

ULC Sermon Study Resource
As We Wait // Waiting for Renewal
Pastor Marcus
January 1, 2023

Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: Have you made any new year's resolutions? What are they?

Readings: Isaiah 63:7-14

Outline:

- I. God's Goodness
 - a. "... It was not an angel or a man whom you sent to me, miserable sinner, but you yourself were moved by your tender goodness." -Symeon the New Theologian
 - b. When it feels like we are being dragged down by sin and suffering, and that God is far off, it is time to recount the goodness of God. We must remember the mercy He reveals again and again!
Q: *What circumstances make it difficult for us to focus on the Goodness of God? How do we overcome this?*
- II. Our Suffering
 - a. In the face of sin and suffering, our God draws near. He entered into the brokenness of this world for us. God's response to suffering is to make our afflictions his.
 - b. "Hence while it is still true that suffering means being cut off from God, yet within the fellowship of Christ's suffering, suffering is overcome by suffering, and becomes the way to communion with God." -Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Q: *Why is it hard for us to feel close with God during times of suffering?*
- III. Judgment and Renewal
 - a. God's preferred M.O. is the Exodus, not the exile.
 - b. God judges and hates anything that spoils or distorts his image-bearing creatures. His judgment comes from a desire to renew his creation.
 - c. By faith, through the work of His word, even in the midst of suffering, God in his goodness is renewing us.
Q: *How can we learn to recognize God's judgment as an act of love?*

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) How can choosing to focus on God's goodness allow us to feel closer to him?
- 2) How is God's love reflected in his response to suffering?
- 3) How can we feel close to God in our suffering by recognizing that He takes on our afflictions?
- 4) In what ways are you seeing God renewing you in your life?

Suggestions for further study:

- Genesis 6:5-6 **Q: *How is God's goodness demonstrated through his grief of the sin of the world?***
- 1 Timothy 2:3-4 **Q: *How do we see God's love in his desire for all to be saved?***

Closing Prayer:

Father God, you desire our salvation, our renewal. Your will is that we would be saved. We ask that you would soften us so that we may remember your goodness and mercy, and that we would be renewed by your work in our lives. Draw us back to your love so that we may carry this renewal to the places that you have called us. Amen.