

Sunday, August 13, 2023

Why I should trust God during suffering.

How many times have we been going along in life, everything is wonderful, and all our needs are being met, bills are paid, food in the pantry, we are able to buy things we like, and we have no worries....and then Bam, something happens. This could be a health issue that popped up from a recent check-up. The doctors call you and tell you that there is something he is concerned with. You make the appointment to see what the concern is. It can't be anything serious, I've been feeling so good lately. Then you find that the health issue is serious.

What if you go in to work at the job you have had for years and your manager asks to speak to you in their office, privately. The manager, whom you have worked with for years tells you the company is struggling and will be going through some layoffs so they can sustain the market downturn. Then they tell you, I'm sorry but I am

going to have to let you go. You now must go home and tell your family that you have lost your job.

This creates an uncertain future. We may go into a panic initially with any one of these circumstances.

But do we go into panic mode?

Do we fear the problem that has come our way?

We are believers in Jesus Christ, and we need to rely on Him, especially when life gives us a change to our normal circumstances. It may have been a long time since you have been in this type of situation. It may seem a bit scary, but we are undoubtedly headed into turbulent waters. Our worldly instinct may make us react to the situation in fear or anxiety, but our doctrine should keep us from responding like this. Sometimes we make quick decisions that are absent from God.

Is this how you would respond?

I know you are there, God, but I have been so busy lately.....I have not talked with you for awhile.

It's been so long since we have needed YOU for anything. I've had a great job, and my health has been perfect for all these years.

What is the first thing we should do?

1. **Rebound** - Name or cite the sin to God the Father that we are fearing. This ensures the filling of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Then we Pray**. God already knows the situation but wants us to bring it to Him in Faith.
3. **Faith rest drill** - You are now in fellowship, prayed about the problem and now need to let God handle it. Rest (trust) in God to handle the problem.

When you go through suffering, is your prayer always, "God remove this situation from me"?

Nowhere in the Word of God does it state that the believer in Jesus Christ will be sheltered from sorrow, pain, struggles, or even suffering in this world.

In fact, it is quite the opposite!

First, I want you to remember and think of All the suffering, testing from Satan directly, abuse, pain, torture and His death on the cross that the perfect God/Man, our Lord and Savior went through in His earthly ministry! **Then why would we be sheltered from suffering?** Do you not know that at the point of Faith alone in Christ alone, we are **identified** (one and the same) with His life, death and resurrection?

That means we will also suffer here in the devil's domain! Yet our trials, pain, and suffering on this earth are Never for Nothing, because God always allows (or better yet) He has given us the Gift of suffering for our ultimate good! There is, in fact, no redemptive work done anywhere without suffering! (The only exception to this is under the "sin unto death" - We are not allowed to pray for the believer who is dying and suffering from the "sin unto death").

**Phil. 1:29-30 - For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also**

to suffer for His sake, 30) having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

(Basically, Paul is saying we have been given a Gift of suffering).

### Suffering can come for many reasons:

– Deserved Suffering may come as a result of **personal sin and failure in our spiritual life**. For example, some people may suffer financially by not carefully budgeting their money or by being wasteful. Some people may suffer the loss of friendship through their hurtful words or gossip. It could be our neglect of obeying God. This suffering is a warning that our spiritual life is not where it should be. It is punitive and the poor decisions we've made need corrections. This type of suffering is a result of a carnal believer and if not corrected, could bring the believer misery to bring us back to God. If it continues without correction, the "sin unto death" may be the result.



– Undeserved Suffering may also arise due to **other people's sin and failure**, such as the drunk driver who causes an accident and creates suffering for others.

Undeserved suffering can arise from **forces outside of our control**. For example, a tornado or hurricane can create great suffering for many people.

– Suffering for God can come as **a result of a person's faith**—standing for Jesus in some parts of the world is an invitation to persecution.

### Suffering is a part of life:

– Deserved suffering occurs when we sin or act foolishly—1 Peter 4:15 - **Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;**

– Undeserved suffering can be part of following in Jesus' footsteps—1 Peter 2:21 - **For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,**

— Suffering encourages growth—2 Corinthians 12:9-10

The Apostle Paul experienced many forms of suffering. The bible says he had an affliction. We don't know exactly what this affliction is, but it was likely some type of health problem. Paul was also blinded on the road to Damascus, beaten by crowds, like Stephen who had been martyred. Paul was imprisoned numerous times and eventually put to death by beheading. When he asked God to remove his affliction...God's response was:

9) And He (God) has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."

(Paul understands God and says) Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

10) Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

## Suffering is for testing and to demonstrate God's glory

John 9:1-3 - As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2) And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" 3) Jesus answered, **"It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.**

## We may suffer to help others - 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4) **who comforts us** in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5) For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

Romans 8:18 - I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy of being compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.



**James 1:2-8** - Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4) And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 5) But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6) But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7) For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8) being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

If your suffering is a result of consequences of your own actions, you can acknowledge the sin to God and you will be restored to fellowship with God. (1 John 1:9)

If your suffering is from someone else's sin or failure, you can know that God will walk through the pain with you

until you get to the other side of the suffering. God does not promise we will not have to go through the trial.

If your suffering was a result of circumstances, beyond your control, remember these three things:

**1. Despite its painfulness, suffering can be very valuable.**

(Suffering shouts to us our need of Jesus Christ, our refuge, our fortress, the stronghold of our lives.

It takes desolation to teach us our need of Him).

(a quote by Elizabeth Elliot)

**2. Suffering also purifies the heart by deepening the desire for the day when all tears will be wiped away.**

**Heb. 12:2 - fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

**3. Suffering not only clarifies and purifies, but it also motivates the heart to action.**

- If we see a child cry, we offer tenderness.

- If we see the wounds of a victim, we offer solace.

Human suffering stimulates us to action. Suffering can soften the heart and increase our hunger for God.

### So, here's why you can trust God through your suffering

1. Sometimes God allows suffering to come into believers' lives **to strengthen their faith.**

(God Loves us!)

2. **Rejoice** because of what God will do in your life and what **He has promises** for your future.

(God's Veracity, He cannot lie!)

3. Cast your cares on Christ because His faithfulness never changes (Psalm 102:25-27)

(God is Immutable! He does not change.)

2 Cor. 12:9 And He has said to me (Paul), "**My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.**"

Most gladly, therefore, I (Paul) will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that **the power of Christ may dwell in me.**

## When you are persecuted for your faith

1 Pet 4:12-13 - Beloved do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange things were happening to you; 13) but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory **you may rejoice with exultation**. (Read Dan. 3:19-30)

2 Pet 3:7 - But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

The things we see the ungodly do to us make us want to see justice served. "Vengeance is Mine, I shall repay" says the Lord (Rom 12:19). **(God's Justice)**

God's is always patient, and He is always merciful.

God is always with us. **(God is Omnipresent)**

Mat 5:10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

## Peter taught these points about suffering for Christ

1. Suffering is a trial - We can expect God to do this to strengthen us spiritually. These trials help us to become mature believers by learning to trust God.
2. Nothing strange - This is our opportunity to share in a personal experience with Christ. We should look forward to this. We are no longer strangers; we are God's children. Citizens of Heaven.
3. God's Glory is revealed - We can rejoice with gladness! We will get to witness God putting everything back to His perfection. The day of judgement and destruction of un-Godly men is coming.
4. You are blessed - God will bless you when you rely on Him. When we trust God and obey Him, He blesses us, Here and now and in eternity.
5. An opportunity to glorify God! He is worthy of our praise! This means to acknowledge the high honor of God.



**Mat. 5:10-12** - "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11) "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12) "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

He knows (God's omniscience)

He blesses us (God is Righteous)

So, what do we do when going through suffering?

**1 Pet 5:8-11** - Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9) But resist him, be firm in your faith, knowing that **the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.** 10) **After you have suffered for a little while**, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen

and establish you. 11) To Him be **dominion** forever and ever. Amen.

Dominion - κράτος, "Kratos" all powerful, mighty, having full strength, in control of.

So, in verse 11, "**God is in control**" forever and ever.

God is eternal (God's Sovereignty)

God is all powerful (God is Omnipotent)

So, to answer why we can trust God through suffering?

1. God Loves us
2. God cannot lie (Veracity)
3. God is Immutable (unchanging)
4. God's justice is assured, and He will set things right
5. God is righteous; He is pure
6. God is Sovereign; He is in control
7. God is Eternal; He has eternity planned for you.
8. God knows what you are suffering with. (Omniscience)
9. God has the power to do what He desires. (Omnipotent)

10. God can be with you and others around the world at the same time! (Omnipresent)

All the essences of God. God's essences never change.

He is worthy of being praised!

Do you trust Him?

Psa. 30:5b - Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.