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Chapter

The Suffering of Christians

1 Peter 4–5

Today's Lesson:



1. To understand why the Lord allows Christians to suffer.

2. To understand the relationship between suffering and glory.

Open Your Heart



In the 9,842-foot high tree line of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, there are a certain type of trees known as the "Kneeling Trees". The reason that these trees look like they are kneeling is because the violent winds prevent them from growing upright.

These trees must endure in order to survive severe hardships. However, a tree toughened through various trials is born again as the highest quality violin that makes a beautiful sound through its deep and beautiful resonance.



Understanding Today's Lesson

"O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us?" Gideon, the Judge, was so perplexed that he asked this question to the Angel of the Lord. The psalmists and prophets also sometimes wondered if God had stopped looking over His people. It is very difficult to understand why the Lord, the most Holy One, had to endure the greatest suffering, and it is hard to comprehend why His disciples must walk on the same path. In fact, from the martyrdom of Stephen and James at the time of the Early Church until now, countless Christians have continually faced sufferings and afflictions.

The source of this suffering is, of course, the Fall of Man. After the sin at the Garden of Eden, the whole world has been subjected to toil, sorrow, suffering, curse, and death. Christians are not excused from these misfortunes. Some of these disasters are judgments for our individual sins. However, as in Job's case, some sufferings begin with the accusation of Satan; in Joseph's case, it was the refinement of God; in the case of Paul and Silas' imprisonment in Philippi, some sufferings are given as providence for the preaching of the Gospel.

Therefore, we should not hastily conclude that everyone who is in distress is suffering due to their sins. These hardships can sometimes lead us to frustration and discouragement, and it can even lead us to distancing our relationship with the Lord. However, in these moments of suffering, what we must do is believe in the righteousness, love, and omnipotence of God and, in prayer, desire for his guidance and answers regarding these things. Also, the sufferings we are facing now cannot be compared with the glory that will be given to us in the future. We must not forget to look to the glory and joy that lies ahead of us.

Notes:



Memorizing Bible Verses

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

(John 16:33)



Meditate

On These Verses

1. After you have meditated on the following verses, give a title of the verse or write a short summary of the verse. Also, write down things you have felt about the verse, or other verses that it has reminded you of.

(2 Timothy 3:10–12)

(Isaiah 40:27–31)

(2 Corinthians 1:8–10)



Changing

Directions

Peter wrote the book of First Peter to comfort and encourage the saints who were suffering unjustly for being a Christian. Read 1 Peter 1:5–7 and answer the following:

1. The "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" in verse 5 refers to the salvation of the body that a person who has received the salvation of the spirit obtains when the Lord returns. Read verse 5 and write down what the Lord has promised us until the day when the salvation of our bodies is fulfilled.

2. Why do we need the promise of verse 5? Find the answer in verse 6.

3. In verse 6, find what is the right attitude we should take when we face hardships and trials.

4. In verse 7, the 'genuineness of faith' is compared to 'gold tested by fire'. Gold does not exist alone in its natural state, but it can be found in small amounts within different rocks and stones. In order to collect pure gold, it is necessary to put these stones mixed with gold into a furnace and smelt it several times. In this regard, write why we need the "genuineness of faith".

5. What is the ultimate purpose of the Lord for allowing more suffering and trials for Christians? Find the answer in verse 7 and write it down.

6. In the end, we are not only "kept" by the power of God in the midst of suffering, but He also gives us 'glory' in proportion to our suffering. What kind of suffering am I now receiving for the Lord?



Applying

The Word to My Life

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
(James 2:26)

1. Please write down how you will apply what you learned today throughout this week.

1.)

2.)

3.)

2. Look back and reflect on how successful you were at applying last week's lesson.



Praying

To Live According to the Word

Let us ask for the Lord's help and protection so that we can overcome the hardships we face as a Christian. Let us also pray for and rejoice in the praise and glory that the Lord will give us in the midst of these hardships. And let us pray for our brothers and sisters who are suffering the same hardships as us.



Our Story

The Meaning of Trials

Even though I don't believe in Jesus, my life is going well without any difficulties. But why is it that those who believe in Jesus always face difficult trials?



Let me give you a simple example. Let's say you went hunting.



While you were hunting, you shot two deer. While one of the deer died, the other was wounded and ran away. Which deer are you going to chase after?



Since the dead deer is already mine, I would probably go after the wounded deer.



Yes, likewise, the reason there are no trials is because the soul is left alone, as it is already dead and has become the devil's.



However, those who want to live according to the will of God are tested because the devil tries to interfere and put them under his snare and command.



You Must Go Through Hardship to Gain Strength in Your Wings

The Emperor Moth's cocoon looks like a flask. Therefore, the moth inside the cocoon struggles to squeeze out the neck of the narrow cocoon. Entomologists explain that this is a process that the Emperor Moth must go through to make the wings come alive, and it is a kind of survival method that nature enforces.

However, an observer cut the thread surrounding the moth to ease the pain and struggles of this poor creature as it comes out of its cocoon, allowing it to come out painlessly and effortlessly. Because of this, the moth's wings became useless, and the moth couldn't fly. It just crawled a little, and soon died. Grief, suffering, trials, and sufferings are what God wisely prepared for us to be like Christ. The process of refinement and growth is always difficult and tedious, but through the grace of God, we can ultimately win.





Wednesday

Sermon

Date.

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Title:

Speaker:

Main Passage:



Sunday

Sermon

Date.

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Title:

Speaker:

Main Passage: