

# The Suffering of Sonship

by Art Katz

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*The sermon explores the nature of sonship, suffering, and faith, emphasizing the importance of appreciating poetry, anticipating bliss, and being responsible before God and others.*

**Duration:** 42:42

**Scripture:** Psalm 46:10, Psalm 84:10, Matthew 6:33, Revelation 21:23

**Topics:** "Sonship"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of praising God even in times of suffering and adversity. He uses the example of Paul and Silas, who were beaten and imprisoned but chose to pray and sing praises to God. Their act of praise led to a miraculous release from their chains and opened the prison doors. The preacher also highlights the significance of having a deep relationship with God, as demonstrated by Jesus' cry for help in the midst of his suffering. Overall, the message encourages believers to trust in God's faithfulness and to praise Him regardless of their circumstances.

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## Transcript

Has it ever been your continual feeling that you're never ready? And if you could postpone the moment, you would. So just to let you know that that's not a peculiarity that's unique to you. That's universally experienced by anyone who has assumed any responsibility in God to be an expositor of his word to men.

You will never feel ready. You always want the delay. And if you can, even avoid the obligation and the responsibility.

But nevertheless, the moment comes, and you're obliged to open your mouth. The question is, do I read anything from today's Spurgeon, which is a selection of a kind you'll not hear from anyone ever, but only uniquely from Spurgeon, that speaks of the eternal bliss that awaits us and is our everlasting home with such cogency as if he's already been there, and he knows it in such a depth that it affects his present days. And it's so rare, it's just a note that is struck that only God can sound through Spurgeon.

Do I read that, something from Chambers? Do we go into Psalm 69 at all? It would be a pity to pass that over, because it contains some of the most remarkable and essential constitutive elements of the Psalms themselves, of a man facing duress, opposition, persecution, not as something inadvertent, but in total proportion to the quality of his relationship with the Father, that he would not suffer those things if he had been satisfied with a lesser knowledge of God. It's because he has the unique esteem and deep affection

and regard for the Lord that he opens himself and is made a candidate to experience the hatred upon himself as a visible presence in the earth of those who hate God but can't reach him. Got the idea? So when they got hold of the Son of God, you know what they did.

They marred him more than any man. They left him a visible wreck, because they ventilated on this object now in their possession, what they have long harbored in their hearts as a bitterness, enmity, hatred against God himself. It's remarkable even to understand such a phenomenon, but anyone who is so identified with that God has this kind of relationship, makes himself a candidate to receive some measure of that brunt, and David is continually crying out in bearing it.

So where is the God that he loves to protect him? Why does God allow him to experience it? Because it evokes a cry out from the psalmist to God that God desires and waits to answer. So it serves even the purposes of God of driving the psalmist yet into a deeper cry to God, a deeper quest and a deeper response. So in that way we can understand why he's not totally shielded and protected from the remarkable opposition that comes upon him, though he cries out from the very first line, Save me, O God.

From the waters that have come up to my neck, I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold. I have come into deep waters and the flood sweeps over me. This is poetry and it has to be poetry because mere prose cannot capture the essence of this predicament to which a son makes himself available by virtue of his love and relationship with the father.

Got that? This would not come up, these flood waters would not rise, he would not be sucked into the mire, he would not be crying out for his very life as the waters reach even to his lips if he himself were not in this quality relationship. This is the consequence of a love relationship and he's not asking for it to be removed but for a deliverance to come. And he's crying, his throat is parched, his eyes grow dim, waiting for my God.

A son will wait, a son will wait for salvation, a son will wait for deliverance, he knows it will not be immediate and he doesn't have to have an explanation of why it is that God will not relieve his immediate distress though the waters are virtually up to his mouth and his feet are sinking into mire. His confidence is that that deliverance will come, that God is hearing the cry and if there's a delay, it is serving purposes in God for which he need not be instructed. God has no obligation to explain to him why he's not being immediately delivered and why that distress is mounting up to the point even of virtual death.

But his relationship with God is such that he's willing to abide that. He doesn't demand explanation. He cries for deliverance but it will come in God's time and one will wait for that.

