

Suffering Part 1 Following the Good Example of Christ

“21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” (1 Peter 2:21-23 KJV)

Suffering is one of the things that God allowed and ordained for us to pass through. Some people they would surprise and astonished why God allowed suffering to come into their lives. But the truth is that every human born of woman is ordained for him or her to pass through suffering.

The purpose of suffering in your life is as the following:

I. To teach you obedience: “8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8 KJV) Here in this Scripture is speaking about Christ, that even He was the Son of God that He learned obedience by the suffering He passed through and what God had allowed of hardship on Him while He was in the flesh. **Suffering is the hardship that God allowed for you to pass through to discipline you in order for you to learn obedience.**

II. To lead you to crucify your sinful nature: Everyone should pass through the cross of Jesus to crucify his own sinful nature. The purpose of each trial of suffering is to crucify part of the human flesh. Every time you pass through suffering, like sickness, pain, hard work, working over long hours, losing big amount of money, losing a person near to you through death or separation, or having problem and dispute with certain peoples; through all these painful events God is cutting some of your sinful flesh like cutting your emotions, your bad habits, your over spending and over sleeping, cutting your much eating and your laziness, cutting your anger and gossips, cutting your watching TV and the rest of the Media that you are involved with, cutting certain types of food or certain taste, and the rest until you are cleansed from the works of the flesh and can testify, ***“20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20 KJV)***

III. To keep you from becoming conceited: God allows suffering in your life to humble you and prevent you from being proud and boastful. Paul said, ***“7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” (2 Corinthians 12:7 KJV)*** God allowed a suffering in the life of Paul to prevent him from being conceited. The same might be for you today that your suffering is a treatment of your pride and arrogance. Before the trial that you are passing through you are boastful but after the trial that God allowed you to pass through you are humble.

IV. To enable you to live with the grace of God: Suffering will lead you and make you rely more on God's grace and His provision in your life. The Holy Spirit will minister to you through the period of suffering. Paul said about his suffering, ***“7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For***

this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9 KJV) The suffering of Paul with the thorn in the flesh that God allowed to come to him most likely was through his eyes' sickness to cause him struggle in his life and ministry. Paul pleaded to God repeatedly about it, up to three times to let that thorn in the flesh to depart from him, but God did not remove it but told him that through His grace he can handle his life and ministry with that thorn in flesh as He said to Paul, ***“My grace is sufficient for thee.”*** In the same way, whatever struggle in your body and limitations in your health, and you are pleading with God to remove, God may remove it but if not then God has His grace for you and He wants you through that grace that is sufficient for you to overcome the struggle that God allowed you to be in. ***“My grace is sufficient for thee”***, and through that grace then you are victorious in Him and God shall continue to use you to accomplish that purpose that He ordained in your life.

For even hereunto were ye called: Sometimes you think it is strange for you to pass through suffering forgetting that God when He called you, part of this calling is your suffering for Him. ***“29 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 KJV)*** * Your calling to Christ is to believe on Him and to suffer for Him. Therefore believing without suffering or to escape suffering is not recognized in Christ. It is easy to believe and follow Christ without suffering, but it is attested and approved if you continue to follow Christ and serve Him and do His will while you are in the mid of suffering. * Those who regress in trials and refuse to cooperate and continue they are not in Christ. Therefore take heed, keep your integrity and continue to follow Christ and serve Him while you are in suffering to approve your faith in Him.

