

March 21, 2021

The Sunday View

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus." — *John 12:21*

Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate at the entrance. Thank You

Schedule

The Lord's Day Assemblies

Three assembly opportunities,
in the building:

9:30 AM / 10:30 AM / 11:30 AM

Livestream at 10:30 at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLEmwy2iYxrl7ZUgTiZTVqA>

Speaking today: David Posey
"The Last Word on Worship"
Revelation 4 & 5

Young People's Classes Today

High School & Up: 5 PM
Contact David Posey for information at
(530) 558-5057

Middle School: 5 PM

Contact Dan Stegall for information
(818) 209-9810

Weekly Online Classes

Tuesday 10 AM ("Conformed to Christ")
Check with David Posey at dpaulposey@mac.com
or text @ 530-558-5057

Wednesday 7 PM (Faith: Hebrews 11)
Check with Jack Horak: jshorak98@gmail.com

Saturday AM Men's Breakfast
7 AM, second Saturday of the month
Contact Tyler Wade @ tyler@ppldev.com

Additional Classes

There are some smaller classes in progress.
If you are interested in participating in any of them,
please contact David Posey

Information

Website & Online Presence

Visit our website at www.folsomchurch.com for updates and material on current and past classes, and recorded sermons and classes. You will also find a directory of churches on page one. If you are a member of the church here at Folsom, see one of the deacons or elders to inquire about access to the password -protected members section. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/folsomchurch>

Classes & Home Studies (Will resume soon)

We have classes for children from 18 months and up. Please see the map in the hallway or ask any of the members which room is appropriate for you and/or your child. There are several Bible studies in progress on Sunday afternoon and evening. Check with David Posey if you have questions.

Restrooms

There are two sets of restrooms: one off the first hallway to the right of the lobby and another at the end of the first hallway to the left. Ask anyone and they'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

For Small Children

There is a special room for nursing mothers and a separate "cry room" at the rear of the auditorium. You enter them from the first hallway to the right, across from the restrooms.

View & Junior View (Let us know if you don't get a copy)

Be sure to pick up a copy of the View and Junior View; both are sent out weekly to our member list and hard copies are printed on Sundays and available in the foyer.

Prayer Requests & News Items

Send to David Posey at dpaulposey@mac.com
or text at 530-558-5057

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

This article is not a scholarly treatise on suffering, just some thought for you to ponder. There is much more to be said on the topic. For more depth, read Job, Ruth, Esther, the prophets, the Psalms, the four gospels, I Peter... in other words, most all of the Bible.

I. Suffering is the inevitable consequence of freedom.

Think about it: we possibly could be insulated from the evil acts of others if we were locked in a room, but is that what we want? Do we consider parents who lock their kids in a basement — no matter what their motives — good parents? God chose to give us freedom. The upside for God of freedom is that when we choose to honor God, even during suffering, then God is glorified. The downside is that we can choose to *not* to honor Him, but God is willing to take that risk. God could easily have created us without the ability to choose evil and without any possibility of suffering. What kind of world would that be? Isn't that the kind of "world" heaven is?

II. Suffering occurs because the the world is "in the arms of the evil one" (I John 5:19)

If Adam and Eve had not sinned, all of us would be in Paradise — until someone sinned. Adam and Eve took care of that for us. God promised, "on the day you eat of it you will surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Eve sinned; she ate of the forbidden tree and Adam made it unanimous. That ushered in death, both physical (Genesis 3:19) and spiritual (Romans 5:12 — a person does not die physically because he sins; sin causes spiritual death).

Adam and Eves sinned, thus opening a new chapter in world history. Disease and aging began Fromm that time. And Satan has had access to us and the whole world lies under his sway (see I John 5:19; Ephesians 2:2). Suffering and evil is the work of Satan, not God, and therefore, the result of man's sin, not God's character. But God *allows* it.

III. "The Logical Conclusion"

If God chose to prevent suffering in the world, then it would have to be *complete*; there would be no suffering at all because what is the alternative? *Some* suffering?? "Suffering for thee but not for me?" In a world of selective suffering, who gets to be spared?

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1. If there was no suffering in the world there would be no sickness, no pain, no evil...not death.
2. What kind of world would it be?
 - a. Everyone would live forever in a pristine environment; there would be perfect love, perfect faith in God, perfect everything.
 - b. Of course, no one would ever go to heaven because we would never die; i.e., we would never age, never be separated from our bodies.
 - So if there was no suffering, then there would be no sin, no evil; no one would hurt another person; there would no separation from God.

