

## Why do Christians Suffer?

- Tonight we will be taking an in depth look at the “Suffering Christian”. Many questions will be asked, many will be answered, and many will be left remaining with no answer possible.

### Questions to be looked at:

1. Why are some healed and others are not?
  2. Why does God allow trouble to happen to “good” people?
  3. Can we avoid some attacks?
  4. Are you being tested for the Word’s sake?
  5. Why do children suffer?
  6. Why is there sickness among the people of God?
  7. Is there a purpose in suffering?
  8. Is there a difference between my will and the will of God?
  9. Why do the innocent suffer during tragic times? (tsunami’s, earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, or tornado’s)
  10. Do these global events occur because of sin and if so why does it occur within those that have not sinned?
- In no way am I saying that I have all the answers. I understand that there will be times in which you will agree with what I am saying and times that you may disagree with what I am saying.
  - All that I ask is that during this teaching you remain open-minded seeing and hearing spiritually. It is neither my desire nor my goal to cause confusion. However it is my goal to take what the Word of God says... apply the definition and meaning of the “Word” in order to bring life to the many questions that we all have.

### [Beginning with a simply question of WHY?](#)

#### **Acts 12:1-5**

Why was James martyred and Peter released?

1. If we go back to when Jesus asked Peter do you love me...Jesus then told Peter that he would live to be an old man.
2. And in Acts 12 Peter was not yet an old man.

I know many of you will wonder why two people have cancer that you have been praying for...one will be healed and have a testimony while the other will die. Why?

#### **Job 5:7**

“Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.” (NKJ)

#### **Psalms 77:9**

“Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.” (KJV)

Have you ever felt like David...God where are you?

- We often say God is love...God is good all the time, all the time God is good – If God is love why does he allow bad things to happen to good people in their suffering? Is there a reason for suffering?

Three basic facts that Sinners and Saints must accept.

1. If the Lord Jesus carries everyone will physically die.
  2. During your lifetime you will experience both good and bad. You have to deal with people in your life. Remember that you will always deal with imperfection and fallible people. Deadlines, appointments, support, failure, overachievers, underachievers, and so on.
  3. When the time comes for you to die you will die by old age, affliction of the body, or by an accident. (*You can go to Heaven sick in body, but you can't go with sin in you. You can not go with a "sin-sick" body.*)
- Jesus taught that the heavenly Father **"Makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:45-46)"**.
  - As long as good and bad people live on the same planet, they will both experience trouble when it comes to an area. Just because a person is righteous does not exempt him from tragedy.
  - Often Christians lose their homes in floods, hurricanes or tornadoes. The difference in the righteous and the unrighteous is that an unbeliever is left feeling hopeless, but believers can still maintain their faith in God and have peace in the midst of the storm.
  - Some people never want anything negative to happen to them. If nothing negative, bad, or tough time occurs in our life then let me ask you this:
    - A. How do you know God can answer your prayers?
      - a. If we are honest with each other our prayers are mainly based on *Physical needs - Financial needs - or Family needs.*
    - B. How could we tell others that God will bring you through?
      - a. When you study the life of Paul you will discover that Paul constantly used his testimony.
      - b. If a man tried to tell you how to raise your kids, you would first want to know if he had any kids, then what kind of experience did he have. Another words you would want to have his testimony.
    - C. In the book Revelations it says that the over-comer would overcome all things in 7 different things.
      - a. If we never face difficult things then how can we become over-comers?
      - b. You can only be an over-comer if there are obstacles or things to overcome.

- D. If we never go through difficult times how we would learn how to use our faith?
- Faith has to be used when we approach God. *“He that cometh to God...”*
  - Faith...you either use it or lose it.
  - If you don't use your faith it will become weak, but instead we use our faith in times of stress, trials, suffering, etc.