About Christ suffering as you read in ***1 Peter 2:21-23: “21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” (1 Peter 2:21-23 KJV)*** You will set good example to others when you observe the following in your suffering:

1. Don't sin: “Who did no sin,” Christ when He was hanged on the cross did not sin. **Therefore you need to control yourself and to continue to live in holiness while you are passing through trials. Sin should not rule over your life.**

2. Don't speak bad: “neither was guile found in his mouth.” Christ when He was hanged on the cross did not speak bad words to those who crucified Him. **Therefore keep your heart clean and pure toward those who harmed you and toward everyone. Control also your mouth and do not utter any bad word to those who harm you. You may describe to them what they did but do not use bad words and keep your heart clean and in such you follow Christ's example.**

3. Don't retaliate and threaten others: “when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not.” Christ when He was on the cross, even He is God, did not threaten people with His power and authority, but He behaved as an ordinary man. **In the same way even others sin against you but you need to control yourself and continue to live in holiness. You can avoid them and move away from their territory to protect yourself, but never**

think or try to harm them or revenge of the harm that they inflicted on you. You must also know that your retaliation will bring you more pain and more suffering. As well as never use your power and resources to threaten, revenge and retaliate but use them to protect yourself and those who are in Christ with you.

4. Entrust yourself to God who judges justly: *“but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”* Christ when He was on the cross surrendered His will to God and was willing to go through that kind of cruel and painful death. He did not revenge or hurt those who harmed Him. * In the same way surrender your full will to God and do not allow your flesh to manipulate this important period of suffering in your life, but rather be willing to go along the way and the style and scenario that God had ordained for you to live. * You do not need to revenge of those who harmed you, but placed them in the hand of God who is able to deal with them and revenge on your behalf, *“19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” (Romans 12:13 KJV)*

For suffering as compared to Christ suffering on the cross you will pass through three stages:

Stage 1, the stage before the cross: The time that you would come to know that you are going to face certain suffering or trial in life. At this stage do not try to avoid or complain or retaliate to be deviated from passing through the cross of Jesus. Some they suffer at this stage because they will do their best to avoid suffering and such measures which they will do shall add more to their suffering. Hard work or a challenge of trial is what God ordain for you to pass through in order that His will and purpose in your life shall be achieved. You must know also that the more you avoid passing through it the more you are suffering. Therefore do it willingly and without force so that you will suffer less. About Christ, *“8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:8 KJV)* Christ as He came to know about God’s will for Him to pass through the cross, no one forced Him, but willingly He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. In whatever trial that God is leading you to pass through pray and tell God; ‘Lord I am willing but please I need you to help me.’ God will not allow you to pass through it alone, but the Holy Spirit shall be with you and will bring you in and will take you out of it, and fulfilling what God had ordained for you.

Stage 2, the stage of the cross: This is the time that you find yourself in the mid of the problem and you are on the cross of suffering and you cannot go out of it. What you need to do at this stage is to follow the above four steps:

1. Don’t sin.
2. Don’t speak bad.
3. Don’t retaliate and threaten others.
4. Entrust yourself to God who judges justly.

Your obedience to the above instructions will secure to you a fruitful and safe outcome of whatever trials that you are passing through.

Stage 3, the stage after the cross: This is the stage after you pass through the hard and painful trial. * In this stage you ought to glorify God and magnify Him and thank Him to the painful

cross that He allowed you to pass though to cleanse you and makes you a better person. * Do not be like other people who continue to act negatively and continue to grumble and complain after passing the stage of the cross. Instead be able and willing to use the good things of the previous trials that you passed through in the present trial that you are in and use them to glorify God and to testify about His goodness to others.

Let us continue to speak about suffering and how to manage suffering in following the example of Christ. *“13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.” (1 Peter 2:13-14 KJV)* The authorities in the world that God had placed around us and over us they might be the source for our suffering by their injustice rules and by their abuses. But how the way out? It mentioned in verse 14 about these authorities the following: *“and for the praise of them that do well.”* So when you do still right and as the following: 1. Don’t sin. 2. Cleanse your heart and don’t speak bad. 3. Don’t retaliate and threaten others. 4. Entrust yourself to God who judges justly, then the same people who are bad they will commend you. Therefore you need to remember that while you are in the mid of the suffering and hanged on the cross of the trial, that in doing good you will receive the commendation from those who are the source of your suffering. This is amazing and this is the truth: *“15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” (1 Peter 3:15 KJV)* The foolish men are the evil people who are bringing suffering into your life. And how you will face them? By doing good, and in this way you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.

