

Closer Week 4

“The Hurt Before the Healing”

Message Recap

I. Purpose in the Pain

In Joshua 5, we see the Israelites poised to take the promised land after decades of waiting to see the promise fulfilled. But on the eve of what should have been the grand entrance, God stops them and tells Joshua to circumcise every military-aged male. Not only did this delay the people from entering the promised land, but it also left them vulnerable to attack. God had a purpose, though, in the pain that Israel was experiencing.

II. Before the Victory

So often, God chooses to trim things from our lives in order to ready us for the next season. Just as He did so physically with the Israelites, He will trim things in our lives so that we rely on Him, not our own strength or wisdom. God is not the author of our hurt, but He will always use the pain we walk through to further His Kingdom. Without pain, there is no healing. But with that pain, He becomes our Healer. As we endure pain and wait on Him, He teaches us to trust Him no matter what. This trust helps us walk into the next season confident and ready to receive.

III. The Joy of Suffering

Many times we associate following Jesus with happiness and with that, a lack of pain and struggle. But the Bible tells us over and over in the New Testament that pain and suffering actually bring us closer to Christ. When we encounter pain, we can identify with Jesus and other Christians that are suffering for the Gospel and even find joy in the middle of it. God doesn't cause the pain, but He never wastes anything that we go through, and He will turn it into good.

Read and Discuss

Read Joshua 5:1-12

1. What lessons did Israel learn through their pain?
2. How has God turned pain into a growing experience in your own life?

Read Zechariah 4:6 and 1 Peter 1:6-7

1. How does pain teach us to trust in God more?
2. How can we benefit from suffering trials in our lives?

Joshua 5:1-12

Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they^[a] had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.

Circumcision and Passover at Gilgal

2 At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again." 3 So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth.^[b]

4 Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt. 5 All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not. 6 The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the Lord. For the Lord had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. 7 So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. 8 And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed.

9 Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the place has been called Gilgal^[c] to this day.

10 On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. 11 The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. 12 The manna stopped the day after^[d] they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.

Zechariah 4:6

6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.

1 Peter 1:6-7

6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.