

# Baptism in Suffering

by Anton Bosch

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*Baptism in suffering is a fundamental part of the Christian life, and it is a means of purification and glorifying God.*

**Duration:** 43:13

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:11-12, Matthew 10:24, Luke 3:16, John 1:27, 2 Corinthians 11:26

**Topics:** "Baptism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the various sufferings and hardships that he has endured for the sake of Christ. He mentions being beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, and facing dangers from both robbers and false brethren. Despite these trials, he encourages believers to rejoice in their sufferings, as it is a sign of being counted worthy for Christ. The speaker emphasizes the importance of looking to Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith, who will see us through to the end and bring us to a place of joy and no more suffering in heaven.

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## Transcript

We're dealing with baptisms. This is the last of the four baptisms that we deal with tonight. Let's turn to Luke chapter 12.

Luke chapter 12. And the first of the four baptisms was baptism into Christ. Immersion into Christ.

The second one, baptism in water. Third one, baptism in the Holy Spirit. And then this one tonight, which you may never have heard of before, baptism in suffering.

And if we read from Luke 12 and verse 50, But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished. Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on, five in one house will be divided, three against two, and two against three.

Father will be divided against son, and son against father, mother against daughter, and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Now, Jesus says here that he has a baptism to be baptized with, and he's distressed about it. Now, obviously at this stage already, Jesus didn't have to be baptized into Christ, because he is Christ.

He had been baptized in water, he had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Remember the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove. And so, he now refers to yet another baptism that needs to happen.

And if we go to Mark chapter 10, and it's important. We're going to go to many scriptures tonight, but it's important that we look at these first few, because people say, well, how do you get to these baptisms? Well, we get to them because they are recorded here in scripture. Mark chapter 10 and verse 38.

And the context is that James and John, the sons of Zebedee, are arguing about who's going to be greatest in the kingdom. And they said, you know, one wants to sit on your left, and the other one wants to sit on your right. Verse 38, But Jesus said to them, You do not know what you ask.

Can you drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said to him, We can. Jesus said to them, You will indeed drink the cup that I drink. And with the baptism I am baptized with, you will be baptized.

But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared. And so again here you see that the Lord Jesus is referring to a baptism that he needs to be baptized with. And then he says that the disciples would also be baptized with this baptism.

And then immediately you'll see that he links it with the cup. Now we don't have to go to the next scripture, but in Mark chapter 14, just a few pages further, you'll find Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. And there you'll find that he refers to the cup.

And he says, Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, but not my will, but your will be done. And so very clearly what Jesus is speaking about here is the suffering that he was to suffer. Not just on the cross of Calvary, but also in the garden of Gethsemane.

And so he's speaking about a baptism, but not a baptism in water or a baptism in the Holy Spirit, but a baptism in suffering. And he makes this very important statement and he says to them that they would also be baptized with that baptism. Now why is this part of the first principles or part of the solid foundation that is given to us in Hebrews? I believe that it is given to us because it is important for us to understand that this is part of the Christian life.

Many Christians are taken by surprise when they face difficulty. They're taken by surprise when they suffer persecution. When life is not all roses and wonderful things.

And unfortunately many people are selling a wrong gospel and saying if you come to Christ, all your problems will go away, you'll be happy, you'll be healthy, you'll be rich. Everything will go wonderfully, just come to Christ. Now that is not the true message of the gospel.

And Jesus is very clearly saying here that it's very fundamental to our union with Him. Becoming one with Him in His death and His burial and His resurrection is becoming one with Him also in His sufferings. And you'll find that there are a tremendous number of scriptures that teach on the subject in the New Testament.

And we're going to look at some of them tonight. In John chapter 15 we are warned that we should expect this. Now some people may say but you know that's a very negative thing to speak about.

I don't believe it's negative at all because I believe what it does is when things go wrong, when we face difficulty, when we face suffering, we're not taken by surprise. And we know that this is something that is part of the Christian life. And so the devil is not able to discourage us, he's not able to catch us unawares because we know this is something which will happen.

