as the Greek interpreters of the passage without exception understood the verb to mean "_____, _____, or _____."

Paul Reminded Them Of Two Biblical Truths

(a) Christians are _____ for pain (vs. 3).

(b) Christians have been _____ and thus need to be _____ in advance (vs. 4).

3. Our first biblical response is to pray using _____ to provide _____ to others in pain (vv. 6-8).

- + Revelation 21:4, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever" (NLT).
- + Romans 15:13, "I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit" (NLT).
- + Romans 12:12, "Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying" (NLT).
- + James 5:16, "Pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results" (NLT).
- + Ecclesiastes 7:13-14, "Accept the way God does things, for who can straighten what He has made crooked? ¹⁴Enjoy prosperity while you can, but when hard times strike, realize that both come from God. Remember that nothing is certain in this life" (NLT).
- + Galatians 5:22-23, "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!" (NLT).

***** Next Steps Devotional Questions *****

1. Philip Yancey in his book, Where Is God When It Hurts, writes: "Christians don't really know how to interpret pain. If you pinned them against the wall, in a dark, secret moment, many Christians would probably admit that pain was God's one mistake. He really should have worked a little harder and invented a better way of coping with the world's dangers" (pp. 22-23). What do you think of his comment and why?
2. C.S. Lewis, a former atheist now Christian apologist writes this about pain in his book, The Problem With Pain: "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world" (p. 91). When has God used His megaphone of pain in your life to get your attention? How did He do it and how did you respond to God?
3. When you are going through pain, do you ever ask these questions: (a) Doesn't God care about me and love me anymore? (b) Didn't God promise never to leave and forsake me? Where is God now? (c) How can a good and all powerful God allow this to happen in my life or in my family's lives? (d) If God has the power to stop this, why doesn't He? (e) Is it my fault these painful things are happening to me? (f) Is God punishing for me for some unconfessed sin? If so, why? Does a specific pain cause you ask a certain question? Why or why not?
4. Christian author A.W. Tozer in his book, The Root of the Righteous, writes this: "It is doubtful God can use anyone greatly until He has hurt him deeply." How do you feel about this quote and why?
5. When you are in emotional, spiritual or relational pain, how do you typically respond and why? How does God want you to respond?