



The Embrace of Suffering

Embracing suffering pervades a good portion of the teachings of Christ. Even in His first public discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus presents suffering as a common expectation for believers. He teaches His disciples that to suffer because of their connection to Him is a cause for rejoicing, *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."* (Matthew 5:10-12)

"Rejoice and be glad," says Jesus, with reference to our suffering for Him. This is not some frivolous desire for misery. The cause of rejoicing in the midst of suffering, is the knowledge of God's awareness and just character. God is aware of the injustice of suffering and sets the account right in the end. Jesus speaks of His own suffering as a divine mandate, an obligation, that must be fulfilled to reveal the Father's character of love and grace and to bring about the salvation of the world. *"From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day."* (Matthew 16:21)

Jesus tells His disciples of their own suffering yet to come. It is a necessary part of being His disciples, *"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!"* (Matthew 10:24-25)

In the life of the early church, suffering plays a significant role. The promises of Jesus Christ in this regard are fulfilled within a few weeks of the

ascension. In Acts 4, we witness the first harassment of the Apostles. In Acts 5, the first physical persecution and imprisonment of the church occurs. In Acts 7, we weep at the first martyrdom, as Stephen bears great witness to the faithfulness of God, the work of Christ and the sinfulness of humanity. The response of the crowd to Stephen's sermon reminds the reader of the prophetic words of Jesus Christ, *"A disciple is not above his teacher."*

As the gospel spreads and the church grows throughout the Greco-Roman world, the persecution of the church also bleeds beyond the Apostles and deacons of the church in Jerusalem. Paul, who was once a persecutor of the church, embraces suffering for the cause of Christ. At Paul's calling, the Lord Jesus tells him from the beginning that he will suffer for this cause, the gospel. God sent Ananias to Paul saying, *"Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."* (Acts 9:15-16)

During his ministry, Paul often includes the theology of suffering in his letters to the churches. He teaches the early church that suffering is a necessary aspect of following Christ, *"After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples... strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.'"* (Acts 14:21-22)

The suffering in this life is certainly not limited to persecution. All people, both Christians and non-Christians, face trials and struggles in this fallen world. Some come from persecution directed at believers. Some suffering comes from trials living this broken life as broken people.

However, all trials are used by God for the sake of revealing His character so we know Him and of strengthening His people. We read this truth as



Paul instructs the church at Rome to rejoice in trials because of what God does with trials in the life of a Christian, *"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."* (Romans 5:3-5)

According to this passage, suffering produces perseverance, character and hope. God's love, affirmed in our hearts by His Holy Spirit, allows believers to rejoice over troubles. We know that God, because He loves us, takes all tribulations and brings about a godly transformation in the life of believers. We know this from His word, but we also know this from the abiding Holy Spirit who verifies God's love to us. Even when we walk through trials, God reminds us that He is at work in us during those difficulties.

Not only does God do a work in our lives by bringing perseverance, character and hope through trials, Paul writes to the Corinthian church that suffering in this life produces something for each believer in the next life, *"For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."* (II Corinthians 4:17-18)

The current trials and struggles are temporary and light compared to the character of God being produced in our lives through those trials. Our trials may not seem light. Our trials may not seem temporary. However, when we see Christ face to face and experience His eternal rest, He balances all the troubles in this life for believers with an eternal joy that greatly out measures our sorrow. He redeems every trial that He allows into our lives for our eternal joy and the display of His glory forever. This doesn't mean that the sorrow in this life is unreal and painless. Even Paul admits to being so burdened by troubles that he was at the point of death from the weight of them. Paul then encourages the church with the knowledge that the Lord had brought him through each of those trials. In His own life, when experiencing great anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus says, "Father, take this cup from Me." Yet, Jesus embraces His crucifixion as a means to glorify the Father and as a means to everlasting reward. God brings about His greatest plan through the greatest suffering of injustice in human history, the

unjust murder of the perfect, innocent God-man, Jesus Christ. The sorrow and suffering of Christ are real at the crucifixion, and the victory over death resulting in everlasting joy for all believers is also real in the death of Jesus Christ.