And so in John chapter 15 verse 18 he says, If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Remember the word that I said to you, a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. And if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

But all these things they will do to you for my name's sake because they do not know him who sent me. And so Jesus is very clearly saying that whatever happened to him will happen to us. If people acclaimed him as a great teacher and they followed him and they were obedient to his word, then they will do that to us.

But remember that they did not do that with Jesus. Yes, when he gave them bread to eat, they followed him by the thousands. But then when he began to speak a hard word, then they turned away from him.

And remember at the end of the ministry of the Lord Jesus, there was only 120 left in the upper room. Of all the miracles that he performed, of all the thousands that ate his bread, all of the many people who heard his wonderful teachings, at the end of the day there was only 120 left. And Jesus says, don't be surprised when you go into the world and you get the same reception.

Because you are no greater than I am. You know the servant is no greater than his master. And so if they rejected the message of the Lord Jesus, they will reject the message of his followers of the church.

If they cause him to suffer, they will cause his followers also to suffer. And so there it is part of the prophecy as it were that Jesus gives. Now in Philippians chapter 3, and as I said why we are turning to all of these scriptures is because some people think that this is a strange thing.

That this isn't part of the New Testament. And I am not going to all of the scriptures, there are many many more which I am not including in the study tonight. But Philippians chapter 3 verse 10, that I may know him, Paul says, and the power of his resurrection.

And the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed to his death. If by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Now Paul says this is what I want.

I want to be made in every respect like the Lord Jesus. Even being partaker of his sufferings. So that, and there is the end of the conversation.

So that I may be part of his glorious resurrection. And so Paul is saying really that if I am going to be part of the great resurrection. And this is one of the subjects which we will deal with in fact week after next.

Is the resurrection from the dead. But he says there is glory to come, but in the meantime there may be some suffering. There may be more suffering for others and less maybe for others.

But there is an element of suffering. And so he says I want to become part of the Lord Jesus. And you notice there that he says that I may share, that I may know him.

And the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings. The fellowship of his sufferings that I may share with Jesus in his sufferings. Now the wonderful thing is that God doesn't allow us to go through suffering and just stand at a distance.

But in fact God is touched, the Lord Jesus is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He suffers when we suffer. And in fact it was Paul you remember when he was still sore.

And he was on the road to Damascus and he is confronted by the Lord Jesus. And he says but who are you Lord? And Jesus says I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But Paul wasn't persecuting Jesus.

Paul was persecuting the church. He was taking Christians and throwing them in prison. Committing them to be stoned.

Mistreating the Christians. But Jesus says you are persecuting me. In other words when we suffer Jesus suffers with us.

And when people persecute Christians they are in fact persecuting the very Christ. And that's why Paul says that I may know the fellowship of your sufferings. Being one with you.

Being in fellowship with you. Even in the issue of suffering. Now in 2 Timothy chapter 3. 2 Timothy chapter 3. And Paul is writing to Timothy a young man.

And he says in verse 10. But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions. Which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra.

What persecutions I endured and out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. And so he is making a very very clear statement here.

First of all he says. He says you know how that wherever I went basically there was persecution. Wherever Paul went.

Now this was following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. Wherever he went there was persecution. Now then he says this is something which is a fact.

He doesn't say this is going to be something which some are going to experience. But he says all who desire to live godly in Christ will suffer persecution. Will suffer persecution.

Now this is against the background of what Jesus said in the beginning in that first scripture that we read in Luke. Where Jesus said I have not come to bring peace. I have come to bring division.

And that is true today as it was ever. Yes Christianity is a lot more popular today. And it is a lot more acceptable to be a Christian today than it was maybe in years gone by.

And yet at the same time Jesus is still the greatest dividing factor in the world today. I just listened to a message preached by David Wilkerson just after the World Trade Center collapsed. I think he preached it on the 23rd of September.

And he makes a very true statement. He says that if we take Christ out of the world. Or the exclusiveness of Christ.

