

Sunday, May 10, 2020

A Message From Your Pastor

Let me begin by extending a very happy Mother's Day to all you ladies who are Mothers, Grandmothers and perhaps even Great Grandmothers. May the Lord bless for your service in the home and your godly influence you have had on family members as well as others. It is true that motherhood is a high calling, and if you have experienced that call, you have been blessed. When you go to meet the Savior someday, may you hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Motherhood is a sacred title to have. Being a godly, Christian Mother is one of the high callings of God.

The message for this week is entitled: "The Believer And Suffering". Our text is taken from the Book of Romans Chapter 8 and verse 18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." Christians may often ask: "Why does God allow some believers to suffer while others do not?" Or you might ask: "Why does God permit the godly believer to suffer, when the ungodly believer remains okay?" Let us first look at this particular situation from a general outlook. Job, whose writings are older than the Book of Genesis tells us: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." Job does not categorize those who have trouble and those who do not, but he speaks of the whole of mankind.

By way of introduction let us first look at this subject of the believer and suffering in a general sense. Paul uses the word "reckon" in our text verse. The Greek word is "logizomai", from which we get our English word "logical". It means to take an inventory of things and then come to a conclusion or having reasonable expectation because of what has gone before. So Paul had seen lots of suffering, much of which he himself wrought upon others as a persecutor of believers. Then, too, he experienced a great deal of suffering following his conversion. In Philippians 3:8 he tells us that he suffered the loss of all things. So, he comes to a "logical" conclusion (one that makes sense) when he writes this verse under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.

Now then, let us look into this subject of suffering. **FIRST** – All mankind, in general, will face some sort of suffering because of **SIN**. Immediately following the fall of Adam, God cursed the whole earth. You will find in the Book of Genesis, chapter 3 the end result of Adam’s disobedience and Eve’s temptation by that old serpent the Devil. Because of their actions there would be pain and suffering for the woman in childbearing. There would be sweat and hard work in raising food and caring for the ground to make a living for the man. Since God cursed the ground, thorns and thistles would choke out whatever was planted. If you have ever seen an overgrown thistle patch, you will see why. The husband would rule (to have power over, dominion or control) over the wife. Before the fall there was no need for this rulership. Most of all there would be DEATH both physical and spiritual. All of this because they disobeyed the commandment of God. “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Genesis 2:17). Death is our last enemy. “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” (I Corinthians 15:26) Jesus Christ conquered death and the grave for us. He died and was buried, but He arose victorious on the third day! Here is what Paul wrote in our Bible (I Corinthians 15:3,4) “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” We all have an appointment with this last enemy. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27) There are two deaths spoken of in the Bible. One is physical and the other is spiritual. The physical is separation of body and soul. The spiritual is separation of both body and soul from God. (Revelation 20:14) “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” The only escape from this horrible place is to repent of your sins and put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, because He died for you. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (Romans 10:9) All men are sinners. (Romans 3:23) “For all have sinned and

come short of the glory of God.” If you want to be a partaker of this “glory”, you must be saved. So, no one is exempt from the sufferings of this world, not the saved nor the lost. We are all under the curse of God.

SECOND – The sufferings of believers are often **CONDITIONAL**.

Living the Christian life in a godly fashion will often bring us in contact with some sort of suffering. “Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (II Timothy 3:12) So, dear one, if you are living a godly Christian life, you can expect some suffering along the way. The verse says “shall suffer”. Just remember how the Lord suffered for you, then whatever you have to go through won’t seem so terrible. He’ll be with while you suffer and He will bring you through it!

THIRD - It is sometimes a **CHOICE** of our own. Moses made that choice when he saw the affliction of his people while under the Egyptian bondage. “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season..” (Hebrews 11:24,25) Do not be afraid or hesitant to make choices that will draw you closer to God and that will make you stronger in your faith. **FOURTH** - There are times when our suffering is in the form of **CHASTISEMENT**. Here is what the Book of Hebrews teaches us. “And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” (Hebrews 12:5,6) I bring your attention to two key words. The first is “despise”. It means to have little regard for. God always has a specific purpose when He chastens His children. It is to mold godly character in our lives. Sometimes it is to get our attention towards Him when we are doing wrong and get us back on the right path again. The second word is “scourgeth”, oh my! This means to flog with a flagellum. In simple terms that we can understand, it means that God will beat the devil out of us sometime. After all, we can be rather stubborn or bullheaded at times, right? **FIFTH** – The Lord often has His own **CAUSE** behind our sufferings. Peter says in (I Peter 3:17) “For it is better, if the will of God

be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.” He said in verse 14a of I Peter, “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye...” The whole context in which he is speaking in the last part of this chapter centers around having a good testimony and bringing glory to God. He tells us in (I Peter 4:15,16) “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” Therefore when we are suffering while we are living right, it is to glorify God. So, beloved, just do right and live for Jesus. Guard your testimony so that you honor God and are a good example to those who are lost. Any sufferings you may have to go through now is just temporary. They cannot be compared with the glory you shall experience someday in heaven. Just think! As a believer you will have a glorified body with no pain, sickness or death. You will have perfect knowledge and understanding. You will walk on streets of solid gold! You will rejoice around the throne of God with the saints of all the ages. (I Peter 3:18a) “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God...” He suffered for YOU! Love Him and serve Him.

Perhaps the Lord’s cause in this pandemic is to build character and trust in His children and to awaken those who do not know him. Let us pray in earnest for one another and for those who are lost. May the Lord bless you. Let us look forward to being in church again. Thank you for your prayers and much needed support for the church to be a lighthouse in this community.