

ROMANS
Lesson 251–January 24, 2016

Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
a Christian Church
Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...a Christian Church based in Mesa, AZ...my name is Pastor Rory Clark. Barah Ministries has a worldwide reach and an intimate impact on lives, through the gracious provision of our omnipotent God, the Lord Jesus Christ. One of His many blessings is the internet, and through it, anyone with access can be reached with His Word.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON
Suffering is the Gauntlet of Your Life

We begin today's study at Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 18...

ROM 8:18

For I (Paul) know for a fact that the sufferings of this present time (both RIGHT NOW, and throughout the Church Age...this present evil age) are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed IN us believers in Christ (IN THE FUTURE).

This week, my mind drifted to reflection on the things we have been learning recently about suffering. That's usually the sign that God the Holy Spirit is telling me to wrap up a subject, and to move on to the next. It occurred to me that we could rest on the subject of suffering for a year if we wanted to, because all of us are intensely interested in a subject we experience regularly...we suffer so often. In fact, our desire to learn about suffering is almost morbid. Yet we are not focused on the study of suffering, we are focused on a study of the eighth chapter of the Paul's letter to the Romans. So move on we must.

As we close out the subject of suffering, for now, I asked myself, "What did we learn about suffering THIS TIME?" It's actually hard to study the bible without getting a perspective on suffering because it is such a natural part of our lives.

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We learned many things...among them that our wires are crossed about the subject of suffering. We think of suffering as abnormal...and we think of the absence of suffering as normal. We long for the days when we aren't suffering. If our wires weren't crossed like that, we'd KNOW that suffering is a normal, valuable and regular part of our lives...and that the absence of suffering is a break before the next bout of suffering. The absence of suffering is like a day off from working out. It's a brief rest, but we know that if we want to grow in this life, we must go back into the "spiritual gym" to suffer more. When our wires are uncrossed, we know that God allows suffering for our benefit. First Peter, Chapter 5, Verse 10...

1PE 5:10

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in union with Christ Jesus, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

And as it says in Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 28...

ROM 8:28

And we believers in Christ know with absolute certainty that God the Father keeps on causing all things to work together for good to those who love God the Father, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Those who love God the Father are His believers. And believers love God the Father because He gave God the Holy Spirit, who IS love, to reside in us. There is nothing inherent in mankind would want to love God. The indwelling God, the Holy Spirit, puts the love of God in us.

Those who are called according to God's purpose are all members of the human race...in fact all angelic creatures as well...whosoever...all creatures are invited to the privilege of a free of charge, "so great" salvation...yet only believers have responded to the call...the invitation to believe. Our response to the invitation indicates no merit, no deservedness, and no work on our part...it simply requests acceptance of a gracious gift from a God who loves all of His creatures unconditionally.

So what do we learn about suffering? We know that suffering is a GAUNTLET of this life. What is a gauntlet?

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GAUNTLET

A column of enemy forces, formed with two lines of personnel, which we walk between. The enemy strikes us multiple times and multiple ways from the two sides as we pass. The experiences often devastate us. Yet God causes us to be edified by the experiences so that we can keep on enduring other experiences in the future.

What suffering have you experienced as you pass through your very own personal gauntlet?

What have you learned from these experiences of suffering?

I have learned... I CAN TAKE SUFFERING because of the power of God indwelling me. Second Peter, Chapter 1, Verses 2 and 3...

2PE 1:2

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God the Father and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord...

2PE 1:3

...seeing that The Lord's divine power has granted to us believers in Christ everything pertaining to (the details of this) life and has granted us everything pertaining to godliness (The Christian Way of Living), through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

God allows suffering because it tears down our thoughts of self-sufficiency, and teaches us to count on God instead of counting on ourselves. James, Chapter 1, Verses 2 to 4...

JAM 1:2

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials...

JAM 1:3

...knowing that the testing of your faith (through suffering) produces endurance.

JAM 1:4

And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

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The suffering we experience in our very own personal gauntlet prepares us to be able to handle anything life throws at us...and God knows it. In fact, suffering is a gift from God.

