

Suffering (Part 3) - by Rev. Tom Aicken

Suffering is inevitable for sinners living in a fallen world, even for sinners saved by grace. How, then, shall the believer view his pain and suffering? What does it all mean for him? And what does he need to know in order to bear up under it?

Here are ten biblical insights to help the Christian endure suffering

- (1) Suffering comes from the Lord, and, for the child of God, it's part of the "all things" that He is working together for his good. Isaiah 45:7; Romans 8:28. The believer, therefore, shouldn't instantly pray for its removal, but that he may learn its purpose.
- (2) Suffering teaches the believer obedience, and, if even Jesus had to learn obedience that way, surely His disciples do as well. Hebrews 5:8; James 1:2-4.
- (3) Suffering will never be greater than what the believer, waiting upon the Lord and looking to Him for help, can bear. Philippians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 10:13.
- (4) Suffering is a light and momentary affliction to the believer compared to the glory which has yet to be revealed in him. Romans 8:18. Oh, that he might remember that!
- (5) Suffering, if the believer bears it patiently, is profitable in working for him an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. 2 Corinthians 4:17.
- (6) Suffering discipline, in particular, is a mark of God's love and peculiar favour to someone who is His child and heir. Hebrews 12:6; Revelation 3:19.
- (7) The believer bears witness for Christ, not only by what he does but by how he responds to what is done to him. How he suffers affliction, therefore, if he does so with contentment, is a testimony of God's all-sufficient grace. Isaiah 40:29-31; 2 Corinthians 12:9.
- (8) How the believer suffers persecution, if he does so faithfully, is a witness even to his persecutors. But let him suffer for doing good, not for doing evil. Luke 23:47; 1 Peter 3:14-17.
- (9) The Lord never sends the believer into any furnace of affliction without going in before him and to stand beside him. Daniel 3:25; Psalm 46:1. Many have testified that some of the greatest joys they have known came as a result of the Lord's presence and power in the midst of affliction.

(10) It is no shame to suffer shame and disgrace for Christ. With the apostles before him, let the believer rejoice if he is counted worthy to suffer such disgrace for Christ. Acts 5:41.