

Are You Doing God's Will Part 6 Suffering for Christ

“1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: 4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: 5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. 6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. 7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” (1 Peter 4:1-7 KJV)

It is a challenge what Peter wrote about the life of man in Christ: ***“2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.” (1 Peter 4:2 KJV)*** **Suffering in the flesh is the calling of Jesus into the life of every believer. Suffering entails walking in the narrow way. Suffering entails forfeiting the pleasure in this world. Suffering entails leaving behind our emotions, our plans, our ambitions, and turn to God and walk in the plan that He prepared for us.**

“1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin: ” (1 Peter 4:1 KJV) Christ the King of glory He left His Heavenly dwelling being at the right hand of God the Father and came down unto the earth and became poor for our sake, ***“9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:9 KJV)*** He came to make us rich but He sent those who are rich to be empty, ***“53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.” (Luke 1:53 KJV)*** **The Lord is not against riches but He is against people who use riches for the lust of the flesh.** God gives riches and blessing to everyone, to give relief to us in satisfying our needs and in order to be employed in His Kingdom. Christ came from Heaven and became poor and suffered for us in order to relieve us from our trials and troubles. Christ is the Creator but He did not spend much on Himself or lavish much on His body while He was on earth. Christ came to do the will of God and He suffered and persevered in doing that.

Apostle Peter said, ***“arm yourselves likewise with the same mind”*** toward what you are heading and what your eyes is focus on. The mind of worldly people focus about eating food, being merry, partying, hoping for new experiences, getting silver and gold, lot of accessories, fame, sensualities, beauties and the like. Christ when He came to earth He suffered, endured all those temptations and He overcame, ***“18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:18 KJV)*** Christ being the Creator, came down from Heaven, suffered, tasting death on the cross, but He overcame as God raised Him from the death, becoming the captain of our salvation, ***“9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. 10 For it became him,***

for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” (Hebrews 2:9-10 KJV) Therefore as He was perfected through suffering, then He is able to help us and save us from all the temptations that we are passing through as we put our trust and confidence on Him, arming ourselves likewise with the same mind of Christ, that we no longer should live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

“for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin”: **When we are willingly refusing to allow our flesh to get indulge in the worldly practices and pleasure we are indirectly combating and ceasing from the life of sin.** Jesus said about His second coming linking it with the event of destruction due to sin on the old world at the time of Noah, and upon Sodom and Gomorrah, ***“26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.” (Luke 17:26-29 KJV)*** Note, the Lord judged the following: ***“They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, they bought, they sold, they planted, and they builded.”*** The verbs actions that God judged are ‘eat, drank, married wives, they were in marriage, bought, sold, planted and they built.’ There is no clear cut sinful act as stealing, telling lies, committing murder, or adultery. But what is apparent is that they were living their lives and giving full vent to the lust of the flesh. Not denying their flesh the pleasure of food, the lust of the flesh toward the other gender in marrying what they likes and wants, doing their own will in starting new business, in selling and buying, and in planting and building what they want. They showed no restraint toward what God wanted them to do by following the dictation of their own will. They did not allow their flesh to suffer by any mean, and in such they were abound in their sins. In the same way today being so conscious to satisfy all the desire of the flesh is the way to allow the sinful nature to take over the move in our lives. **The more we give the way to the flesh, then the more we are abounding in sin.**

“for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin”: **The call of God today in our lives is to be away from sin and the way we do that is by refraining from pleasures as much as we can and to deny the desire of the sinful flesh.** The story of the rich man and Lazarus speaks about the reason that the rich man was judged and was sent to hell.

“19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they

pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” (Luke 16:19-31 KJV) The reason that Abraham stated to that rich why he was in hell is what we can read in verse 25, “*But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” (Luke 16:25 KJV)* He was sent to hell because he did not allow his body to suffer. He received the best of all the good things during his life right to his death. He denied himself no pleasure. That rich man was not judged because he did not help the poor Lazarius, but his insensitivity to live a simple life and not to heed the good example of Lazarius was the reason of his judgment. We are not saying here that we should not help the poor, but it was not the reason for that rich man to be condemned to hell.

The rich man request for Lazarius to wet his tongue was refused by Abraham, explaining to him that there is a great gulf fixed between them. Upon hearing that, he again requested that Lazarius to be sent to his house so he can tell his five brothers not to come to that place, “*28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. “ (Luke 16:28 KJV)* The rich man had left behind him five brothers who had witnessed how he had lived in luxury. Certainly with what Abraham confronted him with, then he was a bad example to them and he wanted to correct them by sending Lazarus to them to tell them the truth in what place their brother was ended. But, “*29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” (Luke 16:29 KJV)* The prophets of the Old Testament and the New Testament Apostles and saints are the very good example to us today to live away from worldliness and to live a simple life that pleases God with willingness to suffer for Him. The style of life that the rich man was living was contradicting the Word of God and the style that Moses and the prophets declared in God’s Word.

