

Suffering (Compilation)

by Compilations

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life that is surrendered to Christ and bearing His name.

Duration: 9:27

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 4:13

Topics: "Suffering And Persecution", "Surrender To Christ"

Description

This sermon shares a powerful testimony of enduring faith in the face of extreme persecution, highlighting the transformative presence of Jesus even in the darkest moments. It emphasizes the profound impact of surrendering one's identity and will to Christ, acknowledging our weaknesses and embracing His strength and grace. The speaker's experience in solitary confinement serves as a poignant illustration of finding true freedom and purpose in complete surrender to Jesus, transcending personal limitations and fears to fully embrace the identity and calling found in Christ alone.

Transcript

From 5 in the morning until 10 in the evening, 17 hours a day, we had to sit just like this. We were not allowed to lean. For nothing in the world could we rest a little bit our head.

To close your eyes was a crime. 17 hours a day you had to sit like this and hear, Communism is good. Communism is good.

Communism is good. Communism is good. Communism is good.

Christianity is stupid. Christianity is stupid. Christianity is stupid.

Nobody more believes in Christ. Nobody more believes in Christ. Give up.

Give up. Give up. These days, weeks, years, we had to listen to these things.

At once the walls of the cell began to shine like diamonds. I have heard Bach. I have heard Beethoven in my life.

I have seen California. I have seen Napoli. I have seen many beautiful things.

Never have I seen the beauties which I have seen in the dark cell beneath the earth. Never have I heard such a beautiful music as on that day the King of Kings, Jesus, was with us. We saw his understanding,

his loving eyes.

He wiped away from our eyes our tears. He said to us words of love and words of forgiveness. We knew that everything which had been evil in our lives has passed away, has been forgotten by God.

And now there came wonderful days. The bride was in the arms of the bridegroom. We were with Christ.

We didn't know that we were in prison. So many of us believe that we are Christians, that we are something good, something highly talented and gifted. Paul said, I am nothing.

I wish to start tonight by telling you a prison experience. When the communists took over my homeland, Romania, they did what they did everywhere. Where they came to power, what they would do in this country too if ever it would fall under them.

They put in prison thousands of Christians. And we who were considered somehow to be leading personalities of the underground church, we were kept during years in solitary confinement, I myself and others. We were during years 30 feet beneath the earth.

We never saw sun, moon, snow, flowers, stars, mountains, rivers. I had forgotten that these things exist. We never had a Bible nor any other book.

We never had a bit of paper or a pen. I had forgot to write. I have not seen a lady for 10 years.

I have not seen a child for 10 years. In solitary confinement, we saw nobody except the wardens and the torturers. We never heard a sound.

The cells were soundproof. We never heard a whisper. We saw nothing, we heard nothing.

Perfect silence reigned in those prison cells. We had almost nothing to eat, sometimes one slice of bread a week. For 10 years, I have never seen a color.

We always saw the gray walls of the cell and our gray uniforms. I had forgotten that brown and blue and green and red and pink and violet exist. Our world was gray.

And years passed like this. One year after another, I became very, very tired. And one night, I said to our Lord, Lord, you see, I have no brethren, no sisters.

I don't have your written word. I don't have holy communion. I have none of these things.

But you have spoken so often directly to persons, even to very evil persons, like Saul of Tarsus, who had been a persecutor and a killer of Christians, and you came and spoke with him. And as I had nobody to speak to me, would you speak to me tonight? And then, it was exceptional circumstances. And in exceptional circumstances, exceptional things happened.

And when I said, you, Lord, speak to me, I heard his voice. Now, I expected from him a word of comfort, a word which would strengthen me in my faith. Instead of this, I heard very strange words.

He put to me a question. What is your name? Now, I believe that Jesus is God. And surely, God should know at least what my name is.

It's very strange for a God to ask somebody what is his name. But he has put such strange questions before. He asked Adam.

Adam, where are you? Well, if he is God, he should know where Adam is. He put this question to Adam, not because he did not know, but to make Adam think, am I not in the wrong place, hidden in a bush, hiding myself from my Creator, before whose eyes nobody can hide himself. And so, the Lord put to me this strange question.

What is your name? Now, I had known all my life that my name is Richard. But in that moment, I could not reply to Jesus, my name is Richard, because I happened to have read in church history that in Britain there was once a big saint with the name of Richard, who, because of his faith, has been sentenced to death, and I have the same name as that saint. And I feared to say to Jesus, my name is Richard, because I trembled about something else.

What if I say, my name is Richard, and he says, are you like that Richard? I was not like that Richard. So I could not say that I am Richard. Should I say I am a Christian, I feared to say it, because I knew that in the first centuries, under the Roman persecution, Christians entered into the arena of circuses to be devoured by wild beasts for their faith, and I was not as courageous as those Christians.

Should I say I am a pastor, I did not dare, because I knew that a pastor has to watch day and night over his flock, and I have not been like this. He had asked me, what is your name? I bowed before him and said, Jesus, I have no name. Allow me to bear your name.

And that is what he really wishes from us. Paul understood it. Not Eilid.

Not the old Paul, not the new Paul. Not the wicked Paul who has been a murderer, not the new Paul who is an apostle. Not the wicked and full of vices, not the very good and full of virtues.

The I has been abolished. Not Eilid. But Christ lives in me.

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