

ADVERSITY GOSPEL #5 – YOUR PROBLEMS HAVE A PURPOSE

Sermon by Todd Lester

March 12, 2017

Romans 8:29 For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son.

Ephesians 4:15 Growing in every way more and more like Christ.

Genesis 1:26 Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.

Sanctification (definition): _____
God produces the fruit of the spirit by putting you in the exact _____ situations.

WHAT GOD USES TO MAKE ME MORE LIKE JESUS

1. God uses His _____
2. God uses the _____
3. God uses _____
4. God uses _____

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR PAIN

1. GOD USES PAIN TO _____ ME

Luke 15:16-18

2. GOD USES PAIN TO _____ ME

James 1:2-3, Deuteronomy 8:2

3. GOD USES PAIN TO _____ ME

Isaiah 48:10, Hebrews 12:7, 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

1. I REMEMBER THAT _____

Genesis 50:20

2. I REJOICE AND _____




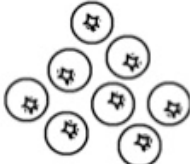
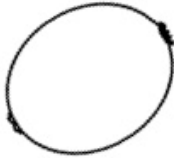




1 Thessalonians 5:18, Philippians 4:4

3. I REFUSE TO _____

James 1:3-4

Fruits of the Spirit

What actual fruits best represent the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22? Label each diagram with either LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL. Be prepared to give a reason for your choices.

 Pineapple	 Strawberry	 Orange
 Blueberries	 Kiwi	 Grapes
 Apple	 Bananas	 Peach

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Ephesians 4:15 Growing in every way more and more like Christ.

Genesis 1:26 Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.

Sanctification: To make holy (def'n), to become like Jesus (Todd)
God produces the fruit of the spirit by putting you in the exact opposite situations.

WHAT GOD USES TO MAKE ME MORE LIKE JESUS

1. God uses His Word
2. God uses the Holy Spirit
3. God uses other people
4. God uses pain and suffering

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR PAIN

1. GOD USES PAIN TO MOTIVATE ME

Luke 15:16-18 The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. "When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you."'

2. GOD USES PAIN TO MEASURE ME

James 1:2-3 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

Deuteronomy 8:2 Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands.

3. GOD USES PAIN TO MATURE ME

Isaiah 48:10 I have refined you, but not as silver is refined. Rather, I have refined you in the furnace of suffering.

Hebrews 12:7 As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father?

2 Corinthians 4:8-10 We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 That is why we never give up ... For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

1. I REMEMBER THAT GOD'S PLAN IS GOOD

Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good.




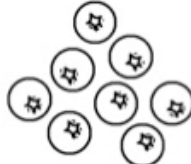
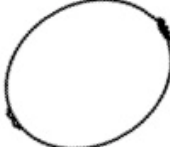




2. I REJOICE AND GIVE THANKS

1 Thessalonians 5:18 Be thankful in all circumstances.

Philippians 4:4 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!

3. I REFUSE TO GIVE UP

James 1:3-4 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

<p>Peace</p>  <p>Pineapple Must be cut into "peaces" to eat</p>	<p>Love</p>  <p>Strawberry Can be heart shaped</p>	<p>Joy</p>  <p>Orange Can be cut to make smiley – joyful mouths</p>
<p>Goodness</p>  <p>Blueberries "super food" with so much goodness in</p>	<p>Patience</p>  <p>Kiwi Need patience to peel them</p>	<p>Kindness</p>  <p>Grapes Need a group to be kind to each other</p>
<p>Self Control</p>  <p>Apple Eve didn't show self control when she ate the apple</p>	<p>Faithfulness</p>  <p>Bananas In bunches that stick together (faithful to each other)</p>	<p>Gentleness</p>  <p>Peach You have to handle these gently so you don't damage them</p>

THE ADVERSITY GOSPEL #6 – YOUR PROBLEMS HAVE A PURPOSE

Sermon by Todd Lester

March 12, 2017

Icebreaker/Introduction

'The Fruits of the Spirit' is a light (silly?) activity focusing on Todd's point about how we become like Jesus in character when we display the fruits of the Spirit. The idea is for them to come up with reasons why a particular physical fruit could be associated with a spiritual fruit. You may want to give them a clue (eg. Pineapple is Peace because it needs to be cut into 'pieces' to eat – say they aren't all quite that corny – but close!). Give a few minutes for them to consider ideas and then share together some responses (some of their ideas may even be better than the ones provided – the answers are on the Scriptures page).