If we say Jesus is not the only way. There are other ways. You don't have to go through the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we remove Jesus out of the world all wars will come to an end. All of the trouble that we are seeing in the world today is over one issue. And that is over the person and the claims of Jesus Christ.

To being the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. Of being the only way to the Father. The only access into heaven through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And of course we live at a time now when this is becoming more and more difficult. Because more and more people are saying that there are other ways that lead to God. You don't have to believe in Jesus Christ in order to go to heaven.

You can believe in anything else and you will still get to heaven. And yet Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.

The scripture says there is one mediator between God and man. The man Christ Jesus. And so there is only one way.

Jesus is that way. And the moment we say that. The moment we say that out in the world.

Persecution will come. Difficulty will come. In this country more than ever before up to now it has been tolerated.

You can no longer go into a school and say there is only one Saviour. His name is Jesus Christ. If you do that they will put you in prison.

You can no longer stand on the street corners and preach and say Jesus is the only way of salvation. Because you are then immediately branded as a bigot and as a fundamentalist. And we know the kind of feeling that is attached to fundamentalist.

Not because of Christians but because of Muslims. But in fact this is now becoming so bad that there are Christians. Evangelical, so called evangelical Christians.

Who are speaking out against fundamentalist Christians. Fundamentalist Christians are those who stick to the basics of the word. And amongst other things say that Jesus is the only way.

And so you can see that this is something that is going to happen. So if we are going to stand for the truth. Persecution may come.

And it comes from a number of sources. But we will come to that in a moment. But before we say we will just deal with where the persecution.

And not only persecution but suffering in general comes from. Let's just deal with two scriptures in the book of Peter. 1 Peter chapter 4. And if you have got a marker you may as well put it into Peter.

Because we are going to come back to Peter a number of times. Incidentally the first letter of Peter is written specifically to Christians. Who were now having to face Nero who had become the Caesar.

And who was bringing tremendous persecution upon Christians and upon the church. And so the first book of Peter contains a tremendous amount of teaching and encouragement. About persecution and about

suffering.

Tells us how to deal with it. Tells us what the hope is. Assures us that this is not something strange when it happens.

Because remember at this time Christians were being slaughtered wholesale. Under Nero. They were being fed to the lions.

They were being crucified by the hundreds. And lined the streets on their crosses. They were being put on poles and tar poured over them.

And set alight to light up his feasts in his palace garden. And so this was a tremendously difficult time for Christians. And the first letter of Peter is written specifically for Christians in that sort of environment.

Now in 1 Peter chapter 4. He says in verse 14. If you are reproached for the name of Christ. Blessed are you for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

On their part he is blasphemed but on your part he is glorified. Now that's a tremendous thing. There are many Christians who get this impression that it's a bad thing to suffer for Christ.

That it's a bad thing to be persecuted. Because you must have done something wrong. You deserve what came to you.

But Peter says no. He says it's a wonderful thing. He says you are blessed when this happens.

Because in this Christ is glorified. In this Christ is glorified. But now in verse 15.

Let none of you suffer as a murderer, as a thief, an evildoer, as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian let him not be ashamed. But let him glorify God in this matter.

Now whatever that degree of suffering may be. Like those Christians we spoke about would have to lay down their lives literally for the faith. Right now Christians are suffering for their faith.

And being killed for their faith in Muslim countries. And in other countries. Maybe we have to make less of a decision.

Sometimes maybe somebody may just shun you. Maybe somebody may just ignore you. Or something slight like that.

And yet we take that very personally. But he says no. What in fact if anyone suffers as a Christian let him not be ashamed.

But let him glorify God. But there is this proviso. That we must not suffer for misdeeds.

We must not suffer because we have broken the law. Because we have done wrong things. When we suffer for those reasons.

We get what we deserved. Then there is no glory in that. And it is amazing how many times Christians think that they are suffering for Christ.

And that they have done something honourable. When in fact they are suffering because they are just plain rude. Or they are just ill mannered.

