



# MOUNTAIN STREAM NEWS

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## THE OTHER SIDE OF SUFFERING

### MESSAGE FROM PASTOR



*Psalm 119:67 & 71  
 67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word. 71 It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.*

Suffering is distressing. It often causes physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual trauma. Suffering disrupts our lives in unexpected ways and has the potential of knocking us completely off our feet. It is no wonder we do our best to avoid it. We pray desperately for God to protect us from any suffering, and we strive to avoid any actions we think might result in our suffering. Yet when we study our Bibles, we discover that suffering can and often does have a beneficial aspect.

Listen to the psalmist David as he celebrates the

fact that he had suffered affliction. He honestly concedes that prior to being afflicted he had a tendency to wander away from God (verse 67). Like all of us, he allowed himself to be distracted by the siren calls of worldly living and temptations. By so doing, he exposed himself to the possibility of being trapped and exploited by the deceptive pleasures of sin. God's antidote for this kind of dangerous gullibility is to ensure that our wanderings are met with discomfort and suffering. God is not trying to be mean – He is restraining us from becoming too deeply entangled in the slow death spiral that is the ultimate result of sin. Once we recognize that the path of sin leads to suffering and loss, we are more likely to resist the sugar-coated temptations that assault us. So, one benefit of suffering is that it curbs our taste for sin.

A second benefit of suffering is that it helps us to learn and understand God's statutes or ways (verse 71). As sufferings force us to our knees and ultimately to God's Word, we discover that our

sufferings are neither arbitrary nor malevolent. God's Word explains that afflictions are designed to strengthen us and keep us close to Him. When we understand that this is how God works, we do not torment ourselves with desperate questions about "why us?" and/or charge God with impotence or unkindness. We assuage our souls by internalizing the clear truths of Scripture. We are able to see a benevolent God at work using suffering for our good.

While none of us like suffering, we need to train ourselves to look on the other side of suffering. If we are in season of hurt and pain right now, what may God be trying to teach us? Is He calling us back from our wanderings? Or is He seeking to draw us into a deeper understanding of Himself? May God help us to use suffering as an opportunity to draw closer to Him no matter where we might be in our Christian walk.

God bless you,  
 Pastor James

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

**CORPORATE PRAYER**  
**TUE @ 7 PM**

**APR 25**

Join us via Zoom video  
 Please contact Pastor James for log on information at rcantio@gmail.com

**YOUTH GROUP**  
**FRI @ 6:45 PM**

**APR 28**

In-person at church.  
 For teens ages 13 and over

**EVENING SERVICE**  
**1st & 3rd**  
**SUN @ 6 PM**

**MAY 7 & MAY 21**

Join us in-person at church

**KIDZONE & NURSERY**  
**SUN @ 11 AM**

**APR 30**

These ministries are available every Sunday during the morning service

Kidzone for ages 6-12 yrs. old.

**WORSHIP SERVICE**  
**SUN @ 11 AM**

**APR 30**

In-person service and Livestreaming on Facebook, Youtube and our webpage.

- Vacation Bible School is July 17-21.
  - A) Members may sign up to serve at the Information Center.
  - B) Students can be registered online.
- Thanks to all who helped with the Middle Smithfield Township street clean-up on Saturday.
- The Pregnancy Resource Center's Fundraising Banquet is May 11 @ Camelback Resort. Contact Lori for more details.
- Clarks Summit University's Lyfe Women's Conference is June 2-3. Contact Sherrill or Becky for more information.
- Join us on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at 3:15 at the Garden at Stroud as we sing and share the gospel with the residents. Contact Tom for more information.
- Bible Reading plans for 2023 are available at the Information Center. Also, read Pastor Jimmie's daily blog on the readings via the link on our website.

### QUICK TIPS ON WAYS TO GIVE YOUR OFFERING

Traditional during the Sunday morning service, with a check by mail or through our secured website. Please remember to hit "SAVE" after you give if you did not set up an account so the church can have a record of who gave for tax purposes. Thank you!