

# Sanctification Through Suffering

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February 4, 2018

Lord, You are faithful beyond all reckoning. Thank You for carrying us over the thresholds of suffering and being a continual comfort to us.

Well, my dearest Heartdwellers, thank you so much for your prayers; they were greatly needed and I'm feeling much better.

Ezekiel went through a very rough spell with pain, and well, what can I say? How do you feel when the one you love is suffering terribly? That brought me to tears many, many nights. And finally, there was nothing left of me. Between running the little errands that are so necessary when someone is in bed, trying to make them comfortable. And praying with tears and not seeing solid results for a very long while--it was just too much for me.

And I woke up the morning after his worst suffering and there was nothing left of me. And the prospect of seeing him suffer again caused me to break out in tears and I cried myself back to sleep. I was completely depleted.

As for how to explain what is going on, just as we fast and make other sacrifices to accompany our petitions, he offered himself as a living sacrifice for the reform of the nation and the release of the little children being tortured and abused in the sex trafficking trade.

I will share with you that there were wonderful consolations for Ezekiel in between the sufferings. Many trips to Heaven, many periods of extreme bliss (and no, it wasn't medication, 'cause he didn't HAVE any). When he was in our small pool, the Lord was with him, holding him up and kissing his forehead many times with great tenderness.

There was also relief from the pain and moments of extreme joy in communion with the Lord. This follows the patterns of many suffering servants. Our dear Jesus suffers with us, but still finds ways to shower delightful consolations on us in times of respite.

The Lord treated him so tenderly after these bouts of extreme suffering and showed him some of the fruits of his labor. For truly, bearing up under this kind of pain IS a labor!

And He told him, "This is the most productive time of your whole life. You have done more here to advance the Kingdom of God and rescue souls, than in all your years of your ministry combined."

Wow!

In addition to the consolation of Jesus telling Ezekiel 'well done', I believe we have turned a corner and are moving towards a complete healing.

Whatever God's timing, dear ones, we receive it with resolve that as long as God's grace accompanies us, we will persevere. I have not, in the slightest, wavered from the Lord's promise of Ezekiel being healed of these issues. Truly, when Jesus announced to me what we would be going through, He made a promise, "You will not be afraid for his life, for I have promised you I will heal him and you will also have peace in all circumstances, as a sign to you that My promise is true, and I am with you."

And I have indeed, had supernatural peace that cannot be ruffled by circumstances, as far as the threat of death goes. I know our Satanist friends would love to see him dead. There have been many death assignments and demons of death dropping in for a visit. But they all left empty-handed, because they are not in charge here.

Jesus is.

Some of you my, dear Heartdwellers, have questions and doubts about this doctrine of sharing in the sufferings of the Cross for the sake of the Kingdom. But truly, it is only a matter of perspective.

When you examine the Scriptures thoroughly and very carefully, you will see that this IS in the Bible. If you are more attached to the opinions of those in your current ministries that do not allow for suffering, I would ask you to set yours and their opinions to the side, and seek the counsel of Holy Spirit, Who will confirm to you the principals behind the cross Jesus told us to carry.

I believe it is the height of presumption to say that a prayer and faith is all it takes to heal every soul, no matter what. That Jesus heals everyone in our timing--no matter what. And if you didn't get healed, you have hidden sin or are lacking in faith. Only God knows why He did not manifest a healing on the one we prayed for.

As for some Scriptural references I want to share these.

From Romans 12:

"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship." Roman's 12:1 (That's probably the Amplified Bible.)

Going on. This kind of prayer and offering is so little understood by the modern church. In the first 300 years of the church, these things were understood very clearly, and some have survived to be quoted today--without the person quoting them understanding the depth of the statement.

For instance, "The Blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the church." That was Tertullian, 2nd Century--one of the Fathers. This is well understood in reformation theology, on the surface, at least. But there are far more implications to that statement than the obvious.