Or they have broken the law. And they get a speeding fine. And so they feel they are suffering for Christ.

No you are suffering for your own misdeeds. And you will see in 1 Peter chapter 2. He deals with the same thing. Just a page or two back.

1 Peter chapter 2 verse 19. For this is commendable. If because of conscience towards God.

One endures grief. Suffering wrongfully. But what good is it.

If when you are beaten for your faults. You take it patiently. But when you do good and suffer for it.

If you take it patiently. This is commendable before God. For to this you were called.

Because Christ also suffered for us. Leaving us an example. That you should follow in his steps.

And so again he is saying to us. If we are going through difficulty. Because of our own faults.

Then in fact he says. There is no glory in that. That is no big deal.

And so we need to differentiate. Between difficulty and suffering. That comes our way.

Because of our own misdeeds. Or because of our own faults. Or because of our own bad attitude.

And that which comes upon us purely. For the sake of Christ. And for the name of Christ.

And of course there is great honor upon the other. And in fact there is dishonor on the other. Now let's go back.

If you have a marker put it in Peter. Because we will come back there. But let's go back to Luke chapter 3. And verse 16.

John answered saying to them all. I indeed baptize you with water. But one mightier than I is coming.

Whose sandals strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. And with fire.

His winnowing fan is in his hand. And he will thoroughly purge his threshing floor. And gather the wheat into his barn.

But the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire. Now notice what John says concerning Jesus. He says.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. And with fire. Now some people link this fire with the tongues of fire that appeared on the day of Pentecost.

But you will see that when he speaks about fire here. He is speaking about fire in the sense of purging. Because he immediately begins to say.

But his winnowing fan is in his hand. In other words he is going to purge his threshing floor. He is going to throw the wheat with the winnowing fan into the air.

And the chaff is going to be blown to one side. The wheat is going to remain. And then that chaff he says he is going to take and he is going to throw into the fire.

And so in fact what he is saying is that Jesus is going to purge the threshing floor. Meaning the kingdom or the church. And he is going to purge that and he is going to purge it by fire.

And so one of the sources. And the question always is where does suffering come from? Well one of the sources is from the Lord Jesus. Who sends testing our way.

Not because he takes pleasure in the death of the saints. Or that he takes pleasure in the problems that we face. But because he knows that those things are sometimes necessary.

In order to cleanse things out of our lives. And so the same way as you have to take gold or silver. And you have to put it through the fire so that the dross can be removed.

And the purity of the gold or the silver can come forth. So as Christians and as people we have to go through difficulties at times. And the Lord Jesus puts us through those difficulties.

So that he can burn up those things that are unpleasing to him. Those things that are not good in our lives. Those things are consumed in the process.

And Peter even speaks about this. That when our faith has been tried so as by fire. He says when that has been done it will come forth as pure gold.

And so you will see that John prophesies this. Peter takes it up in his book. And he says this is in fact what happens to Christians.

And part of the reason or part of the source of this is the Lord Jesus himself. He does that with loving attention to us. Not because he wants to make us suffer.

But because he wants to cleanse us. He wants to purify us. And there are many other passages that teach the same principle.

In John also he teaches about the vine. And he says we are the branches. And if a branch bears fruit then what happens? The husbandman comes and he prunes the branches so that they produce more fruit.

In other words the same picture. He is cutting off those things that are extraneous. He is cutting off those things that are drawing strength out of the branches.

And preventing them from producing the fruit they should do. And so yes there are pruning processes. There are times when the Lord Jesus will allow things to be consumed in our lives.

And there are even times when he will test us to see of what sort we are. Sometimes you are not sure whether what you have got is pure gold. One way of testing it is to put it into the fire and see what comes out on the other side.

If it is rubbish it will be consumed. If it is gold you can put it through the fire. It doesn't matter how many times.

It doesn't matter how hot the fire is. At the end of the day it will just be purified more and more. And if our faith is real and genuine.

And sometimes God tests that. Because we need to know of what sort our faith is. He wants to know.

