

You Can Still Be Blessed While Going Through Hardship

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though some strange thing happened to you. But rejoice insofar as you share in Christ's sufferings, so that you may rejoice and be glad also in the revelation of His glory. If you are reproached because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified (1 Pet. 4:12-14).

In my family, one of our favorite people is a little girl with bows in her hair, braces on her legs and a walker that holds her up. Her little body struggles to be healthy, but her soul is perhaps the healthiest I have ever seen. She has a huge smile, lovely personality and kind word for everyone she meets. Every time I read Jesus' words that those with pure hearts will be blessed, this little girl comes to mind.

This lovely little lady has spent much of her dozen years of life in the hospital undergoing various surgeries. On one occasion, I was honored to be at her bedside as she came out of surgery and began to awaken. Her lovely blonde hair was shaved, and in its place were numerous large stitches from yet another surgery.

With parched lips and droopy eyes due to the medication, she looked at me and smiled. Holding back tears, I asked her how she was doing. She said, "I'm fine, but Mr. Mark, how are you? I'm more worried about you."

This little girl has been through more suffering than any child I know, yet she is perhaps the godliest, maturest, and most Christlike child I have ever met. In various

conversations we have had, she has explained to me how her suffering has helped her more fully appreciate Jesus' suffering and increased her love and compassion for others who are suffering. At times the profound insights she shares make it obvious that God's Spirit is present and powerful in her suffering, giving her wisdom that defies the number of candles on her birthday cake.

Jesus suffered, and yet He was blessed because the Holy Spirit rested upon Him in glory during His suffering. You can suffer and be blessed because the Holy Spirit will come to rest on you in a unique and glorious way when you suffer. {eoa}

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