**Suffering and the Means of Grace**

**The Word**

Read together Romans 5:1-5

**The Big Idea**

God has given us every good thing we need for life through the gospel: we are forgiven, transformed, and adopted. He even uses suffering to draw us closer to himself and to transform us into greater Christ-likeness. So as we go through suffering, we can wait on him and gaze on his glory, and he will transform us through the process.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. We explored some of the great gospel truths at the beginning of Sunday’s message from Romans 5:1-2 and spent some time in silent reflection on them (see Point I below). Which of those truths struck you most on Sunday? Was there one that stood out or that you most needed to be reminded of?

2. When we come across trials and suffering, we are tempted to three responses to try to solve our problem: compromise/manipulation, worry, and despair. What is your most common default response, and what does that look like specifically for you?

3. Consider the encouragement offered on Sunday regarding how to navigate suffering: to wait on God and seek his glory, and to allow him to transform your character as you gaze on him. Describe a time in your life when God led you through that very process.

4. As you consider your current trials and challenges, how are you feeling called to respond in light of Sunday’s message?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Great gospel truths (v. 1-2)

 A. Justified: God wipes away all our sins and declares us forever not guilty

 B. Regenerated: God sends his Holy Spirit to give us new hearts with new affections

 C. Adopted: We are adopted into the family of the Trinity (a very happy family)

D. “Peace” (v. 1) = the flourishing existence that comes from having these great privileges

E. “Access to grace” (v. 2) = having access to the throne of the king

F. Our lives our hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:1-3) and we are now seated in the heavenly realms with Christ (Ep 2: 4-6)

II. Suffering (v. 3-5)

 A. There are goods we seek in live and we develop attachments to those goods.

 B. Suffering comes in like a cloud preventing us from seeing or attaining those goods

1. Suffering causes us to pause and ask the question: “is this really a good good that I am seeking? Or is this something my heart is too attached to?”

2. Suffering can show us what our treasures are. Suffering provides an opportunity to examine our hearts and what they’re attached to.

C. When suffering comes our first step is usually to problem solve (which can be good), but at some point, we may come to the end of our own resources, and then we have a decision about what to do next:

 1. Compromise to get what we want (manipulate, disobey)

 2. Worry

 3. Despair

 D. Paul’s encouragement in suffering

1. Endurance (v. 3)

= watching and waiting for God and experiencing communion with him in suffering. It’s about gazing on his “glory” (2 Cor 3: 18, 2 Cor 4:6, 1 Cor 13:12). Trials help us come face to face with God

2. Character (v. 4)

= As we gaze on Jesus’ glory, we begin to change and become more like that on which we are gazing (see again 2 Cor 3:18)

= the fruit of the Spirit playing out in our lves

 3. Hope (v. 5)

= As we become more like Jesus through suffering, that confirms our justification, regeneration, and adoption which then fills us with greater hope

III. Conclusion

As you go through suffering, gaze on Jesus, wait on him, and let him transform your character