

ULC Sermon Study Resource
Sojourn // The Path of Suffering
Pastor Gabe
March 19, 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: If you could try any food, what would it be?

Reading: 1 Peter 3:8-22

Outline:

- I. Love the church (v.8).
 - A. Peter says we should all have the same disposition of sympathy towards each other as part of the church. We should care about what each of us is going through.
 - B. The sort of community that Peter is inviting us into in the church is a thick community borne out of a common love. A common love of Jesus and the work of the gospel.
Q: Is it ever hard for you to love the church? If so, why is that?
- II. Love your enemies (v. 9-14)
 - A. Enemy love is unique to Jesus, and Jesus's command to love your enemies was the most popular verse of the early church. The blessing in loving your enemies is not that they'll see the error of their ways and be nice, the blessing is that we are united to Christ in his suffering love for us.
 - B. Peter goes on to say that if we are zealous for what is good, we will be sort of "indestructible". No matter the earthly standards we may fail to meet (like deadlines at our jobs, etc.), we are instead pursuing a greater work.
Q: When have you best loved an enemy?
- III. Look to the cross (v. 15-22)
 - A. "Bless those who curse you. When reviled, do not revile in return. And don't be afraid. Take courage. Keep your hope in Christ. Continue to be gentle and respectful to others as you share that hope. Keep doing good to others. God sees. God is with you. Suffer well." -Gabe
 - B. When we're tempted to not suffer well and love our enemies, we are called to look to Jesus's suffering on the cross and see that he loved his enemies so much that he died for them. At one time we were an enemy of God, but through the cross we've been brought near to God.
Q: How do you remind yourself to look to the cross in your daily life?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) How can we help new members of a "thick" community like the church feel welcomed and integrated?
- 2) What is the hardest part about loving our enemies?
- 3) How do we still balance our earthly responsibilities while being zealous for what is good?
- 4) How can we suffer well like Jesus did when we are not perfect like Jesus is?

Suggestions for further study:

- 1 Samuel 24:16-21 Q: How does this passage give a powerful image for loving our enemies?
- Romans 12:10 Q: How does the last part of this verse add nuance to loving the church?

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for sending your Son to show us what truly loving our enemies looks like. Teach us to love your church, to love our enemies, and to always look to the cross in times of suffering. Continue to strengthen us and to protect our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world. Amen.