What constitutes "the blood of the martyrs" is also the life force of those in a white martyrdom of suffering. The life is in the blood.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for

your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." Leviticus 17:11

Not all are crucified, but we all have crosses that drain the life out of us at times. The Lord said, "Deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow Me."

Which leads to this question: What does He mean by 'my cross?'

The Cross is pure suffering and diminishment of life force. The crosses come in many forms. A bad marriage brings great suffering, a wayward child causes deep suffering, a sickness that does not yield to prayer is suffering. And accusations from church members that you are lacking in faith, or God would have healed you--is another version of Job's blanket, filled with thorns and anything but comforting. Getting one of those is suffering, as well.

We know that the prayer of faith can heal sickness, but God is not a slot machine that operates on OUR time schedule. Just because we prayed in great faith or passionately or with fast offerings does not mean it is expedient, from God's viewpoint, to heal them in that moment.

The Lord may be slowing that soul down to get their attention. He may be using that suffering to bring family members into the faith. He may be using it to humble the soul. And for those souls who have been given the mandate to pray for the world in earnest, the soul's contribution will never be understood until Heaven.

But I can tell you this much: it is HUGE.

There is a well-respected minister who has written books and established a community and many outreaches, who was taken to Heaven either physically, or in a dream. When he was meeting people there in Heaven, he saw a man sitting on a throne who was a king. Looking back through his memories, he recognized that man as someone who had been on Earth passing out tracts and proselytizing people at a bus station.

At that time on Earth, he was taking a lunch hour with a friend and he walked by this man who was passing these tracts out. And he said to his friend, "People like that give Christianity a bad name."

Uh, oh!!

Now, on his tour of Heaven, there was that man--elevated to the status of a king in Heaven. Deeply humbled by his ignorance, the minister asked the one accompanying him in Heaven, "Who WILL have the greatest rewards in Heaven?"

The answer was his guide making a motion to other thrones, where housewives and mothers were seated and had many serving them.

That led him to another question, "Well then, where are the famous ministers?" As I recall, he saw some ministers he knew--but they appeared normal, just everyday people.

And his escort explained to him that everything in Heaven is backwards. It is the hidden intercessors and those who pour themselves into their own prayers that will be highly exalted--not the famous evangelists.

The souls that did nothing for their own glory, but only for God's glory. The souls who remained hidden, who didn't make a big show of their church services; the men and women who interceded and lifted up the minister will be given the greatest rewards.

Yes, the minister, too, will be rewarded, if he is faithful. But he never could have had the impact that he had without the intercessors behind him. Not on his own. It's the intercessors that prayed for the graces of conversion that gave him such power.

But getting back to the Cross. Not everyone is crucified on a cross, but everyone has a cross in their lives. It could be a sick spouse or a child, an injury from an accident, persecution from church members because they are a little different, a long-term illness, losing a job unjustly.

Each one of these souls can be healed. But even if they were in a healing service with people getting out of their wheelchairs, regaining their sight, and having a limb spontaneously regenerate right in front of everyone--all of those healings were in agreement with God's plan for that soul in that moment.

All the conditions were met in God's timing; for His own inscrutable reasons, it was their time to be healed. But the person right next to them did not receive a healing. They love the Lord with all their hearts, they totally believe they will be healed--but it didn't happen for them that night.

The usual response is something careless and brutal, "You have hidden sin in your life." Or, equally as disconcerting, "You don't have the faith to be healed."

What a miserable slap in the face to an already wounded soul--delivered by one who presumes to know what God alone knows. Just because it is a popular doctrine does not mean it is truth.

We've seen the church go through all kinds of doctrines that were popular and then we discovered flaws in them, because they were not Scriptural after all.

But as always, we continue to look to Scripture to see what the Word of God has to say.

The Lord gave us an example in Paul's thorn. "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know--God knows. And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body--I do not know, but God knows--was caught up to Paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.

I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, or because of these surpassingly great revelations.

