

Crazy Joy (Part 2): Joy in Light of Suffering?!

Introduction

The Text

- A. I've read to you [Acts 5:17-42](#) in sermons twice before now. So for the sake of time, I'm not going to read all of it again.
1. We're just going to jump straight to the end there with [vv. 40-42](#). It's [v. 41](#), in particular, that shall be my focus for this morning.
- B. Remember, the apostles have been out preaching the good news of Jesus and they're being persecuted for it by the Jewish leaders there in Jerusalem. And here's what we read: "⁴⁰ [A]nd when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ Then they [the apostles] left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴² And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus" (Acts 5:40–42).

Crazy Joy (Part 2)

- A. Now, if you were here last week, you know that this is part 2 of these sermons I'm titling "Crazy Joy."
1. We're talking about "joy", because that's what these apostles have here: "they left the presence of the council, rejoicing . . ." (v. 41).
 2. We're talking about "crazy" joy, because they have this joy even in the midst of horrendous suffering and trial.
 - a. They were beaten, scourged, most likely with the infamous Jewish 39 lashes. This was no slap on the wrist. Such a thing had been known to kill a man.
 - b. And yet, after such harsh dealings, even still they went on their way rejoicing!
 - i. That's not just joy. That's crazy joy.
- B. And I daresay it's a crazy joy that you and I want.
1. It's a joy that can't be taken from us. It's a joy that lasts. It's a joy that doesn't go up and down with circumstance like ours so often does. It's steady and stable come what may. It's crazy.
 - a. And I want it. And I want you to have it. So how do we get it?
- C. I told you last time that I was going to attempt an answer at this question by considering this crazy joy in relation to suffering in particular.

1. So last week we looked at how and why, in Jesus, we can have joy in spite of suffering. And I gave you two reasons: (1) Because God Is Still in Control; and (2) Because God Is Still Up to Good.

In Light of Suffering?!

A. But now today things are going to get even crazier.

1. Because now, as I said, we're going to look at not just how and why, in Jesus, we can have joy in spite of suffering. No.
2. Now we're going to consider how and why, in Jesus, we can have joy in light of suffering.
 - a. In other words, these apostles here, if you noticed, they're not just rejoicing even though they're going through a hard time (that would be crazy enough);
 - b. if you look carefully, you realize: they're actually rejoicing because they're going through a hard time (now that seems almost certifiably insane!).

B. Look at [v. 41](#) again. Let me make sure you see this. [“Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing](#) [not: ‘even though . . .’ they were suffering; not: ‘in spite of the fact that . . .’ they were suffering; but:] [that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.”](#)

1. In the Greek, it's the word [hoti](#). It is very often used as a marker of causality. They were rejoicing . . . that, for, since, because . . . they were suffering in this way.
 - a. And, again, I want to ask: How and why?! What makes such a thing possible?! Because if we want that kind of crazy joy, we have to know where it comes from.

C. So, now, this morning I have four reasons for us as to how and why we can rejoice even in light of suffering: (1) Because God Is Refining Us Further (Purity); (2) Because God Is Inviting Us in Deeper (Intimacy); (3) Because God Is Preparing for Us Something Greater (Capacity); (4) Because God Wants to Use Us to Reach Others (Opportunity).

1. I'm going to largely go outside of [Acts 5](#) for this now, but hopefully you still find it helpful.

D. Before I get going on these, as I said last time, I'm aware that in our text the suffering immediately in view is that of persecution for one's association with Jesus. And while I'll deal with that in all that follows I am still going to broaden out the idea of suffering here to include many other forms, because I think the reasons I am about to give you still hold.

1. In other words, I don't think the biblical teaching is that you only have good reason to rejoice in light of your suffering when you're persecuted for your faith.
2. I think it actually says you have good reason to rejoice whatever your suffering may be.
 - a. There may be some in this room who are suffering dishonor for Jesus' name—from your coworkers, or neighbors, or family members, or something like that.
 - b. But for many of us our suffering is probably taking on other forms. Your body is breaking. Your relationships are hard. Your numbers at work aren't on track. Your kids are going through a rough patch. Your bank account is drained.

