

2007 Proclaimer

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" - Isa.61:1-2

A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608

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IS THIS SUFFERING WASTED

by Homer Hailey

Among life's most baffling problems, there are times when none is more perplexing than that of suffering. "Why should this have come to me?" is so often asked. Then, after much anxiety and questioning one still does not have the answer to the "Why?" From thence we turn to the question of "What?" If I cannot know "why," then what use shall I make of it? Surely, in a world of order, governed by a God of love, there must be some use which suffering may serve. It cannot be that God allows suffering with no purpose to be accomplished by it. Surely my pain, whether mental, or physical, or in the deep recesses of conscience, is not to be wasted.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. For the past two months I have spent much time with "a perfect and upright man, a man that feared God and turned away from evil." This man had been brought to the brink of death as he drank the full of calamity and physical suffering. Being a man who feared God and enjoyed all the bounty of this life, he could not understand why he should be called to suffer as he did. In my association with him I learned much about suffering. Among other things I learned something of the use to be made of it. The man's name is Job. Every sufferer should meet and become acquainted with him.

Through suffering Job came to know God as he had never known Him before. At times he thought God was cruel to him; at other times he would conclude there was no moral government in the universe -- God just did not care. But throughout his experience his faith was deepening and expanding. Finally Job was able to say, *"I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"* ~ **Job 42:5**.

SUFFERING HUMBLER US. Job was humbled by his experience. He had learned to trust when he could not see. He came to realize his own ignorance of God's great and mysterious universe.

He came also to know God and of His concern for the sufferer as he could never have learned except through experience. He now knew what it was to walk by faith and not by sight.

Here is one of the greatest uses of suffering. To the man who will trust it brings a knowledge and understanding of God which can be acquired in no other way - knowledge by experience. God does care. He was intensely interested in Job from the first, and so in us. He is a God of purpose and of order, as revealed throughout His universe. And even though man suffers, God is not indifferent, but uses the suffering to bring man closer to Himself. Job came to know God, not as a tyrant, but as man's friend. So may you and I.

COMFORT OF OTHERS. Suffering may be used to teach one a deeper sympathy and compassion for others. It should teach us to share the experiences of another, to encourage and inspire as we could not have done before our own experience. Though Paul was writing of Christians suffering for the cause of Christ, his statement may serve in any suffering: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted"* **2 Cor 1:3-4.**

Through one's own experience is suffering, and the comfort he receives from God, he is able to comfort as can no one who has not himself experienced such affliction and such comfort. He has learned through experience, and can now teach and help through that which he knows. Let the sufferer make this use of his suffering.

PATIENCE AND HOPE. Another great use of suffering as presented in the Scripture is that of the development of patience and hope. Paul rejoiced in hope of the glory of God, but he did not stop there. *"We also rejoice in our tribulations,"* he continues, *"know-*

ing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope; and hope putteth not to shame" **Rom 5:3-5.** As one overcomes wave after wave of tribulation, adversity, suffering and pain, he grows stronger in his own steadfastness, and his hope flashes more gloriously.

Trials, and also pain or suffering, may become tests of faith. James writes, *"Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold trials; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience"* **Jas 1:2-3.**

Patience is not a fatalistic submission to "come what may"; but it is a steadfast enduring, waiting, letting the Lord work out the end. James himself so explains it: "Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen *the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful"* **Jas 5:11.** Job was doubly rich at the end of his experience: he had not only his abundance of material wealth, but a richness of faith and knowledge of God.

Then there is that suffering which is vicarious: suffering on behalf of and for another. Christ's sufferings were such. So may your suffering be used as the means of bringing Christ and the Spirit of the Christ to the heart and life of another. Your own faith and steadfastness may teach by example where one will not listen by the ear.

Shall my suffering be wasted? By no means! "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose" Rom. 8:28. Let God use suffering in the life of us all as a means of bringing us to know Him as never before. Let Him use it to teach us faith, humility, steadfastness, hope. Through it let us learn that we can trust when we cannot know; we can walk when we cannot see. Faith is greater than sight, and loving trust than scientific knowledge. Let us thank God for His providential use of suffering, as He uses it to make heaven's glory more brilliant, and earth's sojourn one of humble trust. **—Sunnyvale bulletin**

God's grace
Keeps pace
With whatever we face

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE FANCY WORDS

The Smiths were proud of their family tradition. Their ancestors had come to America on the Mayflower. Their relatives included senators and Wall Street wizards.

They decided to compile a family history, a legacy for their children and grandchildren, and hired a fine author. Only one problem arose -- how to handle the two black sheep of the family. Uncle George was executed in the electric chair for murder. Great grandfather Sam was hanged for rustling cattle. The author assured them he could handle the story tactfully.

When the book appeared, It said that great-grandfather Sam died, "taking part in a public function when the platform gave way."

As for great-uncle George, he "occupied a chair of applied electronics at an important government institution, was attached to his position by the strongest of ties, and his death came as a great shock."