This sounds like heaven! But we're not in heaven yet.

We suffer because:

1. We sin. Much of our personal suffering can be traced to the sins we commit or have committed. Romans 3:23; I John 1:8-10.
 2. We often suffer at the hands of others.
 3. We suffer because the world is a dangerous place. Accidents, disease and "man's inhumanity to man" causes suffering that is not our fault.
 4. We suffer needlessly from guilt and shame because we refuse to seek out and apply God's grace.
- Since we all suffer, for various reasons, it makes sense to ask whether suffering serves any purpose. The Bible says it does.

Purposes served in Suffering

- Produces steadfastness and genuine faith (James 1:2; I Peter 1:6-7).
- Builds and recruits hope — gets our eyes back on the goal (Romans 5:1-5; I Peter 4:19).
- Identifies us with others who are suffering, especially our brethren who suffer for Christ (I Peter 5:9; Hebrews 10:32-34).
- Promotes a poverty of spirit — empties us, making room for the kingdom. Matthew 5:3-12.
- May help others when they see us dealing with trials with hope and faith.
- Identifies us with Christ (I Peter 4:1).

Songs and Singing

Of the many pleasant experiences we enjoy when the church at Folsom gathers, singing together together is one of the best. Singing appears in the Bible frequently. For example:

“Is anyone suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.” — *James 5:13*

“...be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

— *Ephesians 5:18b-20*

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

— *Colossians 3:16*

“For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying,

“I will tell of your name to my brothers;

in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”

— *Hebrews 2:11-12*

“And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!”

— *Revelation 15:3*

Eugene Peterson said,

“There are songs everywhere in scripture. The people of God sing. They express exuberance in realizing the majesty of God and the mercy of Christ, the wholeness of reality and their new-found ability to participate in it. Song proliferate. Hymns gather the voices of men, women and children into century-tiered choirs. Moses sings. Miriam sings. Deborah sings. David sings. Mary sings. Angels sing. Jesus and his disciples sing. Paul and Silas sing. When persons of faith become aware of who God is and what he does, they sing. The songs are irrepressible.”

— *Reversed Thunder*, p. 66

One of the many painful results of the Covid crisis has been the limitations it has placed on our singing. The singing in our assemblies at Folsom has always been outstanding. Aided by our excellent song leaders, the church sings with enthusiasm and it's uplifting. We sing like we want to be here; we sing like we mean it.

Before I go on, let me stipulate that the quality of our worship to God is not based on how good it looks or sounds but on the state of our hearts and minds when

we worship. Having said that, Covid restrictions that limit our numbers and require us to wear masks have muffled the sound of our singing somewhat. But those restrictions have not and cannot muffle our hearts.

Singing is an important part of worship. We can sing any time. Paul and Silas knew that:

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. *Acts 16:25*

I've told the story before of how I heard my mother quietly singing a hymn while cooking dinner and I asked her why she was singing a church song. I said, “it's not even Sunday yet!” She explained that we can sing to God any time and in any place. We can, and we should. But singing together in a worship service is the one thing, other than the Lord's Supper, that we are doing all at once, together. We join our voices — men, women, children — and sing thanks to God and speak to each other, teaching and reasoning with each other through song.

As Tom McGowan taught us a few years ago, there is an actual physical benefit to singing (and listening to songs) as well. We know it by experience when we listen to a song with a beautiful, moving melody and words that speak to us; something happens inside us. Singing

is known to release endorphins, the feel-good brain chemical that makes you feel uplifted and happy. Singing has also been shown to improve memory and cognition and there are reports that singing lowers blood pressure and builds the immune system (that's interesting, in the age of Covid. More singing, not less?).

This just shows the wisdom of God in including singing as an act of congregational worship. It's not just words put to music, it's God's word doing its work within us. Amazing!!

So, we sing today, in three separate services, with masks. Soon, we plan to be in two services where we can sing a few more songs with a few more voices. We are anxious to get to one service when we can all sing together and then...one day: one service, unmasked and free to sing like we used to. That'll make us even more anxious to get to heaven where we will be singing with the millions on high, forever and ever.