

The welcome verse for this week is Psalm 59:16: “I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.”



Over / It
Philippians 4:4-13; 1 Thessalonians
5:16-18

The Bottom Line: Suffer like you know God is with you.

Introduction:

Every time we step out the door, we find ourselves in a society ridden with brokenness, pain, and deep grief.

Often, these realities are evident within the scope of our own experience. Our faith does not leave us untouched by the ache of affliction.

Some days, we just don't know how we will ever get over it. Agony that is greater than usual can lead us to feel defeated.

Tension:

You know that person...perhaps you are “that person.”

Always in distress. Forever the victim. Maybe a little sour toward good people.

Every day, Christians subdue themselves to their own external circumstances, eventually leaving the faith altogether.

Truth:

We may not always be able to control what happens to us, but we can control how we undergo and perceive the things that happen to us.

Defeated Christians are deceived Christians. Feelings of defeat often show as mind over matter.

For Clarity: This is not “good vibes only” or “positive thinking” theology. God's calling is *not* for us to ignore our grief as though it does not exist.

Instead, the biblical understanding of how to endure affliction is simple – *Suffer like you know God is with you.*

If Apostle Paul were ever to give a TED Talk, it would likely be “how to suffer like you know God is with you.” Let’s read **Philippians 4:4-13**.

How do we suffer like we know God is with us? Paul, a man of much suffering, offers us some practical wisdom for how to get over it.

1. Choose joy.

2. Persist in prayer.

3. Give thanks.

Application & Conclusion:

Paul reminds his readers to put these things into practice, as they stand tried and true in his own life. Paul’s careful adherence to these disciplines has helped him to remember that, though his suffering was very real, he could remain victorious and come out on top. This is why Paul can confidently say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*

~ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Discussion questions for group this week:

1. What does this teach me about God?

2. What does this teach me about me?

3. How do I apply this to my life?

4. If I could ask a question about this it would be....