

Thank you!
Alexis Brown
Today's speaker

New Christians...and Others Interested
“Foundation Lessons” Class
Wednesdays 3:30 p.m. at the church building

Important and Timely Bulletin Article

Please spend time reading the main article in the bulletin today...“Some Benefits of Suffering.” It’s especially worthwhile and timely...but likely always that way! All of us have many struggles in this life. Hopefully, the article contains “reminders” that will help us all.

August Birthdays

12 Debbie Hoffman

16 Nick Hoffman

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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Indio Informer

Vol. 34 No. 32

August 6, 2023

Some Benefits of Suffering

By Bob Waldron

There is no problem in life more universal, more common, and more unique than that of suffering. It is the common malady of mankind; if we live long enough, we will experience some type or degree of suffering. It is not my purpose in this article to discuss the source or origin of suffering. While it is a baffling question, many good articles and tracts have been written to explain this problem and they can be read and studied with much profit. It is my intent to look at some ways suffering can benefit us.

First of all, we can learn complete dependence on God. If there is ever a time in life when men tend to turn to God, it is when they suffer. We certainly learn this principle from the study of God's word. Great men of the Bible always turned to God and leaned on him when sufferings came. I believe this is the great lesson in the book of Job. In severe suffering Job “*did not sin with his lips*” (Job 1:10). Neither did he “*charge God foolishly*” (Job 1:22), but worshiped Jehovah. He knew God was his redeemer (Job 9:25) and that God would vindicate his cause.

This was also a quality of Daniel; when problems and threats of death came, he trusted in God for his help (Daniel 6:10-11). And he walked into that den of lions believing God would win the victory for him. And by complete dependence on God, the victory was won (Daniel 6:22-23).

Paul was given a thorn in the flesh. God did not send this suffering; the devil did. And God did not remove it but gave Paul the grace to bear it (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). I believe it was complete dependence on God that enabled this great apostle to bear up under this and all other problems of suffering he encountered.

And this is the “bottom line” for you and me. When suffering comes, we should certainly turn to God, put our complete dependence in him and say, “Lord, it is in your hands, I have no other source to which I can turn but you and may thy will be done.” And what a great source of help, comfort, and strength he can and will bestow on us in time of trouble. *“The Lord is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”* (Psalms 46:1).

Another great benefit we can derive from suffering and trying times is the support of family. There is no greater source of strength and help than a faithful loving husband or wife by your side. And to see them patiently bear up under the long hours of concern and care, never wavering, but always there, cannot be surpassed as a genuine source of benefit and encouragement to one so dependent on others. This, along with children patiently encouraging and helping, makes what seems like unbearable times so much easier. Yes, we can certainly learn of the benefits of a faithful spouse and children in our times of problems and suffering.

Still another thing we can learn from suffering is what our fellow Christians (especially the local church) can mean to us. In times of severe pain and stress, when the way looks exceedingly dark and drear, what a comfort it is to know of the love, concern, and prayers of our brethren in Christ. It is at these times that we learn what real love, support, and encouragement is all about. I am sure this is how Peter felt when he learned that while he was in prison, with all his sufferings and uncertainties, *“prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him”* (Acts 12:5).

Another definite benefit of suffering is that we can learn of another suffering—that of Christ. While the sufferings of this life may be severe; those that try our very souls, they can in no way compare with the sufferings of Christ. But while they can in no way compare, maybe we can come to appreciate more his love and sacrifice for me. He became obedient unto death, yea even the death on the cross (Philippians 2:6). He was literally nailed to a cross and left there to die. What suffering, what agony! Now maybe, just maybe, in our sufferings we can in some small way come to appreciate that love and sacrifice more. Maybe we can appreciate more what he went through so I can be a Christian and

have that hope of eternal life. What a great lesson we can learn in our times of suffering.

One final and very important principle we can learn from suffering is: the sufferings here do not compare with the glory to follow. The New Testament reminds us of this again and again. Paul suffered much for the cause of the Lord. And in our times of suffering, we can in some small way relate to him as to what he emphasized again and again, *“Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceeding weight of glory”* (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). He states further, *“If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him. For I reckon the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward”* (Romans 8:17-18). So, we can understand that whatever sufferings we undergo here are light and insignificant in comparison to our eternal reward. All sufferings of this present world don’t last long; yet heaven is eternal. This is precisely why we need to learn this great benefit of suffering and why we should endure patiently; knowing that by faithfully committing our lives to God, we can have a great reward in heaven. I believe it will certainly be worth it all.

Yes, suffering is the common lot of mankind. And in suffering we can learn things learned nowhere else. We can learn a deeper and more abiding faith in God and a more humble trust in him. And despite the suffering of this world, we can cast all our cares on him knowing that he cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). And in turning it all over to him and waiting on him, always believing he will work things out to our ultimate good, we will win.

And finally, may we learn what the Spirit said to the church at Smyrna, *“Fear not the things thou are about to suffer, behold, the devil (the source of suffering) is about to cast some of you in prison, that you may be tried; and shall have tribulation ten days (a short but definite period of time). Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life”* (Revelation 2:10).