

# **THEME : Suffering and the Sovereignty of God (Part 2)**

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## **SUMMARY OF MESSAGE**

### **Recap Premise of Our Meditation on Subject:**

#### **Deuteronomy 29:29**

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

#### **1 Corinthians 13:12**

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

### **3-key Principles to understand scriptures:**

1. Major on what the entire weight of scriptures say vis-à-vis a verse or text that seem to suggest otherwise [Psalm 119:160]. E.g. 1 Samuel 18 - Saul
2. Know the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant [Jeremiah 31:31-34].
3. Know the testimony and revelation of the Lord Jesus. [John 14:9].

### **Summary of “Suffering Common to Man in a Fallen World”**

#### **I. “The Sovereignty of God”**

- Acts 17:28 : “in **Him**, we live and move and have our being!”
- He is our **CREATOR-GOD!** - Genesis 1:1
- It is **ALL** about Him! - Job 38-41
- We don't have full control, He does! - Isaiah 40
- Be still and know that He is God! - Psalm 46:10

#### **II. In God's Sovereignty, He gave man a free will and complete ownership of the earth realm.**

Genesis 1:26; 28

Deuteronomy 30:19

#### **III. Two Sources of Suffering in this world affecting all mankind.**

A. Fallen-ness of Man - Man rebelled against God and fell [Romans 3:23, 6:23]

B. Man's fallen-ness caused him to lose his ruler-ship over this earth to the evil one [John 10:10a]

#### IV. Suffering in this Fallen World.

- A. This suffering affects **both** the believer and the pre-believer in this fallen world [John 16:33]
- B. Therefore when someone dies from a **sickness** or an **earthquake**, it is due to the fallen-ness of man in a fallen world. God is **NOT** the direct source of sickness or all the evil, accidents, wickedness and calamities on the earth.
- C. **Avoid** saying: "God allows". [permits - cause it]
- D. Rather say "God is **Sovereign**". This means:
  - I don't know but God knows.
  - I don't fully understand my suffering but God does.
  - I seem to lose control but God is in charge as I connect and commit my situation to Him [Romans 8:28].
  - I don't fully know why but God is with me!
- E. Understand clearly the difference between the direct judgment of God and the reaping of consequences of man's actions.
- F. At the individual level, man will reap what he sows according to the respective laws of life.
- G. In these last days, there will be an increase of earthquakes, wars, famines and pestilences and lawlessness according to the scriptures [Matthew 24:8]

#### V. The spiritual world cannot intervene in the natural world unless there is a **connection**. [doorway]

#### VI. God is good and is **consistently** good all the time Tension between **Sovereignty** and **Nature** of God. All Power but Always Good, Just and Righteous!

**Bottom Line: There is always HOPE in the good God!**

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#### TOPIC : Suffering for Righteousness Sake

If you are suffering, do you know WHY? Suffering per se is **NOT** spirituality

#### 3 broad strokes of suffering:

- i) Common in a fallen world
- ii) For righteousness sake
- iii) Due to our own "faults"

## I. Suffering due to our own “faults”.

**1 Peter 2:20a** - For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? ...

Faults: sins, weakness, infirmities, foibles, wrong doings..

Our own “faults” comprise of 2 broad areas:

### 1. Our sinful nature – the sin in us.

#### **Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)**

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

The sinful nature produces fruit of wrong-doing. Our sinful nature is manifested through our personality (mind, emotion,will) and through our relational and work-style. Examples of differences in personalities:

“D” Personality - Strength for leadership. However, weakness is displayed in one’s pushiness.

“I” Personality - Strength in relating and pleasing people. However, weakness in being impulsive and failure to close the loop.

“S” Personality - Strength in being loyal and faithful. However, weakness is in failing to have own convictions.

“C” Personality - Strength in looking into details. However, weakness is in being legalistic.

Examples of differences in relational and work styles: Some move fast; some are more emotional, some are more a thinker or some move very slowly.

### 2. Our sins are:

A. The things we have done which are wrong. 1 Peter 2:20a.

#### **1 Peter 4:15**

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters.

#### **Galatians 5:19:21**

19The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

If we are not part of a problem or a solution, we ought to stay out and don't meddle around. We should not allow any doctrine or persuasion to tear away our unity. There may be differences but at the end of the day, we should be speaking one voice. Let's appreciate the life in this church.

### **Examples of wrong things we do:**

- \*Jaywalking and getting hit by a car
- \*Naïve
- \*Poor diet leading to health issues
- \*unequally yoked
- \*Unwise investments
- \*Aids and diseases for being promiscuous
- \*Spending money beyond our means ending up in a debt, etc.
- \*Lack of exercise (lazy)
- \*Getting drunk
- \*wrong company
- \*refusing to heed counsel
- \*Being ignorant
- \* Lack of self control
- \*Foolish
- \*Poor parenting

B. The things we ought to do but fail to do so.

### **James 4:17**

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

### **Examples of Things which we ought to do but fail to do so**

- \*Pay attention to spouse
- \*Commit to your CG
- \*Submit and support CGL
- \*Etc
- \*Response to God/altar call
- \*Establish family altar
- \*Save money
- \*Maintain sexual purity
- \*Spend time with children
- \* Serve God

## **II. Suffering for righteousness sake.**

### **2 broad areas:**

1. **Persecution** for our faith. [note **synonyms**]

**2 Timothy 3:12** - Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. The ultimate suffering for righteousness sake is martyrdom, but this is only for some believers.