And then he says in verse 4, more in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause. Is that really literally true? Is this hyperbole, is this an exaggerated statement? Yes, more than the hairs of his head. So why does God allow this poetic use of exaggeration because the psalmist is feeling as if there are as many as oppose him as he has hairs on his head.

It's not the issue whether that's literally true. The issue is, is it felt to be true? Is he experiencing it as truth? And the answer is yes. So reality is not the issue of specifically how many are actually opposing David.

The issue is experientially and existentially what is this man bearing in a form of suffering and opposition because he represents God and stands for him in a world that is at enmity with him. Got the idea? It's like Elijah saying, I alone am left. He felt, what was he, God says no there are 7,000 but as far as Elijah is

concerned he is alone.

As far as we are concerned you will feel alone. And that's the issue. The issue is not numerics.

The issue is not statistics. The issue is existential and experiential reality. Are you willing to feel alone? Are you willing to experience this reality as if it represents the numbers of hairs on your head? See what I mean? And the answer is yes.

So we have to have a respect for what's being said and how it's being said and only poetry can say it. The prophets are prophetic. The psalmists are prophetic.

God is prophetic. The only ones who are dum-dums who are not poetic are we. The world has robbed us and even insulated us from poetry as if it's some kind of effeminate endeavor and unbecoming to men.

Quite the contrary is true. It has everything to do with truest manhood and sonship is to have a poetic sense. Not that you necessarily will write it, but you will necessarily appreciate it.

And that appreciation will grow as you steep yourself in the psalms and in the prophets. Well that gives me opportunity to interrupt myself with Spurgeon for today. And this will sound like an echo from another generation.

He quotes his, he always has a verse, Revelation 21-23, The city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it. And then he begins, Yonder in the better world the inhabitants are independent of all creature comforts. They have no need of raiment, their white robes never wear out, neither shall they ever be defiled.

They need no medicine to heal diseases, for the inhabitants shall not say I am sick. They need no sleep to recruit their frames. They rest not day nor night, but unweariedly praise him in his temple.

They need no social relationship to minister comfort, and whatever happiness they may derive from association with their fellows, it is not essential to their bliss, for their Lord's society is enough for their largest desires. By the way, Spurgeon is the only one I know who uses the word bliss, B-L-I-S-S. Where have you ever heard that word used by anyone? Bliss.

It's archaic. It's out of usage. It signifies a state of ultimate happiness beyond anything that the word presently connotes to us today.

Bliss is a sublime state of being that will be our eternal and continuous condition in the world to come. Why is that important? Because it's the anticipation of that bliss that enables us to be sustained in the absence of comfort and solace, which is often our experience while we're in this life. The contemplation of what is future is not just some phantasmal thing.

It is a nuts and bolts provision of God to endure in this present life. It's not unbecoming to consider the bliss of the life to come for that consideration will save you and enable you to be sustained in the absence of the most rudimentary comforts and in the face of the most severe oppression and persecutions in this life. See what I mean? Bliss is not a luxury.

It's something future but needs presently to be integrated and taken into our present consciousness and that sustains Spurgeon. See what I mean? And that's why he can speak of it as if he's already tasted it. Maybe that's the reason why he died when he was 57.

If I had anything to do with it I would have said he should have lived to 157 because look at the treasure which is ours just from his prolific production of sermons and books, articles, his commentaries in his 57 years. Why then was he taken so early? But he did more in those 57 years than most will do in twice that number. He's talking about no social relationships are needed in heaven that whatever happiness may be derived from association with one's fellows it is not essential to their bliss.

It's still a delight to have eternal fellowship in heaven with other of the saints and to have it unhurriedly and undistractedly because we have all the time in the world to enjoy one another and speak with Paul and the patriarchs and the saints who have gone before. But what he's saying is that's not essential to their bliss. Whatever happiness they may derive it is not essential to their bliss for their Lord's society their fellowship with the Lord now which is not through a glass darkly but pure and unmitigated and whole is now their experience.

Their fellowship with the Lord is enough for their largest desires. They need no teachers there they doubtless commune with one another concerning the things of God but they do not require this by way of instruction. They shall all be taught of the Lord.