SUFFERING IS A GIFT FROM GOD

“Some of us will not see the pain of suffering as a gift...some will accuse God of being unfair for allowing it...but, the fact is, pain and suffering is a part of our lives, and we need to learn how to respond to it.”

On one side of the personal gauntlet of our lives is “the flesh” ... on the other side of the personal gauntlet of our lives is “the world” ... and Satan and his demon army are inflicting our experience of suffering.

Welcome to a place where you can learn to enjoy your personal gauntlet.

MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

HOW DEEP THE FATHER’S LOVE FOR US

Phillips, Craig and Dean

As we prepare our souls for worship, let’s enjoy the opening song... **HOW DEEP THE FATHER’S LOVE FOR US**...sung by Phillips, Craig and Dean.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We’re grateful, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Thank you for the hardships, Father...thank you also for the wisdom You provide to us through Your Word...thank you for the power of God the Holy Spirit, our Mentor and our Teacher who helps us to take advantage of the wisdom You provide, helping us to use it to make decisions in the midst of the dichotomies of this life...thank you for helping us to recognize Satan’s insidious attempts to derail us from happiness and to influence us with the thoughts that You are unfair because You allow suffering to be part of our lives...

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Help us to know the times when we generate our own misery...intensify our hunger for a deep, intimate and personal relationship with You...help us to crave Your Word more than we crave every breath...help the eyes of our souls to see the traps being laid for us and help us to see the escape plan you have put in place to help us endure these momentary and light tribulations... grant us calm in the midst of the storms of this life...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit in Christ's name...
Amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON
Suffering is the Gauntlet of Your Life

My daughter Alyssa is a freshman in college. She is suffering, just as all college students suffer, without suspecting it. As I reflected on what I have learned THIS TIME in the study of suffering, I realized that I did not prepare her adequately for the suffering she was about to experience in college. It's really the bane of a parent's existence when they make this kind of tactical error when raising their children. The expression "the bane of our existence" refers to a big annoyance or a distress in our lives...something that prevents us from enjoying life, turning our focus instead to worry and misery. As parents we worry when we know our children are suffering. We wish we could prepare them adequately for it. I'll tell you of my failure after a few announcements.

BARAH MINISTRIES ANNOUNCEMENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
The Next Lord's Supper Celebration
February 14, 2016

Valentine's Day!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
No Face-to Face Teaching
March 6, 2016

Lessons will be posted.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Meredith DeSmet

January 22

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Jackson DeSmet

January 24

PRAYERS

Barah Ministries Prayer Request Group

Join me in prayer directed at all the intercessions and all the petitions of the people visiting the Barah Ministries Prayer Request Group.

Patti Dare of the UK is a friend of this ministry, and a friend of this Pastor, and her husband Simon went home to be with the Lord this week. Our prayers to Patti's family...including her children...Harriett, Freddie and George.

DEACON'S MEETING

January 30

7:30A-9:00A

DOWNLOAD THE BARAH MINISTRIES APP

Take the Word of God with You
Wherever You Go

It's available at Google Play, at the Windows Apps Store, or at the iTunes Store. It's also downloadable from the Barah Ministries website. Tell your friends about the APP. It's never been easier to have the Word of God at your disposal all the time. Thanks to Brian Davis for making the APP possible for another year.

BARAH MINISTRIES IS BACK ON THE RADIO

Thanks!

LARRY COLLINS

We're on at a new time...Sunday at noon...right before Through the Bible

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with J. Vernon McGee...a great timeslot. Thanks to Jacob Barker, the station owner for helping us find an economical way to get back on the radio.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

Suffering is the Gauntlet of Your Life

God did not give me the privilege of fathering my daughter Alyssa from birth. The Lord brought her into my life in her sixteenth year, and He said, "Rory, you take the fathering from here." It was apparent to me pretty quickly that she had not had much meaningful male influence in her life... no criticism intended...it's just that it was obvious she didn't really know how to respond to the kind of love a male parent has to offer...and if the truth be known, her mom wasn't very used to it either. ☺

No matter. I pressed on. To tell the truth, I didn't know much about parenting a daughter. Friends who have daughters have always told me how different it is. Now it was my turn to experience it. And indeed it is different.

