

"Rejoice That You Participate In The Sufferings Of Christ!"

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1st Peter 4:12-13 (KJV)

"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed."

It is a deplorable thing that modern Christian doctrine has taught the masses that Christianity and suffering are at odds with each other. The message being taught in this era leads one to believe that Christ has taken all of our suffering therefore our lives will be free from all traces of it. This is the furthest thing from the truth! The result of this doctrine is a generation of superficial Christians that come unraveled at the seams when hard-times and suffering begin to transpire.

First of all we must identify the two different types of suffering. One is a vital part of true spiritual growth and the other is caused by the damning results of sin. These two are opposites and their chief ends are different; let me explain. We know Isaiah stated that Jesus, "took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows."

Isaiah 53:4 (KJV)

Beloved what the Prophet is revealing to us is the fact that Jesus took all of the sorrows and suffering that have been caused by indwelling sin. That sorrow is the sorrow that leads to death! There is another sorrow that leads to life!

The Apostle Paul tells us in *2nd Corinthians 7:10 (KJV)* : "*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*" Paul also said that the "wages of sin is death". There is a sorrow and suffering that is the wages for the sinful lives that we have led. This is the suffering and sorrow that Jesus bore on the tree that we have been redeemed of. But beloved, there is another suffering that is a righteous suffering that works in us the glory of God! This truth has seemingly fallen asleep in our modern society of comfort and happiness. The simple truth remains that it is a normal part of true Christian growth to experience hardships and suffering as believers. First of all we will never know of the tender mercies of Christ nor of the delivering power of God unless we first experience suffering and sorrow. Peter correlated suffering with the glory of God being revealed! There is something about righteous suffering that works a manifestation of the glory of God in our lives!

The simple truth is that many born-again believers have never experienced Gods glory because they have grumbled and complained during these times of hardship and trial instead of rejoicing! One may think it absurd to rejoice during suffering and I suppose this world agrees but beloved, God does not operate by our worldly standards. Why rejoice during duress and suffering? Because we know if we do and keep our eyes upon Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith, then we will behold the glory of God being revealed in us!

Now in closing we must understand that all suffering is not righteous suffering. There is a suffering that is wrought by sin or it is a by-product of sin. This suffering is not nor cannot reveal Gods glory within. This suffering is the consequence or the reaping of a life that has sown to the flesh. Yet, even this suffering can be remedied by repentance!

Beloved, if you desire to live righteously upon this earth then you will suffer. Yet, this suffering is to produce something in you that cannot be attained by any other means. These sufferings are the pruning shears of heaven and the refining fires of God. There are no shortcuts to the glory of God being revealed in you.

So beloved, if you are suffering and are living righteously, rejoice! Allow these times to produce in you the divine qualities that they alone can produce.