

SUFFERINGS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

(Moerewa - C F - 6/11/88 - EKB)

1. God's Word has a lot to say about **sufferings** in the Christian life.
Jam 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into **various trials** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
1Pet 4:12,13. Do not think it strange concerning the **fiery trial** which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you, but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings.
Rom 5:3 We also glory in **tribulations**, knowing that tribulation produces endurance.....
2. As followers of Christ we experience **tests, trials, sufferings** along the way.
3. **Jesus said:**
Jn 16:33 In Me you will have peace, but in the world tribulation
Jn 15:18 If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before it hated you.
Jn 15:20 If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.....
4. **1Pet 4:1-4** (in particular v4)
When we turn from living for self and the way of the world, choose Jesus Christ as Lord, God, and Saviour, live to serve, obey and please Him, the world reacts to this by:
 - a. **thinking us strange**, (v4), "what has happened to you?", "what has got into you?", "we liked you the way you were!"
 - b. **speaking evil of us**, (v4). "he's gone religious!", "really weird!", "stuck up and proud too! no fun anymore!"
 - c. **reproaching us**. (*Mat 5:11,12, Mat 10:34-37*) "a little religion in its place is all right, but you're a fanatic!" Despised, rejected and insulted on occasions.
5. **1Pet 4:1** **"Since Christ has suffered for us in the flesh"**
Jesus could have lived a peaceful, quiet, long life as the most respected carpenter in Nazareth and been everyone's friend, **BUT** He obeyed God's call, to speak the truth, do what the Father wanted Him to do, to go where the Father sent Him, to teach the Word, to perform miracles on the Sabbath, to declare His divinity, heal the sick, save the lost, etc and as a result, (*Is 53:3*), He was insulted, rejected, despised, hated, and had many murder attempts on His Life.
"arm yourself also with the same mind"
Arm yourself as Jesus did with the **definite decision** that you are not going to allow suffering to turn you back from believing the Word, obeying God, and serving Christ. **Our choice** is that we are going to follow and obey Christ though it involves hardship, suffering, tests, trials, difficulties, oppositions.
6. How to handle suffering when it occurs.
 - a. **Declare your decision** to follow Jesus no matter what it costs.
Josh 24:15, 1K 18:21, Heb 11:24-26.

- b. **Thank Him** that those who are persecuted for serving and obeying the Lord are greatly blessed by God, and will be greatly rewarded, *Mat 5:11,12, Heb 11:26, 1Pet 4:14.*
- c. **Rejoice and be glad** in the Lord. As the tests and the trials increase make a greater emphasis of **praising, thanking and worshipping God**. Lift your heart to Him more and more and refuse to look at the “problem”. *Mat 5:12, Lk 6:23, Jam 1:2, Rom 5:3, 1Pet 4:13, Neh 8:10, 1Sam 30:6, Ac 16:25, Jonah 2:9, 2Chr 20:21,22, Phil 4:4.*
- d. Realise that the same tests and trials are **occurring in the lives of most other believers** who are actively serving the Lord. *1Cor 10:13, 1Pet 4:12. 1Pet 5:9, 2Tim 3:12.*
- e. Remember that serving the Lord through tests, trials, difficulties, **is the way that we gain “endurance”**, *Jam 1:3,4, Rom 5:3.* Endurance is the ability to stand for God through the storms of life, its tests and trials. **The result of endurance is mature godly character**, *Jam 1:4, Rom 5:4.* God uses the tests and trials to bring us to maturity. James says therefore “rejoice” in your trials
- f. **Be wise!**
 Don't look for trouble, *Heb 12:14, Ps 34:14.* Seek peace! Don't lash back seeking for revenge. Forgive and pray for those who persecute you. *Mat 5:44, Rom 12:14,17,19.*
 If you don't know the answer, say so, and tell them you will ask the pastor.
 Give a clear answer if you can, *1Pet 3:15.*
 Be humble in your attitude. Do not act in pride, thinking yourself better than others, *2Tim 2:24-26.*
 Set a godly example of patience, kindness, longsuffering, forgiveness, peace, selfcontrol, gentleness, goodness, boldness, strength and power, as much as you can.
- g. **2Tim 1:8**
 Be a partaker of Christ's sufferings according to the power, and anointing, enabling, strength, and ability of the Holy Spirit through faith in the Word. *Lk 11:13.*