Read the first 3 scriptures on the handout (Rom. 8:29, Eph. 4:15, Gen. 1:26). What point did Todd make with these passages? (our #1 purpose in life is to become like Jesus). Discuss this statement about our #1 purpose – do you agree? Is becoming like Jesus and following Jesus the same thing? Consider this statement in conjunction with the Westminster Confession (our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever) and John 10:10 (where Jesus says "I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full").

Sanctification: To make holy (def'n), to become like Jesus (Todd) **Would you agree that these are the same, or related closely?** God produces the fruit of the spirit by putting you in the exact opposite situations. **What did Todd mean by this? Does it make sense to you? Todd said that, for example, God will help us develop peace by 'putting us in' seasons of stress or places of conflict. How do you feel about the phrase 'putting us in'? Do you think God 'causes' these problems or uses them/allows them?**

WHAT GOD USES TO MAKE ME MORE LIKE JESUS

1. God uses His Word
 2. God uses the Holy Spirit
 3. God uses other people
 4. God uses pain and suffering
- Choose one of these ways and share an example of how God has used it to change/influence you for good/growth.

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR PAIN

1. GOD USES PAIN TO MOTIVATE ME

Focuses on Luke 15:16-18

Discuss Todd's statement that "we don't change when we see the light, but when we feel the heat". Consider reading about something and experiencing something – can change happen either way? Consider it in relation to a conversion experience.

Is it true that pain is a motivator even for those who don't believe in God?

Think of an example of when pain motivated you. Is it a physical example? Is it spiritual example where it brought growth or change to your life? [consider how some organizations are started through people experiencing or seeing tragedy (like MADD or World Vision), or a mother seeing her child bullied and speaking to a principal even though they would usually be hesitant to talk to someone in authority]

2. GOD USES PAIN TO MEASURE ME

Focuses on James 1:2-3, Deuteronomy 8:2

What did Todd say can be measured by how we react to pain? (character, patience, maturity) Can you think of others?

What do you think God's purpose is in measuring us? (is He evaluating me, or is He encouraging me to evaluate myself?)

Read Deut. 8:2. What are some things Todd said that can dry up in the desert? (relationships, opportunities, finances, health)

Is this 'measuring' the same as 'judging'? How do we interpret this point in light of how much God loves us? Is there a danger in portraying God as one who regularly measures, evaluates, or judges us?

3. GOD USES PAIN TO MATURE ME

Focuses on Isaiah 48:10, Hebrews 12:7, 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Romans 8:28

Read Isaiah 48:10. What are some of the impurities that Todd said can be burned off in the refining fire of pain? (selfishness, materialism, ego, impatience) Choose one of these and think specifically about how pain can bring change in that area.

Todd shared that people tell him that the toughest times have caused the greatest growth in their life? Can you identify, or share an example from your own life?

Read Romans 8:28. Did you find Todd's explanation helpful? How do people misunderstand this verse?

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

1. I REMEMBER THAT GOD'S PLAN IS GOOD

Focuses on Genesis 50:20

Todd encouraged us to remember that 'all pain is temporary but the reward is eternal'. Is all pain temporary? What is the reward?

How can it be helpful to 'not focus on the problems but on God's plan/purpose'?

Todd explained that we can expect problems because Jesus, in fact, said "In this world you will have trouble." Read John 16:33 (NIV).

How does the second part of Jesus' statement ('But take heart! I have overcome the world.') bring hope?

2. I REJOICE AND GIVE THANKS

Focuses on 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Philippians 4:4

What were some of the reasons Todd gave for why we can be thankful in all circumstances? (God sees it, loves us, is with us, cares about us, will use it for good if we give it to Him)

What are some things that you are most thankful for? What gives you the most joy? When going through painful circumstances can focusing on some of these be helpful?

3. I REFUSE TO GIVE UP

Focuses on James 1:3-4

Discuss Todd's statement that 'life makes a lot more sense when we understand that God's purpose is not to make us comfortable but to make us more like Christ.'

Recall the good questions Todd suggested we ask God when going through a difficult time. (How do you want me to grow? What do you want me to learn? How can this make me more like You? How will You use it for good?) Do you think it is still acceptable to ask God to take away the pain?