

Eight Good Habits

7. Remain Godly While Suffering

Preached: 10/24/2021, Germantown;

Scripture

1 Peter 3:8-18 (NIV)

Message:

Remain Godly While Suffering

We are in a series of sermon studies on the subject of **Habits**. A few months ago, I came across an article on ChurchLeaders.com, written by Neal Samudre. The title of the article is: **8 Habits of Christians Who Live Out Their Faith Every Day, Not Just on Sunday.**

Habit; NOUN

1. a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up.

Samudre is concerned that too often we push our faith to the margins of our life.

“[we] let the things that matter drown in our flooded schedules. This is what has happened to many of us. We’ve let our faith become a Sunday thing, not a 24/7 thing.”

Samudre identifies some practices that will help us to live out our faith everyday. He identifies 8 practices to develop into habits. As these practices become habits living them out will come automatically to us. They will become settled practices that are hard to give up. We won’t have to think about it. We will just do it. They will be a part of our nature as much as the color of our hair or some other feature that is uniquely ours. These habits will transform our Christian Witness.

So far have talked about six practices that we are trying to turn into habits:

1. People who live out their faith every day are in the habit of having “Restorative Times” built into their days.
2. People who live out their faith every day are in the habit of serving others or demonstrating love as a reflex. They don’t have to schedule “Loving or serving”. It is automatic.
3. People who live out their faith every day are in the habit of considering character over other outcomes (personal gain)
4. People who live out their faith every day are in the habit of cultivating community with others.
5. People who live out their faith every day are in the habit of honoring the roles God has given them
6. See the Significance in Small Moments

Now today, we are talking about Facing Suffering. ***“People who live out their faith every day handle suffering in godly ways.”***

Samudre writes about **Gentry and Hadley Eddings**. They were driving home from his sister’s wedding when a truck crashed into their car, killing their toddler and unborn baby. When the world expected them to shatter in their pain, they transformed their pain into pulpit. Gentry’s sister said, “Hadley and Gentry are truly the strongest people I know, and it is beautiful to see them **lean into each other and into Christ**. They are **grieving, but grieving with hope** – looking forward to the days when they will be reunited with their boys in heaven.” They gave the donations given to them to Mission of Hope Haiti, while also forgiving the truck driver.

You see, they didn’t trumpet their pain for pity. Instead, they picked up the pieces and gave a beautiful picture of Christ’s love to the world.

It’s possible to not completely break in your pain. It’s possible to give back in the times you feel that daily ache and pain. But to do so requires that you see the redemption possible in the greatest pain. That’s what Christianity is all about—redemption.

Christians who live out their faith every day are in the habit of handling their suffering in a godly way.

I want to talk for a few minutes about what that means. How do we handle our suffering in godly ways. That does not sound easy. Does the Bible have any advice for us about how to handle suffering. Well the Bible has many stories about suffering, especially stories of how God's people went through times of suffering. We find some guidance in the book of 1 Peter. Suffering is one of the major themes of this little book. The book is written by the apostle Peter. He is writing to believers who were scattered throughout the territory of Asia Minor. Followers of Jesus experienced opposition and persecution because of their faith. Peter is writing to encourage them to remain faithful in their difficult circumstances. He teaches them about the importance of handling their suffering in a way that will be a witness to others. I am going to refer to several passages in the book where he writes about suffering. So my references to his writing will include verses scattered throughout the book.

Things to Remember about suffering:

Samudre writes that it is possible to **not completely break** in our pain. It is **possible to give back**. In order to do that there are some things we must remember.

- **4:12** - Suffering is common to people who live in this world. ¹² **Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.** Sometimes when we are going through difficult times, (suffering) we may feel as if we are being picked on. Why is God doing this to me. But God is not picking on you. Suffering is common to all.
- **4:13** - When we suffer, we are experiencing something that Jesus experienced ¹³ **But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.** Peter challenges us to rejoice as we are united with Christ. And Peter reminds us that when we suffer, our joy will be enhanced when our suffering is over (when his glory is revealed).
- **1:18** - We must remember that although we join with Christ when we suffer, His suffering was for a redemptive purpose. ¹⁸ **For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,** ¹⁹ **but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.** ²⁰ **He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.** God uses suffering in accomplishing His purpose.

The Purpose of our Suffering

Peter does not say that our suffering has the redemptive purpose that Christ's suffering has but our suffering affords us with a great opportunity.:

- **1:6-7** - ⁶ **In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.** ⁷ **These have come so that **the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.**** When we are suffering we have the opportunity to prove the genuineness of our faith by the attitude we carry through it.

We do that by following the example of Jesus when He suffered. **2:21-22** - ²¹ **To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.** ²² **He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.**

- What was the example of Jesus when He suffered? **2:23** ²³ **When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.**
- And finally, Peter challenges us about how we live during a time of suffering: **3:8 – 9** ⁸ **Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.** ⁹ **Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult.**

Bitter or Better? We have a choice when we are going through a time of suffering. Christians who are living out their faith every day are in the habit of facing their suffering in a godly way. That will result in our peace. And will impact others who are watching.