

I'm Suffering, So I Must Have Done Something Wrong

Series: Spiritual Big Foots: Disproving the Myths

August 8, 2010

Scripture: Hebrews 11

32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, **33** who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, **34** quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. **35** Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. **36** Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. **37** They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— **38** the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. **39** These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. **40** God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Creating Interest

Ask the group: "Briefly describe the worst period of suffering you have been through in your life."

Follow up question: "Did you sense God was doing anything in your life through this time?"

Outline

1. The outline of today's message centers around three questions. Which of these is your most common question in the midst of suffering? Do you think that we move through these as a process? What keeps some people from ever arriving at the third question?
 - a. Why am I here
 - b. What should I do now?
 - c. What is God teaching me?
2. The solutions to times of trial must accomplish three things:
 - a. It must honor God.
 - b. It must not short circuit something God is seeking to accomplish in our lives.
 - c. It must be resolved in some way, either within ourselves or solution to the problem.

3. Are there times that we are 100% obedient to God and end up suffering? Why is that part of God's plan? Are there times that resolution never arrives?

If we are obedient, we are right where God would have us.

4. There are three answers to the question of "Why am I experiencing this?" They are:
- God sent me here.
 - I blew it and this is a result of my own doing.
 - I just don't know why.

Which of these are you in most often when experiencing suffering?

5. Sometimes it seems as if the only way out of a situation is to disobey God. Have you ever been in a situation like this? How can this short circuit God's will and plan?
6. There are two things God wants when we have blown it—admit it and quit it. What keeps us from changing once we are in the alley?
7. 1 Cor. 10:13 says that God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear. How does this bring us comfort and help us deal with situations and trials?

Close

The challenge for today is to make this commitment: "No matter what happens, I will respond in such a way that honors God." What are the likely costs of making that commitment?