And so what he does is he puts us through testing. And we don't need to be afraid of those times of testing. Because he promises us that he will not test us beyond what we are able to endure.

But whether testing will produce or provide a way of escape. But at the same time when we have come through that trial. We will know.

And he will know. And that gives us tremendous hope. Because we will know that in fact we have the real stuff.

And so again you see the picture that there are many many people who think that Christians are for weak people. People who really need a crutch in life. Yes in a sense we need a crutch.

We need to lean upon the Lord Jesus. But in another sense it's not easy to be a Christian. It's not the easy way out.

The easy way out is to go with the flow. To take the broad road where everybody else is going. The harder and more difficult way is to go the way of Christ.

And the way of Christ is the way of the cross. Which requires that I take up my cross daily. And that I follow him.

And yes that puts us through difficulties. There are trials. There are problems that come.

There is a purifying work of God in our lives. But that's all part of a wonderful thing. Because at the end of the day he's going to produce a wonderful work in us.

He's going to produce those things that are acceptable. Those things that are pure. And those things that are glorious.

And he's going to present us before his Father on that day as glorious and as faultless. Now if we go to 2 Corinthians chapter 11. Now another source of difficulty is false brethren.

And this also comes as a shock to some Christians. And again I believe it's necessary that we be aware of this. And that we be warned.

2 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 26. Now in this context here Paul lists all of the many problems that he has faced. In fact let's just go through some of them.

Now remember Paul was one of the greatest. In fact was the greatest apostle of all. And he says verse 23.

Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more. In labors more abundant.

In stripes above measure. In prisons more frequently. In deaths often.

From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned.

Three times I was shipwrecked. A night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeys often.

In perils of waters. In perils of robbers. In perils of my own countrymen.

In perils of the Gentiles. In perils in the city. In perils in the wilderness.

In perils in the sea. In perils amongst false brethren. In weariness and toil.

In sleeplessness often. In hunger and thirst. In fastings often.

In cold and nakedness. Beside the other things that comes upon me daily. My deep concern for all the churches.

Now there is a tremendous list of suffering. And none of us have ever been called to suffer like that. And will probably never be called to suffer like that.

But you will see in verse 24. That he says five times he received 40 stripes minus one. 39 stripes.

Five times. Every one of those. Was almost a death sentence.

Many people died. Under the whip. Getting 39 stripes.

The reason why it was 39 stripes. Was because the law. Torah prevented or prohibited.

That you beat a man or hit him. 40 times. And so in order to remain safe within the law.

In case you miscounted. They measured out 39. That is where that comes from.

But any one of those could have killed him. And yet five times he went through that experience. Three times he was beaten with rods.

Once he was stoned. Again we think just a few little small stones. But these were huge rocks.

They would put a man into a pit. And they would pour rocks upon him. And that would crush his bones.

And break his skull. And kill him. And then that would just form his grave.

And we know the next morning. Paul crept out from under those rocks. God had miraculously brought him through.

And had not prevented him from the suffering. But he had suffered all of these things for the sake of Christ. And he says this is just part of the deal.

But now you will notice there. That he says at the end of verse 26. One of the things that he has had to face.

Is false brethren. And so again I believe that. And we just mentioned that.

Because sometimes we think. Oh no, no. All the difficulty comes from the devil and from the world.

No, no, no. Difficulty also comes from Christians. And sometimes we are surprised when Christians are not nice with us.

When Christians are rude to us. When Christians even persecute us. Or bring false witness against us.

But this happens. This is part of the experience. It doesn't make it right.

It doesn't make what they are doing a right thing. But it is part of the deal. It is something that happened to Paul.

It is something that happened to Jesus. Remember he was betrayed by Judas. One of the twelve.

One of his closest friends. Who betrayed him on that day. Peter denied him and said.

I don't know this man. And you know when that happens to us. We are really shocked.

And obviously we should be shocked. But we shouldn't be. We shouldn't be caught unawares.

