

The Blood can wash away our sins, but cannot wash away the old man May 14,2000

We are noting the principle of **participation in our Lord's sufferings** and His attitude found in Joh 18:11 *“the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?”* All of us have a cup that God the Father has designed for us to drink.

The “cup” has to do with that which we are willing to receive as a part of the Father's plan for our life and as a part of picking up our Cross and participating in our Lord's sufferings. In Gal 6:2 Paul says, *“Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.”* The law of Christ is found in Gal 5:14 *“For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

We must understand that the adversities and afflictions we go through are what make up our life as well as the service we have the privilege of performing. There are times when we will experience the ultimate blessing of being able to go through certain situations alone with the Lord Jesus Christ. Adversity is the state in which we become truly acquainted with ourselves, because it is then that we are usually free of admirers. Lam 3:27-28, *“It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and be silent since He has laid it on him.”*

Always being happy in your relationships and situations does not develop courage; rather courage is developed by surviving difficult times and adversity. One often learns more from ten days of agony than from ten years of contentment. The path of least resistance is the path of the loser. We are to have the attitude of Est 4:16c *“and if I perish, I perish.”*

In the Old Testament, people were put in the furnace and they were not burnt or in the lion's den and they were not touched. But in the New Testament, they go into the furnace and they get burnt, the lions may devour them, but they don't give in. For it is not the power *for* them now that counts, but the power is *in* them. That power is the Word of God, which is alive and powerful, and the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells them. That power is Phi 4:13 *“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”* You will never know how much strength you have until you are faced with adversity. Every defeat, every loss, contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to grow and improve. We should be grateful for all our problems, for after each one is overcome; we become stronger and more able to meet the problems that are still to come. We shall never be victorious in this life as believers if we think that life with God and being hidden with Christ in God, means freedom from suffering, sorrow, and trial. As the Holy Spirit applies the Cross-within us, He takes us through difficulties and chastening. When we realize that *“always being delivered unto death”* means the daily crucifixion of self, then we begin to glory in the resultant freedom. There are times when God chastens us, not because of divine discipline, but as a part of our undeserved suffering and participation in His sufferings. Heb 12:5 *“and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him;”*

Things don't go wrong and break your heart so you can become bitter and give up. They happen to break you down and build you up so you can be all that you were intended to be Heb 12:6-7. You never will be the person you can be if pressure, tension and discipline are taken out of your life. If we are going to receive the benefit of the Cross, we must go through the suffering of the Cross.

We have seen in the main verse of our study Phi 3:10 the four phrases we have been studying 1) *“that I may come to know Him”* 2) *“and the power of [behind] His resurrection”* 3) *“and the participation of His sufferings”* and the last phrase 4) *“being conformed to His death.”*

This last phrase refers to the oppositional sufferings of Christ connected with His death. It does not refer to His unique sufferings in bearing our sins for there is no way that we could ever go through this type of suffering. It refers instead to the many types of opposition, which came from Satan prior to the three hours of the Cross-when He was bearing our sins.

What does it mean to be conformed to His death?

Heb 5:7-8 ***“In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.”*** Affliction comes to make us sound and wise, not sad and sorry. Trials, temptations, disappointments -- all help, not hinder. Every trial endured and weathered in the right spirit makes us virtuous and stronger than we were before. It is comforting to know that God will not permit any troubles to come upon us, unless He has a specific plan by which great blessing can come out of the difficulty. Triumphs without difficulties are empty; difficulty is only a word indicating the degree of effort required to accomplish something!

It is difficult for us to realize that suffering is one of the major factors in our spiritual growth. You can forget the times of your distress, but never forget what those times taught you. Suffering is the lot of all men, but when undeserved, it is the privilege of all believers. Many think that God is not blessing unless He keeps us from, or relieves us of, suffering. This is not true; there is no fellowship with God, no true spiritual growth, unless we experience the crucified Lord in our own personal suffering.

