

Series: Hope, Suffering & Redemption (Week 1)

Date: October 23, 2025

Presenter: Pastor Donell M. Winder

Lesson Title: Why We Suffer: Divine Testing and Unseen Sovereignty

Anchor Scripture: Job 23:10–11 (NLT) – “But he knows where I am going. And when he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold. For I have stayed on God’s paths; I have followed his ways and not turned aside.”

Big Idea

Suffering is not punishment; it is preparation. God uses seasons of pain and divine testing to refine our faith, deepen our dependence, and reveal His sovereignty in ways comfort never could. Through hardship, He is not trying to break us but to build endurance within us. Every trial carries divine purpose, and as we endure with faith, we discover that God is both present in our pain and purposeful in our process.

Key Insights

- **Some Suffering Refines Us:** God uses the fire of adversity to purify faith and strengthen endurance. Trials reveal what is genuine and produce spiritual maturity through perseverance and trust. Like gold in the furnace, believers emerge stronger and purer through the refining fire (1 Peter 1:6–7; James 1:2–4; Romans 5:3–4).
- **Some Suffering Corrects Us:** When we drift from God’s will, He lovingly allows discomfort to realign our hearts and restore obedience. Correction is not rejection but restoration. The Lord disciplines those He loves to draw them closer to His purpose (Hebrews 12:5–6; Psalm 119:67; Jonah 1:1–17).
- **Some Suffering Reminds Us:** Not all pain is punishment. Some suffering simply reminds us that this world is broken and temporary. These moments draw our focus back to eternal hope and dependence on Christ, teaching us to anchor our faith in His promises rather than our comfort (Romans 8:20–22; John 16:33; 2 Corinthians 4:8–9).
- **All Suffering Reveals Christ:** Every hardship is an opportunity for Christ to be seen through us. When we respond in faith, His strength shines through our weakness, His peace sustains our hearts, and His grace transforms pain into testimony. Suffering becomes a stage where His glory is revealed (Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 12:9–10; 1 Peter 2:21).
- **Pain Has Purpose:** Every trial in the life of a believer carries divine intent. God uses suffering to develop character, increase faith, and reveal Himself as Redeemer. When we can’t trace His hand, we can still trust His heart, knowing that He works all things together for our good (Isaiah 48:10; Job 23:10; Romans 8:28).

Application

1. See suffering not as punishment, but as preparation for greater purpose.
2. Allow God to use pain as a refining fire to strengthen endurance and purify faith.
3. Embrace correction as a sign of God’s love and His commitment to your growth.
4. Remember that every trial is temporary, but its lessons are eternal.
5. Reflect Christ in how you respond to suffering, revealing His glory through faith and perseverance.

Closing Thought

Suffering will either make us bitter or better, and the difference lies in how we trust God through it. Every test refines, corrects, reminds, or reveals — and all of it draws us closer to Christ. Pain is never wasted when placed in the hands of a purposeful God. Like Job, we can declare with confidence, “He knows where I am,” trusting that the same fire that tests us is the fire that transforms us. In every season of suffering, God’s sovereignty is still working, His grace is still sufficient, and His glory is still being revealed.