

Sermon: **Joy When Our Heart Hurts (Romans 5:1-5)**

Date: **March 12, 2017**

The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit begins the moment God saves us. God comes into our lives and begins to chisel away at us in order to make us more like Jesus Christ. His sanctifying work in us will continue for the rest of our lives until we meet our Saviour face-to-face. Mature Christians understand that the process of sanctification can be painful at times. God often uses heartache to increase our faith and accomplish his good purposes in our lives. In this week's text, Paul calls us to rejoice in our sufferings. Why? Because we know that our suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame. For the Christian, suffering must never be interpreted as God's condemnation upon us. Rather, God has a redemptive purpose for our suffering. He uses it to mature us. We are able to count suffering as joy because we know that God is using it to make us more like Jesus.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

### **Individual Bible Study**

1. Please read Romans 5:1-5 and ensure that you have listened to the sermon.
  - a. Pastor Aaron describes two kinds of Christians: the God-user and the God-follower. Please explain what he means by each of these terms.
  - b. Are you more of a God-user or a God-follower? Why?
  - c. In verses 1-2, Paul lists several results of our justification by faith. What are they?
  - d. Paul begins verse 3 with the phrase, "More than that." In doing so, he emphasizes what he is about to say in the rest of the verse. Why do you think he does this?
  - e. Read verses 3-5 and write out the sequence of events that leads to spiritual maturity.
  - f. Read James 1:2-4. What does it teach us about suffering? How is it similar to Romans 5:1-5?
  - g. What are some examples of trials that we face that are external to us (i.e. outside of our control)? What are some examples of trials that we face that come from within (i.e. we are the cause of the trials)?

- h. According to verse 3, how should we respond to our sufferings? As Christians, why are we able to respond in this way?
- i. How does God use suffering to mature our faith? Can you think of times in your own life where God used suffering to mature your walk with Christ?
- j. Pastor Aaron suggests that we can use joy as a gauge for our spiritual maturity. Explain what he means by this. How is joy an expression of faith?
- k. What are some other scriptures that you have turned to for encouragement in the midst of suffering?

**Group Discussion Questions**

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. Describe the differences between a “God-user” and a “God-follower.” How does each one approach suffering?
3. How does God use suffering to make us more like Jesus? How has God used suffering or trials in your life to teach you and produce spiritual maturity?
4. How is joy an expression of faith? How can we use joy to gauge our spiritual maturity?
5. In the midst of suffering, how can we fight for joy? What can we do to encourage, care for, and help others fight for joy in the midst of their suffering?