“16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.” (1 Peter 2:16 KJV) You may say, ‘I am free in Christ,’ but freedom in Christ does not give you the freedom to sin or to abuse the grace of God and do evil. The grace of God is given to us to overcome trials in doing good, and not to cover our sins when we do evil.

Peter was writing to the church in Rome who was persecuted and he told them: *“17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.” (1 Peter 2:17 KJV)* The brethren of the church in Rome were persecuted by the king and Peter still reminded them to honor and respect the king because in doing so they can silence the attack of devil and change the attitude of those who persecuted them for their benefit. In the same way we still need to honor those who are in the government authorities and pray for them and do what is good as we learned from Christ’s example, so we will be blessed by God and commended by the government authority.

“18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.” (1 Peter 2:18-19 KJV) Even in facing injustice or abuse, you can ameliorate that by still continuing doing the good as we learned from Christ’s example, and God shall reward you for such kind of action and attitude.

“20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” (1 Peter 2:20 KJV) * When you do wrong you will receive the penalty that is due for that and that is correct and you deserve it. But when you receive the same hurt when you did and while you are doing good then that is commendable before God. In this way as you are following and

abiding with the same steps of Jesus and following His good example then you shall be rewarded for all the hurt you received and God shall deal with those who harmed you..

My dear and Beloved: Let us come to God, let us humble ourselves and accept the teaching that we received in this message. Let us humble ourselves and accept the sufferings and the trials that God had placed us in and let us be thankful to Him for the grace that He had given to us to endure them. Let us take heed of the good example of Christ and to follow Him and do good as we learned that from Him. Let us honor God by reading the Scriptures and applying them in our lives. Let us honor the government authorities who are above us. Let us surrender ourselves to God, let us be willing to give up our will and our plans and be willing to do the will of God and to comply with the plan that he has for us. Let us also be ready to testify about His goodness and what the great things that He had done for us.

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 dead to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your grace that you gave to me to endure the trials that you allowed me to pass through. Lord thank you for the teaching, the rebukes, the corrections and the new way of life that you opened my eyes to follow in my life.*

Come now to God, repent and renounce all your sins. Repent of your anger, hatred, the grudges you have in your heart, speaking bad words, non forgiveness, trying to revenge and retaliate with those who harmed you. Repent of your lack of submission to authorities. Confess your bad attitude and your bad example to others. Renounce your worldliness and your love for material things. Confess and renounce all the works of the flesh in your life. Repent of your pride, boasting and arrogance. Repent of your grumbling and complains. Repent of your non willingness to serve God and to suffer for Christ. Repent of doing your own will and plan and not the will of God and His plan. Lord forgive me, I repent of the following sins

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Lord I commit myself to abide with your Word in doing your will and whatever you had planned for me. Lord I am willing to pass through the way that you ordained for me to pass through. Lord help me to endure the suffering that I am about to pass through, knowing that it is your will for me in Christ Jesus. Lord help me to overcome the following trial in my life
_____. *Lord fill me with your Holy Spirit and let your grace be sufficient for me to endure all of that, this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.*

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who repented and committed themselves to live for you in following your example Lord Jesus. Lord protect them from the evil one and fight their enemies on their behalf. Lord give them more fruit of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness, faith, meekness, perseverance, self-control, and long suffering so people will see Christ in their lives. Lord bless them, sustain them, and provide all their needs so they will continue to serve you.

Lord help us as your church to continue to teach according to your Word and will. Lord go before us and lead us to streets, buildings, cities, villages to reach new people, to bring Jesus into their lives, and that our life example will be attractive to others to know you and to follow

you. Lord refills us once again with the Holy Spirit so that we can go and evangelize and make new disciples and complete the work that you ordained for us to do. Lord protects us from the evil one and provides our needs to continue to serve you and to continue to stand firm for the truth. Lord helps us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us and enlarge our territory let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that 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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