

Suffering for Christ's Sake

Philippians 1:28-30

Gen 3:17-19 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Rom 8:22-23 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but **we ourselves**, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, **groan inwardly** as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Acts 14:21-22 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that **through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**

Luke 22:31-32 "Simon, Simon, behold, **Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,** ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

John 16:33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation.** But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Psalms 84:5-6 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. ⁶ **As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs;** the early rain also covers it with pools.

Phil 1:21-26 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴ But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

Phil 1:27-30 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹ **For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,** ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

ἐχαρίσθη¹ - χαρίζομαι – give or grant freely as a favor

Phil 3:8-11 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and **may share his sufferings**, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Rom 8:16-18 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **provided we suffer with him** in order that we may also be glorified with him. ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

I. The nature of the believers suffering

Three reactions to suffering

- Focus on self and on the desire to avoid suffering
- Suffering for yourself and your goals
- Suffering for Christ's sake

A. Suffering because of circumstances

1. Health
2. Financial problems
3. Mistreatment by people
4. Natural disasters
5. Tragic accidents

¹ verb indicative aorist passive 3rd person singular from **χαρίζομαι**

B. Suffering because of faithfulness to God

1 Cor 9:25-27 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Rom 7:22-24 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

C. Suffering because of ministry

1. Suffering from stress and pressure

2 Cor 11:27-29 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?

Gal 4:19 my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!

Col 1:28-29 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

2. Suffering from opposition and persecution

2 Tim 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

2 Cor 11:24-26 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers;

Three reactions to suffering

- Focus on self and on the desire to avoid suffering
- Suffering for yourself and your goals
- Suffering for Christ's sake

II. The distinctiveness of suffering for Christ's sake

Phil 1:27-30 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Rom 8:16-18 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Suffering for the sake of Christ is suffering in which we seek the interests of Christ.

A. Becoming like Jesus

In every circumstance, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I draw closer to God through them?
- Do I know Him deeper?
- Do I learn to trust Him more?
- Do I grow in hoping in Him?

1 Pet 1:6-7 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Job 42:5-6 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; ⁶ therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

2 Cor 7:10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

2 Cor 4:16-18 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Heb 5:8-9 Although he was a son, **he learned obedience through what he suffered.**⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

B. Proclamation of Jesus

1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1 Pet 2:11-12 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

1 Cor 9:19-23 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law.²¹ To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law.²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.²³ I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

Acts 20:23-24 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.²⁴ But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

1 Pet 3:14-15 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

C. Transformation of others to be like Jesus

Gal 4:19 my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!

1. Redemptive relationships

1 Pet 2:19-24 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

2. Committed prayer

James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

3. Patient and humble instruction

Gal 6:1-3 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

So, in any difficulty and suffering, ask yourself three questions:

- Do they draw me closer to God, making me more like Christ?
- Do I witness about Christ in them?
- Do I help others to know Christ and live by Him?

III. The triumph of suffering for Christ's sake

Phil 1:27-30 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

2 Cor 2:14-16 But thanks be to God, who **in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession,** and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. ¹⁵ For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, ¹⁶ to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

Rom 8:16-18 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.** ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.