### Misconceptions!

- You should never confess that you are sick.
  - James 5:13-15**
  - You call the elders when? When you are sick, but if you never confess that you are sick then how will we know to pray for the sick?
- Never confess that you have a problem...confess that it is not there?
  - How can God meet your need until you pray to the Father and make your need known?
- Don't ever pray the same prayer twice?
  - Jesus once prayed for a blind man twice? *(Mark 8:22-25) “And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.”*
  - Paul sought God three different times to find God's grace sufficient.
  - Jesus prayed three different times in the Garden.
  - You should pray until you have an inner peace and know that God has heard?
  - There will be times that it will only take one time, but just because you pray more than once doesn't mean that you are in error. Study the Scriptures and apply the word in your prayer.
- Don't ever preach or teach anything negative about anybody or anything.
  - That means that hell, sin, the judgment of God, and much more would be negative.
  - Elijah stood in front of Ahab and called him the troublemaker.
  - Jeremiah blamed the priesthood and the people for their problems.
  - John the Baptist, called the Pharisee's hypocrites and snakes, called sin for what it was...sin.
  - If you live by these misconceptions you often end up in a spiritual bondage. Something negative happens, they pray for someone and their not healed...then we hear “they didn't have the faith” (**this is not always true**).

- Then they begin to question God what happened and become angry with God because they quoted scripture and yet God did not answer their prayer.

**Example:** *(First, let me say this, when dealing with another person you do not what they truly are thinking or desire of their heart).* A Pastor from Virginia had his come down with Cancer. This Pastor believed god to heal his wife, they held healing services, flew in some of the most expensive ministers dealing with healing, placed scriptures on the wall, and truly believed for her healing. His wife would go on to be with the Lord. Now the Pastor was left wondering why. The Pastor's wife had a best friend that came to the Pastor months later. She told the Pastor that his wife had made her, the friend, promise not to tell of the conversation between the two. But, due to the mental anguish the Pastor was in the friend began to speak. The Pastor's wife told her friend these words, "My husband wants me to be healed so badly, but I do not. I am ready to go be with my Lord. I am so tired I believe that my time is finished and I am just ready to go on home".

- If a person believes that their time is finished, then all the prayers and fasting in the World going up to God would do them an injustice.
  1. You are going against something they want.
  2. You are praying against their will.
  3. God will never override the free will of the individual.

How can we look at someone that has gone to be with the Lord in a negative manner? After all is this not what we all are after...do we honestly think that after being in Heaven they would want to come back.

When we pray for people that are sick we must keep 2 things in mind:

1. What is the real will of that person?
2. We must consider the sovereign purpose of God.

(GOD is always in charge)

#### Foundational Ideas

1. People often are in the wrong place at the wrong time.
  2. People bring trouble on themselves.
  3. People encountered hindrances as a result of not listening to advice or good counseling.
  4. People have diseases enter their bodies as a result of habits, drug addiction, alcoholism, etc.
- Is there a way that we can avoid suffering, troubles or trials? - **YES**
    - A. I will accept any trouble or trial that God has assigned to me.
    - B. In the book of Job - Satan brought the trial, but God allowed it to happen.

C. If God wants something to happen to me for a purpose then I will allow it, but I must know that it is God, therefore I will not accept every trial or trouble that Satan brings.

- Many are simply sick in body because of their lifestyle and yet they often blame God or Satan and claim that it is an attack of the enemy.
- Men eating alone with women, or vice-versa...leading to trouble.
- Smokers praying against lung cancer.
- Overweight people praying against diabetes.
- Plus many more examples that we can think of if we try...
- First lesson is to use wisdom in order to avoid suffering, trials, and trouble.

We need to know how to operate in the wisdom of God:

God's wisdom enables the individual in how to act or react under certain instances that can avoid major conflict that can lead to trouble, suffering, stress, or trial.

- In the Book of Proverbs there are three things we must strive for and in this order:
  - Proverbs 9:10 - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. (KJV)**
  - 1. Accumulate Knowledge
    - a. The accumulation of Facts
    - b. Things you learn (School, College, training – “Obtain”)
    - c. You can't have knowledge without understanding.
  - 2. Accumulate Understanding
    - a. The arranging of those Facts
    - b. The “How to Process” – You have the knowledge, but must have the directions.
    - c. Presentation of a message or witness.
  - 3. Accumulate Wisdom
    - a. Knowing how to put an application to those facts.
    - b. Taking knowledge, arrange it in a spiritual way, and the ability to apply the word in the particular situation.
- When we learn how to operate in the wisdom of God (*reading the word, understanding the word, and applying the word*), then we pray for wisdom.
- The Bible teaches that we should pray for wisdom. **James 1:5 -If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.**
- Wisdom gives you the ability to make the correct decision.