One of the most dramatic accounts I have ever read concerning the believer's embrace of suffering comes from the biography of Adoniram Judson, a missionary to Burma during the nineteenth century. Judson and his wife set out from America for the several months journey by boat to India. On the way, their child dies at birth and is buried at sea. Upon arriving in India, they feel led to move to unreached peoples and travel to Burma. After arriving and settling into their new surroundings, the Judsons have a second child, Roger. He is healthy and happy but becomes suddenly ill and dies. The local magistrate for the city feels horrible about their loss and invites them for a day of elephant riding as a distraction from their sorrow. From the book, *To the Golden Shore*, author Courtney Anderson records, "The ride had made them forget their grief for a while but when they returned to the mission house, and the elephant had departed, Nancy's glance fell on Roger's fresh grave in the circle of the mango trees and she began to weep again bitterly. *Later she reflected on this in her diary*, 'Our hearts were bound up in this child; we felt he was our earthly all, our only source of innocent recreation in this heathen land. But God saw it was necessary to remind us of our error, and to strip us of our only little all. O may it not be in vain that He has done it. May we so improve it, that He will stay His hand and say, "It is enough."' A few weeks later she wrote, 'When for a moment we realize what we once possessed, the wound opens and bleeds afresh. Yet we would still say, "Thy will be done.'"' (From *To the golden Shore* by Courtney Anderson, page 192-193)

When we face trials, it is hard to say to God, "Your will be done." It is difficult to fathom the tribulations of this life as a means to greater character now and greater, everlasting joy later. These truths become clouded behind the profound sorrow of our reality. Yet, we take courage and persevere because God is not limited by our feelings or our present situation. He writes His story for each of us in this life as a pathway to a more beautiful and joyful conclusion in the next. He is trustworthy, so we trust Him even when we are hurting.

~ Daniel

Fall 2014 Bible Studies

Sunday 9:45 AM Classes	Location
Senior Adult Class	Library
Sanctuary Class	Sanctuary
Boomer's Class	Fellowship Hall West
Hedin/Sullenger/Bullock	Fellowship Hall Center
De La Torre Class	Fellowship Hall East
Women of Grace	Choir Room
3-D Class	Teller Room
Cross Seekers	Upstairs Ed Bldg - 1 st on left
Lydia's Legacy	Conference Room
20 Something - College	Upstairs Ed Bldg - 1 st on right
20 Something - Young Adults	Upstairs Ed Bldg - Man Cave (2nd room on left)
Sunday 5:30 PM Classes	Location
Cross Seekers	Conference Room
Newlywed/Nearlywed	Library
Sanctuary Class	Sanctuary
Men's Class (Oct 17-Nov 23)	Upstairs Ed Bldg - Man Cave (2nd room on left)
Ladies' Class	Fellowship Hall
Systematic Theology	Teller Room
20Somethings - Prophets as Preachers	Fellowship Hall
Wednesday 6:30 PM Classes	Location
Women's Class	Conference Room
Library Class	Library
Wednesday 8:30 PM Class	Location
20 Somethings - Attributes of God	CommonGrounds

Living Grace Groups – Coming in September

| Support | to bear all or part of the weight of; hold up; give assistance to; enable to function or act.

Living Grace Groups heart and vision is to *reveal Christ, relieve suffering, and restore lives* (John 9:1-3). Grace Groups are designed to provide an ongoing **support structure** to help those living with **mental health difficulties**, giving each person practical skills and tools in order to regain their lives and rebuild their families. All of this is done in a **Christ-centered** environment with a clear focus on the necessity of **God's grace** for life transformation. Grace Groups focus on the positive, where the goal of each meeting is to end with a greater understanding and vision concerning mental health difficulties. For more information and registration: Contact **Keith Dibble** 469.278.5901 Keith@MatthewRoad.org

Mary Hill Davis Offering



Week of Prayer for Texas Missions: September 14-21

1 John 3:16-18 says "...don't just talk about love as an idea or theory. Make it your true way of life, and live in the pattern of gracious love." (The Voice Bible) This is what LoveStrong means. A major way for Christians to Love Strong is to share the love of Jesus Christ with all who need Him. You do not have to be called by God as a missionary to share the love of God. All of us are a part of Texas missions when pray for missions, give to missions, or share the Good News.

Our church will observe the Week of Prayer for Texas Missions September 14-21. Prayer guides will be given out at each worship service on the 14th. We encourage you to pray each day that week for the eight missionaries and projects featured. Part of this emphasis is the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions. Our church goal is \$5,000. We will collect this offering for several weeks.

May we all LoveStrong by praying, giving and sharing so that many in Texas and beyond will learn of God's Strong Love for them.

~ Paul Ware

Wednesday Night Dinner Ministry

Wednesday Night Dinner

Wednesday Night Dinners are back!!!

Please see the display cabinets for this month's menu.

To RSVP, please email the church office at crystal@matthewroad.org.

Children's Ministry



The 2014-2015 Awana year begins Wednesday, September 3rd for kids age 3* through 6th grade. Cubbies will meet on the playground and all other Awana kids will meet in the opening ceremony room upstairs in the Education Building. The Education Building will not be open until 6:25pm for children unless they are in the children's choir (see the music page for more information). Contact Brittany if you have not yet registered for Awana!