Ours are the alms that the kings gave to them and they feast at the table itself. Here we live from alms little handouts there we are at the Lord's table and we lean upon and they lean upon their beloved and upon him alone. Here we may have the help of our companions but there we find all they want in Christ Jesus.

Here we look to the meat which perishes and to the raiment which decays before the moth but there they find everything in God. We use the bucket to fetch us water from the well but there they drink from the fountainhead and put their lips down to the living water. Here the angels bring us blessings but we shall want no messengers from heaven then.

They shall need no Gabriels there to bring their love notes from God where there they shall see him face to face. O what a blessed time shall that be when we shall have mounted above every secondary cause and shall rest upon the bare arm of God. What a glorious hour when God and not his creatures the Lord and not his works shall be our daily joy.

Our soul shall then have attained the perfection of bliss. There's that word again. You like that? Does that sound strange to our hearing? I would put it this way.

We need so to seek the Lord, to find him that this sounds less and less strange and more and more normative and it begins to color and to affect not only our own thinking our own contemplations but our own speaking. This, what Spurgeon is writing however ephemeral, ethereal excuse my language it appears to be is definitive and normative for every saint. It only strikes us as unusual and strange because it's so rare to hear one have this kind of understanding and express it so aptly.

Is that the idea? Spurgeon is a provision from God of what is his beck and call to us all and that we're so far below what he intends so that the word bliss needs to come into our vocabulary and not to be ashamed of it. There's a reward in heaven and it's proportionate to what we've had to bear in this earth as the psalmist is crying out in his own experience not only in Psalm 69 but virtually every psalm almost every other psalm is another cry of David for relief from the oppression the persecution that he bears just being a son of God in the earth who loves him and serves him and makes him a candidate to be hated in verse 4 without cause. Many are those who would destroy me.

It's not enough to oppress a David the object of the oppression is to annihilate the David because David like Paul is not fit to live the world cannot tolerate the existence of such a one in its midst because even when such a one is silent and lives modestly and to himself his very presence is an indictment against all that is false in the world that is celebrated as truth or is honored as being of value can you understand that?

The very presence of a David blows the whistle on all that is fraudulent and counterfeit in the world that is ruled over by the prince of lies that's why David's presence cannot be permitted even when it is silent he's an indictment against the lie and that's why the Anabaptists from which our dear Hutterites are derived who are but a bare shadow of that reflection were burned at the stake drowned in rivers confined in dungeons because and moved and most were expelled there are whole statements of their sufferings where entire communities are out in the field in the winter time without covering, without protection with their elderly people, with their babies out in the open elements because they have been completely expelled from their communities where they have labored to build their

homes, their farms what about them I've often asked the question what was there so horrific about them that their presence could not be tolerated every other variety of scum could be tolerated the drunkards, the revelers Luther made room for everyone but the presence of this people, there was no room why? for the same reason David David's life was sought the same reason that men in the time of Paul vowed they would neither eat nor drink until Paul was killed because he was not fit to live there was a statement that was so offensive to religious sensibility that it required his elimination that's why Jesus was crucified and if we go on in godliness we will make ourselves candidates equally for this historic kind of opposition that is intrinsic to faith so stop where you are go no further,

desire no more deep relationship or intimate union with God or to express it or you'll begin to experience uncanny forms of opposition and if it doesn't come to you externally from the world there are ways in which the lord will allow it even to come under your own roof and within the framework of your own family so and yet in verse 5 David is not saying that he's free from sin himself, oh god you know my folly, the wrongs that I've done are not hidden from you do not let those who hope in you be put to shame because of me oh lord god of hosts, do not let those who seek you be dishonored because of me, oh god of Israel, this is a pregnant statement you dear saints because if it were not for our responsibility before God to his sons and daughters, our own lives personally would be

much less than what they presently are this is one of the dynamics of faith, that because we have an obligation to be something for God's people as his mouthpiece where we have a factor working, disposes us to be more concerned for the truth of our own life, it's moral quality and character than we would otherwise be can you follow that? this is not an accidental point, this is an elemental thing that our obligation to be for God before others compels us to attend to ourselves more seriously in the observance and maintenance of our own life morally and spiritually than would be the case if we had no obligation at all to each other see what I mean?