Because this can happen. It doesn't mean that we must live in mistrust of one another. But at the same time.

Let's be aware. That not everyone is going to say. That's wonderful.

You are a Christian. And not everybody is pleased about the truth. Not everyone is pleased.

About the message of the gospel. Even though they claim to be Christians. And then of course.

John chapter 15. The third source. Is from the world.

And I have not even included the devil. Because obviously the devil is behind false brethren. And he is behind those who are in the world.

And so he is orchestrating much of this. But in John chapter 15. And verse 18.

If the world hates you. You know that it hated me. Before it hated you.

If you were of the world. The world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world.

But I chose you out of the world. Therefore the world hates you. And so very clearly he says.

If you were part of the world. The world would accept you. You would be a great fellow amongst the world.

And it is amazing that you can be a crook. And a cheat. And all of these things.

And the world will accept you. But the day you become a Christian. Suddenly.

And you become honourable. And upright in your dealing. Suddenly they have a problem with that.

But he says that is the way it is. You are not part of the world. And the world will never accept you.

Yes they may tolerate you. They may give you time to do your job. And they may live with you.

But they will never fully accept you. Because we are of different worlds. Christians are born from above.

Those who are of the world are of this world. And they are two totally different people. And the world will never tolerate.

And fully accept Christians. And so he says if the world hates you. You know that it hated me before.

So he says don't worry. Happen to me. The Lord Jesus says.

And so it is going to happen to you as well. Alright. So what we have said is that.

Jesus spoke about the suffering that would come. It is something that we must expect as Christians. It is guaranteed to come.

We must not suffer wrongfully as evil doers or law breakers. That the Lord Jesus is one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire. That difficulty comes from false brethren.

From the world. And from the devil. Now let's have a look in Hebrews chapter 12.

And I want to just deal with our response. And how do we deal with this. Because obviously it is one thing to say.

Well this is part of the deal. This is going to happen. But when it happens.

How do I deal with it. And in Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 1. Therefore we also since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses. Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us.

And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith. Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.

Despising the shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself. Lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

And so what the Hebrews are saying. Is that there are really three things I need to do. Because if I don't do these things.

I will become discouraged when things start going hard. When I go through times of difficulty. And so he says the first thing I need to do.

Is I need to be looking to Jesus. I need to be looking to Jesus. I mustn't be looking at the difficulty.

I mustn't be looking at the persecution. Because remember whatever source the difficulty may be. Whatever source the suffering may be.

The Lord Jesus is behind it. Because he is using all things for my good. And he is shaping me through those things.

Even though the devil may be the one who is doing it. Or the world may be the people. Or the false brethren or those.

But he is ultimately going to use those things. To make me a better person. He is going to strengthen my faith.

He is going to strengthen my relationship with him. He is going to purify me of things that shouldn't be in my life. Of impatience.

Of intolerance. Of a lack of love. Of a lack of all sorts of things.

He is going to deal with those things. And so he is using those things. So let me not look at the source of the persecution.

Or the source of the difficulty. It is easy to retaliate. And say oh no.

And to respond to the source. Whatever that source may be. Now let's look to the Lord Jesus.

Because we have committed to him. He is the one who is even allowing these things to happen. Because he can prevent them.

But he doesn't. Because he is using them. Allowing them to happen to us.

So that he can work out his wonderful purposes in our lives. And so let's look to him. Let's not look to the difficulty.

And then he reminds us of who Jesus is. Verse 2. Looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith. So that which he has begun in us.

He is going to complete. And so he is not going to leave the job half way. He is not going to leave us in the lurch.

He is going to finish the work which he has done. And he is going to see us through. That is the wonderful assurance we have.

And then he says. For the joy that was set before him endured the cross. So again he is reminding us.

That as we look to the Lord Jesus. What we see in the Lord Jesus. First of all is one who suffered far more.

Than we will ever suffer. But he endured it. And he despised the shame.

And he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Now the second thing I need to remember then. Is that what gave Jesus the wherewithal to see it through.

