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The children of God are to Suffer: Pt 3 Consequences of our suffering.

This is our third study on the topic of suffering. In our previous teaching we established 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.

In this study we will cover a further four points – suffering brings us closer to the Lord, our suffering is not worthy to be compared to our future glory, our suffering enables us to comfort others in their suffering, and when we endure suffering we see the deliverance of the Lord.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded.

1. The journey of suffering brings a believer closer to the Lord & His word.

"Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word" (Ps.119: 114), c.f. Ps.119: 50 – "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me."

2. Our suffering is not worthy to be compared with our future glory.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom.8: 18).

3. We are able to comfort others in their suffering.

"Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2Cor.1: 4).

See also 1Thes.3: 7.

4. When we endure suffering we see the deliverance of the Lord.

"Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me" (2Tim.3: 11).

See also Ps.88: 17.

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

The Outward Bound course that I went on during my electrical apprenticeship years was a challenge that proved what I was made of (as a non-believer). Out of the 28 days I remember a three day hike over a mountain range that would have led to much physical and mental suffering for those in my group. We all took a vote on whether we should obey the rules and walk over the mountain or go around and save ourselves a whole lot of suffering. I was complicit in the decision to go around the mountain, but like all acts of disobedience in life this had its consequences – and all those in my group spent three days in isolation on an island instead of three days of fun.

Question to think about.

What happens when a Christian is **not** driven closer to God and His word in times of suffering?

My answer to our question from the scriptures.

When a believer goes through persecution, suffering and affliction it is a time where **they** get to see the substance of their faith. Just as the Lord did with Israel, where He proved Israel "to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord" (Jud.3: 4).

Is our faith skin deep, or is it made of steel (so to speak)?

If we stand strong in suffering and so steadfast in our faith, and endure then we will be delivered.

If we disobey the word of the Lord then we potentially end up where the nation of Israel are – backslidden (Jer.3: 6).

When a believer is not driven closer to the Lord during times of suffering they inevitably act as I did at Outward Bound and take the easy road, they opt out of affliction, which means they are not reliant on the Lord, and so move away from Him, and head in the direction of the world.

Whereas for us to endure suffering we are forced into His arms, His word, which equips us to comfort others, and we see the deliverance of the Lord. Amen!