**Always Ready Week 6**

**A Christian Perspective on Suffering:**

**Part One**

Reflect: Have you ever encountered suffering and questioned God’s providence or love *in some way* as a result?

Case Study: Captain Allen Francis Gardiner

"Mr Maidment was so exhausted yesterday that he did not rise from his bed till noon, and I have not seen him since; consequently, I tasted nothing yesterday. I cannot leave the place where I am, and know not whether he is in the body, or enjoying the presence of the gracious God whom he has served so faithfully. I am writing this at ten o'clock in the forenoon. Blessed be my heavenly Father for the many mercies I enjoy--a comfortable bed, no pain, or even cravings of hunger; though excessively weak, scarcely able to turn in my bed, at least, it is a very great exertion; but I am, by His abounding grace, kept in perfect peace, refreshed with a sense of my Saviour's love, and an assurance that all is wisely and mercifully appointed, and pray that I may receive the full blessing which it is doubtless designed to bestow. My care is all cast upon God, and I am only waiting His time and His good pleasure to dispose of me as He shall see fit. Whether I live or die, may it be in Him; I commend my body and my soul to His care and keeping, and earnestly pray that He will take my dear wife and children under the shadow of His wings, comfort, guard, strengthen, and sanctify them wholly, that we may together, in a brighter and eternal world, praise and adore His goodness and grace in redeeming us with His precious blood, and plucking us as brands from the burning, to bestow upon us the adoption of children, and make us inheritors of His heavenly kingdom. Amen.” -The final journal entry, 1951

*A Theology of Suffering*

Judges 6:1-14

1 Corinthians 1:27-29

Job 11:7-11

Romans 5:12

Reflect: How does sinful nature play a role in suffering? How does the cross of Christ help us in our suffering?

**Paul’s unique perspective:**

2 Timothy 1:12

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

Philippians 4:4

Isaiah 26:3

Revelation 21:4

*In what specific ways to these promises from God’s Word bring you comfort today?*

Learning to suffer well

1. Realize it will happen
2. Don’t be ashamed or afraid to express raw emotion and talk about your feelings.

 (2 Corinthians 1:8)

1. Remember who your real enemy is (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
2. Turn instead to the one who promises to turn even our most despairing moments into something eternally good and glorious. (Romans 8:28)
3. Believe that God can work on your heart and character through suffering.

“The faith that can’t be shaken is the faith that has been shaken” –Randy Alcorn

Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.

 -Isaiah 48:10