### **Galatians 5:11**

And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.

### **Philippians 1:29**

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.

Phil 1:29 has been taken out of context many times.

### **1 Peter 3:14**

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

What is righteousness? It is right standing with God. It is right-doing.

### **1 Peter 3:16-17**

16having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

It is the will of God to suffer for doing good. Only this is acceptable to God.

### **1 Peter 4:14**

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

### **1 Peter 4:16**

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

We suffer because of belief and convictions. We suffer for doing good as in the verse below.

### **1 Peter 4:19**

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

### **Examples of Persecution in Some Nations:**

- Going to jail for sharing your faith openly (e.g. China)
- Being burnt and tortured for refusing to renounce Christianity (e.g. Pakistan, Middle-Eastern countries)
- Church buildings being burnt down (e.g. C-Sulawesi)

### **Examples of Persecution Personally:**

- Being mocked / jeered at when something goes wrong. "So where is your God now? Why doesn't He help you?"
- Being passed over for a promotion because you refuse to compromise on your integrity.
- Being ostracized from your family and community because of your faith.
- Family upset with you for your refusal to partake in idol worship, ancestor worship etc

2. In following Christ as His disciples.

### **1 Peter 4:12-13**

12Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

A. This is our journey to overcome the evil one.

**John 10:10a**

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.

**He is a Liar and Deceiver. John 8:44; Rev 12:9**

The doctrine of cessation, ie no more tongues, prophesying, etc. There was a man called Benjamin Warfield. His teachings on such went into the theological schools. However, now things are changing. The devil is a liar. All we need is a little deviation.

**He is our Accuser and Condemner. Rev 12:10; Romans 8:1**

Some struggle with guilt and poor self-esteem. We need to confess that we are the righteousness of Christ. We can always go to God confidently.

**He is a Devourer. 1 Peter 5:8**

He goes around seeing whom he can devour. However, he is a lion without teeth. What are we fearing? If fear increases, faith collapses.

**He is the Tempter. James 1:14; 1 John 5:19**

He tempts us to love of World. We need to testify, to speak forth and to develop faith. What we believe, we speak.

**Revelation 12:11**

And they overcame him [evil one] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

B. This is our journey to overcome the world.

**1 John 2:15-16**

15Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

**1 John 5:4-5**

4For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world— our faith. 5Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

C. This is our journey to overcome our self-life.

**Luke 9:23**

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

### III. All suffering by a believer is a trial of his faith.

1. This includes:

- A. Suffering in a fallen world - No choice
- B. Suffering due to our own "faults" - Wrong choice
- C. Suffering for righteousness sake - Right choice

God is NOT glorified in All our sufferings! Only for Christ and Righteousness sake!

#### **1 Peter 1:7 (NIV)**

These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Faith is a mixture. Some of our beliefs are correct, some are not. Some are opinions of man, pastors, counselors, cessationists, etc.

#### **Mark 4:17**

and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

Whatever the suffering, connect with God. Seek God wholeheartedly, pray with all your might. Go to people with gift of healing, go to places where the ministry of healing is administered.

2. When the believer connects with God during the trial i.e.

- A. He will develop strength in perseverance.

What is perseverance? It is the fruit of the Spirit.

#### **James 1:3**

knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience - perseverance.

#### **Romans 5:3**

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance

- B. He will develop the character of Christ.

#### **Romans 5:4a**

and perseverance, character ...

C. He will have hope.

**Romans 5:4b**

... and character, hope.

Hope is certainty. Before faith, we must have hope. When hope is deposited, it produces faith. Heb 11.

D. He will experience the deep assurance of the love of God.

**Romans 5:5**

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Until we experience God, the love of God is just a theory.

E. He will be victorious i.e. an overcomer.

**James 1:4**

But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

F. He can now minister to others the Grace of God.

**2 Corinthians 1:3-5**

3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

**1 Peter 4:10-11**

10As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies ...

**The Bottom Line**

If you are: Suffering for **our Own Faults**:

**1. 1 John 1:9**

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. James 5:16

**2. Matthew 10:16b**

Be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

If you are: Suffering for **Righteousness Sake**:



**Philippians 3:10**

that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death

**Revelation 22:12**

And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

End.

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**Questions for discussion**

1) What do you think our approach should be towards suffering?

2) Is God glorified in our suffering? How is He so? How is He not so?

3) In following Christ as His disciples, what are some things we need to be overcoming?

4) At this point, for a quick idea, how would you gauge yourself in the following area?

1 for lowest and 5 for highest score in trait.

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Facing trial but persevering?       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Character developing?               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Still strong in hope?               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Still know & experiencing His love? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Still overcoming?                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) Able to minister to others          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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No condemnation, no comparison, no competition but only encouragement...