

Devotionals

Jim Downing

I. Introduction.

- A. Should we question God about suffering?
- B. Sometimes we can ask why and we know why.
 - 1. The example of one who was brought to Christ through someone else's disease.
 - 2. Sometimes God will answer and sometimes not. We must respect the silence of God and believe in his sovereignty.

II. Devotional 1. (Philippians 1:21)

- A. It was by Paul's suffering that God was able to be magnified.
- B. Navigator founder Dawson Trotman's life was a testimony to how God can use suffering to magnify Himself.
- C. The speaker in the midst of a dangerous flight was able to share Christ with a man. He asked if he was ready to die and whether he wanted to receive Christ.
- D. The captain apologized to the speaker for the rough ride, but the speaker praised God for it because he was able to use it to share Christ with the man.

III. Devotional 2.

- A. The way of devotion and the reason for it. (Acts 17:30-31)
- B. Our purpose is to extend the Great Commission.
- C. The enemy can slip into our lives if we are not looking; we must be in prayer and in the Word to love others.
- D. Abiding in the shadow of the Almighty is essential. We must set His name on high. (Psalm 91:1)

IV. Devotional 3.

- A. One of the questions people had in days past is what is the highest good. They never consulted the right source book though.
- B. The highest good is to know God. (Jeremiah 29:23-24)

C. God backs this up with three illustrations.

1. Moses was the most educated man of his day, yet he had to ask God to teach him in order that he might know Him. (Exodus 33)

2. Daniel although highly educated in the political system, felt very little towards political power in contrast to the power that came from knowing God. (Daniel 11:32)

3. Abraham although rich had a primary purpose of knowing God. (Genesis 13:2)

D. That which is most important is not education, power, or riches but to know God.

E. However, this “knowing God” is a bit ethereal.

1. How well we know a person can be reduced to how many shared experiences we have with that person.

2. How well we know God can be reduced to how many shared experiences we have with Him.

3. The example of a man who said that he could never know a person unless he was caught in a blizzard with him with only one blanket - through shared experiences we know someone.

F. We do not have to panic - God has an agenda for us. Every day we need to trust in Him and look to Him.

G. Conclusion: God expects us to still be growing in our knowledge and grace in Him no matter what the age by increasing daily the number and depth of shared experiences. (II Peter 3:18; Jeremiah 9:23-24)

V. Testimony.

A. A woman who married a Navigator who realized that she was just another member of the church but not saved. Being part of a church family, she was embarrassed to admit this. She was convicted that it was more important to be saved than to worry about what anyone thought.

B. She was told that she would not have children but in the year after she was saved she had her first child.

C. Her “steel jaws” have been a point of suffering, but it has opened her up to the Lord. (Psalm 3:3)

D. When in pain and when you feel like you can do nothing else you can pray and listen to God.

E. She prays for four things: patience, expectancy, obedience, and listening to the Lord.

F. The Lord has given her back her smile.

Application questions.

1. What observations did you make from the different presentations?

2. What impacted you the most about the woman's testimony concerning her salvation and suffering at the end?

3. Several issues were discussed in this message including knowing God, evangelization, trusting in God in the midst of suffering, and salvation. What concerns do you have as these subjects apply to your life? What do you intend to do about them?
