

## SUFFERING

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;” Philippians 1:29

This morning I want to talk about suffering for his sake, what things we might suffer, how God commands us to handle these sufferings, and what the purposes of these sufferings are for. I’m not talking about the suffering and shame that we endure for our sin. I want to talk about the suffering we endure for living godly. The fact is as sons of God, we are going to suffer either for sin, or for godliness. And its better that we suffer for godliness.

### The Suffering Christian

Philippians 1:29 (suffer for Christ’s sake)  
 II Thessalonians 1:4-5 (suffer for the kingdom of God’s sake)  
 I Timothy 4:10-11 (suffer reproach because we trust in God)  
 II Timothy 3:10-12 (the godly shall suffer persecution)  
 John 15:18-20 (persecution to come for the Christian)  
 John 16:33 (Ye shall have persecution)  
 Psalm 34:19 (many are the afflictions of the righteous)

### Examples of divers sufferings

II Corinthians 6:4-10 (a list of them)  
 I Corinthians 4:10-14 (written to warn us)  
 Philippians 3:4-8 (suffer loss of previous things once possessed by the old man)  
 Luke 12:51-53 (divisions and problems at home because of Jesus Christ)  
 James 5:10 (prophets’ examples of suffering affliction) The children of Israel in Egypt, Joseph, David and Saul  
 Job 1:1 (perfect, upright, feared God, eschewed evil)  
 Job 1:6-8 (The LORD speaks greatly of Job)  
 His servants die, sheep, camels taken, his sons die and Job blessed the name of the LORD. Job smitten with boils and doesn’t sin with his lips saying to his wife that we are to receive good and evil from the hand of the LORD.

### How are we to handle these sufferings?

I Peter 3:13-17 (be happy)  
 I Peter 4:14-16 (be happy for the Spirit of God rests upon you and glorify God on this behalf) --- in Acts, apostles rejoice because accounted worthy to suffer for his name  
 Talk about Kristy in parking lot  
 II Corinthians 12:10 (take pleasure in infirmities)

### Appointed unto afflictions

I Thessalonians 3:1-4 (appointed unto afflictions)  
 I Peter 2:20-25 (Called to suffer for doing well: just like Christ; How Christ reacted to these things is the way we are commanded to respond to these things)

Colossians 1:23-24 (fill up the afflictions of Christ for the church's sake)

II Corinthians 1:5 (the sufferings of Christ abound in us)

Isaiah 53:3,4,7 (these are the sufferings of Christ)

II Corinthians 1:7 (as we partake of the sufferings, so shall we of the consolation)

II Corinthians 4:8-11 (we are to bear in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus that his life might be made manifest in us)

### Why do we suffer?

Philippians 3:8-11 (to know him! And the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death)

To know the Lord we must read his word and also keep it.

I John 2:3 (we know him if we keep his commandments)

But you know what, in order to know him, we need to experience the things Christ experienced, not only the sweet fellowship of the Father, and the comforting of the Holy Ghost, but also his sufferings, and reproach.

Romans 13:14 (Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ)

Galatians 3:27 (we have put on Christ)

Galatians 2:20 (Christ liveth in me)

Don't you think if Christ lives in you, the world will treat you and say the same things they said to the Lord 2,000 years ago?

I Peter 4:12-13 (Don't think it strange)

You ever have anyone say to you, "You just walk one day in my shoes and you'll see what its like" or something like that? We can know about it from the outside but we truly do not know what it is like unless we have walked in that persons shoes, experiencing what that person experienced. So it is with Christ, we are to put him on, and go through what he went through, why? As Paul said in Philippians 3, that we might now him and the fellowship of his sufferings

Look at Ephesians 4:15 (We are to grow up into him) In Romans 8:29 we are predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

How can we expect to grow up into Christ without going through what he did? And he suffered.

Christ said to his disciples that it behooved him to suffer (Luke 24:46). The word behooved according to the 1828 dictionary means this – "To be necessary for; to be fit for; to be meet for, with respect to necessity, duty, or convenience."

Turn to Hebrews 2:10. Paul writes in Hebrews that the captain of our salvation was **made perfect through sufferings** (Hebrews 2:10). **Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered** (Hebrews 5:8-9).