- E. Listen, to me: whatever it may be, however hard, however horrible, in Jesus, not only can you rejoice in spite of your suffering, you can rejoice in light of it as well? How? Why?

Reason #1: Because God Is Refining Us Further (Purity)

God's Agenda for Your Life

- A. I wonder if you realize, according to the Bible, what God's agenda for your life is. If I were to come up and ask you, what would you say?
1. You might say: "Oh, well I think he wants to bless me." And you wouldn't be wrong.
 - a. After all, the book of Ephesians comes right out of the gate with these words from Paul: "[Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places . . .](#)" (Eph. 1:3). You say: "That's a lot of blessing." It is.
 - i. But what does Paul mean by the term? What do you mean by the term?
- B. Typically, I think, when we say that God wants to bless us we tend to see it all through a worldly lens. We imagine it means that he will make my life easier here and now. He'll change my circumstances. Stuff will just start to click: I'll get that job, I'll find that spouse, he'll heal me of my illness—he'll bless me.
1. Often we take blessing to be the very opposite of suffering. If I'm suffering, he's not blessing. And if he's blessing, I'm not suffering.
- C. But that's not God's definition of blessing because God's agenda for your life isn't to just make things go smoother for you in the present. No. He's got higher purposes, greater goals.
1. God's agenda for your life, before anything else, isn't to change your circumstances here and now . . . it's to change you. That's how he intends to truly bless you!
 - a. You're born again; your heart of stone is made a heart of flesh;
 - b. you're transformed from the inside out;
 - c. you're renewed in the image of your Creator through Christ, from one degree of glory to the next;
 - d. you're less tripped up by sin and the flesh and the entanglements of idolatry;
 - e. you're more surrendered to the Spirit and more fruitful;
 - f. you're more loving, more patient, more peaceful, more wise.
 2. That's why Paul comes out later, after all this discussion of blessing, and, in [Eph. 2:10](#), he says: "[\[W\]e are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works . . .](#)"

- a. We are saved by grace, through faith, not on the basis of our good works, but so we might start to walk good works. Do you see that? In Jesus, we're being re-created, reshaped, renewed, changed.
3. Later, in Eph. 4, he puts an even sharper point on this when he calls the Christians there “²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (vv. 22–24).
- D. Again, God's agenda for your life, before anything else, isn't first to change your circumstances here and now, it's to change you . . . and in and through that comes the blessing!

Turning up the Heat

- A. And here's what we must understand (this is what's critical for our current discussion): one of the primary means by which God exposes what's still off in us and helps us towards transformation and change is . . . suffering.
- 1. He turns up the heat to refine our hearts.
- B. This is what the psalmist is getting at in Ps. 119. It shows up time and again:
- 1. V. 67: “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word.”
 - 2. V. 71: “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.”
 - 3. V. 75: “I know, O LORD, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.”
 - a. In every case, he's saying: “Suffering taught me, suffering changed me, suffering blessed me. You afflict me because you love me. It's how you root sin out of my life. It's a mark of your faithfulness.”
- C. This is precisely what the author of Hebrews is trying to remind the recipients of his letter, who were suffering persecution and all manner of trials and tribulations (cf. Heb. 10:32-34): “⁶ [T]he Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.⁷ . . . God is treating you as sons.¹⁰ . . . [H]e disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Heb. 12:6-7, 10–11).
- 1. I can't tell you how much these verses have meant to me through the years.
 - a. I remember, as a young Christian, I had the whole blessing-is-the-opposite-of-suffering idea. So when suffering came, I was so confused. And scared. I thought it meant God had abandoned me.
 - b. But I came to see, thanks to this text in particular, is that God's not abandoning me, he's “receiving” me—he's strengthening me, refining me, saving me from myself. He's helping me grow. He's helping me stay on the narrow path and not turn to the right or the left.