I wish I could blame it all on "political correctness", but it's a problem that goes back hundreds (and thousands) of years. We want people to think well of us (or our relatives), so we paint a pretty picture of words, or we hide behind a beautiful hand-crafted mask. But when we get behind the pretty words and the image we have erected, there's only one thing that God wants to know -- what's in our heart? There's the reality.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."
(Matt 23:27-28)

May your focus this day not be on creating an image so that others will think well of you, but on cleansing your heart so that God will think well of you.

**Alan Smith
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THOSE NEEDING PRAYERS

Don Alexander
Jason & Marie & Cayna Anderson
Frank & Tina Ayers
Edith Ayers
Jack & Dorothy Bailey
Margie Buchanan
Bill Cain (at home now)
Larry & Mona Cain
Karen Daly
Helen Gray
Margaret Holcomb
Chuck House
Catherine Kay
Dale Lovelady (Lucille's brother)
Vi Lyman (Folsom)
Jean McCarty
Jeffry & Kaye Pennant
Wendell & Irma Rapier
Berniece Raven
Rosie Reagan
Glenn & LaurieAnn Reagan
The Roadman family
Caleb & Jacob Robertson
Taylor Romine
Ray Rude
Bill & Rena Schultz
Troy Shadman
The Brad Shuck Family
Ola Thornburg
Nancy Valine
Shirley Watkins
Ellie Williams
Kathy Wilson (Folsom)
Gordon Wilson

TRAVELING IN THEIR WORK

Karen Daly
Aaron Robertson
Gordon Wilson

IN THE MILITARY

Jason Anderson
David Lovett
Aaron Robertson
Trent Walsh

THE LABORERS ARE FEW

Matt 9:35-38

INTRODUCTION:

- A. ONE OF THE MOST effective ways any of us are to witness for the Lord has been called "**LIFE-STYLE EVANGELISM.**"
 - 1. Some may presume to ask, "**WHAT IS LIFE-STYLE EVANGELISM?**"
 - 2. It is **living the Christian life in front of the lost**, so they'll learn by our examples!
 - 3. The "life-style evangelist" won't **sell out** for **FAME** or **FORTUNE!**
 - 4. As we've ALL learned, *if you aren't going to WALK IT, then please don't TALK IT!*
- B. A very NECESSARY work for the Lord is by "**VERBAL WITNESSING.**"
 - 1. Not only by exemplary lives, but **through words** we tell the lost about Christ!
 - 2. The lost are won only through a **God-focused purpose** & a **God-serving determination.**
- C. But, we must understand that for either of these to be effective means of saving others we MUST HAVE ~ ~ ~

I. A DEDICATED LOVE

- A. All of us have a dedicated love, but it's often **dedicated to the wrong things.**
 - 1. Much of our love is devoted to pride of ownership in physical things (cars, houses).
 - 2. If we are going to reach the lost we must have a Christ-like, active love.
- B. A major activity demands that we **CONSIDER OTHER PEOPLE**
 - 1. We see that the Bible says in **John 4:3-4**
 - 2. Why is it hard to desire to reach out to the lost?
- C. Today's society are mostly suspicious of organized efforts they're not in control of.
 - 1. Those without a spirit of brotherhood in Jesus can get caught with wrong attitudes!
 - 2. If we are not led by the Holy Spirit, it is easy for us to get caught up in all this hate.
 - 3. **The Lord recognizes those who need to be saved,** & will help fulfill their needs.
- D. A DEDICATED LOVE also requires that we **CONSIDER PRIORITIES!**
 - 1. Many "Christians" have become PLEASURE SEEKERS instead of SOUL SEEKERS!
 - 2. We live in an age when people place more value on things than they do on each other!

II. WE MUST HAVE A POWERFUL LOVE

- A. When godly people have a godly love, you don't have to beg them to glorify the Lord!
- B. Have you ever had a nagging heart to speak about Jesus to someone?

III. AN ACTIVE LOVE THAT WILL LEAD SOULS INTO HIS FOLD REQUIRES:

- A. **A PRIORITY WORK** ~
 - 1. Is a work with a sustaining importance in our time and activities! **Acts 1:8**
 - 2. The "**YE SHALL**" command says it's to be a priority in our lives!
 - 3. THAT MEANS we're obligated to obey His commands **EVERYWHERE** we are!
- B. **A PROGRESSIVE WORK** ~
 - 1. Must be sustained in our mortal bodies ~ so long as we live!
 - 2. And the territory for doing this work includes ALL THE WORLD!
 - 3. Don't OVERLOOK OR REJECT anyone the Lord brings into your REALM OF INFLUENCE!
- C. GOD'S WORK IS A **GENERATIONAL-ENCOMPASSING WORK** ~ **Mark 16:15**
- D. Do all you can to reach everyone in your life with the Lord's "GOOD NEWS MESSAGE!"

IN SUMMARY:

- A. We need to examine our love for the unsaved ~ AS WELL AS for the Lord!
- B. HOW MANY REASONS can you enumerate why we need to do that?
- C. We must be sure that soul-winning is our top priority.