I'm much more the man the godly man because of you than I would be independent of you, if it was just me alone, I would be much more slack I would take much more liberty I'd be much more careless in the maintenance of my own life there's an imperative requirement to keep myself before the lord in a way that would not otherwise be the case and what I'm saying is, this is not an accident of life in God it is an intrinsic element of that life so if you want to be kept you need to open yourself to be more responsible before God's people see what I mean? that we're in something together and that we affect one another

and therefore we have a greater requirement to see to the truth and the reality of our own life our own integrity and that's what David is trying here he's acknowledging his

faults I'm not without fault and my wrongs are not hidden from you but don't let those who hope in you be put to shame because of me that would really hurt him that others will be adversely affected because of his faults and his folly do not let those who seek you be dishonored because of me, so this is a dynamic of the faith that we are in something together and because we are in something together and affect one another and affect nations in the world how much more then do we need to be careful and regard our own walk and the condition of our own life, its consistency and its truth and therefore how much more do God's people have obligation to pray for men who are being used in our mouthpieces and objects of God's service against whom powers of darkness conspire and seek their end if

not physically morally to bring them down and that they need to be prayed for and kept by the faithful prayers and intercessions of the saints because we're in something together have I made that point clear? if you're not an obligation to God for the souls of others, if no one is affected by what you are in yourself before God you are not rightly related to the body of Christ you're not in the right place of God in your service to others and it doesn't require you to be a professional even in your own hometown, your own locality, this dynamic is available that should be embraced for your own spiritual good, we need to see ourselves affecting others and therefore attending to the truth of our own lives more seriously than we otherwise would because that's a demanding thing so, in verse 7

it's for your sake that I borne reproach that shame has covered my face I have become a stranger to my kindred and to my mother's children so it's not just from those that are without that I'm catching flack, but even closest to home, my own flesh and blood are offended and alienated to me because it's the zeal for your house that has consumed me, the same thing that the child Jesus said at the age of 12 I must be about my father's business, didn't you know he says to his parents, I have to be about my father's business, I'm in my father's house, so this concern marks every son and David himself expresses it, the zeal for your house has consumed me the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me but my prayer is to you O Lord in verse 13, and at an acceptable time O God, in the

abundance of your steadfast love, answer me, not only because your answer will relieve me from the distress, but because your answer will sanctify your name and honor you as one who shows his love and faithfulness to those who are his it will be a statement to those who reproach you that you are a faithful God, and that those who call upon your name will not be disappointed, I'm asking you to save me, not just to be relieved from the distress, but that your name should not be reduced and slighted, that you should be honored rather than defamed, that's why I want you to come and answer to my distress, because my jealousy is more for your name than the alleviation of my own distress that is the statement of a son and he'll wait for that answer and knows that God will give it, why? because

he knows God as God, God's very nature will require that because God is faithful, and his steadfast love is Chesed C-H-E-S-E-D the Hebrew word, is intrinsic to God and must have its final expression his faith is in what God is in himself, and how does he know that God, that he can count upon it even before the answer comes, because he has a history because he has a relationship because previous distresses have been answered by God so the God who was faithful in the past will be faithful now also, how come? because God is faithful faith comes from a God who is faithful this is his nature so the one who knows him like this can have the waters come right up to his mouth, his feet sinking into the mire, and know that his deliverance will come, and if it doesn't come, so be it yea, though he

slay me, yet will I trust him, that evidently my death now is more serving the purposes of God's glory, than my deliverance got the picture? how can you lose, if the issue is God's glory and not your deliverance per se have you noticed in this psalm something that seems unbecoming to the psalmist, where he prays for God's vengeance in verse 22, let the table be a trap for them, a snare for their allies let their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, make their voids tremble continually, pour out your indignation upon them, let your burning anger overtake them, may there can't be a desolation, let no one live in their tents for they persecute those whom you have struck down and those whom you have wounded, they attack still more this is another remarkable aspect of psalms is to hear the cry