Now it is clearer why we need to embrace the theme of suffering for Christ, because in such a way we will be assured that we will be quitting from sin. As well as with such mind and attitude we are becoming a good example to others in living a simple life, away from worldliness, away from the lust of the flesh, accepting trials as ordained by God for us, persevering in all holiness and godliness, inviting others to follow our examples as we follow the example of Christ.

“2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.” (1 Peter 4:2 KJV) The rich man that God allowed him to have much it was not for him to indulge and get merely enjoy with the excess that God gave him. * **Certain times God give much but that does not mean we will spend all just to vent them all for the flesh, but to be considerate and spend wisely what is ordained for the life situation to spend and not in the measure of the excess that God gave. * And in certain time God give trials and suffering, and that does not mean to grumble and be angry with God, not accepting what He gave you from hard times, struggles and challenges.**

Willingly we should organize ourselves to live within the limits of the will of God. Living for the will of God is our willingness to suffer for the sake of God and bear the pain in order that His Word, His commands and His plans to come true in our lives.

“3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:” (1 Peter 4:3 KJV) It is the right time for us now to quit the life of sin and be willing to suffer in our flesh for the sake of God and Christ our Lord. It is much time in the past that we had lived in sin and did the will of those who do not know God; therefore now is the time to quit the sinful life of the Gentiles who do not follow God, who walk in transgressions to the commands of God. Now is the time to quit the following sinful acts:

1. **Lasciviousness:** Unbridled lust, excess, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence.
2. **Lusts:** Desire, craving, or longing for what is forbidden.
3. **Excess of wine:** Drunkenness.
4. **Revellings:** Riotous procession after drinking in the street, yelling and singing.
5. **Banquetings:** Indulgence in parties and spending much in inviting others on food and drinks.
6. **Abominable idolatries:** Abominable is contrary to law and justice. Prohibited by the law of God. Those who practice them are doing criminal things against God.

God is merciful on us, who waited patiently for us till we are out of all these wicked things, and He included us in Christ Jesus the time we gave our lives to God. Therefore we should consider His mercy and not to go back to the old life.

“4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:” (1 Peter 4:4 KJV) Following Christ is not only that we should come out of all these wicked things as we described, but following God means to be in contradiction to those whom are doing all these evil things. The very same people that they are doing all what we described of evil practices, they would ultimately sees us changed and become strange to what they were seeing in us before. **Coming to Christ is not only to be changed in character, attitudes or life’s habit but even to be willing to be considered bad to our previous companions and friends.** They might be even tempted to speak evil against us; ignited by Satan to speak bad against our new conduct and against our commitment to God, but we need to bear that and persevere knowing that God shall vindicate us.

“5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.” (1 Peter 4:5 KJV) Those who speak evil against us because we left them and left the evil ways, in order to follow Christ, they will give an account of all what they do or speak against us to Christ Himself. We need to understand that Christ is seeing everything and He is watching us and what we are passing through from suffering. Those who persecute us, they will face Christ and His judgment against them, either in this life or in the life to come. **The Lord in sending His judgment on those who trouble us, the purpose of that is to relieve us, and to discipline them, so the pain that they will be inflicted with, may contribute to their repentance. That is how He shows His love toward us to relieve us so we can continue to serve Him, and that is how He shows His love toward those who are against us.** In His judgment on them He is giving them the opportunity to repent and escape the wrath of God, *“9 The Lord is not slack concerning*

his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9 KJV) Their failure of repentance will bring them to the final judgment of God, *“8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8 KJV)*

“5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.” (1 Peter 4:5 KJV) The quick are those who are still living and have the breath of life and can decide and have the opportunity to repent. In judging them while they are still living they will undergo a temporal judgment that may contribute to their change and conversion. The dead are those who expired and are waiting for the final judgment of God, *“28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” (John 5:28-29 KJV)* *“8 The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.” (Psalm 7:8 KJV)* *“11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.” (Psalm 7:11 KJV)* *“11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.” (Psalm 58:11 KJV)*

“6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” (1 Peter 4:6 KJV) The purpose of preaching the gospel that everyone will have the opportunity to hear the truth and will be given the chance to repent and turn to God. The gospel is the good news that God will allow every man to hear His Word and His will. Both the Old Testament and New Testament saints were and are directed toward the ways of God that they need to live and adopt to be saved.

