

27 May 2018

The children of God are to Suffer: Pt 2 – We are to suffer for His sake.

This is our second study on the topic of suffering. In our previous teaching we established three points – (1) the meaning of “suffering” in the scriptures, (2) how that Christ suffered in the flesh for us, and (3) Christ is an example for us to follow. In this study we will cover another three points – (1) we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ if we suffer with Him, (2) we are to suffer for Christ’s sake, and (3) the sufferings of Christ are to abound in us.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded.

1. We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ if we suffer with Him.

“And 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 together” (Rom.8: 17).

See also – 2Cor.1: 7 & 1Pet.4: 13.

2. We are to suffer for His sake.

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Phil.1: 29).

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us” (2Tim.2: 12).

3. The sufferings of Christ are to abound in us.

“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ” (2Cor. 1: 5). See also – 2Cor.1: 6.

Additional comments.

Christ suffered – He was mocked, spat upon, spitefully entreated (Lk.18: 32), and crucified.

An illustration to help apply the teaching to our life today.

Twenty three years ago I came out of sixteen years in the Presbyterian church where I called myself a Christian, sat on pews, read a book with the words “Holy Bible” on the front cover, and prayed. But when the rubber hit the road (so to speak) and I had an opportunity to speak to others about Christ I was a coward and could not tell anyone what Christ had done for them on the cross.

Question to think about.

If a person calls themselves a Christian and has never suffered for Christ’s sake are they really in the body of Christ, are they really a born again child of God?

My answer to our question from the scriptures.

A Christian is a person who is born of the Spirit of God, and so the Spirit of God dwells in them, and will bear fruit of the Spirit in them, just as the Spirit of God will enable the believer to suffer for Christ. Why? Because that is what the scriptures say!

For a gospel message to be complete does it need to include the grief that a person, once saved will suffer for Christ (as Julian Batchelor the evangelist would suggest)? NO – Paul gives us the gospel in 1Cor.15: 1–4 and Rom.10. And just as the gospel message does not need to include teaching on the Spirit bearing fruit in us, neither is it necessary to include teaching on suffering. BUT, if we have never suffered for Christ, or are like I was – a pew-sitter, afraid to speak of Christ, then let us examine ourselves as to whether we are in the faith (2Cor.13: 5). Because during my 16 years in the Presbyterian church I proved to myself that I was **not** in the body of Christ, because I “loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (Jn.12: 43), and would not suffer for Christ. And therefore I either believed a false gospel or had believed in vain (1Cor.15: 2).

Where do you sit? Do you love the world and never suffer for Christ? Or do you hate the world and suffer for Christ’s sake (1Jn.2: 15) in which case you have not believed the gospel in vain. Be encouraged today to examine yourself – whether you have believed, and suffered for Christ and therefore are joint-heirs with Christ, or whether you love the world more than you love the Father.