

“Suffering In Christ!”
2 Corinthians 1:5

Introduction:

1. “Suffering” - Not A Word We Like To Hear Or Experience!
 - Definition - “To Feel Pain Or Distress; To Sustain Loss, Injury, Harm Or Punishment; To Tolerate Or Endure Evil, Injury, Pain, Sickness Or Even Death.” (American Heritage Dictionary)
 - Everyone Will Experience Some Kind Of Suffering!
 - Suffering Is Part Of The Result Of Sin Entering Into The World!
 - Genesis 3:16-19 - “Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”
 - And, Because “All Have Sinned” (Romans 3:23) All Will Experience Suffering - Even Those Who Have Committed Their Lives To Jesus Christ!
2. But How Should A Christian Deal With Suffering?
 - Christians Often Experience The Same Suffering As Non-Christians - But How Should A Christian Deal With Suffering?
 - When A Christian Suffers, That Person Suffers In Jesus Christ!
 - When A Christian Suffers, That Person Participates With The Sufferings Of Jesus Christ!
 - When A Christian Suffers, That Person Will Suffer Differently Than A Non-Christian!
3. How Should Suffering For A Christian Be Different Than Suffering For A Non-Christian?
 - When You Suffer In Christ, You Will Suffer With A Different Objective, With A Different Outlook, And With A Different Outcome!

1. *When You Suffer, Do You Suffer With A Different Objective?*

- **IE:** Elementary School “Run-A-Thons” - Used To Raise Money By Getting Sponsors - Prizes For The Most Laps Too - More Athletic Students In My Class Wanted To Win - I Just Wanted To Make It Through The Half-Hour Time Period - Same Race - Different Objectives - Our Objectives Influenced How We Ran The Race!
 - Christians Often Experience The Same Sufferings As Non-Christians!
 - In Fact, Christians Often Experience More Sufferings Than Non-Christians!
 - But When You Suffer In Christ, You Can Suffer With A Different Objective!
- You May Suffer Sickness!
 - **IE:** According To The National Cancer Institute, 45.19% Of Men And 38.67% Of Women Will Be Diagnosed With Some Type Of Cancer In Their Lifetime! (SEER Cancer Statistics Review 1975-2000) According To A Study By The Franklin Institute, “Today, More Than One In Five Americans Suffer From Some Form Of Cardiovascular Disease, With More Than 2,500 Americans Dying From It Each Day”!
 - Christians Experience Illness & Weakness Like Everyone Else!
 - But Your Objective Will Be Different!
 - **IE:** Fanny Crosby Became Blind When She Was 6 Weeks Old - She Came To Know The Lord Jesus As Her Savior, And Eventually Wrote Over 8,000 Hymns - She Wrote: “It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me!”
 - The Apostle Paul Suffered Physically - But He Had A Different Objective!
 - 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 - “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. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it

might depart from me. 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. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

- His Objective Was Not To Be Physically Strong, But To Be Strong In The Lord!

- You May Suffer Poverty!

- **IE:** On September 2, 2003, In Ranchi, India, A Man With His Wife And 4 Children Poisoned Themselves To Death, By Putting Pesticides In Their Dinner - Sukra Pahan, Age 40, Was Often Out Of Work - His Neighbors Said He Was Fed Up With His Family's Condition And The Daily Fights Over Food (Yahoo! India News)

- Christians Experience Poverty & Financial Problems Like Everyone Else!

- But Your Objectives Will Be Different!

- **IE:** "In Bristol, England, George Muller operated an orphanage for two thousand children. One evening he became aware that there would be no breakfast for them the next morning. Muller called his workers together and explained the situation. Two or three prayed. "Now that is sufficient," he said. "Let us rise and praise God for prayer answered!" The next morning they could not push open the great front door. So they went out the back door and around the building to see what was keeping it shut. Stacked up against the front door were boxes filled with food. One of the workers later remarked, "We know Who sent the baskets, but we do not know who brought them!" (Our Daily Bread, 11/30/93)

- The Apostle Paul Suffered Financially - But He Had A Different Objective!

- Philippians 4:11-12 - "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

- His Objective Was Not To Be Financially Rich, But To Be Rich In The Lord!

- You May Suffer In Other Ways! (Through Temptation / Persecution)

- But Your Objectives Will Be Different!

- Because You Are Suffering In Christ!

* When You Suffer, Is Your Objective Different?