- i. I'm a dad. If my kid goes running off in the street and I do nothing to correct or discipline—"Oh he's just a boy being a boy, I'd hate to quench that adventurous spirit"—I'm a deadbeat. I'm not loving my son, I'm endangering my son.
 - ii. Love gets in the mix with truth, confronts what's off, what's dangerous, and disciplines so we wake up and learn to stay on the sidewalk.
- 2. I'm particularly fond of that last verse, [Heb. 12:11](#). I remember memorizing it. Because it's so honest. "[For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant . . .](#)"
 - a. He doesn't try to act like this is a happy time. It hurts. It's okay to say that it hurts. Christian joy isn't plastic or cheap or glib. Like I said last week, sometimes our joy is in the minor key. Sometimes it's through tears.
 - i. Suffering stinks. It's not pleasant. It's painful.
 - ii. But we see what God is doing with it—he's like a surgeon with a scalpel, removing the tumor; he's like a metalsmith with a fire, burning away the dross—and so we can find joy in it.
- D. I think this is what James is getting at when he writes at the opening of his letter: "[2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing](#)" (James 1:2–4).
 - 1. It's kind of a strange phrase, isn't it? "[Count it](#) [or 'consider it' or 'regard it as'] [all joy . . .](#)" James wouldn't have to exhort us to such a thing if trials already seemed joyful to us.
 - a. So he has to tell us to count it as such, regard it as such, even though we might not initially receive it or feel it to be so.
- E. So whatever hardship you are facing right now, you can count it as joy, not because it's just awesome and you're thoroughly delighting it in the moment, but because you know what God is doing with it, you know where it's headed.
 - 1. He's a good Dad. And he's loving you. He's changing you. He's blessing you. And, in that, because of that, you can rejoice!

Reason #2: Because God Is Inviting Us in Deeper (Intimacy)

Closed and Open Doors

- A. This second reason is obviously related to the first, but it brings out a different nuance. Here we remember that our suffering and trials are not just about refining us and making us more like Jesus. They're actually meant to drive us deeper into relationship with Jesus.

1. Suffering has this way of exposing our idols—our false gospels and saviors. It knocks the props out from under our lives, and we fall upon him.
 - a. Suffering seen from this angle, then, while in one sense it could be understood as a door closed in our faces, in another sense it's a door opening to deeper fellowship with Christ. It's an invitation to come in closer, to know him at a more intimate level.
- B. I'd imagine something like this is the way most all of us came to Jesus at the very first.
1. I have the privilege of getting to hear many of your stories, your testimonies of how God saved you—and more often than not, it's suffering that brought you to God.
 2. That's how it worked for me. I thought I was awesome. I thought I had my life planned out. I thought I could do what I put my mind to. I was attaching my identity and joy to music and all this. I wanted to be a rockstar. It sounds silly now. But it was true then.
 - a. And so God, in mercy, destroyed me. He took away my voice. I couldn't sing. I couldn't even talk. He took away my arm. It just went numb. I couldn't play guitar.
 - b. And I fell . . . upon Jesus.
- C. But, you know, God doesn't just use suffering to bring us close to him at the start. He uses it time and again to bring us back or take us deeper in.
1. This is what God does with Israel when they keep succumbing to idolatry time and again. He says: “¹⁴ [B]ehold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness [the place of heat and hardship], and speak tenderly to her. ¹⁵ And there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth . . . ¹⁶ And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.' ¹⁷ For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. . . . ¹⁹ And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD” (Hos. 2:14–17, 19-20). “It's in the wilderness that you come to know me like that. It's in the place where I'm all you've got.”
- D. This is what we see God do with Paul in 2 Corinthians, at numerous points actually:
1. So in 2 Cor. 1:8-9, Paul is writing of “the affliction [he] experienced in Asia,” he says: “⁸ [W]e were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.” Why the suffering? Why the trial? To bring us closer to him.
 2. And then later, in 2 Cor. 12, he's talking about this thorn in the flesh that he was given from God—some form of suffering, we don't know precisely what it was. But he begs for it to go. And do you want to know what Jesus comes to him and says? “No.” Why?
 - a. 2 Cor. 12:9a: “But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'” “I'm not going to heal you Paul, not because I can't, not

because I'm mean or vindictive, but because I love you and want you to know more of me—more of my grace and my power.”

