

There's a Purpose Behind This Coronavirus Suffering

Suffering is a hot topic. Many are suffering from the terrible effects of the coronavirus. The tributaries stretch in a thousand directions.

This virus confronts us with sickness, disease, fear, unemployment, financial ruin and stress. All these are in the top 10 of the worst things that can happen.

Both Christians and non-Christians are on the radar.

The virus is not particular about its victims. It includes all races and religions.

Thousands are suffering the loss of loved ones. Our relatives are dying alone and slipping into eternity. This is a new level of suffering for Americans.

Suffering Is Real

God never promised a life without suffering. No one ever promised us a rose garden. Even those close to Jesus experienced severe suffering.

The apostle Paul said, "For these things I suffer, but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that Day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

Paul shared his suffering for the sake of the gospel. His suffering was a part of the calling that God placed on his life.

Paul was a special vessel. He suffered more than anyone in the Scripture. Paul's suffering was a sign that he was chosen by God.

“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go your way. For this man is a chosen vessel of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and their kings, and before the sons of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake’” (Acts 9:15-16).

Paul shared his suffering throughout the Scriptures. God chose Paul to show us how to live strong in seasons of spiritual weakness.

Suffering Is a Teacher

Paul revealed that his suffering led him to understand God on a higher level. It is in the valley that we find the joy of the mountaintop.

This is why Paul took pleasure in suffering:

“So I take pleasure in weaknesses, in reproaches, in hardships, in persecutions, and in distresses for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12:10).

This is difficult to understand. Paul is saying, “I take pleasure in my trouble.”

Few of us have discovered the value of suffering. Weakness never feels valuable. But spiritual weakness is a strength. Paul realized when his natural man is weak, his spirit was strong.

Paul discovers he cannot count on his human ways to perform God’s work.

Paul sees his physical suffering as spiritual renewal. “Even though our outward man is perishing, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16).

The Purpose of Suffering

Paul realized he was to live for Christ and not for himself.

This is the call to every believer. We are crucified with Christ, but we remain alive. We remain alive to live for Christ.

Paul realized that the outer body dies day by day. He also realized that his spirit man was being renewed every day through his suffering.

Why is Paul known as the suffering servant? Because he suffered for God's glory. This means Paul's suffering was a part of showing us how to walk in God's strength.

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; and always carrying around in the body the death of the Lord Jesus, that also the life of Jesus might be expressed in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that also the life of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then, death works in us, but life in you" (2 Cor. 4:8-12).

Don't Hide Your Struggle

Paul said, "I am not ashamed."

Few reveal their struggles. Paul was transparent because his suffering was for God's glory and not from God's judgment.

Many of us hide our struggles because we are afraid of man's judgment.

In his suffering, Paul became convinced of God's goodness. Paul turned his suffering into understanding.

He was not ashamed to suffer for God.

As believers, we must find God's outcomes in the center of our struggle.

The coronavirus is a real struggle and thousands are

suffering.

Endure Suffering

Through our suffering, we can land in a good place. The place where we understand that God is trustworthy.

Like Paul, we can know that God is faithful.

Paul knew his suffering was for a purpose.

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).

When we realize the purpose of our suffering, we can endure the challenge of the moment.

Fear not.

Suffering is here, but glory is coming. {eoa}

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