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The children of God are to Suffer: Pt 4 Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness

This is our fourth and final study on the topic of suffering. In our previous teaching we established 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. In this study we will cover a further four points – God can use Satan to afflict us, to teach us that the Lord's grace is sufficient for us, for His strength is made perfect in weakness, therefore we glory in our infirmities and take pleasure in our sufferings, for when we are weak then are we strong.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded.

1. God can use Satan to afflict us.

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2Cor.12: 7).

See also Job 2: 6, & 7.

2. God can use affliction to teach us that the Lord's grace is sufficient for us.

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...." (2Cor.12: 9).

3. Therefore, we glory in our infirmities that the power of Christ may rest on us.

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2Cor.12: 9). See also 2Cor.11: 30.

4. Therefore, take pleasure in sufferings for when we are weak then are we strong.

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2Cor.12: 10).

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

Job was afflicted with his oxen and asses being stolen, his servants slain, the fire of God from heaven burnt up his sheep, the Chaldeans carried away his camels and slain his servants, a great wind from the wilderness smote the four corners of his house, and it fell upon the young men (1: 13–19). And then Satan smote him with "boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (2: 7).

Question to think about.

How could anyone go through what Job went through and not curse God?

My answer to our question from the scriptures.

Job's answer to his wife when she encouraged him to curse God says it all – "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 2: 10). And was a similar reason to why Paul was able to go through all that he experienced in Christ – "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren" (2Cor.11: 25 & 26). Paul glorified God and knew that the Lord's grace was sufficient for him, that Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness, therefore he gloried in his infirmities and took pleasure in sufferings, for when he was weak (2Cor.11: 29) then was he strong.

What does it mean for us to know the grace of Christ – such that it is sufficient for us in our times of suffering? That is in our next topic – the grace of Christ.