*3 year olds in Cubbies must be potty trained and a parent must stay on campus through the duration of the program. See our Bible study page to find an adult Bible study to attend.



*We will continue through the Gospel Project
on Sunday mornings throughout the fall!
Don't miss a Sunday hearing the Gospel presented
throughout the entirety of the Bible.*

Children's Church - We welcome new 3 year olds (by 9.1.14) to join us for children's church during the 11am worship service! Listen for your cue to send your child to children's church after singing and Scripture reading. Children's church is for 3 and 4 year olds and children in kindergarten. (Children's church serves to help prepare kids to attend worship with their parents as they get older).



*Sunday Nights
5:30pm
Front Lawn of
Worship Center*

MD2 is for kids in kindergarten through 6th grade. Join is for games on the lawn (weather permitting) followed by small group boys and girls Bible study groups. This Fall we are studying the book of Hebrews!



The Children's Choir will start work on a great new project called Children's Worship Series. Your elementary school kids won't want to miss this! We will start on Wednesday night, September 3rd at 6:00 on the second floor of the Education Building.

Beth Moore Simulcast @ Lakeview Baptist Church



Join us Saturday, September 13th,
from 8:30am - 4:30pm,
for a Beth Moore Simulcast,
hosted by Lakeview Baptist Church.

We will meet at MRBC at 7:30am to carpool.

Cost: \$10, which includes lite breakfast and lunch.

Please RSVP no later than
Wednesday, September 10th
to Jennifer Howard, at 443-717-4152.

Student Ministry

Check out the Student Ministry Events & Activities coming soon!

- ~ **September 7th** - Parent Meeting in Sanctuary, [12:15 pm -12:45 pm](#) after service
- ~ **September 8th** - Small Groups begin again!
- ~ **September 24th** - See You at the Pole @ any school at a flag pole, prayer time for the students to come
Possible start date for Parents of Teenagers class/meeting

Bible studies: Reminder: Bible studies will start back up September 8th!

- * High School Guys @ Geisendorffs [Mondays 6:30pm](#) - Seniors
- * High School Girls @ Christine Wehrli & Maggie Dean's [Tuesdays 6:30pm](#) - Christine & Maggie
- * Middle School Guys @ Kings [Mondays 6:30pm](#) -Andrew Snyder
- * Middle School Girls @ Wests [Mondays 6:00pm-7:00pm](#) -Maddie Snowden

Also be praying for these students and teachers as they help start small groups/Bible studies at their schools: Tim Wittman, Kenton Snyder and Richard Rodriguez, Uncovering the Bible Club with Dr. Michael West and Nick King @ Dubiski, FCA @ South Grand Prairie with Ms. Traci, FCA at Truman M.S. with Mr. Wade, FCA at Reagan M.S. with Diana Knight, and FCA at Kennedy Leadership Academy, FCA at Arlington H.S. with Christine Wehrli, Fine Arts Academy Lunch Bible study, and Jackson M.S. FCA with Coach Sam

Fall Festival

Free! FALL FESTIVAL Free!
Friday, October 31st
6:00pm - 8:00pm
Bounce Houses, Train Rides,
Photo Booth, Games, Candy
& lots, lots more!!!
Free! Free!

Music Ministry

YOU ARE INVITED!

Our choirs are starting back and we're saving a place for you! We hope you will join us on Wednesday nights this Fall!

- ♫ Adult choir rehearsals will have begun! Wednesday nights at 6:30pm, in the sanctuary.
- ♫ Proclamation Youth Choir has begun. Wednesday nights, at 5:45pm in the choir room.
- ♫ The Children's Choir will start work on a great new project called Children's Worship Series. Your elementary school kids won't want to miss this! Wednesday nights, at 6:00pm, on the second floor of the education building.

--

Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the Lord is good; His loving-kindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations. Psalm 100 (NASB)

-Jeff

PAW FALL



Preschool Academy of Westchester (PAW) is a quality preschool program for children ages 9 months - 5 years old. Your children will enjoy their classroom activities planned around our curriculum, "Wee Learn" (published by LifeWay). At our program, your child will learn about sharing, healthy living, academics, music, American Sign Language, the Bible, manners, cooperation and giving. It is a time for both you and your children to enjoy.

Schedule: We are a Monday & Wednesday preschool. Our hours are 9am - 2pm.

Tuition and Fees: Tuition is \$130.00 per month. There is an annual supply fee of \$75.00 (prorated if enrolling during the school year) and a registration fee of \$35.00 (non-refundable). Supply and registration fees are due upon enrollment. (Sibling discounts are available.)

Pease call Cyndi King, at 972-641-7380, for more information.

20Somethings

20some things Winter Retreat!