The Apostle Paul is our pattern of living the Christian way of life and being conformed to our Lord's death. The Lord makes an interesting statement about Paul soon after his conversion from Saul of Tarsus to the apostle Paul in ACT 9. Act 9:16 ***“for I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake.”***

2Co 11:23-30 describe many of those sufferings Paul would endure for the sake of Christ, take a look at some of them: ***in far more labors, imprisoned, beaten, in danger of death, five times he received thirty-nine lashes, three times beaten with rods, shipwrecked, frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, robbers, dangers in the city, the wilderness, on the sea, in labor and hardship, in hunger and thirst, in cold and exposure. Apart from these there was the daily pressure of concern for all the churches.***

Yet notice Paul's attitude, 1Ti 1:16 ***“And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.”***

Our fellowship in His sufferings bears threefold fruit:

1. In suffering we learn something of the process of growth, Rom 5:3-4.
2. In suffering we also learn more of Him, 2Co 1:5.
3. In suffering we learn to appreciate the needs of others, 2Co 1:3-4.

If you learn from your suffering, and really come to understand the lesson you were taught, you might be able to help someone else who's now in the phase you may have just completed. Look for the learning in suffering. The principle in participation in His sufferings is living for others! Mat 20:28 ***“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”***

Joh 15:13 ***“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”***

You can fight with all your might against sin and your sin nature and yet you will still find yourself surrounded by failure and defeat. You can pray fervently and sincerely but it will seem that He does not hear. It is not that He is merciless but rather because of His mercy that He does not help. If

He did, you would not be free from your self-confidence; you would not learn to fight the good fight of faith and thus obtain the victory, you would not learn to say Joh 18:11 ***“the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?”***

Denying ourselves of certain things for a time, even for all time, is not the answer because the old sin nature will adjust and thrive under any conditions. Self never changes into anything but more of the same. The Lord said Joh 3:6 ***“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”***

The Blood of Christ can wash away my sins; the Cross can crucify the "old man."

The blood purchased our pardon and forgiveness.

The Cross-purchased our deliverance from what we are.

It was on the Cross of Calvary that God, in Christ, dealt fully and finally with self. There is no other way for self to be denied, God has done the work in this way: our identification with Christ Jesus in His death and resurrection! It is done; now it is ours to believe.

As we exercise faith, we begin to receive the benefits of that finished work in experience. The same Lord who said in Mat 7:6 ***“Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine,”*** is the same Lord who holds His most vital and best things in store for those who mean business, for those who hunger and thirst for His very best, and the Cross is the center, the secret of it all. It is what He did there that counts, and what He did becomes a force in the life of a Christian. What we are to experience He purchased, and what He purchased for us we ought to experience, this is a part of being conformed to His death and learning to deny self.

It is a faith, which sees ourselves identified with Christ in His death and resurrection. As our Substitute He went to the Cross alone, to pay the penalty of our sins; as our Representative.

What is lacking among believers is the proper emphasis on *spiritual growth*. What sort of salvation would we have if God simply saved us from the penalty of our sins and then left us on our own to deal with the power of the sin nature in our Christian life and walk?

We must be brought back to two basics: we were freed from the penalty of sin by His finished work and we were freed from the power of the sin nature by His finished work. We are not left to deal with the old life ourselves; it has been dealt with by Christ on the Cross. This is how we are being conformed to our Lord's death.

Unless the Cross-is made the basis upon which we overcome the old man, we will only drop into another form of morality; seeking by self-effort to overcome self, and that struggle is a hopeless one.

What is the essential characteristic of the Lord Jesus that is to be manifested in us?

It is the sacrificial quality of being poured out for others. We are not struggling believers who barely exist until we finally are in heaven; we are recipients of resurrection life for ourselves, and sacrificial life unto all!

We are assured that nothing, and no one, can touch us apart from His blessed will Rom 8:35–39. Our attitude is that of looking upon all that He takes us through, for we are not under His circumstances, but rather above them all in our victorious Lord.

Standing in our position, we learn “to be content” in whatever state we are in.

Our confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ develops as we realize that ***“His grace is sufficient for all these things”*** and that ***“His strength is made***

perfect in our weakness” 2Co 12:9-10.