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in

difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." II Corinthians 12:2-10

Here Paul makes several very interesting statements. This thorn was in the flesh. In other words, a sickness of some sort. Paul recognized that he was in need of being humbled, because of the revelations he received--and he saw this thorn as an instrument to sanctify his soul.

Then the Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

And that is precisely the point of a suffering. The Lord allows our weaknesses, sufferings, crosses in such a way that His power is glorified through our circumstance, because we have made of our bodies a living sacrifice.

And just as grace poured forth from the Cross to open the Gates of Heaven and redeem mankind, our sufferings are being used as sacrificial offerings to deliver the gospel and soften hearts, and so many more circumstances necessary for conversion are also being met.

And this is exactly what we will see in Heaven. Many that were sick on Earth will be kings and queens in Heaven, with servants, going forth to do good to those on Earth. He who is faithful in the little things will be given more.

And another statement of Paul's is also very reinforcing: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, which is the church." Colossians 1:24

Now, many people have given that different interpretations, but it's obvious that there is a connection between sufferings and the sake of the Body.

These are mysteries, my beloved friends. And the Scriptures are far deeper and wider than any of us can fathom. The Pharisees were well versed in the Scriptures, yet they rejected the doctrine of the trinity, which the disciples fully accepted when Jesus told Philip, "If you know Me, then you will also know My Father. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to him, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know Me?" John 14:7-9

Well, this update would not be complete if I didn't share with you what the Lord is doing with me in these sufferings. For one, I am learning to be patient and faithful, and ready to drop what I am doing--no matter how engrossed I am--to serve Ezekiel's needs and bring him comfort in some small way.

I am learning to let go of my agendas: music, messages, art, etc., in order to minister to Jesus in the distressing disguise of Ezekiel.

"For truly, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25:40

I am also recognizing ways I am opening doors for the demons to sift us, by stepping out of God's perfect will. I am finding that I cannot move to the left or the right, presuming to be in God's perfect will, without checking first with my husband.

And the Lord is cutting out of my life the superfluous things, bringing me back to a place where He alone matters and there is no happiness in things. But all happiness is in Him. Things are truly a burden. So, I will be getting rid of a lot of things.

And I am finding out who my dearest and truest friends are, as well as seeing the ones that seem very holy on the outside, but cannot stand up under pressure and flake off. Quite an education. Sometimes that in itself is a cross.

So, this is my update. Thank you all for standing by us and prayer. Your kindness overwhelms my heart. Truly

I asked the Lord, "Jesus... do You have anything to add?"

He began, *"The hour is late and you have done well to explain many things to My children.*

*"Do not presume to know everything, My dear ones, because others who teach you convince you that they know everything. Rather, test the spirits and be open to His leading, even when it puts you in opposition to others who hold fast to their doctrines. Do not allow yourself to compromise truth for the sake of support or friendship; rather, be ready to lose friends rather than compromise on the truth that My Spirit convicts you with.*

*"As much as I would love to see peace among brethren, I told you that I did not come to bring peace but a sword and division."*

I'm quoting the Scripture: "No, I have not come to bring peace but a sword! For I have come to set a man against his own father, a daughter against her own mother, and a daughter-in-law ..." Matt. 10:34

*"And what is the sword I am referring to here? It is the Word of God, dividing bone from marrow and exposing the hidden things. Those who value their social status above My Truth will be left in the dust as My faithful Bride cleaves to Me and not to any man.*

*"Be strong, courageous and cleave to Me beyond all persons or things. I will never lead you astray. Discern, My dearly loved ones, discern through the power of My Holy Spirit; discern Truth and cleave to that."*

For those of us who are suffering, (that was the end of what the Lord had to say) please don't grow weary, but finish your appointed course. For God is faithful to reward those who keep their hands on the plow and keep moving forward.

I KNOW it's hard--believe me, I know it is so hard. We all have thoughts tempting us to give up, but the Lord does come to our rescue to strengthen us.

So, lets hold hands with one another in prayer and continue to carry the cross He has given each of us.

I love you dearly, Family. Thank you so much for your prayers.

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