We will be going to Riverbend in Cleburne Friday & Saturday, November 14th & 15th!

The cost is \$50.00 per person.

- ◇ We will meet there. (Eat dinner before you come.)
- ◇ Friday night we will do a hay ride and smores bonfire.
- ◇ Saturday we will have breakfast, and lunch, then shoot skeet.

To sign up, please email Rachel at rachel@matthewroad.org.

What's up

9.7.14 - FREE
GAMES & HANGOUT
AFTER 7:17 SERVICE

9.14.14 - \$3.00
VOLLEY BALL AT DBU
COOK OUT & VOLLEY-

REGULAR SCHEDULE

Bible Study
Sunday:
9:45AM - II Corinthians;
Ed Bldg
Biblical Principals of
Finance
5:30PM - Snack/Prophets as
Preachers
Fellowship Hall

Discipleship Wednesday:
8:30PM - Common Grounds
Attributes of God and
why do they matter

Leadership Training 2014

We believe a great way to build a stronger church family, and encourage our members in their spiritual growth, is to provide opportunities such as Leadership Training. Please join us Saturday, September 27th, for our 5th Annual Leadership Training. Please find below a brief outline of our schedule. Breakfast, lunch and childcare are provided. Please RSVP to christy@matthewroad.org.

8:15 - 9:30 Registration
8:30 - 9:00 Breakfast
9:00 - 9:20 opening
9:20 - 10:50 Track One
Dr. Paul Stutz
Holly Glover
Micah Meek
Phil McGlothlin
John Galbraith
Dr. Derouen
10:50 - 11:15 Cookies & Talk
11:15 - 12:45 Track 2
Daniel Sweet
John Galbraith
Phil McGlothlin
Micah Meek
Children's Offering
12:45 - 1:30 lunch
State of the Church Address
1:30 - 2:00 Staff Panel



September 2014 Events & Activities

For more information, please see our website, www.matthewroad.org, or call the church office at 972-641-2717.

- September 7th: Youth Parent Meeting, 12:15pm, Sanctuary
- September 8th: PAW Fall Semester begins, 9:00am
- September 10th: Finance Committee Meeting, 5:30pm, Teller Room
- September 13th: Deacon Meeting, 8:00am, Fellowship Hall
- September 19th: Parents Night Out, 6:30pm, Worship Center
- September 21st: B&G Meeting, 5:00pm, Conference Room
- September 27th: Leadership Training, more info to come!
- September 28th: NewComer's Class & Luncheon, 12:15pm, Fellowship Hall
Fall Festival Meeting, 5:00pm, Library

Save the Date -
Leadership Training 2014
is coming!

SEPTEMBER 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Discipleship

Sunday Nights:

- ◇ 20Somethings - Fellowship Hall, 5:30pm (ongoing)
- ◇ Adult Discipleship - Sanctuary, 5:30pm
- ◇ Ladies Bible Study - Fellowship Hall, 5:30pm
- ◇ Men's Bible Study - ManCave, 5:30pm
- ◇ Young Marrieds Bible Study - Library, 5:30pm (ongoing)
- ◇ Guy Talk for youth - CommonGrounds, 5:30pm (ongoing), see Zach for exact location
- ◇ Girl Talk for youth - CommonGrounds, 5:30pm (ongoing), see Zach for exact location
- ◇ MD² for children - Education Building, 5:30pm (ongoing)

Wednesday Nights:

- ◇ AWANA Club for children - Ed. Building, 6:30pm
- ◇ Collide for youth - CommonGrounds, 6:30pm (ongoing)
- ◇ Adult Bible Studies - Library & Fellowship Hall, 6:45pm
- ◇ Women's Bible Study - Conference Room, 6:45pm
- ◇ 20Somethings Bible Study - CommonGrounds, 8:30pm

Regular Scheduled Activities

Sundays	
Morning Worship	8:30 & 11:00am
Morning Bible Study (all ages)	9:45am
Evening Bible Study (all ages)	5:30pm
7:17 Service	6:45pm
Mondays	
PAW Program	9:00am
Tuesdays	
Young @ Heart Activities	9:45am
Wednesdays	
PAW Program	9:00am
Wednesday Night Dinner	5:15pm
Collide (youth)	6:30pm
AWANA Club	6:30pm
Adult Bible Study	6:45pm
20Somethings	8:30pm
Fridays	
Chic time at Chic-Fil-A	9:00am
Saturdays	
Men's Coffee Group	7:30am
(Good Day Café, Grand Prairie)	

Financials through June 30, 2014

Budget Income	\$498,792
Budget Expense	(522,402)
Net Budget	\$(23,611)

Average Morning Attendance for August: 450
Average 7:17 Service Attendance for August: 230