Because I didn't have her from the beginning I did not have the years it takes to inculcate a mindset of toughness into her...a mindset of "ghetto" ... a mindset of constant awareness...a mindset of constant preparedness. In short, I didn't have the time to make her as paranoid as I am. ☺ Her mom got some of this toughness into her. Yet moms are moms, and there is a different way dads prepare daughters. When I came into Alyssa's life, she, like other teens, had a fixed and erroneous view of how life would treat her in the future. I wanted to change that view, but fixed is fixed...and she had a cafeteria approach to my advice...she would pick and choose the advice that was convenient for her to follow.

As I mentioned earlier, I did not prepare Alyssa adequately for the suffering she was about to experience in college. If I had prepared her properly I would have taught her about the gauntlet. What is a gauntlet?

GAUNTLET

A column of enemy forces, formed with two lines of personnel, which we walk between. The enemy strikes us multiple times and multiple ways from the two sides as we pass. The experiences often devastate us. Yet God

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causes us to be edified by the experiences so that we can keep on enduring other experiences in the future.

Let's take a short music break and then I'll tell you how I would have prepared Alyssa differently for college.

MUSIC BREAK

INDESCRIBABLE

Chris Tomlin

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

Suffering is the Gauntlet of Your Life

How would I have prepared Alyssa differently for college?

I would have told her God has provided her with a personal gauntlet. On one side of her personal gauntlet is "the flesh." I would have warned her that she was about to experience real freedom for the first time in her life...preparation for the freedom of adulthood...and that she would be battered with suffering as she experienced her freedom. Galatians, Chapter 5, Verse 13...

GAL 5:13

For you were called to freedom, brethren (believers in Christ); only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh...

For virtually every college student, the college experience is the chance to turn freedom into an opportunity for "the flesh." In effect, college students turn themselves over to enemy forces.

I would have told her that on the other side of her personal gauntlet is "the world." I would have told her that she is about to experience four years of living within "the world system" of Satan and his demon army, a system designed to ruin her thinking and to ruin her life at her most vulnerable time...during her youth...during her college years...a time when most people live without mature direction. I would have used Romans, Chapter 12, Verse 2 to advise her...

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ROM 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but keep on being transformed by God through the renewing of your mind (the study of God's word), so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

I would have told her that every right thing she learned at home was about to be turned upside down by “the world,” who would deceive her into believing that parental warnings were wrong and old fashioned, and that all of the things “the world” has to offer are the real things in life.

Well you're probably thinking, “Pastor, you're just being hard on yourself... I'll bet you did get some of those lessons across to Alyssa in the two years she was with you before she went off to college.” And you'd be right...I did. But did they get through her fixed and erroneous view of what the world is really like? Did she let the education in? Probably not! Well maybe I could have told her the truth differently.

If I had told her the truth differently, I would have told her that for young women, either for her, or for her friends, often college is like a horror movie. Young, innocent women are unwittingly walking into a hell on earth, and they have no idea what is about to happen to them. I would have told her she is a lamb about to go to the slaughterhouse. I would have told her that of every five women she meets at college, one of the five will likely be raped during her college years...that is, forced to have sexual intercourse against her will, either violently or otherwise. Rape is not a sex crime. It's a power crime. I believe these statistics are low. I think it is more along the lines of two or three out of five women will be raped while in college. I believe this because many women absolutely will not report it when rape has happened to them. Therefore, the statistics don't tell the real story.

I would have warned her that in the United States, the statistics say a family member has already sexually violated one in three women. I think those stats are low, too. I shudder to think what the stats are in the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, this form of suffering...this gauntlet...is not something that anyone wants to talk about, especially the women who have experienced it. Here is a typical comment from women who have been raped. When a

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college student was asked if she told her parents about the experience said, one young lady said, “No.” When asked why not, she said, “I don’t want my parents to look at me differently...and they will.” Perhaps that is true, but also it is part of the problem. The truth concerning this form of suffering seldom comes out, often because no one wants to talk about it OR to hear about it.

