

Obedience

Hebrews 5:1-14 Obedience is a word that usually causes us to flinch. Something inside of us does not like that word. That something inside of us is called “the flesh.” I recall the story of the little boy who was told over and over again by his mother to sit down and be still. Little Johnny finally obeyed, but he told his mother, “I’m sitting down on the outside, but I’m standing up on the inside.” Obeying outside without having an obedient heart inside is still rebellion.

Ever since the Fall, we have been subject to our flesh, which is rebellious. One has only to observe an eighteen-month-old baby for a short time to discover the natural man in our sinful nature is rebellious. We were all born with the desire to have our way instead of God’s way.

In this passage in Hebrews we see an interesting verse of scripture: “Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all them who obey Him” (v. 9).

None of us like to suffer. In fact, we usually dislike the word suffer more than the word obedience. Jesus, however, suffered. The apostles suffered. What Paul went through alone is enough to tell us he was not exempt from suffering. Listen to his words: “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and

painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11:23-27, KJV).

Can your list of suffering match Paul's? Jesus, however, not only suffered, but He tasted death for us all. Jesus was the suffering servant mentioned in Isaiah 53. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by the stripes He bore, He purchased our healing. Jesus learned obedience through the things He suffered. Suffering in our lives will never result in the fruit of an obedient heart unless we submit our lives totally to God. Jesus said, "In this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." No one is exempt from suffering. The question we need to ask ourselves, however, is, Will we learn obedience to God in the midst of our suffering?

**READ: Ezekiel 7:1-9:11; Hebrews 5:1-14; Psalm 105:1-15;
Proverbs 26:28**