2. ***When You Suffer, Do You Suffer With A Different Outlook?***

- **IE:** An Outlook Is How You Look At Something - Keeping Things In The Proper Perspective - Coach John Mckay Of USC Tried To Keep Things In Perspective After His Football Team Had Been Humiliated By Notre Dame, 51-0 - After The Game, He Entered The Locker Room And Saw A Group Of Beaten, Worn Out, And Thoroughly Depressed Players - The Coach Stood Up On The Bench, And Said: "Men, Let's Keep This In Perspective. There Are 800 Million Chinese Who Don't Even Know This Game Was Played!"

- When Someone Suffers, They Tend To Focus On The Suffering & How To Remove It, Alleviate It, Or Transfer It!

- When You Suffer As A Christian, You Need To Have A Different Outlook / Perspective Than The World!

- But When You Suffer In Christ, You Can Suffer With A Different Outlook!

- It Is Not Looking At Your Suffering!

- It Is Not Looking At Yourself!

- It Is Not Looking At Others!

- It Is Looking At And To Jesus Christ!

- When You Suffer With A Different Outlook, You Will Not Think About Your Sufferings, You Will Think About Christ's!

- 1 Peter 3:17-18 - "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit!"

- When You Suffer With A Different Outlook, You Will Not Think About How You Are Suffering, You Will Think About How Christ Suffered!

- Isaiah 53:7 - "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."
- When You Suffer With A Different Outlook, You Will Not Think About Why You Are Suffering, You Will Think About Why Christ Suffered!
 - When You Look To Jesus Christ In Your Suffering, You Will See That It Is Nothing Compared To The Suffering Of Your Savior!
 - 2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 17-18 - "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. / For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."
- You May Suffer, But Your Outlook Will Be Different!
 - Because You Are Suffering In Christ!
 - * When You Suffer, Is Your Outlook Different?

3. ***When You Suffer, Do You Suffer With A Different Outcome?***

- When You Suffer Without Christ, There Is Sorrow & Depression!
 - **IE:** In 1835 a man visited a doctor in Florence, Italy. He was filled with anxiety and exhausted from lack of sleep. He couldn't eat, and he avoided his friends. The doctor examined him and found that he was in prime physical condition. Concluding that his patient needed to have a good time, the physician told him about a circus in town and its star performer, a clown named Grimaldi. Night after night he had the people rolling in the aisles. "You must go and see him," the doctor advised. "Grimaldi is the world's funniest clown. He'll make you laugh and cure your sadness." "No," replied the despairing man, "he can't help me. you see, I am Grimaldi!"
 - When You Suffer In Christ, There Can Be A Different Outcome!
 - When You Suffer In Christ, There Can Be Joy!
 - James 1:2 - "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations!"
 - And This Joy Comes From And Is In Jesus Christ, Your Savior From Suffering!
- When You Suffer Without Christ, There Is Loneliness!
 - **IE:** Loneliness In Suffering Is Very Real - You May Not Be A Leper In A Leper Colony, But You May Feel Like One - Noone Knows, Understands, Cares, Helps In The Hours Of Your Deepest Needs!
 - When You Suffer In Christ, There Can Be A Different Outcome!
 - When You Suffer In Christ, There Can Be Fellowship!
 - With Christ - Philippians 3:10 - "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death!"
 - And This Fellowship Comes From And Is In Jesus Christ, Your Savior From Suffering!
 - With Other Christians - 1 Corinthians 12:26 - "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it!"
- When You Suffer Without Christ, There Is Pain & Hurt!
 - **IE:** When There Is Pain, There Is A Longing For Comfort - Like A Child Crying Out For A Mother's Tender Touch After Bruising A Knee!
 - When You Suffer In Christ, There Can Be Comfort!
 - 2 Corinthians 1:5 - "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ!"
 - 1 Corinthians 10:13 - "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it!"

- And This Comfort Comes From And Is In Jesus Christ, Your Savior From Suffering!
- When You Suffer Without Christ, There Is Hopelessness!
 - When You Suffer In Christ, There Can Be Hope!
 - Romans 8:17-18, 23-25 - “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. / For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”
 - And This Hope Comes From And Is In Jesus Christ, Your Savior From Suffering!
- You May Suffer, But The Outcome May Be Different!
 - Because You Are Suffering In Christ!
 - * When You Suffer, Is Your Outcome Different?

Conclusion:

1. How Will You Deal With Suffering?
 - Remember, If You Are A Christian, You Are Suffering In Christ!
 - He Will Give You A Different Objective In Your Suffering!
 - He Will Give You A Different Outlook In Your Suffering!
 - He Will Give You A Different Outcome In Your Suffering!
2. Remember:
 - Romans 8:28 - “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!”

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