

BEYOND THESE WALLS WEEK 2// THAT'S JUST PART OF IT

INTRO//

What's up Faith Students?? Welcome to the best night of the week! I'm so glad each and every one of you guys is here.

REVIEW LAST WEEK//

Last week we started a new series called "Beyond these Walls" where we were studying the early church in the book of Acts.

And last week we talked about Jesus' last few words on earth before he ascended back to Heaven, and what the disciples did right after.

This story perfectly illustrates some clear truths about God's plan for our life, and those were the 3 points last week, does anyone remember them?

1. God has a plan
2. You have a purpose
3. We need His power

We need his power! And as we read last week, God gave the disciples his power when the holy spirit came and empowered them to do what Jesus called + commanded them to do!

That same power is available to us! God has called and created each of us in this room to do mighty things for His kingdom, to share the gospel wherever we go, and we have the power and boldness to do so through his spirit!

TENSION//

But that doesn't mean we won't still face challenges. As we'll quickly learn, following Jesus doesn't equate to an easy, perfect life, it actually brings its own pain and trials, **"That's just part of it"**.

ILLUSTRATION + CONNECTION//

How many of you have ever heard or said that before? "That's just part of it" ?

-Maybe you were at your job that's really good, you enjoy it a lot, you get paid great, but you've gotta clean the bathrooms. Or something you don't really like, and you just kinda say "well that's just part of it".

-Or maybe you're on a sports team and you love it, love your teammates and even your coach isn't that bad, but they make you do some awful drills or practice just goes a little too long every day and you think "that's just part of it".

“That’s just part of it” usually implies something negative, that it’s not all bad but “that part” isn’t good.

And in context of following Jesus, as we read about the early church in Acts, there’s not doubt suffering and trials “are just part of it”. And as we talked about last week, if that’s what the early disciples and church had to go through, that probably means we might have to go through it too.

So how do we handle those parts? Does that mean God isn’t real or good if he allows us to go through those parts? What’s the purpose of those parts?

SCRIPTURE//

Acts 4:1-4

“While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. 2 These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. 3 They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. 4 But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of men who believed now totaled about 5,000.

-suffering and trials are something that comes with following Jesus, “that’s just part of it”. If you’re taking notes that’s actually the title of my message: **“that’s just part of it”** And tonight we’re gonna look at a few things that “just are part” of being a believer and follower of Jesus. And where Peter + John are in this moment perfectly sets up our first point:

1//BONDAGE CAN COME IN OBEDIENCE

Peter has to be thinking: “when I was denying Jesus I was perfectly safe, but now I starting preaching and proclaiming His name, seeing Him work miracles through me, NOW I start to get pushback and opposition?”

And maybe the same has been true in your life. When you really start to take God seriously, when you start to see growth in your spiritual walk, when you start to read your Bible consistently and study God’s word, when you begin to walk in His ways, maybe you even begin to share your faith with friends + family that don’t follow Jesus, NOW you start to face pain and hurt. Now things start to go off the rails and now you start to doubt your purpose. Maybe seeds of doubt in God even begin to be planted in your mind + heart.

-Ephesians 6:12 “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Of course Satan will start throwing things at us when we become a threat. Sometimes we can believe that if we do enough of the right things, if we do all the religious traditions, that we can avoid suffering.

But this just simply isn't what the Bible teaches, this just simply isn't what Jesus said.

Even in the beginning of Acts, like we talked about last week, what did Jesus say or call the disciples? Witnesses. You will be my "witnesses" we see this in acts 1:8.

You wanna know what else witnesses means in greek? Which is what the new testament was written in? Witness in greek is mártyras, which also means Martyr. martyr means someone who is killed or dies for their faith + religious beliefs.

In a physical sense, many of Jesus' early followers and disciples were martyrs. They LITERALLY died for their faith and belief in Jesus. Before that many of them suffered, were imprisoned and tortured. That's just a part of it.

And I don't say this to scare you and say if you follow Jesus you're gonna be killed for your faith, I say it to point to the reality that **"if you're willing to surrender to Jesus you better be ready to suffer"**

-Hebrews 4: 15 says: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin."

Jesus has been through everything we will go through and so much more, so 1. We're probably gonna go through some suffering too, but also 2. He understands. He gets us. It's not just a cool super bowl commercial campaign or slogan, it's real and true, Jesus understands what we go through.

And part of what we go through is suffering, is obstacles and challenges, even when we obey. And it may not look like literally or physically dying like it did for many of the disciples, but it may look like some things in our life, some relationships in our life, some aspects of our identity, that may have to die for our faith and following Jesus.

Tonight I want you to think about what in your life may need to die, in what aspects do you need to be a martyr?

-Romans 8:28 says that God works all things together for "our good and His glory".

The disciples trusted this, John and Peter trusted this and we see in v. 5 despite them being in prison it was worth it, God made sense of that season, and because now **"the number of men who believe totaled 5,000". The church was growing!**

But sadly the opposition wasn't over.

In verse 7 it says: **They brought in the two disciples and demanded, “By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?”**

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of our people, 9 are we being questioned today because we’ve done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? 10 Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. 11 For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, ‘The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. 12 There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:7-12)

Even when being questioned and interrogated Peter saw it as an opportunity to preach the gospel. And this shows us our second point about suffering:

2//OPPORTUNITIES CAN BE FOUND IN OBSTACLES

ILLUSTRATION + CONNECTION//

Who in here is optimistic? Who would say they’re more pessimistic?

