

Epistle 394

by George Fox

The sermon emphasizes the importance of suffering for Christ, the true liberty in Christ, and the need for faithfulness to Christ, using the Jews' history as a pattern of rebellion and suffering.

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, John 16:33, Acts 5:41, Galatians 4:29, Galatians 5:1, Ephesians 1:4, Colossians 2:6, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 3:8, Jude 1:13, Revelation 2:10

Topics: "Perseverance Of Faith", "Overcoming Adversity"

Description

George Fox preaches about the challenges and persecutions faced by believers in the world, emphasizing that through Christ's power, they can overcome all obstacles and sufferings for the sake of His name and truth. He encourages believers to remain faithful to the end, promising the crown of life and a peace that cannot be taken away by worldly troubles or deceitful spirits. Fox warns against false brethren and the history of those who turned away from God, highlighting the importance of staying rooted in Christ to avoid deception and false liberties.

Transcript

Dear friends and brethren, who are elect and chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world [Eph 1:4]; in Christ you have peace, and in the world you have trouble. But 'be of good cheer, Christ hath overcome the world [John 16:33],' that lieth in wickedness [1 Jn 5:19], and all the persecutors in it; and in him you all overcome the devil and his works [Heb 2:14/1 Jn 3:8], and 'without him you can do nothing [John 15:5];' but through Christ, and his power and strength, you will be able to do all things according to the will of God. And though for a time ye may suffer for the name of Jesus [Acts 5:41], and for his truth, and be cast into prison, and suffer the spoiling of your goods [Heb 10:34]; the eternal God knows, and his son Christ Jesus, it is for him alone, and his truth's sake, we suffer, and not for any evil doing, or doing wrong to any man. And so the Lord hath given us 'not only to believe, but also to suffer for his name and truth's sake [Phil 1:29];' and so it is the gift of God, with his eternal spirit and power, that doth uphold us [Heb 1:3] in all our sufferings, which hath made so many to finish their testimony for the truth in jails and prisons; and not to love their lives to the death, but love God and Christ Jesus above their lives, and all outward things; as practice and experience have declared it.

And now, dear friends, be faithful in Christ Jesus to the end, that you may all have the crown of life [Rev 2:10], and that peace from Christ Jesus, which the world, and all the apostate spirits from the truth, cannot take away from you; I say, neither the world, with their outward persecutions and spoiling of goods, nor the

apostate spirits from the peaceable truth, with all their lies and defamations, and their filthy, scandalous books, and evil tongues, though they be like the raging waves of the sea [Jude 1:13], casting up mire and dirt [Isa 57:20], whose folly is manifest to all that hear and see them [2 Tim 3:9]; yet all this cannot disturb the peace of the righteous. And all the restless, unquiet, unruly murmurers and complainers [Jude 1:16], that are filled with false jealousies, and are the wandering stars [Jude 1:13], who are wandered from the witness of the Lord in their own hearts [1 Jn 5:9f]; such their judgments do not linger, nor their damnation doth not slumber [2 Pet 2:3], though they may be suffered for a time to try God's people.

And now, friends, you know envious Cain was a sacrificer as well as Abel, but out of the faith and righteousness, who murdered his brother Abel [Gen 4:3-8], he may be said to have been a type of Judas, who was a partaker of the ministry, yet betrayed his master [Mat 10:4, etc]. And you read that Ishmael and Esau were circumcised [Gen 17:23-6] as well as Isaac [Gen 21:4] and Jacob; but Esau hated Jacob, and would have slain him [Gen 27:41]; and Ishmael scoffed at Isaac [Gen 21:9], and so he that is born of the flesh persecuteth him that is born of the spirit [Gal 4:29]; and that birth is not heir with the seed of the promise [Gal 3:29/4:30], though it may come into the outward form, and outward profession.

And likewise you read of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their company, and their rebelling against the Lord, and his servants, Moses and Aaron [Num 16], and of their false liberty; but what became of them, in Numb. xvi. you may see.

And likewise how that the Jews (after the Lord brought them out of Egypt) made themselves a calf of their jewels and ear-rings [Exo 32], as in Exod. xxxii. Psalm cvi. 19. The Jews made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the golden image [Psa 106:19], and forgot God their saviour, who had done great things in Egypt, and wondrous things in the land of Ham [Psa 106:21f] and murmured in their tents, and hearkened not to the voice of the Lord. And therefore God overthrew them in the wilderness, [Psa 106:25f] and they came not into the promised land.

And you read how the Jews run into false liberty in the days of Balaam, and joined with Baal-Peor, and how the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and what a destruction he brought upon them, who had turned against the Lord and his faithful people [Num 25:3-5]; as in Numb. xxv.

And likewise how often the Jews murmured against Moses and Aaron, and what a destruction came upon them in the wilderness, that none of that old stock the Lord brought out of Egypt that dishonoured him; though they had seen his glory, none entered into the land save Caleb and Joshua, but they perished in the wilderness for their murmuring and rebelling [Num 14:26-35]; and therefore take heed of murmuring and rebelling against the Lord and his spirit, but in all things learn to be content.

And also you read in Judges, how often the Jews forsook the Lord, and what judgments came upon them [Judg 6:12-16, 10:6-9]; and also how the Jews turned against the prophets, and imprisoned and persecuted them [Mat 5:12]; and in the days of the kings, as in the Chronicles, how David and many of the prophets, and the righteous suffered: but what became of them that made them suffer? And likewise in the days of Christ, and his apostles, how did they suffer, by the professing Jews! And there were many comers and goers in the days of Christ that could say, 'Lord, Lord:' but such do not enter into the kingdom of God, except they do the will of God [Mat 7:21].

And you read how the apostles and the true church were troubled with false Christians and false brethren; whom Paul writeth against in many of his epistles, and Peter, and John, and Jude; and John in his Revelations. And therefore, all Friends, dwell in the seed Christ Jesus, in whom ye cannot be deceived,

'who bruises the head of the serpent [Gen 3:15],' who is the head of all deceivers; and the head of all enmity, and false ways, worships, and religions; and the head of all false liberties: but in Christ Jesus, in whom all nations are blessed, is the true liberty. In him all stand fast, so far as he hath made you free [Gal 5:1]; and in him all walk, as ye have received him [Col 2:6], to the praise and glory of God: in whom you have all eternal life, peace, rest, and salvation; and in him the Lord God Almighty preserve you all in love, unity, and fellowship. Who is able to support you, and supply you with his eternal hand and power, with what you do need in all your sufferings and trials. Amen.

G. F.

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