- b. So Paul comes out and concludes: “⁹Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (vv. 9b-10).

- i. Paul doesn't use his suffering as a reason to push away from the Lord in bitterness or resentment. No.
- ii. He lets his suffering move him towards the Lord.

E. A lot of times we miss out on this because we're so desperate to fix things, to get out of or avoid suffering. We want to be comfortable . . . now!

1. Maybe you feel like all these doors in your life are closing, they're just slammed in your face. And it hurts.
2. But I can tell you, most assuredly, however many doors may be closing, one door is opening wide—and it's a door to deeper intimacy with Jesus.
 - a. Go through it . . . and I promise you, whatever you may be facing, you'll find fresh reason to rejoice!

Reason #3: Because God Is Preparing for Us Something Greater (Capacity)

Heavenly Reward

A. With this third reason, I'm thinking in particular of the biblical notion of heavenly reward.

1. This is what Jesus is talking to his disciples about in the Sermon on the Mount: “¹¹Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt. 5:11–12).

- a. Your suffering now is, in some way, preparing reward for you in heaven. Therefore, he says, rejoice!

2. This is similar to the point Paul makes later in 2 Cor. 4:16-17, where he writes: “¹⁶[W]e do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”

B. Well, what is this heavenly reward? What is this eternal weight of glory? (I don't have the time to really make a full case for my answer here, so I'll just simply give it to you up front, and hope you trust me with it.)

1. Sometimes I think we imagine this reward to mean we get more riches, more stuff, more power or prominence in the age to come, or something like this.
 2. But I think it's that we get more of him.
- C. This is where all of this has been going so far, right? Suffering makes us more like him, it takes us deeper into our relationship with him, and it prepares us to know even more of him in the new heavens and new earth.
1. This is why Jesus, right before his discussion of heavenly reward says you shall “see God” (Matt. 5:8). It's the beatific vision. It's getting clearer sight of him.
 2. This is why Paul goes on just after his mention of this eternal weight of glory and sums it all up by saying we will be “at home with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). We see him. We're at home with him.
- D. This great reward, this weight of glory, then, it isn't a place or a possession or a position—ultimately, it's a person.
1. And our persecution, our affliction, our suffering now here on earth somehow, it seems, enables us to get more of him in the age to come!

Increasing our Capacity

- A. And this is why I chose that word “capacity.”
- B. I'm getting it from Jonathan Edwards and his own understanding of heavenly reward. He's just brilliant on this. In his sermon on Rom 2:10, he makes the point that all in heaven will be full and satisfied in God. We should have no doubt about that. But some will have capacity for more of Him. All will be full, but some will have more.
1. Here's how Edwards put it: “Every vessel that is cast into this ocean of happiness is full, though there are some vessels far larger than others . . .” (Works, Vol. 2, p. 902).
 - a. And how do you get larger, how do you get more capacity, so you can hold more of Jesus and his fullness?
 - i. Well, one of the ways, it would seem from Scripture, is suffering with him.
- C. I don't actually think this is all that hard to understand.
1. I was trying to help my kids grab ahold of this concept the other night at dinner. I just asked them: Who do you think would enjoy this spaghetti more—you guys, who get it every week and always have something tasty on your plate; or a kid from the street, whose mommy and daddy left him when he was young, and his idea of a good meal is picking out something from yesterday's trash?