I think if we’re honest, and even maybe as a culture, we can tend to be pessimistic. Or maybe you don’t describe yourself as pessimistic, you’d just say you’re REAListic.

However you’d define your outlook we all know those people that no matter what the situation is, no matter what they’re going through, they see the light at the end of the tunnel. It may be an incredibly small glimmer of light, but they still see it, or even just imagine it!

In a sense and in a way as Christ-followers we’re called to be this way. Not that we ignore reality and just say “everything is gonna be okay” blindly, but we find the good in situations, we find the opportunities in obstacles.

It’s not a blind faith, it’s a trust in who our God is: he’s good, and he’s consistent, and if he’s been good then, if he’s done the impossible then, either in their life or mine, I know he’s capable, and I know he can and will do it again!

PRACTICAL CHALLENGE//

That’s why it’s so important to journal, and track our prayer requests and when they’re answered, because you can have a mountaintop moment, a great breakthrough at camp or over the summer, then the first week of school some drama pops off or

someone says one thing that totally wrecks your faith and relationship with God, because you forgot what he's done, and you lose faith that he can and will move again!

As followers of Jesus, just like Peter + John we have to get good at finding the opportunities in obstacles.

And this isn't something we're asked to do on our own. I want you to notice it didn't say "Peter was such a good christian" or "Peter had so much faith" or "Peter was super religious and more saved than anyone else" NO! It said **"Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,**

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he was filled with the power that we need and God knows we need, like we talked about last week!

13 The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.

-When you surrender your life to Jesus, you're filled with the Holy Spirit, and you encounter and walk with God, it's evident. Other people will see it. There was no reason for these men to speak so boldly, speak so clearly, with so much authority, the only explanation was that they had been with Jesus.

-Some of you worry and fear that when sharing the gospel or talking about Jesus with your friends and family you won't have the right words to say or speak. And I wanna challenge you and ask: "what if it doesn't depend on you?". What if it's not about having all the right words and arguments figured out and what if it's simply about being with Jesus.

PRACTICAL CHALLENGE//

By spending time meditating on God's word, reading and studying it, spending time in prayer and worship, just like the early church did, you're gonna see miracles happen through you, you're gonna see the opportunity in obstacles, and you're gonna have the words to speak and the boldness to speak them!

It's not on you and it can't be reliant on you. Just like we talked about last week, we have to have God's power, and we get God's power by being in God's presence.

And being in God's presence was a mark of the early church. It's a theme and characteristic of the early followers of Jesus.

23 As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. 24 When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God:

Then in verse 28:

everything they did was determined beforehand according to your will. And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. 30 Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

What we see the early church do brings us to our last point tonight:

3//PRAISE FOR BURDENS AND PRAY FOR BOLDNESS

See with the holy spirit, and everything else the disciples and early church had witnessed, by this point they've learned. They learned that following Jesus is not easy, it comes with suffering, that's just part of it".

And they recognized it was a good thing, that it was actually better they faced obstacles, because there are opportunities available in that!

With suffering, the door will be opened to reach more people than you could without. Suffering is a stage that will put your message in front of people you couldn't reach otherwise.

So the early church didn't just see the opportunity, they PRAISED God for the burden and obstacles they had to walk through because they saw the blessing in it!

And they didn't pray, take these people away, they prayed "Lord take our fear away and give us boldness so we can take the gospel to these people, so miracles can break out in your name!"

And what happened? In v.31 it says **"After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.**

See God doesn't create suffering but will allow it and use it and redirect it for a purpose. Again he'll make reason for every season. And often times it can be easy for us to get in a mindset that this Christian life will be easy and following Jesus will make our problems go away.

- “God will never give you more than you can handle”. And I hate to tell you but that’s just simply not true. We see all throughout scripture, God giving people WAY more than they can handle. God allowing situations that people simply can’t take care of on their own.

-And you may think that makes God evil or bad, but the truth is it’s exactly what makes him so good. God gives us more than we handle so we REALIZE we need more of Him. God will allow more than you can handle so you seek more of Him!

CLOSING//

Suffering and trials are real, “it’s just a part” of living in a broken and fallen world, but it’s also “just part” of bringing and teaching a message that the world won’t like. If they crucified the one we follow course they’re gonna hate us. Jesus talked about that. “that’s just part of it”.

But you know what else “is just part of it”? See while Jesus suffered and faced the cross we know it wasn’t the end and He ultimately Rose again.

So yes, when it comes to following Jesus: suffering? “That’s just a part of it”. It just comes naturally.

But as Paul talks about in Romans 6, we were crucified with Christ and also rose with Him, so death and suffering, yes that’s just a part of it, but resurrection? Victory? New life? Hope? When we follow Jesus “that’s just a part of it” that’s just what happens, that’s just part of walking with Jesus.

Suffering is real, but Hope is too! Paul said later in **Romans 8:18- “Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.”**

We can hold on to hope. But until then, until the glory God reveals to us, we patiently walk in obedience.

As we close tonight I believe there’s some responses we need to make:

ALTAR + RESPONSE//

-Are you suffering alone and without hope? You don't have to and can suffer with your creator and savior who wants to give you hope (Gospel/salvation)

-Do you need to see the opportunity in an obstacle? (Discernment)

-Do you know what you need to do but fear doing it? (Boldness)

Give students students time to pray and process with a leader, journal, and worship