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The Glory of Suffering for Jesus



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #138 ~

Examples of believers suffering for the Lord are found throughout the Bible. In Hebrews 11:24-25, we read about Moses *"choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin."* It was no walk in the park for Moses, but rather 40 years of putting up with grumbling, rebellious Israelites in that hot, barren desert. Then there's David, who testified time and time again about being persecuted, and how God delivered and comforted him. (Psalms 28, 31, 35, 55, 59, 142, 143). And don't forget Jeremiah and the suffering he went through (Jeremiah 26:11, 32:2, 38:6). But it wasn't just physical, it was also mental, emotional and spiritual suffering that Jeremiah patiently endured all those years, especially at the end, when Jerusalem was being destroyed, and fellow Jews were dying right before

his eyes. Lamentations 1-5

In the New Testament, Jesus is our prime example of one who suffered, but it's the Old Testament prophecy in Psalm 22 that best describes His extreme pain and sorrow, and how He sacrificed His life for us. None of us can comprehend how hard it was for Jesus to be persecuted by the Jewish leaders – *"They spat in His face and beat Him with their fists and slapped Him"* (Matthew 26:67), or by the Roman soldiers – *"having Jesus scourged… they mocked Him… they spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head"* (Matthew 27:26-31). More than that, none of us can fathom the torment brought on by His Father, who caused Him to suffer the hellish wrath we should have received – *"My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?"* Matthew 27:46

Then there's Paul, who willingly and joyfully suffered for the Lord. 2 Corinthians 1, 4 and 6, all talk about his sufferings, but it's that long litany in 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 that best illustrates what he went through for God and for people – *"… beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews 39 lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked…"*

This subject of suffering is an untaught topic in most churches today, especially in the United States. But it needs to be taught, for many Christians are worldly and soft, not holy and strong. Many believers don't know what the Bible teaches about suffering, and therefore, won't be expecting it and be able to joyfully endure it when it comes – and it will come.

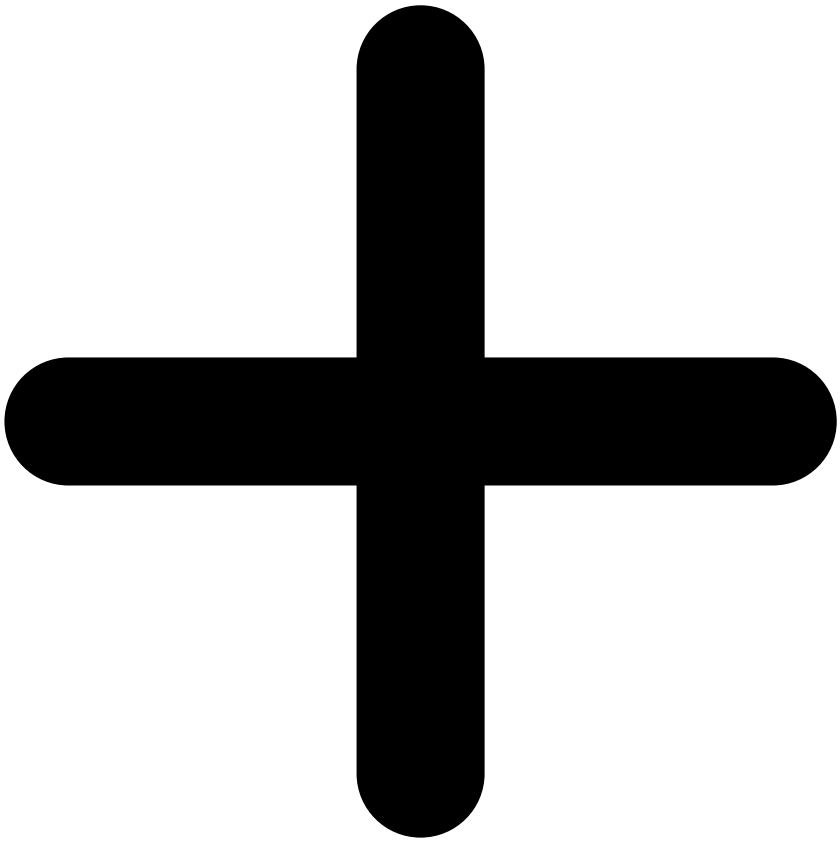
But what is it that God wants you to know about suffering?
* Suffering is part of God's plan for Christians. Acts 14:22, 1 Peter 2:21
* God is sovereign over your suffering. He plans it out ahead of time, knowing it will be for your good, and for His purposes and glory. Romans 8:28-35, 1 Peter 3:17

* Suffering is momentary, lasting only a little while. 2 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Peter 1:6, 5:10
* To patiently endure suffering, God gives you both present grace and the hope of future grace. 2 Corinthians 12:9-11, 1 Peter 1:13
* *"If the world hates you, you know it has hated Me before it hated you."* John 15:18
* To get through suffering, you need God's promises. Psalm 119:50, 154; 2 Peter 1:2-4
* God wants to use your suffering for the gospel. Luke 21:12-15, Philippians 1:12-14
* Suffering is one of God's ways for you to grow in faith and love. James 1:2-3, 12
* The more you live for Christ, the more you'll be persecuted for Christ. 2 Timothy 3:12
* To suffer in a godly way, you need to submit and entrust yourself to God. 1 Peter 4:19
* *"Consider Him who endured such suffering by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."* Hebrews 12:3
* You find favor (grace) with God when you suffer. 1 Peter 2:19-20
* Never be surprised when you are faced with the fiery ordeal of suffering. 1 Peter 4:12
* When you are persecuted, your faith is being tested. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10, James 1:3
* When you suffer, be thankful that you can share in Christ's sufferings. 1 Peter 2:10
* Remember, many other Christians around the world are also suffering. 1 Peter 5:9
* Those who suffer on earth will be greatly rewarded in heaven. Matthew 5:12
* To endure suffering, you need to *"see"* Jesus. Daniel 3:16-27, Hebrews 11:27
* The primary purpose of your suffering is to bring glory to God. 1 Peter 4:12-16

If you are going to rightly suffer for Jesus, you need to know these truths. Not only that, but we are living in the end-times, which means it

won’t be long before we experience great tribulation – *“they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name”* (Matthew 24:9). Immediately after that, we will all be with Jesus in heaven, never to suffer again (Matthew 24:29-31). In the meantime, learn the above truths, knowing that you will need them in the years ahead. *“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great.”* Matthew 5:11-12

P.S. This is such an important subject to understand. Here are two other things I would encourage you to read that relate directly to this post: “The Persecution of the Church Before the Coming of Christ,” and “A Biblical Perspective on the Trials of Life.”



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