

Daily Devotional, September 24, 2021 True Strength in Our Sufferings

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 1Peter 4:10-14 (NIV)

Have you ever been taken by surprise, even though you knew what was coming? Once when Laura and I were traveling in an RV through the Badlands of South Dakota on our honeymoon, a thunderstorm was fast approaching from the south. We were in the middle of the park when we saw the wall of dark clouds swiftly approaching and decided to head back to Wall Drugs just off the main highway for safety. Unfortunately, we were about 18 miles away and a number of other travelers had the same idea that we had, therefore it was a slow and windy journey toward shelter.

When we arrived at our destination, we were alarmed to find that they had apparently sent all of their employees home and had dropped their large wooden canopies over the windows for protection. The winds were gusting, the rain was pouring down and lightning was striking only a few feet from us as we tried to brave out what was happening all around us. We were taken by surprise. There we were stranded in an empty parking lot, save for a few other cars that had suffered the same predicament that we were trapped in. We were surprised by this storm—even though we knew it was coming.

When we accept Jesus Christ to our life and start to follow Him, the battles in our lives begin. Satan wages war on us, continually seeking ways to make us fall away from our faith. We will sometimes suffer just as our Lord has suffered, but Jesus gave us many examples to follow. The world hated our Lord, and we will be hated by the world because of Him. We will go through hardships for doing the right thing. We will lose friendships because of the One we follow and obey, and we will be despised for no good reason.

We often wonder why we suffer. Some of our sufferings are a direct result of our actions or other people's actions. Yet many times our sufferings are permitted by God to discipline us and to remove our impurities because God love us. These afflictions will refine us as gold is refined by fire, and our faith will be strengthened, resulting in praise, glory and honor to the God we serve. In this we should rejoice and give thanks to our Lord. This side of eternity is but a brief moment in which we endure trials and tribulations to prove that our faith in Christ is genuine, resulting in the salvation of our souls.

Therefore, let's not be taken by surprise when sufferings and testing come our way. Romans 5:3-5 explains it this way. *"Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."*

God of Heaven, since I am Your child, I am Your heir, an heir of Your glory. But if I am to share Your glory, I know that I must also share Your suffering. I understand that pain and suffering is necessary at times, but what I suffer now is nothing compared to the glory that You will reveal to me later. In the name of Christ, my redeemer, Amen.