

## The Purpose of Suffering, Part 2 - Philippians 3:10-11 – January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019

- Today's teaching will be part two of a series I've titled "The Purpose of Suffering."
- In our text the Apostle Paul makes what I would argue is an astonishing claim concerning our participating in Christ's sufferings.
- Namely, that of knowing that the power of Christ's resurrection comes in only one way, which is the fellowship of His sufferings.

Romans 8:16-18 - 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 - 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

- The Lord has been ministering to me that one second of life in heaven is worth infinitely more than one life of suffering on earth!
- I'll go one step further and suggest were it not for our suffering here on earth, we would not look forward to the glory of heaven.
- I think of that hymn, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus;" the things of earth grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.

2 Corinthians 4:7–12 - 7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. 12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

- This is the paradox of our faith, such that, life comes from death, just as resurrection power, comes from crucifixion suffering.
- The problem is, we don't want to pick up our cross and die to ourselves, because we're living our Christian life for ourselves.
- This is why God uses suffering to bring us to the end of ourselves so we die to ourselves and follow Him with humble reliance.

- I suppose you could say God allows suffering to get our attention in order to teach us that which we would not otherwise learn.
- In other words, were it not for the affliction and the suffering, we would not seek the Lord and as a result draw near to the Lord.
- The truth of the matter is, we're all prone to stray when things are going well, which is why God will allow affliction and suffering.

Psalms 119:67 - Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.

Psalms 119:71 - It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.

- I think you would agree that when God gets us all to Himself, He can then begin to show us things we wouldn't otherwise see.
- Sometimes what the Lord wants for me to see, in and through the suffering, is that He is sparing me, and even preparing me.
- If you'll kindly indulge me I will explain this, starting first with how it is that God allows the trial to spare us from a greater trial.

Matthew 14:22–32 - 22 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. 23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. 24 But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. 25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." 29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" 31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

- Question, why would Jesus immediately get them in the boat, knowing that they would face this perilous life and death storm?
- I believe as one suggested, it was He wanted to spare them from what could have very well been an even more perilous storm.
- Had they stayed and not got into the boat, they would have faced the perilous storm of pride after the feeding of the multitudes.

- Not only will God spare us from the greater storm, He will also prepare us for a greater blessing that He can now entrust to us.

A.W. Tozer - "It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply."

Charles Spurgeon said it best this way, "This depression comes over me whenever the Lord is preparing a larger blessing for my ministry. The cloud is black before it breaks and overshadows before it yields its deluge of mercy."

2 Corinthians 1:3–7 - 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5 For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. 6 If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. 7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.