for vengeance that often comes from the assaulted psalmist upon the enemies of God because they really believe that in the last analysis two categories of beings, the righteous and the wicked, and the wicked are consciously and willfully wicked, they have forsaken any redemptive benefit from God they are consciously and willfully his enemies and persecute those who are his and therefore he's asking that God's righteousness and justice be expressed as judgment upon them, and in fact if you take these verses and view them in light of subsequent Jewish history, there almost seems to be a fulfillment, word for word, of all that the psalmist is crying, I think Paul quotes may their table be a snare unto them, and that somehow this is not unbecoming this is not some human indignation this is a

cry for God to show forth righteous judgment in those who hate him and ventilate their hatred on those whom you have struck verse 26 in those whom you have wounded they attack still more, isn't that remarkable now why would God strike anyone whom he loves and that once being struck the enemy finding opportunity will seek to deepen that grievance and compound it yet the more how come can you answer questions like that I would think any son could, the psalmist says God has wrought that now the enemy finds opportunity to yet worsen how do we understand that those are the wounds of a friend this is the chastisement of God for sons whom he loves but the enemy seeing the opportunity comes in to yet do greater damage why doesn't God then preserve the son from this further onslaught because even

the further onslaught is part of the total chastening that he has allowed the son to bear in his love and yet the psalmist cries out over it so you mustn't think it a strange thing that while the Lord himself is inflicting the enemy is adding his own extra little zets but the Lord is allowing it as part of a total chastisement for those he loves those whom you have wounded they attack still more so add guilt to their guilt it will come back upon their own heads for taking such an advantage let them be blotted out of the book of the living and so on let them not be enrolled among the righteous but verse 29 I am lowly and in pain let your salvation oh God protect me I will praise the name of God with a song not when the salvation comes but now now in the midst of this affliction even though

the enemy is compounding it now while I'm bearing this I will praise your name with a song put that in your spiritual pipe and smoke it, it's not that the praise waits for the answer the praise is forthcoming with the cry because he's deserving, you don't have to wait for God to punctuate and give the answer for which you're asking it's certain that it will come and even if it doesn't he's still the righteous God so we give him praise and that praise when it comes in affliction devastates the enemy and has a powerful consequence beyond anything we can know a wonderful example in the New Testament, Acts 16 Paul and Silas publicly whipped and beaten, tossed into an inner prison but at midnight the darkest hour when the enemy is there to browbeat and you really missed it you should have

remained in Asia what did it get you for coming to Philippi, Europe and all you got is a demoniacal woman that got you in trouble and only one Lydia and now you're going to rot in this jail, gangrene, no aid and

then the stink and the unholiness and vile environment that this dungeon is, you'll perish and you don't even have a cell phone to call home for a cry for help at midnight in the midst of all of that oppressive da da da da da you really missed it Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them and suddenly there was a great earthquake and the fetters of everyone were loosed and the bars opened the prison doors sprang open because where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty and the spirit of the Lord is prominently in the place of praise, not just

when we're comfortable, well fed and in hospitable environments, but all the more when you at least expect praise to be sounded in the place of suffering, chastisement, bruise woundedness, beatings there, God is compacted yet the more that even the fetters were burst by the presence of the Lord in liberty so this is remarkable I will praise the name of God notice I will this act of assertion this insistence this is the son, remember? sonship is activity sonship is acting doing, praying, praising son is not silent except he's called to a silence I will this assertion is the very formation of identity of personhood of personality, of being the existential moment by which a person is defined defined as a real entity comes when he summons out of his deeps a determination to praise God when

every factor is contrary to justifying praise in that moment, so to speak, the man is born, the reality of the entity is established and the praise itself of course, devastates the powers of darkness whose wisdom cannot understand it I will praise the name of God Israel is about to suffer a remarkable affliction at God's hand called the time of Jacob's trouble, but the enemies of God and of Israel will take occasion to rub salt into the open wounds and to drub them yet more and this has always been Israel's history that the enemies though they are the rod of God's chastisement for Israel, go beyond God's intention and inflict yet more grievous wounds upon the victim taking advantage by the occasion but what it does then is earn for them a judgment and so will it be in the last days, those

nations that will take advantage of Israel in their flattened condition of these last days to rub in more than God intended or required of them will be obliterated as nations they will be dismissed from history just in the same way that the psalmist cries out, blot them out of your book they will be blotted out from nations as a judgment for going further than God intended so we need to expect this and of course we can go on for the rest of the day, the psalms like the word of God anywhere is inexhaustible but just to direct your attention to the conclusion let heaven and earth praise him verse 34, the seas and everything that moves in them, for God will save Zion, there's always almost an eschatological note struck of the largest cosmic kind that ends these psalms it begins with the

