



The River of Pain

Psalm 6:2-3 ESV | Psalm 6:6 | Psalm 13:1-2 | Psalm 22:1-2 | Daniel 4:35 NLT | Isaiah 45:7 | James 1:2-3 | 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 | John 9:3

Hosts - Give a Quick review from last week - Last week the sermon covered getting over good and bad guilt. Guilt is designed to get us to do something. Guilt is caused by the things we do and should not do or things we don't do and should have done.

Say, This week we took a look at Pain.

Ask, Does anyone remember the two main types of pain that Michael shared? (make sure these two are covered)

- **Physical** pain - acute, chronic, breakthrough, bone, soft tissue, nerve, referred, phantom, total (physical, emotional, spiritual)
- **Emotional** - primary focus of our study today
 - Pain of the past - bad memories, abuse, heartaches, etc. - not meant to define you, debilitate, or determine who you are or who you become. There is value and purpose in pain. Swimming against the current - upstream swimming is hard but only looking upstream will result in continued turmoil. (Raging rivers - drifting rather than pushing upstream)
 - A loss that is so life altering - losing someone through death, divorce, infidelity, prodigal, disowning, disability, chronic suffering that is not undone.

(Be sensitive to allow people to share about some of their pain, but be careful to steer people away from bashing people and sharing names in an unhealthy way.)

Ask, What is a danger in the "Just get over it" attitude towards others?

Suffering is a response to the pain in our lives and our response can help prolong or help the healing in the suffering.

Say, Hiding in our pain can be debilitating. King David is seen openly dealing with his pain in these Psalms. David understood pain and felt permission to cry out to God. Most of these cry outs were at the beginning of the Psalm.

(Be sure to read each of them or have them read out loud in the group.)

Psalm 6:2-3, 6 ESV

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing; heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled. But you, O Lord—how long? I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping.

Psalm 13:1-2 ESV

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Psalm 22:1-2 ESV - *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.*

Say, In this verse, we are reminded that we are not God.

Daniel 4:35 NLT - *All the people of the earth are nothing compared to him. He does as he pleases among the angels of heaven and among the people of the earth. No one can stop him or say to him, 'What do you mean by doing these things?'*

Read these verses –

Isaiah 45:7 ESV - *I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the Lord, who does all these things.*

Psalms 119:71 ESV *It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.*

Say, Pain is the coach that leads us to surrender and realizing we need only God. Pain is a part spiritual training.

Michael also shared a powerful quote about how God uses pain and is with us in the pain: “God isn’t unable to help us, and He doesn’t despise us. He is the ruler of all mankind and the lover of His own people. But through suffering He looks into and searches everyone. He weighs the character of every individual during danger, even death. Therefore, as God is revealed in the fire, so our true selves are revealed in critical moments.”

Minucius Felix

Say, God allows pain and suffering for at least three reasons. The first is that **The river of pain teaches us endurance.**

Read James 1:2-3

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (ESV)

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. (NLT)

Say, In much the same way a coach pushes an athlete/musician to persevere through the training, God uses pain and struggles to mold us and shape us more in His image.

Say, The second reason God allows pain is **The river of pain teaches us empathy.**

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 ESV

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. ⁴ He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. ⁵ For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.

Ask, Are there struggles and pains that God has allowed in your life that He has used to help others through their pain? (Allow a couple to share helping them to focus on what God did through them.)

Say, We are comforted in order to extend God’s comfort to others. Empathy is impossible if we are consumed with ourselves.

Remind everyone of this quote and imagery from the cross:

“Too often we sigh and look within; Jesus sighed and looked without. We sigh, and look down; Jesus sighed, and looked up. We sigh, and look to earth; Jesus sighed, and looked to Heaven. We sigh, and look to man; Jesus sighed, and looked to God.”

Theophilus Stork, Sermons (1876)”

Say, Another reason God allows pain is that **The river of pain teaches us that pain can be a gift.**

Read John 9:3. (God allowed this man to be born blind so that God would be glorified.)

“It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.

Say, For the believer, pain is never the end in itself. God uses it to display His glory in a broken world. Suffering builds character that reflects God and His goodness. Michael asked us, “think about the most amazing and interesting people in the world. Would you say that most of them were people who struggled, suffered, and overcame?”

Ask, What examples come to mind in history, or even people in your own life, that have amazing stories of overcoming and God’s provision? Michael ended with this encouragement: “suffering builds character, it builds story, and it builds a really amazing life. So don’t waste your pain, but find the purpose in it and start the swim to glorifying God today.”

Share prayer requests and be sure to encourage group participants to pray for one another during the week.