(30) Live, **Give,** Grow, Go GIVE: Testimony

**John 9:1-4** As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. **2**“Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?”**3 “It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,”** Jesus answered. **“This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.** **4**We must **quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us.** The night is coming, and then no one can work.

* **Why do bad things happen? Or, Why Did God let this Happen to Me?**
  + In no way do the following answers minimalize or make light of the pain…

**We Misunderstand Suffering & Pain (vs 3) “It was not because of his sins or his parent’s sins….”**

* **We see Suffering & Pain only in a negative light…**
* **But it has purpose and unimaginable power…**

**Mark 8:34-35** And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, **and take up his cross and follow Me**. **35**For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.

**Suffering Is Intentional In Your Life And Is Meant to Produce Testimony (vs 3) “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him…”**

**2 Cor. 4:7-12, 15**

**7**But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; **8***we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; **9**persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; **10**always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. **11For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.** **12So death works in us, but life in you…**15**For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.**

* **It’s the Bearing of It that has so much power…Not the Curing of it** 
  + Healing is powerful…It comforts the believer
  + But Bearing Up Under Suffering…Trusting God
  + **That’s What Convinces the Unbelieving Heart** 
    - The Thief on the Cross
    - The Roman Centurion
    - The Persecuted in Acts 8
* **Worth Carrying To GIVE Others Hope, Support, Encouragement – and Life**

**Luke 22:31-32** “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat;but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, **when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”**

**You’ve Been Assigned Your Cross(es) to Bear… (vs 4) “We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the One who sent us…”**

* Avoid?
* Complain?
* Blame?
* Bitterness?
* Perpetually Overwhelmed?
* Lose Faith in God?
* Focus on Escape or Relief?

*“A Christian is someone who shares the sufferings of God in the world.”* – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**Philippians 3:8, 10-11**

I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, **for whom I have suffered the loss of all things,** and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ *…***10**that I may know Him and **the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.**

**Follow in the Footsteps of your Lord…Willingness to Suffer so that you can GIVE Life to Others…Carrying Your Cross**

**1 Peter 2: 19-24 For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows** when suffering unjustly. **20**For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you **patiently endure it,** this *finds* favor with God.**21For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,** **22**who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; **23**and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but **kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously**; **24**and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for **by His wounds you were healed.**