personal and intense suffering of the psalmist the son David but it never remains there, always it's a statement at the end of the largest things that pertain to God that are cosmic and eternal, Zion and you'll see it in Psalm 22 they have pierced my hands and my feet, my God, my God why hast thou forsaken me, read that psalm all the way through, when you come to the end of it, you come to an end like this, the victim is not just addressing his own concern he's crying out for God's ultimate eschatological universal and cosmic purposes to be fulfilled now is that an accidental insertion or is there a divine logic in that what begins with personal suffering ends with a revelation and a cry for the fulfillment of God's universal and cosmic purpose or is there a logic, a connection and a

connection that we need to recognize that our personal suffering has a cosmic end and we can bear it when we see that there's a larger end than the way in which we are personally afflicted and that in fact we would not have seen that larger end were it not for this affliction so you see why the psalms are so precious, the whole environment of the psalm is such a provision for us who are called to be the sufferers

of the last days but we need to see our suffering in the context of God's ultimate universal and cosmic purpose and celebrate it because the same God who's going to save us out of our distress will perform that final thing by which you'll be glorified forever now can you see how important it is to be able to anticipate the bliss of our eternal reward for which this life is but

preparation anticipating that bliss enables us to bear this let's conclude this so we can get to our subject the end of that psalm let the heaven and earth praise him the seas and everything that moves in them for God will save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah and his servants shall live there and possess it the children of his servants shall inherit it and those who love his name shall live in it seems to be a statement of why it is that the present state of Israel cannot be the locus of such a people and have to be expelled and fitted through that trial as many as will survive it to return and be the servants for whom God has prepared that land and for their descendants so it's an eschatological note a reaching out to something that is yet future for us where the psalms were written

seven centuries before Christ the last statement is pointing to a future that we have not yet realized and is full of prophetic insight and accuracy and probably a grace in proportion to what the psalmist prophet has suffered or is suffering so don't miss that because it's so characteristic of the psalms that will often end with a cosmic future prophetic note that is right on and that somehow is related to the suffering that is described in the earlier part of the psalm and what it brings forth is a deeper revelation of himself and a more perfect refinement of their own souls so that they are being fitted at the same time for the eternal bliss and will have a greater capacity for that bliss all the more because they bore in this earth the sufferings that their relationship opened to them

if we don't see this in the context of that, we're not seeing so it's more than an accident this morning that the Lord would have spoken here from Spurgeon on future bliss and read a psalm that is so descriptive of the suffering of our saints in every generation praise God for God and for the reality of God and for a psalmist who even cries out Lord let not my own, you know my own sins my own follies but let me not be a factor in offending those who look to you and I'm not denying my follies, my wrongs that are not hidden from you, so I love this reality none of the greatest saints are without these imperfections and faults and failures the greatest, Paul himself David as we know and this is not accidental but this is intrinsic to reality and to a God who loves us in that condition and

who ultimately is bringing us to his own image and is not turned off and alienated as others are by those imperfections okay let's pray a little prayer to conclude this portion, this devotional portion and the Lord would give us a second wind when we come back to the subject which is not unrelated to this of sonship, relationship with the Father so Lord we just thank you for Spurgeon we thank you for Chambers, we thank you for David, we thank you my God for the harmony of these today's selections that fit together in not just a remarkable way but a sublime way and for the testimony of the saints that have been stirred by what we are considering Lord and having their own experience pass through these things and have glorified you thereby by their ability to praise you in the midst of what

has had to be suffered so we bless you Lord, thank you my God give us a love for the Psalms a love for the poetry of the Psalms the propheticness for the essential insight content, the knowledge of you the trust of yourself as a deliverer whenever that deliverance comes and even if it doesn't come you're still deserving of all praise we bless you Lord give us a few minutes now of respite of recovery, of restoration and bring us back my God with a second wind for what is yet on your heart for us this morning, we thank you and give you praise in Jesus name, Amen

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