- a. If we were to go get him and bring him in here, in one sense, he'd have greater capacity to enjoy this meal, because of what he's been through. His eyes would light up. His heart will fill with gratitude.
 - i. You guys just receive it as just another Wednesday night spaghetti dinner.
 - ii. He would receive it as a miracle.
- 2. I think it's kind of like that. I suppose you could say it's almost like a pendulum: the further you bring it back into one side, the further it swings out into the other side.
 - a. So if you lose your life for Jesus' sake, if you take up your cross and die daily in love for him and others, if you trust him through hardship and lean in on him more than anyone or anything else, if you suffer with him in this age . . .
 - b. . . . then in the age to come you'll swing further out into the joy of life with him. You'll have greater capacity for fullness in his presence.
 - i. This seems to be what Peter is getting at when he writes in [1 Pet. 4:13](#):
 "[R]ejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed."
- D. So this promise of great reward also comes with a warning.
 - 1. When we bail out on this process; when we look for quick fixes and try to keep ourselves comfortable now, whatever the cost; when, in love for ourselves, we try to limit how far the pendulum swings into suffering and sorrow . . .
 - 2. . . . not only do we keep ourselves from the blessing he would give us now through our transformation and deeper relationship with him, we also shrink our capacity for future fullness and joy (cf. [1 Cor. 3:10-15](#)).
- E. So, again, I plead with you: When suffering comes, don't run from it. Contrary to what you may feel, it's not destroying you. It's preparing for you something greater! And, therefore, you can rejoice!

Reason #4: Because God Wants to Use Us to Reach Others (Opportunity)

"Filling Up What Is Lacking"

- A. The last thing I'd say is that suffering really provides us with an opportunity to reach and minister to others in a way we wouldn't be able to without it.
- B. This is what Paul seems to be getting at in [Col. 1:24](#): "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church." But what does he mean by this?
 - 1. Well, first, notice he says that he rejoices in his suffering "for your sake . . ."

- a. One of the reasons he can have joy in his suffering is it's doing something for others. But what exactly is it doing?
2. But he goes on: “. . . in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.”
- a. Now, truly this is worthy of a whole sermon. It's a bit complicated and confusing. But for the sake of time I want to just read to you what John Piper has to say about it: “So Paul suffers, and in his suffering, he says that he fills up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. Now, what does that mean? It almost sounds heretical, doesn't it? What does it mean to fill up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions? Or complete what is missing in Christ's afflictions? What is missing in Christ's afflictions?
 Nothing is missing in Christ's afflictions in their atoning worth. Paul can't add anything to the atoning value of Jesus Christ. The beauty, the wonder, the value, the worth, and the merit of Christ crucified to cover sins is infinite. You can't add anything to it. There's nothing missing from it. There's no lack in it.
 Paul taught us that. He knows that. So what does he mean when he says, “I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions”? That's the question. Now, the answer to that, I think, is what I'm about to say, and then I'll sum up the answer and I will give you the text that is the basis for my summary. The summary goes like this: What's missing in Christ's afflictions is the presentation of those afflictions to the people for whom he died — the personal, touchable, visible, seeable presentation of his afflictions to those for whom he died.”
 - b. In other words: I rejoice in my sufferings because it gives you a chance to see the love of Jesus for you in and through me. No longer am I merely sharing the gospel with my lips. I'm showing it to you with my life, in the way that I'm suffering in love for you.
- C. This is why, by the way, when you come back to our story in [Acts 5](#) and turn the page, after all this suffering, to [Acts 6](#), do you want to know what you see? The church grows! “[I]n these days . . . the disciples were increasing in number” (v. 1).
- 1. You would think that seeing the apostles suffer for the gospel might make those outside reluctant or scared to follow Jesus.
 - 2. But, instead, it has the opposite effect. They want to. Why? Because they see in the suffering of these apostles the love of Jesus for them!

