

Old Union Baptist Ministers' School

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"If We Suffer With Him"

By

Elder Billy L. Moran

Lesson Scripture - Romans 8:12-18

INTRODUCTION - There are many verses of scripture that deal with the subject of suffering. However, in this lesson, I want to focus on two passages in particular which refer to suffering with/for Christ. They are Romans 8:17, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together"; and 2 Timothy 2:11 "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he will also deny us".

Both of these verses contain the word **"if"** which indicates that the fulfillment of the promises, specifically mentioned, are contingent upon meeting the conditions that are set forth. The stipulation in both passages is, **"That we suffer with him"**.

I want to mention right here three kinds of suffering:

1. Common suffering - Because of the fall of man, all people, both the righteous and the wicked suffer. Women suffer in child birth; men earn their living through labor; none are exempted from sickness or disease, heartbreak, sorrow, or accidents. See Job. (Job. 14:1) **This kind of suffering does not qualify as suffering for Christ.**

2. Corrective Suffering - This is also known as chastisement; it is suffering imposed because of un-confessed personal sins. This is one way God corrects his children when we disobey; all types of sins, both omission and commission are included. This could be described as self inflicted suffering. **This also does not qualify as suffering for Christ.**

3. Christ Like Suffering - This suffering is for the Glory of God. Choosing to do God's will in faithful obedience to his teachings even if it results in suffering.

Did Christ Suffer? The gospels are filled with the sufferings of Christ, especially the events following the establishment of the Lord's Supper: the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, the betrayal by his friend, the arrest and trial in the house of Caiaphas the High Priest (where Peter denied, three times, that he knew him) and where he was falsely accused and condemned by the religious leaders. They delivered him to Pilate who ordered him to be scourged, and finally sentenced him to death by crucifixion, which was carried out by the Roman soldiers. This treatment inflicted physical pain, emotional distress, and spiritual burdens beyond our comprehension. See Isaiah 53 for the prophetic account of the sufferings of Jesus.

Did Jesus Choose to suffer? The choice Jesus faced was: **Do I in obedience to my Father carry out his will; or do I disobey him?** Notice the Gethsemane prayer of Jesus,

"Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Mt. 26:39) Jesus chose to do the will of his Father, what ever the cost, knowing fully that obedience would result in suffering. Please notice the mind-set of Jesus; "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

The Apostle Peter states, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:" (1 Peter 3:18)

Notice again the words of Peter: "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind...." (1 Peter 4:1) The word suffer in this passage comes from the Greek word *Pathontos*. A. T. Robertson says this is an active participle of *Pascho*. This is the Greek word which our English word "passion" comes from. Luke's refers to the sufferings (Pascho) of Christ as his Passion. (Acts 1:3) My point being that the passion of Christ, was to carry out his Father's will.

Suffering with/for Jesus requires a mind-set that joyfully endures suffering, for the sake of God's glory. See Luke 22:39- 23:46 for the historical account of his sufferings.

SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Before returning to the scriptures that are the focus of this lesson, I want to point out other verses from Peter's writings that will help us develop the Mind-Set of Christ.

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:" (1 Peter 3:12-15) *"For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil-doing."* (1 Pet 3:17)

WHERE IS OUR PASSION

Is the love we have for Jesus, the Word of God, and the church Jesus established (which is the pillar and ground of the truth) our passion? Do we love Jesus and the Cause for which Christ lived and died enough that we will joyfully serve him faithfully, any where, any time, under all circumstances, even if it brings suffering into our lives?

"... thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra: what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:10-12)

(2)

IF WE SUFFER WITH/FOR HIM

It seems to me that many people, even Baptist people, assume that BEING SAVED obligates God to reward all of his children equally. I hasten to affirm that every born

again child of God is an heir of God, as our focus scripture states. ***"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God"*** (Romans 8:16-17a) The only stipulation required for being an heir of God is that you be a child of God. Peter makes this plain, ***"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you,..."*** (1Peter 1:3-4)

A heir of God is one position, and a joint-heir with Jesus is another position. Being a joint-heir with Jesus is reserved for those who suffer with him. Notice "... and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Romans 8:17b) Being a Joint-heir, and being glorified together with Christ requires two things. First, one must be a child of God; and second, one must suffer with/for Christ.

Now, let's look at our other focus scripture. It comes from the Pastoral Epistles; addressed to Timothy, for the benefit of Ministers. This is an audience made up of "Ministers of Jesus Christ". Please do not take your "Divine Call" lightly. It is an honor to be identified as a minister, but it's a dishonor to be recognized without performance.

God has reserved something "Special" for those who "work and labor" in the doctrine. Being Glorified together with Christ is set aside for those who ***"suffer for righteousness"***; and those who ***"make full proof of the ministry"***. (2 Timothy 4:5)

We may, in our vanity, think that since James and John, Peter and Paul and "me" were all called to follow the Lord, we'll all get the same reward. But remember, they ***"..left all to follow Jesus"***. (Mark 10:28) We read ***"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for her sins."*** (propitiation & reconciliation) Then we sit back in our comfort zone and sing, "Jesus Paid it All".

What we ought to be singing is, "Am I A Soldier of The Cross"

Am I a soldier of the cross, a follower of the Lamb,
And shall I fear to own his cause, or blush to speak his name?
Must I be carried to the skies, on flowery beds of ease,
While others fight to win the prize, and sail the bloody seas.
Sure I must fight if I would reign,
Increase my courage Lord!
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, supported by thy Word.

(3)

In Luke's gospel we are told of three half-hearted followers. They appeared to have a desire to follow Jesus, but... they had other things too, that seemed more important. And Jesus said to one of them, ***"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."*** (Luke 9:57-62)

We are in a battle, a contest, as Paul calls it, a race; ***"... us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily besets us, and let us run with patience, the race set before us,..."*** (Hebrews 12:1)

But remember, and make no mistake, "...if a man strive for masteries, yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully." (2 Timothy 2:5) Paul admonishes us, "Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." (2 Timothy 1:8)

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he will deny us: (2 Timothy 2:12) Most commentators don't comment on that verse. If they do, they misapply it. If I may, I would like to express my interpretation of that verse. I believe it means, **If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him, and if we don't suffer, we won't reign.** If we deny him our service, we will not reign with him in life, because we are living rebellious and disobedient lives. You may ask, are there really saved people living in rebellion and disobedience? Without doubt! They are all around us. Many who profess to be saved have no interest in the kingdom work of Christ. So I ask you, are those individuals reigning with Christ in this life? Of course not!

As redeemed saints we are not our own; we have been bought with a price, and are called upon to glorify God in our bodies and our spirits, which are God's. (1 Cor. 7:19-20)

Jesus said to them all, **"...If any man will come after, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."** (Luke 9:23) **"Take up the cross, daily..."**

What about the future reign? Where and when will it take place? Obviously, **In heaven**, after the resurrection and after this world has been destroyed. Jesus will select his bride from among believers. **It is my opinion** that not all saved people will be in the bride of Christ; but only those who have been faithful to Him.

"These are they which have not defiled themselves with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." (Rev. 14:4-5)

Those who have suffered with him, that is, for his cause. Those who have been faithful to the Bridegroom, and have not cheated on him with other religious organizations. They have earnestly contended for the faith, once delivered to the saints. In faithfulness they have suffered, and because of their suffering, they will reign with him.