In behooved him to be made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour [to help, aid, relieve from difficulty] them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:17-18).

As it behooved Christ to suffer first, then be glorified, so it is with us that we too are to first suffer, and then be glorified. As it behooved Christ to be made like unto us, so we too must be made like unto him. As he was made perfect through sufferings, even learning obedience thereby, so we too are made perfect through sufferings, even learning obedience to God thereby.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We too are sons of God by believing on him. If Christ was made perfect through sufferings, how much more does it behoove us to suffer that we might be perfect? If Christ learned obedience by the things which he suffered, how much more do you think particular sufferings, afflictions, persecutions, and temptations, are coming our way that we might learn obedience to God?

As soon as the Spirit descended upon the Lord, he was immediately driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. You know, as soon as the Holy Ghost comes upon us, we too are immediately found in temptations and persecutions.

I Peter 5:8-11 (after suffering awhile, make you perfect) Do you see how suffering is tied in to the perfecting of the saints? The Lord allows you to suffer down here for awhile in order to make you perfect, in order for you to understand WHAT GOD HAS GONE THROUGH! He came to his own and they received him not. He is continually pleading with this world yet they don't care. He manifests his love toward us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, yet the world just walks on by when we proclaim these things on the streets. When we suffer wrongfully we learn a little more about our Saviour. He suffered for the unjust and endured such contradiction of sinners against himself but he didn't respond. How many times do we share the word of the Lord with people and they don't care. Are you learning how Christ feels yet, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

When a redeemed son of God rebels against the Lord and sins against him, can you imagine what that does to the heart of God? Yet he's plenteous in mercy, and slow to anger. That is how we are supposed to be.

Look at II Thessalonians 1:4-10

#### Encouraged to suffer by the apostle Paul

II Timothy 1:7-8 (be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel)

Your labour is not in vain in the LORD

Why? Why did Paul say I'd rather glory in my infirmities, and distresses, and persecutions, and reproaches for Christ's sake?

#### The rewards for suffering

Mark10:29-30 (receive an hundredfold in this life WITH PERSECUTIONS)

Look at the end of Job. He received twice as much as what he had to begin with. Job 42:12 says that the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. We

need to consider our end, seeking those things that are above and setting our affections on things above, for where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.

Deuteronomy 32:29, "O that they were wise, *that* they understood this, *that* they would consider their latter end!"

II Timothy 2:8-13 (If we suffer, we shall reign with Jesus Christ)

Romans 8:16-18 (to be glorified with him)

Luke 6:22-23 (great reward in heaven for suffering)

Summation: The fact is that as sons of God we are going to suffer, whether for our sin in disobedience or for righteousness and Christ's sake. Hebrews 12:5-11 tells us that every son whom the Lord receiveth he chasteneth and scourgeth. All sons are partakers of this. By the way he does this for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. In Revelation 3:19 the Lord Jesus Christ says, As many as I love I rebuke and chasten. The Lord will correct you for your sin no doubt. If we sow to the flesh we are going to reap of the flesh corruption. But I ask you this question: **Would you rather suffer for sin, or for Christ's sake?** (we are going to suffer)

If we live godly we are going to suffer persecution just like Christ. You want to know the Lord more, forsake the things of world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, live godly for Christ sake, abhor that which is evil, cleave unto that which is good, and obey the voice of LORD thy God: be partakers of the afflictions of the gospel. Go out and proclaim the gospel of the grace of God. We have an opportunity to do that today. People might speak evil of you and curse you and think you're nuts, but **your Saviour won't think that of you**. They might look and stare and mock. Paul said in Galatians, Do I seek to please men, for if I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ.

Do you think preaching the gospel and keeping those things which are written in this book is going to please men? No. Do you think the world is going to respect you for preaching the gospel out in the streets, at work, at school? No. The condemnation of this world is that men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. You're not going to please men by living godly and preaching the word of truth. But I can tell you this, you'll please the Lord.

He'll look down and smile upon you. An obedient child, not ashamed of my name bearing my reproach: he'll be glad and rejoice that you are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ that did so much for you, saving you from a life of destruction and from the wrath of God. Suffering for him is worth it.

#### End of this Passage

II Corinthians 4:17 (this light affliction works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory)