

IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM, WE WILL REIGN WITH HIM

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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Holy Spirit is speaking clearly that hard times are coming our way and we need to be prepared (New Year's meeting, Northgate Convention theme: "Courage for Difficult Times.") How do we prepare?
- B. **2 Tim. 2:1-3, 8-12** (NKJV): *¹You therefore, my son, **be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.** ²And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³You therefore must **endure hardship** as a good soldier of Jesus Christ... ⁸Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to **my gospel**, ⁹**for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer**, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. ¹⁰Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. ¹²**If we endure ["suffer" KJV], we shall also reign with Him.** If we deny Him, He also will deny us.*
- C. The Bible has a lot to say about suffering—its causes, its hidden blessings, and much more. We will look for answers to common questions like, "Why do good people suffer?" "How can I keep my joy, peace, and faith in sufferings?"

II. WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER?

- A. Peter didn't want Jesus to suffer, but Jesus rebuked him sternly:
- Mat. 16:21-23:** *²¹From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that **He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things** at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. ²²**Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. "Never, Lord!"** he said. "This shall never happen to You!" ²³Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; **you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.**"*

B. Peter apparently learned something about the importance of suffering, later mentioning it 17 times in his first epistle:

Glory
always
follows
suffering!

1. **1 Pet. 1:6-7, 10-11:** *⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—**may be proved genuine** and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed... ¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the **Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.***
2. **1 Pet. 2:19-23:** *¹⁹For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. ²⁰But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But **if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.** ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps... ²³When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; **when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.***
3. **1 Pet. 3:14, 17:** *¹⁴But even **if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.** “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” ¹⁷**It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.***
4. **1 Pet. 4:1, 12-16, 19:** *¹Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin... ¹²Dear friends, **do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering,** as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But **rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ,** so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the **Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.** ¹⁵**If you suffer,** it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶**However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed,***

but praise God that you bear that name... ¹⁹So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

5. **1 Pet. 5:1, 9-10:** *¹To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed... ⁹Resist him [Satan], standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. ¹⁰And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.*
6. Summary from 1 Peter
 - a) Christ suffered, and we are called to follow Him and share in His sufferings
 - b) Many suffer justly for their own wrongdoing, but others suffer unjustly just because they are Christians
 - c) Suffering proves and refines our faith
 - d) It is God's will that Christians suffer
 - e) Suffering in the body brings an end to sin
 - f) Suffering always comes before glory

III. ARMED WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

- A. When Jesus rebuked Peter, He told Peter that he did not “have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” Apparently, the things of God include suffering, and Peter's *mind* and attitude needed to be transformed. Peter learned that the secret to enduring sufferings is all in our head—our minds must be properly prepared and equipped **beforehand**:

1 Pet. 4:1: *Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.*

- B. The Greek word translated “arm” means “to equip with tools, implements, or weapons.”
 1. How do we go about doing this?
 2. What tools or weapons has God given to help us through hardships, trials, and sufferings?

C. Seven tools or weapons to help arm our minds for suffering:

1. Understand and embrace the fact that suffering is God's will—He allows it for His purposes; we are called to suffer—it is part of following Christ:
 - a) **1 Pet. 2:20-21:** ²⁰*But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.* ²¹*To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps.*
 - b) **1 Pet. 3:17:** *It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*
 - c) **1 Pet. 4:19:** *So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*
 - d) **John 15:18-20:** ¹⁸*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first...* ²⁰*"No servant is greater than his master." If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also.*
 - e) **John 16:33:** *I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*
 - f) **Phil. 1:29:** *For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him.*
 - g) **2 Tim. 3:10-12 (NKJV):** ¹⁰*But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,* ¹¹*persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.* ¹²*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*
 - h) **Rev. 1:9:** *I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*

We are called to suffer... period! Let's get used to it!

When we expect trouble and persecution, we will not be disappointed!

2. We must lay down our life—watch out for selfishness and feelings of self-love or self-importance:

a) **Luke 9:23-24:** ²³*Then He said to them all: “If anyone would come after Me, **he must deny himself** and take up his cross daily and follow Me. ²⁴For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life for Me will save it.***

- b) Self-denial is the complete opposite of the world:

2 Tim. 3:1-4: ¹*But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ²People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³without love, unforgiving, slanderous, **without self-control**, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴treacherous, rash, **conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.***

Lovers of
themselves
rather than
lovers of
God.

- c) **Acts 20:22-24** (NKJV): ²²*And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³except that the **Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.** ²⁴But none of these things move me; **nor do I count my life dear to myself**, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*
- d) **Rev. 12:11:** *They overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; **they did not love their lives** so much as to shrink from death.*
- e) **1 John 3:16:** *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. **And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.***

3. Sufferings change our perspective and help us to focus on the glories of eternity:

a) **Rom. 8:16-18:** ¹⁶*The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, **if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.** ¹⁸*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.**

Troubles
seem light
and
momentary
in light of
God's
eternal
glory!

b) **2 Cor. 4:16-18:** ¹⁶*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

c) **Heb. 10:32-34:** ³²*Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. ³³Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. ³⁴You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.*

d) We will be willing to suffer for Christ as our love for Him grows. Note how love completely changed Jacob's perspective:

If suffering
lasts a
lifetime, it is
still just for
"a little
while"
(1 Pet. 5:10)

Gen. 29:18-20: ¹⁸*Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel." ¹⁹Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." ²⁰So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.*

4. Submit to God in sufferings, understanding that He is using those sufferings to teach, strengthen, and transform us:

a) **Heb. 5:7-8:** ⁷*During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission. ⁸Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered.*

b) **Heb. 12:3-11:** ³*Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. ⁴In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light*

of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, ⁶because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son. "

⁷**Endure hardship as discipline;** God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? ⁸If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. ⁹Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. **How much more should we submit to the Father** of our spirits and live! ¹⁰Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but **God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness.** ¹¹No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. **Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace** for those who have been trained by it.

- c) **Rom. 5:1-4:** ¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also **rejoice in our sufferings**, because we know that **suffering produces perseverance;** ⁴perseverance, **character;** and character, hope.
- d) **James 1:2-4:** ²**Consider it pure joy**, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that **the testing of your faith develops perseverance.** ⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
- e) **1 Pet. 1:6-7:** ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while **you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.** ⁷**These have come so that your faith—**of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—**may be proved genuine** and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.
- f) God is always in control, causing every circumstance to work for our ultimate, eternal good:
Rom. 8:28: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.*

Trials & sufferings produce Christlike character & strong faith.

- g) **Phil. 3:10-11:** ¹⁰*I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death,* ¹¹*and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*
5. Rejoice in persecutions and sufferings, counting it as a great honor to suffer for Christ—we are blessed and will be greatly rewarded:
- a) **Acts 5:40-41:** ⁴⁰*They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.* ⁴¹*The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.*
- b) **Acts 4:29-31:** [After the apostles' release from jail, they prayed with the church] ²⁹*“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable Your servants to speak Your word with great boldness.* ³⁰*Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.”* ³¹*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*
- c) **Mat. 5:10-12:** ¹⁰*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* ¹¹*“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.* ¹²*Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*
- d) **Luke 6:22-23:** ²²*Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.* ²³*Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.*
- e) [Review: “Count it pure joy” (James 1:2) and “greatly rejoice” (1 Pet. 1:6)]
- f) **Col. 1:24:** *Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church.*

Rejoice and leap for joy when you are persecuted!

6. We need to make up our mind that we are going to keep praising, worshiping, and thanking God **no matter what!**

a) **Ps. 34:1:** *Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he left. **I will extol the LORD at all times; His praise will always be on my lips.***

b) **Heb. 13:15:** *Through Jesus, therefore, **let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess His name.***

"As long
as I'm
breathing,
I've got a
reason to
praise the
Lord!"
Praise by
Brandon
Lake

c) **Job 1:20-21:** ²⁰*At this [all of his sons and daughters had been killed], Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then **he fell to the ground in worship*** ²¹*and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; **may the name of the LORD be praised.**"*

d) **Acts 16:23-26:** [Paul and Silas in Philippi] ²³*After they had been **severely flogged**, they were **thrown into prison**, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.* ²⁴*Upon receiving such orders, he put them **in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.*** ²⁵*About midnight Paul and Silas were **praying and singing hymns to God**, and the other prisoners were listening to them.* ²⁶*Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.*

7. God is with us in our trials and troubles—He will never leave us nor forsake us:

a) **Isa. 41:10:** *So, do not fear, for **I am with you**; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*

b) **Isa. 43:2:** ***When** you pass through the waters, **I will be with you**; and **when** you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. **When** you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

Do not
fear, for I
am with
you!

c) **Deut. 31:6:** *Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for **the LORD your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you.***

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Christians are called to suffer because they are following the Master who suffered.
- B. We naturally have negative, fearful thoughts about suffering, but our minds must be renewed through the Word of God—we must arm ourselves with the correct attitude in order to face trials, persecutions, and sufferings with courage and grace.
- C. Trials and sufferings are often portrayed in Scripture as something positive.
- D. Suffering is a prerequisite for glory—If we suffer with Him, we will also reign with Him!
- E. If we are willing to suffer with Him now, there is one kind of suffering that will never touch us:

1 Thess 5:9: *For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- F. Come what may, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ; we are always more than conquerors through Jesus Christ our Lord:

Rom. 8:31, 35-39: ³¹*What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?... ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?* ³⁶*As it is written: “For Your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*