Worse, I would have told Alyssa that if she was the one in five, and if she went to her university to tell them about it, they would likely blame her for getting raped. “Did you wear a short skirt...did you come on to him...did you have a drink? Don’t you think your conduct was questionable?” In other words, if you dress provocatively, if you express interest in a young man, if you drink, if you are anything but perfect...you have asked to be violated criminally and forced to do something you don’t want to do. In other words, college administrators often promote a “you deserve it” culture. You see, neither Harvard University nor Dallas Christian College want a story in the news that a rape occurred on their campus. True stories like this hurt revenue and decrease enrollment.

I would have warned Alyssa that her university cares much more about protecting its “brand” than about protecting her, a truth that is more unfair than the violation itself. But then, that’s “the world” ... and that’s “the flesh.” They lure us into their brand of fun, and then leave us devastated in the gutter...and we pay the bill.

The Lord Jesus Christ is not a fan of this kind of suffering. In Matthew, Chapter 18, Verse 6, the Lord says...

MAT 18:6

...but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

God doesn’t let anyone get away with anything. For women who have been raped, God handles the perpetrators when “the world” won’t. If this has happened to you, there is no need for you to carry around the torture of this scar or the scar of any other kind of suffering. By the way, as quiet as it is kept, perhaps even quieter, college men get raped, too.

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Even if the world did treat you fairly when you have been violated, the scar doesn't heal easily or soon.

For the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, at the end of the gauntlet of this and every other form of suffering is “the glory that is to come.” After suffering, we appreciate the glory that is to come. In God's plan, our future is always “much more” wonderful than our present. We can sing the song with pleasure ... “The Best is Yet to Come!”

Suffering is a pebble...glory is a mountain. Suffering is momentary and light...glory is eternal...but we have glory now. Jesus Christ as the Shekinah Glory resides in each of us believers. In the Old Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Shekinah glory lived in the Holy of holies...and His glory filled the tabernacle. Now His Shekinah Glory lives inside of each one of us. Suffering is insignificant...glory is amazing and forever and beyond our wildest dreams.

God reverses our crossed wires...in this world suffering...in the next world glory. God is on our side.

The path to glory in this world includes suffering...God causes us to endure...we get through suffering by looking to the future...by remembering the promises of God...and by looking ahead to the glory that is to come. We realize that suffering the gauntlet makes us tougher, if we let it.

Suffering is our desert...a desert like the one the Jews endured after the Red Sea...we live in a spiritual wilderness called “the world.” Yet God guarantees what He is willing to do for us. He put our gift of glory aside in the past, as an established and irrevocable fact. It is simply waiting for the right time to be conveyed in a way we can see it. Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 18...

ROM 8:18

For I (Paul) know for a fact that the sufferings of this present time (both RIGHT NOW, and throughout the Church Age...this present evil age) are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed IN us believers in Christ (IN THE FUTURE).

God's blessings are abundant to those of us who care about constantly

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exposing ourselves to the truth.

A final note to women...many of you have been hurt by insensitive louts...and many of you carry that hurt around for decades...and many of you attribute the hurt to men, instead of attributing it to a few insensitive louts. Don't let the world fool you. A huge percentage of the men in this world aren't out to hurt women. Don't let yourself hold on to past hurts...and don't let yourself be deceived into thinking that no man will treat you well. There are many men who want to treat you well, and you only need one. By the way, treat them well back when they show up. Don't put them through a ringer of tests.

Most of all remember that God is always on your side, and he doesn't let anyone get away with anything.

**When the Lord Jesus Christ
Promises Salvation, It's a Guarantee!**

ACT 16:31

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes."

ACT 4:12

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given to mankind by which we must be saved (except the name of the Lord Jesus Christ)."

LUK 19:10

"For the Son of Man (the Lord Jesus Christ) has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

1TI 2:9

...the Lord has saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and through the grace which was granted to us in union with Christ Jesus from all eternity...

CLOSING SONG

HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

June Murphy

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CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

THANKS - INTERCESSION - PETITION

And we pray You protect our steps as we go out into the world, Father...and that you keep us on the narrow way, completely dependent on You and Your Guiding, Mentoring Spirit...we ask this in Christ's name, Amen.

Thanks for coming!
Thanks for watching!
Thanks for listening!

www.barahministries.com