Because he had super human strength. Because he was God. No.

He was tested or tempted in every point. Like as we are. And so he didn't have anything.

That you and I don't have. And so what gave him the courage. And the fortitude to go through it.

For the joy it says that was set before him. In other words he says. It's not what I'm going through now that's the issue.

But it's what's in the future. It's what's lying ahead of me. And so there was a joy that was set before the Lord Jesus.

And I believe the joy that was set before the Lord Jesus. Was the achieving of his purpose. Which was the saving of a church.

The saving of us. Because that's what he had come for. He didn't have greater glory at the end.

Than he had in the beginning. Because he was very God of very God. He didn't have eternal life.

He had that to start with. He didn't gain anything. But what he did gain was you and I. And that was his joy.

That was what he had come for. And so he said no there's a purpose. There's a goal in the end.

And so I'm going to go through this. That I may be able to achieve the goal. Which is the purchase of a precious position.

Which he calls the church. Or the bride of Christ. And so for the joy that is set before him.

And so let us also then look at Jesus. And also understand that there is a joy. There's going to be a time when there will be no more suffering.

That there will be no more tears. There will be no more crying. When we will be in heaven.

And we'll be in his presence. And so there is a joy. And that is able to give us encouragement.

To be able to go through the whole process. And then finally he says consider him. Who endured such hostility from sinners.

And so when we think we're having a tough look at Jesus. And look at his suffering. And say that my suffering is nothing in comparison to his suffering.

And so the writers of the Hebrews are saying. These are the things that will encourage us. In times of difficulty.

And in times of suffering. Now if we go to Acts chapter 5. You'll see an amazing verse. Because here you find that the apostles rejoiced.

Because they were going through suffering. And persecution. Acts chapter 5. And what happens here is that.

They brought before the council. And they are beaten. And they are told not to preach in the name of Jesus any longer.

And verse 41. And so they departed from the presence of the council. Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

Not because they weren't rejoicing because they suffered shame. But they were rejoicing because they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ. To be made partakers.

Remember Paul said that I may be made partaker of the fellowship of his sufferings. And they said this is great. That in fact we have been judged worthy.

To be put in the same category as Jesus. To be put in the same and to be dealt with in the same way as the Lord Jesus. This they esteem to be a great honor.

And we know that even the martyrs right through the centuries. Have esteemed it an honor to die for Christ. To lay down their lives for Christ.

Not because there is some perverse pleasure in dying or suffering. But because they've understood that in fact this is a glorious thing. To be identified with Christ.

To such an extent that we actually have to suffer with him. Now this is a difficult one. Because very few of us are able to rejoice when we have to suffer.

And even this morning I was moaning. Because accusations had come against me again. And difficulty had been brought against me again.

From false brothers. And I said but you know I thought that I dealt with this long ago. Now there's things coming up again and again.

And yet these guys didn't groan. They didn't moan. They didn't mutter.

They rejoiced because they said the Lord Jesus is doing a great work in me. And it's a wonderful thing that I've been counted worthy. That the Lord is in fact allowing me to go through this experience.

Now that I believe is something we need to learn from. Because it's so easy to moan. It's a different thing to rejoice.

When we are counted worthy to suffer for Christ. And obviously remember that we said it's not because when I suffer for my own misdeeds. But when I suffer in a true way for the sake of Christ.

And then in 1 Peter chapter 4. If you've still got your marker in Peter. 1 Peter chapter 4. And in fact you can go home and read the whole of the book of Peter. And you'll see that there's almost not a verse in this book that doesn't deal with the subject.

Verse 12. 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 12. Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.

As though some strange thing happened to you. Now remember he's writing to these Christians who are suffering under Nero. But obviously the fact that it's included in the canon of scripture.

Means that it's not just for them. But this is for us as well. That he's writing.

And he's writing to us as Christians. And he says to us. Don't think it's a strange thing.

When you're going to go through a fiery trial. As though some strange thing happened to you. But he says in verse 13.

But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings. That when his glory is revealed. You may also be glad with exceeding joy.