Suffering in General

- A. And, you know, suffering even in a more general sense can open up opportunities for ministry. Even when you're not suffering in love for a person per se, but you're just suffering and people are seeing the way you suffer with hope and peace and they see Jesus in that.
 - 1. Maybe you get fired. Is it a bummer, yes. But it's an opportunity to show your boss and coworkers and kids that Jesus is more—when you don't storm off angry and burn bridges behind you, but you bless and love in the name of Jesus.

2. Maybe you get cancer. Is it horrible, of course. But it's an opportunity to show your doctors and nurses and family and friends that Jesus is more—when you don't bend inward with self-pity and despair, but instead you have a curious peace and you're still able to think about others and love.
- B. This may sound silly, but seeing as today is the Super Bowl, I thought I'd use the 49ers' quarterback Brock Purdy as my last example here.
1. Because, you know, he's gone through a lot this past season. He's been successful, yes, but public opinion about him has gone up and down and all around. Some people love him, think he's awesome. Some people think he's just a poser, propped up by the talent around him.
 - a. He has a good day on the field, he's celebrated.
 - b. He has a bad day, and all the naysayers come out.
- C. And people have asked him: "How do you seem to stay so unaffected by all this, so grounded, so stable?" In particular, during their postgame press conference after their comeback win over the Lions a couple weeks ago, he was asked: "How do you handle the pressure of all this—you were the last pick in the draft, now you're the third youngest quarterback to ever start in the Super Bowl. How do you keep it together?"
1. Here's what he said: "Honestly, I think it's just a testament to God and where he's taken me in life. I've never been the biggest, the fastest, the strongest, or any of that. . . . But God's always given me an opportunity. . . . Getting drafted last, people over look you . . . and then all you need is an opportunity and you watch and see what he does. I put my faith and trust in him and he's gotten me where I'm at. So, when I'm down 17 at the half, honestly, I'm just thinking, alright God you've taken me here and win or lose I'm going to glorify you. And that's my peace, that's the joy, that's the steadfastness. That's where I get it from. And that's the honest truth." Isn't that awesome?
 2. And people see it:
 - a. So his coach Kyle Shanahan, in an interview about him says: "That's . . . the most special thing about Brock. . . . I mean, Brock is as humble of a person as I've ever been around. I talk about him having just a strong foundation on who he is, and it's rare. . . . And you can ask him, I think it has a lot to do with his faith . . ."
 - b. The 49ers legend, Steve Young, has gotten to know Purdy and learned about his faith and said: "It's a beautiful way to live. You can tell that there's a grounding in it. It seems like every day, no matter what happens, nothing's a shock either way."
 - i. Jesus is seen in his life.
- D. I know it might seem trivial to talk about the pressures of football as suffering or something. But think about it for a second.
1. What if he goes out there today and makes some terrible mistakes on national television—he throws a couple interceptions at key moments and costs them the game. And he knows

when he comes back to the Bay Area the whole city's going to be disappointed in him, at best, angry with him, at worst. Wouldn't that be hard?

- a. Wouldn't you just want to hole up for a while?
- b. What if, as he said, you still have peace, you still have joy? What if you could hear all the noise and the jeering and the disgruntled stuff and still love the people, still go out and enjoy the day God has given you, because your identity isn't wrapped up in this stuff, it's in Jesus, that's your "foundation" that's your "grounding."
 - i. I'm telling you that will preach. It'll preach to his coaches. It'll preach to his teammates. It'll preach to any who are watching closely. His suffering would be an opportunity.

E. Now don't get me wrong, I hope the 49ers win. He can give glory to God through a victory as well.

- 1. But even if he blows it. It's not the end. Because life isn't ultimately about football.
- 2. And it's not about your job either, or your family, or your health, or your money, or whatever either.
 - a. It's about Jesus. Becoming more like him. Growing in our relationship with him. Enlarging our capacity for more of him. And sharing him with others who desperately need him.
 - i. Suffering can't take any of these things away from you.
 - ii. And actually, it can help with all of them.

(1) And that's why we can rejoice, not just in spite of our suffering, but in light of it as well!