

Christian Suffering (#02)

Peter writes to believers scattered all about the Roman Empire. He writes to answer questions about suffering and He writes to correct false ideas about God's plan

Questions: If God loves me, why does He allow me to suffer hardships and adversities?

- If my life is filled with adversity, doesn't that mean I am doing something wrong?
- Spiritual children want everything to go right and for life to be prosperous & pleasant.

False Ideas:

- If I do what God wants, He will in turn give me what I want;
- God loves me and wants me to be happy, so He will give me prosperity if I obey Him;
- If I believe enough, God will give me whatever I ask.

Why does God allow us to suffer? What are we to think about suffering and what are we to do in response to it?

There are three (3) Categories of Suffering for the Believer:

- **SIM;**
- **Divine Discipline;**
- **Sharing the suffering of Christ**

[Suffering references: 1:6-9; 2:19-25; 3:13-14; 4:1-2, 12-19; 5:6-11]

- 1. Christians can know joy in earthly suffering by adopting an eternal perspective.**
- 2. Bel's can rejoice in adversity knowing that proving the validity of God's word by trusting it under pressure results in praise, glory and honor in eternity 1Pt 1:7.**
- 3. It is God's will that believers participate in the production of a positive Christian witness by yielding to GHS under unjust treatment from corrupt legitimate authority.**

(1Pet 2:13-3:6) Christian influence in both social & personal realms is by submission to authority.

- (1Pet 2:13)** Submit to chain of governmental authority (Kings, Governors);
- (1Pet 2:18)** Slaves submit to masters (the good/considerate & the harsh);
- (1Pet 3:1)** Wives, likewise submit to husbands (even those not trusting the word).

- A. The adversity of selfish & unfair authority is one of the most difficult situations a believer can face – temptation is to react with anger and reject their authority.
- B. One of the greatest temptations believers face is to justify the rejection of legitimate authority when that authority is selfish, unjust and corrupt – Gov, Boss, and Husbands.
- C. We use the pain from harsh treatment from unfair treatment as our excuse to justify a lifestyle of rejecting authority – never fully yield to God but resist in subtle ways.
- D. We use the pain caused by harsh treatment from authority as our excuse to pursue illicit pleasures that distract us from truly resolving our anger toward authority.
- E. Living life as unto the Lord makes Him our authority and puts Him in control of all the authority over us – frees us to submit to legit authority as if they were the Lord.
- F. Peter explains that when we use our spiritual freedom to submit to legit auth, even to the unfair auth, it creates a witness that silences the critics of Christianity (2:15)
- G. Submission to legit authority by those under it, blesses all who are involved in the organization and makes it work as God intended.

H. Submission to legit authority creates a powerful witness of the reality of Christ to the others involved in the organization – demonstrates true faith in Christ and His word.

4. Suffering in the believer's life is an opportunity to follow the example of Jesus who responded to adversity by submitting to GF by submitting to legit human authority.

(1Pet 2:21) Called to suffering, Christ suffered for our sake, leaving us an example, giving us the opportunity to follow in His steps.

- Opportunity to follow – **epakoloutheo** A.A.Subj – you have the choice to follow or not
- A. The goal of spiritual growth is to become like Christ in the soul, to imitate His beliefs.
- B. Christ suffered in our place for our sake so that we could live with Him forever.
- C. He desires that we choose to grow spiritually so that we can desire to give ourselves back to Him, like He gave Himself for us –to give ourselves by choice.
- D. Peter explains that He set an example that we have the privilege of following.
Subjunctive Mood – sets up the possibility which is our opportunity to honor Christ.

5. One of the goals of the Christian life is to develop the capacity to love God enough to suffer for living righteously rather than suffering for living in sin.

1Pet 3:13-14 – eager to do good, even if you should suffer for doing righteousness.

Pascho P.A.Optative – the optative says I wish you were but I know you are not.

- A. Our initial belief system serves self and places self interest as the center.
- B. Spiritual growth involves laying self interest aside & replacing it with Christ interest.
- C. Spiritual growth builds the capacity for self sacrifice for the benefit of others.
- D. Growth prepares the believer to give himself by sharing the sufferings of Christ.
- E. Most of our suffering is because of our poor choices and bad decisions.
- F. Peter wishes these bel's were suffering for +R, but knows they are suffering for sin.

6. Spiritual growth to maturity motivates and enables us share the sufferings of Christ.

1Pet 4:1-4 arm yourself with the same attitude as Christ who suffered willingly

- A. Peter uses the phrase “he who has suffered in his body” to indicate believers who have reached spiritual maturity and are sharing the sufferings of Christ.
- B. These bel's have obeyed God, yielded to the Spirit when adversity has come to them.
- C. These bel's have abandoned their old life of unrestrained lust in every area of life.
- D. They have devoted their lives to pleasing God at any cost, even if it means to suffer.

7. Sharing sufferings of Christ reaps rewards for bel's at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

1Pet 4:12-19 – don't be surprised, it is not strange, rejoice when you share His suffering so you can be overjoyed when His glory is revealed, suffer acc to God's will, commit their souls to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

- A. When we suffer w/out causing it, it can be surprising and seem strange to us.
- B. We are allowed to share His sufferings – **koinoneo** – communion, participation
- C. Peter admonishes the readers to rejoice so they might be overjoyed at JSC.
 - Rejoice – P.A.Impv – a command that admonishes us to rejoice and not be unhappy
 - Overjoyed – **chairo** A.P.Subj + **agalliao** P.M.Ptc – periphrastic – rejoice while being very glad when you receive your rewards at the JSC.
- D. Peter says to surrender your soul to the Lord trusting Him for your life & future.

Paratithemi – place in front of – place your soul in front of God giving it for His use.

Acts 5:41 So they (Apostles) went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.