Introduction: Why do we suffer?

Four Possibilities:

1. Suffering may be the result of our own sin and poor choices. (i.e. David with Bathsheba) Galatians 6:7-8

2. Suffering may be the result of satanic spiritual attack. (i.e. Job, chapter 1) Ephesians 6:10-12

3. Suffering may occur simply because we live in a fallen world. (i.e. Tower of Siloam, Luke 13) Romans 8:18-23 Genesis 3

4. Suffering may be the result of doing good. (i.e. Peter preaches = prison) 1 Peter 2:19-21

Question: How do you deal with unjust suffering?
A model to follow:

God's Prisoner: __________________________

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

God's Secret Plan: ___________ __________________________

Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Paul’s Role in God’s Plan: ___________ __________________________

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of His power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

The Purpose of the Church: _______________________ & _____________________

"His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In Him and through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence."
4 Principles to Remember When You’re Suffering Unjustly:

1. We are ___________ __________________________. Ephesians 3:1

2. Until we understand what God is up to in “______ _____________,” Ephesians 3:2-6 we will never understand what He’s up to in “______ _____________.”

3. Until we understand our role in “______ _____________,” Ephesians 3:7-9 we will forever be frustrated with God’s failure to fulfill “our plans.”

4. Until we grasp the **extraordinary privilege** and **eternal impact** of suffering for good, we will squander the __________________________ ________________

   God will ever provide us to **glorify** His name, and **commune** with His heart.
Conclusion/Application:

- Don’t be discouraged! God uses unjust suffering to reveal His character to others and His grace to us.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever suffered unjustly? How did you handle it?

2. Which of the “4 Principles to Remember” were most helpful to you? Why?

3. Read 1 Peter 2:19-25, James 1:2-4, and Romans 5:1-5. Discuss the theme that emerges from these passages as it relates to today’s message and your life.

4. In what specific way could you put into practice one of the “4 Principles” you learned today?