“For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead”: With such statement it is clear that everyone who lived on earth the Lord had revealed or will reveal His Word to him or to her. The Word of God was preached to those who lived on earth. God in His mercy had given the chance to every human that He created to hear the message that He ought to know in order to heed.

“That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” The judgment of the flesh is the opinion of man about man, and is all about the external appearance of man (beauty, strength, education, riches, fame, race, etc.) But the judgment of God is different from the judgment of man. God will not judge according to man’s standard and biases. God has His Word that He will use to apply judgment on man. Those who lives according to the standard of God’s Word are alive with God even they are dead in their flesh, and those who live for the lust of the flesh to please their sinful nature they are dead even they are alive in body, and they will pass into the judgment of God in hell after their soul will depart from their body upon their death.

The events of life might bring much temptations and arguments about these points that we discuss. *“7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” (1 Peter 4:7 KJV)* People may move toward honoring the judgment of man, and devil will tempt the people more to depart and to forget the judgment according to the standard of

God’s Word. Therefore there will be a time the believers in Christ might pass through confusion, tempted to go lax toward God’s Word standard, therefore the apostle’ warning is directed to the church, to endure in the way of suffering, and in living away from worldliness toward the standard of God’s ways of Judgment.

“But the end of all things is at hand:” The apostle is saying to the saints, You had suffered much and the time had come to an end, therefore be tempted not to leave your position in Christ and what you were able to achieve. Christ coming is becoming nearer than before, and what He had given to us from His Word is a sure guidance for us in this life: *“19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:” (2 Peter 1:19 KJV)*

“But the end of all things is at hand:” The apostle reminding the believers to be more patient and more persevering because the end is near; it is at hand. They had waited much and suffered lot, and now the time for rewarding. The Word of God inspires us that we had passed through most of the suffering and we are nearer to the end of it more than before. Therefore we will be richly rewarded if we do not give up. Therefore, *“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.” (Hebrews 10:35 KJV)*

“be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” For this reason to pass the period of temptation, they needed, and we need, to *be sober, and watch unto prayer*. Sober is to be of sound mind and know how to analyze events and take sound decisions. Sober is to exercise self-control. The man that Jesus delivered from the legion of demons the people found him in his right mind, *“15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.” (Mark 5:15 KJV)* To be sober is the way to face the attacks of the evil one. Satan would oppose us and try to confuse us, that is why we need to keep our minds sober. That is why Paul instructed Titus that *“6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.” (Titus 2:6 KJV)*

“be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” Peter recommended further, to pass the period of temptation, is to watch unto prayer. To watch is to be calm, discrete and able to concentrate and pick up events and conclusions while you are watching. *“watch unto prayer”*, is to be able to pick up correct conclusions and make sound decisions that we can bring them to the Lord in prayer. *“6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” (1 Thessalonians 5:6 KJV)* *“8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” (1 Thessalonians 5:8 KJV)* *“8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5:8 KJV)* *“13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13 KJV)* Paul advised Timothy. *“5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:5 KJV)* Watchful in prayer is to be ready and prepared to take certain important decisions and actions that will forward you toward the mission and the purpose of God in the life of God’s church and God’s people.

My dear and beloved: . Suffering according to the will of God should be our goal and aim in all our Christian walk, and we need to keep that by committing and yielding our lives and our

souls fully to Him, to take us and keep us in the way that He want us to go. In pain He is there to sooth us, in opposition He is suffering with us, in suffering He is our hope and inspire us unto prayer until we will meet with Him in the clouds, ***“18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:18 KJV)***

Let us pray

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the death to give me eternal life. Lord I thank you for your word that makes me understand the way that you want me to live my life for you.*

Let us repent and renounce all our sins _____. Let us come out from worldliness and from friendship with the world, and let us renounce all our previous sins and evil practices.

Lord, I commit my life to you being willing to stand for the truth, willing to face sins, corruption and compromises inside and outside your church. Lord empower me with the Holy Spirit and encourage me when people says lot of things against me because of your Word and the truth. Lord I commit myself to live the life of prayer that you want me to involve with. Lord sustain me and provide for me so I can continue to serve you.

Lord I pray for my brethren who committed their lives to serve you, protect them from the evil one and from persecution and accusation. Lord give them more fruit of the Holy Spirit and give them the needed Spiritual gifts to go on and serve you.

Lord, refill us once again with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need in our lives. Lord enable us to evangelize and reach new people with the Gospel and the message of Jesus Christ. Lord fills us with love, mercy, justice and righteousness and enable us to plant new Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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