And so when his glory is revealed. You may also be glad with exceeding joy. And if you are reposed for the name of Christ.

Blessed are you. We read that verse a little bit earlier. And so again he's saying rejoice when this happens.

Don't moan. Don't groan. Don't feel this is a terrible thing.

Woe is me. No he says rejoice. Because again you've been identified with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Hebrews chapter 11. You'll see the verse that really has encouraged the martyrs. And Hebrews 11 you'll remember.

The Hebrew is the chapter on faith. And there's just a little bit in one of the verses there. In verse 35.

Which gives us light on this. And this is speaking about Old Testament Christians. Old Testament believers.

The persecution of believers is not a New Testament thing. This happened right through the Old Testament. And in the New Testament.

And remember Jesus said one of the things that Israel did to the prophets. Is that they stoned the prophets. And so all true men of God have always been persecuted.

But verse 35 says. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured not accepting deliverance.

That they might obtain a better resurrection. Now I don't know what that verse fully means. But clearly it is saying that those who are martyred for the sake of Christ.

Have a better resurrection. There is some reward for them. There is some special place for them in heaven.

Now if you go to the book of Revelation. You'll find that it actually speaks about those who are martyrs. And that they actually have a special place in heaven.

And so those who suffer for Christ. In fact will reign with Him. Will rule with Him.

Those who lay down their lives for Him. Will in fact be acknowledged through all eternity. As those who are the martyrs of the Lamb.

Those who are the martyrs of the faith. And so God give us grace that we may not be taken by surprise. At the same time if there is no difficulty.

If there is no persecution. If there is no suffering in our lives. We need to maybe ask a question.

And we don't need to go looking for suffering or persecution. It will come. But remember the verse that said.

That all who live godly will suffer persecution. And so if I'm not suffering persecution. If people are accepting me all over the show.

Then the question simply is. Am I living a life of compromise? Am I so much a friend of the world. That the world is just accepting me.

And they are not seeing a difference. My life is not showing them up for who they are. Now I'm not speaking in a bad way.

Trying to make people look bad. But if I'm living an upright godly life. That must show the sinner up for what he is.

This must show the lukewarm Christian up for who he is. And that will generate envy. That will generate a response.

And a reaction. Which is not always a good reaction. And so if I'm not facing difficulty and persecution.

And suffering for the sake of Christ. Maybe there is something. I'm not saying there is.

But maybe there is something wrong with my stand. When this happens to us. Let's not be taken by surprise.

This is part of the deal. This comes with being a Christian. And when it happens.

It's a wonderful thing. It's not the end of the world. It's not a disaster.

It's not a sign of failure. In fact it's a sign of acceptance. They thought it was a glorious thing.

To be identified with the Lord Jesus. Even to being allowed to suffer for him. And to be identified with him.

In his sufferings. Amen. Let's pray.

Father we know that this is a very difficult subject. And there is nothing within our flesh that enjoys suffering. That enjoys difficulty, persecution, problems.

Lord we all want a good life. And yet we know that that is not our promise. That the scriptures don't really promise us that.

But you have promised to us a glorious eternity. In your presence. A heaven which is without tears.

Without suffering. Without pain. Without any of these things.

And so Lord in the meantime. Give us grace that we may be able to live those lives that are pleasing to you. Not pleasing men.

But pleasing you. And Lord if this brings suffering and persecution. Difficulty into our lives.

Give us grace to deal with it. And to respond in a joyful manner. Like the Lord Jesus.

When he was reviled. He reviled not again. When they plucked the beard from his face.

Indeed he just submitted himself to you. Who judges righteously. Help us Lord to respond in a correct way.

When we are counted worthy to suffer for you. Help us to rejoice in that. And Lord that knowing that you are doing a great and a wonderful work within us.

Not only giving us a martyr's crown. But in fact also working an eternal purpose of shaping us and moulding us. Into the image of your son.

And so Lord we pray. Make these things real to us. Help us to understand them.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

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