

# Christian Suffering

(Rom 8:17)

- Remember the context of this section is the assurance of justification by faith
- I. Paul's method of teaching
  - A) He is always building little upon little, ascending upwards as he goes
    - 1. In this sub-section (v.14-17) he has gone from the assurances we as believers can deduce about ourselves from our Christian experience right on up through the special works of the Holy Spirit Himself
    - 2. Paul now introduces the topic of Christian suffering as another and highest form of assurance
      - i. This will be at the center of his exposition from v.17 to the end of the chapter
- II. Christian suffering
  - A) What is it?
    - 1. Christian suffering is not the common suffering of all mankind due to the sin of Adam and individual sins
    - 2. Matt 5:10-12- "For righteousness sake" and "for My sake"
      - i. Christian suffering is the suffering of the believer because he/she is a believer and desirous of doing Christ's will
      - ii. Job 1:7-12- Job's suffering due to his being a child of God
        - a) Job 2:1-8- The same repeated about Job
  - B) Why is it?
    - 1. Rom 8:17- "Joint-heirs with Christ" means partaking of His things
      - i. It seems Paul introduces suffering here to encourage the believer who might be saying "if I am an heir, why am I as I am in this world?"
      - ii. "If so be that"- means "since" or "because" or "seeing that"
        - a) Paul is not teaching that being an heir is contingent upon our suffering
      - iii. 2<sup>nd</sup> "that"- means "in order that"
        - a) Paul will go on to show that Christian suffering serves a purpose
        - b) Every other N/T epistle does the same
          - 1) This is the main theme and purpose of the Book of Revelation
- III. Doctrine
  - A) Suffering should not cause us to doubt, but assure us of our union with Christ
    - 1. Joint-heirs with Christ means partaking in the things of Christ

- i. Rom 5:12-21- Paul has shown the results of this being joined unto Christ and now goes on to show another result: suffering at the hands of the world
  - a) Union with Christ means similar treatment:
    - 1) John 15:18-21- The world hates Christ and hates His church
      - (a) John 3:19-21- The darkness hates the light because the light reveals the hidden things
      - (b) 2 Tim 3:12- “All that will live godly shall suffer persecution”
    - 2) John 16:33- Jesus promised us tribulation in this world
      - (a) Acts 14:22- Paul re-affirms this
      - (b) Rev ch 12 shows the cause behind it
      - (c) Acts shows it begin to be fulfilled:
        - (1) Acts 4:3, 5:17-18, 5:33, 5:40-41, 7:54-59, 8:1-3, 9:1, 12:1-4, 13:45-50, 14:5, 14:19, 15:1, 16:19-24, 17:5-9, 17:18 & 32, 18:12-13, 19:9, 19:23-41, 20:23-25, 21:27-ch 28
    - 3) N/T epistles all testify to this suffering:
      - (a) 2 Cor 1:3-7- Suffering for sake of the believers
      - (b) 2 Cor 4:17-18- Light affliction works a weight of glory
      - (c) 2 Cor 11:23-26- Paul’s personal suffering detailed
      - (d) Phil 1:12-13- Suffering promotes gospel (v.28-29)
      - (e) Phil 2:17- Paul poured out like drink offering
      - (f) Phil 3:10- Fellowship of His suffering
      - (g) Col 1:24- Fill up the afflictions of Christ’s body
      - (h) 2 Thess 1:4-5- Suffering a manifest token of Christianity
      - (i) 2 Tim 1:7-9- Partaker of the afflictions of the gospel
      - (j) 2 Tim 2:12- Suffering and reigning
      - (k) 2 Tim 3:10-12- All who will live godly will suffer
      - (l) Heb 2:10- Made perfect through suffering
      - (m) Heb ch 11- Entire chapter about this
      - (n) James 1:2-3- Tribulation builds patience
      - (o) James 1:12- Blessed is man enduring temptation
      - (p) 1 Pet 1:6-7- The trial of your faith
      - (q) 1 Pet 4:12-14- The fiery trial
      - (r) Rev 1:9- John in tribulation
- B) Christian suffering is in order to prepare us for glory
  - 1. Heb 2:5- Christ perfected in suffering (5:8)
    - i. Phil 2:5-11- Because He suffered so, He is so elevated
  - 2. 2 Cor 4:17- Suffering works a “weight of glory”
    - i. 2 Cor 12- Paul glories in his sufferings
    - ii. Psa 119:71- “It was good that I was afflicted”

3. We learn things about the Lord Jesus Christ in suffering that we do not learn otherwise
  - i. “There is no university for the Christian like that of sorrow and trial”- CHS
  - ii. “Suffering times are a Christian’s harvest times”- CHS
  - iii. “Had any other condition been better for you than the one in which you are, Divine love would have put you there”- CHS
4. We do not listen as we should, and often suffering gets our attention and fixes our eyes upon God
  - i. Sickness, disappointments, set-backs, persecutions, losses, sneers, ridicule
    - a) Suffering doesn’t have to be in prison or martyrdom
5. 2 Tim 3:12 -vs- James 4:4
  - i. Hymn How Firm a Foundation (esp. v.3-4)