**Genesis 22** “Tempt” - “Test”

- Abraham was tested through Isaac.
- Wisdom enables us to discern the enemy's attack before it happens, therefore we can often avoid self-brought on trials and troubles.
- Wisdom lets you look in the heart and not on the outside.

King Solomon: 2 women came to King Solomon claiming a single baby.

- Today we would hire lawyers, go to court, run DNA test, find the possible father, call in reporters, state our case, the jury would then probably be hung for lack of evidence, but notice what wisdom done.
  1. Solomon, bring me a sword and let's cut the baby in half.
  2. Wisdom says that the real mother would rather have the baby live with another than to have it die.
  3. Therefore the mother that screamed for the other to have the baby was the real mother.

### Matthew 13:54

And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

Jesus: wisdom will hush the critic's mouth

- \* Jesus do you think that it is "Wrong" to pay taxes?
  1. If he says no the Roman gov't will come after him.
  2. If he says yes the Jews come against him.
    - A. Notice that he used wisdom and asked for a coin.
    - B. Whose face is on the coin?
    - C. Give Caesar what is his and give God what is His.
  3. Then they marveled at what he said.
- Very important rule to learn: (Deut.)
  1. If we willing choose to disobey the command or law that God has laid down, it opens the door for Satan to attack us mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
    - A. Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy.
    - B. If you abuse your body with drugs, alcohol, food, sexually, or any other means... God did not do that to you, but Satan used items or means, in which Duet. tells us that God allowed to happen, and you just the same permitted it to go on. Another words...we will reap what we sew.
    - C. Yes, God can heal AIDS, Vernal disease, Herpes...but in the majority of cases the person must realize that their lifestyle and actions brought this upon themselves, not God, but "I sinned". Then they must realize and understand that God can forgive them of their sins and the reactions thereof...also he will allow them to enter Heaven with an earthly sick body. (*David's own sickness due to his affair*)

NO SIN – Yet SICKNESS is there:

1. If you believe the Bible...you will be tested! **Mark 4** -All hear the word and receive the word, the Bible says that the enemy comes to steal what has been given unto you. Sometimes people become afflicted to pull the word out from you. Afflictions arise because of the word of God.

*Example:* God can heal you, then next thing you know in your bed sick asking God what is happening.

2. When God brought Israel out of Egyptian bondage he didn't bring them out in the easy way, but instead he took them through the wilderness in order to get to their paradise.
  - A. "Take you through the wilderness that I may prove you" PROVE = test by adventure.
  - B. **Judges 2:22, 3:1-3, 4** - "Land of the Philistines (Warriors, which would have killed them) was on the easier route".
  - C. Test and trials come to the believer to see if you are going to keep the Word of God through your test and trials. This is how God will operate in your Christian "Daily" walk with him.
  - D. Any test or trial will work on us in order to bring out of things that are hidden within us. (*New marriage-woman without makeup, before marriage watch someone under extreme stress – you see the person for what they are*).
  - E. In the wilderness looking for water when there was no water, looking for food when there was no food...active during the test.
  - F. God will allow the pressure to be put on YOU in order to show you that He will promise you what is written in His word.
- The weakness that is in you will have to submerge and exit your life in order for God to do more within you and His ministry. What is holding you back must be let go!

**Can a Person die before their time:** Absolutely, but there is no reason for you to leave this world if you feel (*Spiritually*) that you work is not done. Many people leave before their time has ended as a result of sin or they simply give up. The key is recognizing whether or not it is an attack of the enemy. (*Example eating double cheeseburgers and having a heart attack while rebuking Satan*).

The Word of God and the promises of God is the very thing that you must hang on to in your wilderness, suffering, trials, or test. Often when attacks occur from the enemy many will depend on the Pastor or the Church to do their praying, fasting, and applying the word in their life. The word of God is a Two-edged sword – Not only can you speak it, but you must apply it in your life (Faith).