

The Gift of Undeserved Suffering **(wrapped in betrayal)**

Phil 1:29 “For to you grace has been given for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, **charizomai** – to be given a grace gift”.

How can suffering be considered a gift? Betrayal & suffering are only the wrapping, the gift is in how it serves our growth.

First century Israel was operating under the law that God had given them, but in a corrupted, criminal form. The leaders had twisted the laws and turned them against the common folk, to line their own pockets and keep power. Evil eventually corrupts all human governments and then turns them against the people of God. In USA, the church has enjoyed great freedom, but that is about to change, giving us the opportunity to be persecuted because we are in Christ.

1. God made human governments to protect freedom for the gospel to be preached freely

1Tim 2:2 - in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

Rom 13 – the government is a minister to control evil & maintain a stable environment.

- a. Governments are made up of sinful mankind who are easily tempted by greed – power
- b. Lucifer is constantly manipulating & influencing government to eliminate the church
- c. Eventually he will turn governments to his purposes to pretend that he can be like God
- d. The issue for God is not government or human freedom, it is the calling of the unsaved to be reconciled to Christ & the spiritual growth – momentum of His children
 - Evil government removes the temptation to trust in man – Jer.17:5-9

2. Even governments designed around divine principles are eventually compromised by the influence of evil & become anti-Christian

- a. The devil began to plot the destruction of the USA as soon as our constitution was ratified.
- b. The devil's goal is to use government to control the people instead of protecting freedom.
- c. He uses people's greed for power and money to entrap them, blackmail them or buy them off.
- d. Once he has trapped those in power with their hunger and greed, he uses them against those they swore to protect to control the people and hinder the church – legal betrayals of Christ

3. Corrupted Jewish and Roman governments tried to kill Jesus and destroy the early church.

Mt 26:3 - Jewish leaders plotted together about how they might take Jesus in secret and kill Him

- a. The Jewish legal system came from God and the Roman system was the best of its day
- b. Both Jewish and Roman legal systems were corrupted because of those in positions of power
- c. Innocent Jesus went through 7 Jewish and Roman legal hoops before taken to be crucified

Jn 18:12-23	before Annas the real high priest of Israel.
Jn 18:24	before Caiaphas the official high priest.
Lk 22:66-71	before the Sanhedrin.
Jn 18:28-38	before Pilate the first time.
Lk 23:6-12	before Herod.
Jn 18:39-19:6	before Pilate second time.
Jn 19:15	before the people

4. **God allows mature believers the gift of sharing in the sufferings of Christ – persecution for the name of Christ, deprived, imprisoned, execution.**

1 Peter 3:14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear them nor fear the trouble they cause - 4th class condition – I wish it, but it's not true
Vs 14 suffering for the sake of +R is sharing the Lord's suffering – **you are blessed**
Vs 14 do not fear them nor the trouble they will surely bring to your life.

- a. Suff/Christ is beyond normal adversities that both believer and unbeliever experience.
- b. Suff/Christ is the pressures applied to the believer from forces of evil attempting to destroy his/her spiritual momentum & testimony.

Ex: political forces targeting believers, closing churches, forbidding certain messages

Act 8:1 - great persecution against the church – Saul: **diogmos** – to be chased down; harassment

John 16:33 - In the world you have tribulation; **thlipsis** – troubles brought on by evil

5. **Different forms & aspects of Suffering for Christ**

Hebrews 10:32-34 “But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, ³³ partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. ³⁴ For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one”.

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| a. Sufferings | pathema | passion, extreme suffering – passion of Christ |
| b. Spectacle | theatrizo | theatre, used for public entertainment |
| c. Reproaches | oneidismos | verbal abuse, unjustified insults, sneering, mocking |
| d. Tribulations | thlipsis | troubles |

6. **What are the blessings of enduring the sufferings of Christ?**

- a. Spiritual growth – Rom 5:3-5, Jam 1:2-4, Rom 8:28 only works for those with truth
 - Adversity and loss expose our faith in the earthly producing (anger, fear, disappointment, self-pity) giving us the opportunity to let go and cling to God; nothing in this life is permanent.
 - Adversity is our opportunity to express Christian virtue in us from the word and God, The Holy Spirit (trust, peace, confidence, rejoice) to witness to angels and mankind about His wisdom
- b. Become a public spectacle – Heb 10:33 – **theatrizo** – public theatre to bring attention to the promises and principles of God's word working through a believer's life.
- c. Become a public drama to teach angels about grace and mercy 1Cor 4:9; Eph 3:10 teach the wisdom of God to fallen angels – Suff/Christ is the greatest witness in the Angelic Conflict...
- d. Utilize and reveal God's power – 2Tim 1:8
- e. Better Reward Heb 10:34 – you will receive a better possession in eternity

7. **Christian behavior for the believer enduring the adversities of suffering for Christ**

1Pt 2:18-24 – **Ex of Jesus suffering unjustly** – submission to unjust legit authority, no sin or deceit, while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.

Jam 5:10-11 – enduring through trusting the promises of God while being patient with people

Rom 12: 14-21 – bless those who persecute you, overcome evil with good....