

Introduction: How do you live a purposeful life through the difficulties of life?

The pathway of a purpose-filled life always involves difficulty.

Paul's missionary journeys:

1st missionary journey

Acts 13-14:28

Date: AD 47-49

Companions: Barnabas, John Mark

Notable events:

- Cyprus: Spiritual opposition from Elymas the Sorcerer
- Perga: John Mark deserts the team
- Antioch Pisidia: Jewish leaders drive Paul out of town
- Lystra: Paul is stoned and left for dead
- Antioch/Jerusalem: Internal opposition from Judaizers

2nd missionary journey:

Acts 15:36-18:22

Date: AD 49-51

Companions: Silas, Timothy, Luke, Priscilla & Aquila

Notable Events:

- Antioch Syria: Paul & Barnabas part ways
- Phrygia + Galatia: The Macedonian Call, kept by the Spirit from going to Asia
- Philippi: Paul & Silas flogged and imprisoned
- Thessalonica: Jewish leader try to arrest Paul & Silas
- Berea: More opposition from Jewish leader, Paul sent to Athens
- Corinth: Paul writes 1 & 2 Thessalonians; Jewish leaders try to arrest Paul

3rd missionary journey:

Acts 18:23-21:16

Date: AD 52-57

Companions: Timothy, Luke, Others

Notable Events:

- Ephesus: Silversmiths riot over Paul's effectiveness in sharing the gospel
- Paul writes 1 Corinthians
- Macedonia + Greece: Paul writes 2 Corinthians & Romans
- Ptolemais: Prophet predicts Paul will be imprisoned in Jerusalem

When life is difficult:

- Get clear on your _____ and don't be surprised by _____.

¹⁰ You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹ persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. ¹² In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

2 Timothy 3:10-12

- Recognize suffering has a _____ it is not _____.

³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans 5:3-5

- Your God-given _____ is not limited by your _____.

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

Philippians 1:12-14

- What's _____ you in Jesus is _____ whatever you are going through.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you typically respond to difficult circumstances? How does Paul's missionary journeys change your view on suffering and hardships?
2. When we lose sight of our "why", we lose sight of our purpose. Have you lost your "why"? Take some time right now to ask God to give you clarity on His purpose for your life. Write down what He's calling you to do.
3. Ryan mentioned four points on how to navigate a purpose filled life when life gets difficult. Which of these four points affected you the most and why?
4. Paul saw suffering and difficulty, not as a problem to solve, but an opportunity to be stewarded. How will you steward your current hardship or difficulty?