

EXILES

"Don't Be Surprised"

Sermon Recap

Drawing from 1 Peter 4:12–19, Pastor DJ Patrick reminds us not to be surprised by "fiery trials" as if something strange were happening to us. Instead of expecting a life free of hardship, believers are called to understand that suffering for Christ is a purifying process God uses to shape us into His image. Just as a coach reviews film to prepare a team for battle, Scripture prepares us to expect challenges when we surrender every area of our lives to Jesus.

The sermon addresses three key questions regarding hardship: why God allows suffering, whether we should be suffering, and why we might be experiencing personal pain. Referencing the story of Joseph in Genesis 50:20, Pastor DJ emphasizes that God uses pain to work *in* us rather than merely allowing things *to* us, inviting us to zoom out and see the bigger picture of His redemptive purpose. Furthermore, we must distinguish between suffering for righteousness—which brings the blessing of the Holy Spirit—and suffering brought on by poor choices or sin, urging a regular self-inventory and repentance where necessary. Ultimately, we are challenged to move out of our spiritual comfort zones, embrace our identity as exiles on mission, and trust faithfully in the God who will never fail us.

Suffering is not something done to you, but a work that God's doing in you.

Discussion Questions

Why Shouldn't We Be Surprised by Fiery Trials?

In 1 Peter 4:12, the Apostle Peter warns believers not to be surprised by fiery trials as if something strange were happening. Pastor DJ Patrick explained that when we give every area of our lives to Jesus, suffering and tribulations should be expected rather than viewed as a shock. How does viewing hardship as a normal part of following Christ change your perspective when you face difficult seasons?

Suffering Done to Us vs. Work Done in Us

The sermon emphasized that suffering for Christ is not merely something done to us, but a purifying experience God uses to shape us into the image of Jesus. Drawing on the story of Joseph in Genesis 50:20, where God intended betrayal and pain for good, we see the importance of zooming out to catch God's bigger picture. What is the difference between feeling punished by God and trusting Him as the Creator shaping you through a trial?

Evaluating the Source of Our Suffering

First Peter 4:15-16 distinguishes between suffering for bearing the name of Christ and suffering as a consequence of our own sin, foolish choices, or meddling. Pastor DJ encouraged a personal self-inventory to evaluate why we might be experiencing pain in certain areas. How can you honestly discern whether a current hardship stems from faithful obedience to Jesus or from chasing after things that do not matter?

Moving Out of the Comfort Zone

Pastor DJ noted that one of the most dangerous places for a Christian is the comfort zone, where spiritual life can easily devolve into an unchallenging routine. Reflecting on Jesus' words in John 16:33 about having peace amidst trials, the message challenges us to live actively on mission for others. In what specific areas is God asking you to step out of your comfort zone, embrace minor inconveniences, and share the hope of Christ with your 'one more'?

Prayer 🙏

- May we embrace fiery trials not with surprise, but as a purifying process that shapes us into the image of Jesus.
- May we examine our hearts with honesty, rejoicing when we suffer for Christ while repenting of the pain caused by our own poor choices.
- May we zoom out from our immediate discomfort like Joseph, trusting that God is actively working in us and will use every trial for good.
- May we step boldly out of our comfort zones to live on mission, unashamedly bearing the name of Christ and inviting others to experience His grace.