

Jesus Calls Us To Follow His Path Of Suffering

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of following in Jesus' footsteps, focusing on the example of suffering and forgiveness set by Christ. It highlights the privilege of suffering for Christ, forgiving those who harm us, and committing our situations to God's righteous judgment. The speaker encourages a mindset of triumph in suffering, drawing from biblical examples like Job, Paul, and Jesus, and stresses the eternal perspective of suffering in light of God's glory and grace.

Duration: 1:23:57

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:21, 1 Peter 2:23, Romans 12:19, Philippians 3:10, 2 Timothy 4:14

Topics: "Following Christ's Example", "Triumph in Suffering"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of following in Jesus' footsteps, focusing on the example of suffering and forgiveness set by Christ. It highlights the privilege of suffering for Christ, forgiving those who harm us, and committing our situations to God's righteous judgment. The speaker encourages a mindset of triumph in suffering, drawing from biblical examples like Job, Paul, and Jesus, and stresses the eternal perspective of suffering in light of God's glory and grace.

Transcript

Then we can turn to the word of God in 1 Peter and chapter 2. See, in India we are not yet used to suffering for the gospel's sake. In North India they suffer a little more. But not so much in Tamil Nadu or Kerala.

But when Peter wrote this letter, it was at a situation where almost every believer in every country was suffering in some way for being a Christian. And the apostles were being killed one after the other. So for them suffering was a daily experience.

From their parents and relatives who had some other religion. And from the temples which they left. And then as time went on, the Christianity also got compromised and other Christians also would trouble them.

So these people who had read the old testament There they saw that Israel suffered only when they sinned. All through the old testament, when they sinned, they suffered. And their suffering was usually some other country would come and occupy Israel and make them slaves.

Then the Israelites would repent and God would deliver them again from those enemies. And in Deuteronomy 28, God told them that if you obey me, I will make you rich. And I will give you health.

And many children. And you will be very prosperous. As a nation.

And you will not get into debt. That was the old testament gospel. If you obey God, you get plenty of money and you get healing.

Deuteronomy 28. Sometimes when you get, you read Deuteronomy 28. It is very clear.

If you disobey God, you will get sicknesses. And you will get poverty. And so many old testament saints were very rich like Abraham.

It says Abraham had 318 servants. Even the rich people in India don't have so many servants. These are all servants who worked in Abraham's home.

And worked in his fields. And looked after his flock. He was a very rich man.

Same with Isaac and Jacob. David was a man after God's own heart. He was a very rich man.

And that's how it was whenever Israel followed the Lord, they were rich and no suffering and nothing. And then Jesus came. And Jesus said, I am proclaiming a new covenant.

Which is much better than the old covenant. In what way is it better? We need to understand that. People who have a worldly mindset will think better means we will get more money than old testament people.

But let me show, before we read one Peter, I want you to go to Hebrews 11. Hebrews 11 is a chapter that is describing all the great heroes of faith in the old testament. And I have spoken about this many times, you have probably heard me.

But at the end of that chapter, it says in the last verse, God wants to give something better for us in the new covenant. This old covenant is describing people like Noah, Abraham and all these people. Noah and his family was so rich they could build a complete ship with their own money.

And then not only riches, these people did so many miracles. Splitting the red sea, killing lions and all that. And then it says in the last verse, God has given something better for us.

What does that mean? Does it mean we will kill more lions? Or make more money? No. We will overcome sin. That is the lion that lives inside.

That is the better thing. And we have now got an example in Jesus. It is better than the old testament.

The old testament was just a written book. But now it is a person. That was the word.

In the old testament it was the word. Now it is the word made flesh. It was not just written in a book.

But it was written in the life of Jesus. So we are not to be just people who know the bible. But that must be written into our life.

When it says God has provided something better. That better thing is found in the life of Jesus. So it says in verse 1 and 2, we run the race looking unto Jesus who is the author and perfecter of our faith.

Our faith is much higher than that of the old covenant people. The whole of chapter 11 is by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith all these people did something. And now a better thing is for us.

And that is by faith what Jesus did. So actually these first four verses of chapter 12 should be the last verses of chapter 11. So it starts with by faith Abel in Hebrews 11 verse 4. Then by faith Enoch and by faith Noah.

And so many people. And then it says something better now. By faith Jesus.

What did he do? How many physical lions did he kill? None. How many walls of Jericho did he pull down? None. How many thrones did he sit on like David? None.

It says in John 6 when they wanted to make him a king he ran away. Then what is this better faith? The better faith is that he endured verse 2, endured the cross despising the shame. And verse 3 endured a lot of hostility by sinners against himself.

So the new testament gospel is one of suffering. In that suffering we become overcomers. See I have two pictures in the walls in my house.

In another room. One is a picture of Daniel standing before in the lion's den. All the lions are unable to touch him.

There are 9 or 10 lions there. And Daniel is standing upright. They cannot touch him.

That is old covenant faith. Next to that I have another picture. Of the Roman amphitheater where the persecuted Christians are standing together and praying.

And all the people, thousands of them are sitting on the stand like in a cricket match and watching. And then from one side the lions are coming out. And these lions are going to eat up these people.

They are deliberately kept hungry for many days those lions. And these people are eaten by the lions. So these two pictures I keep to show this is old covenant and this is new covenant.

In the old covenant the lions mouth is shut. But in the new covenant God allows the lions to come and kill his people. And God shows the devil that see in the new covenant by the power of the spirit they will be true to me even if the lions come to eat them.

And there are some amazing stories of the Christians of the early centuries. They were beaten and even Paul says in the bible how many times he was beaten. Many of them were crucified like Jesus.

Paul's head was cut off. So Jesus opened another way for us to manifest the glory of God in suffering. And that's what we read in Hebrews 12.2 This is the better thing mentioned in Hebrews 11.40 Jesus endured the cross despising the shame.

And faced all the hostility of sinners. What was his goal? Why was he allowing all this? For the joy to set in front of him. And that joy is fellowship with the father.

Psalms 16.11 says in the father's presence is fullness of joy. The most perfect joy in the world is only in the presence of God the father. And Jesus was demonstrating that I am willing to suffer anything if I can have fellowship with my father.

That's what he said. For the joy set before him he endured the cross. If we really follow Jesus.

Our experience will not be Deuteronomy 28 getting rich and all that. Something better than that. We will have fellowship with God himself.

We won't become beggars because God has promised to meet all our earthly needs. No. Jesus said if you seek the kingdom of God all your food and clothing and housing will be taken care of.

I have proved that for 60 years in my life. If you seek God's kingdom you don't have to depend on anybody in the world. God will take care of all your needs.

And Jesus demonstrated that first. He did not ask anybody for money. He did not take an offering when he had a meeting.

And that is how we also conduct our meetings. And our elders don't get paid by anybody. We don't send prayer letters because Jesus never sent any prayer letters asking for money.

That is all Babylonian Christianity. Our calling is fellowship with the father. And if God takes us through suffering we accept it.

Now turn to 1 Peter 2. See what it says here. There is an amazing verse in 1 Peter 2. You have been called for this purpose. Now if somebody were to ask you a question.

For what purpose were you called? Some may say to go to heaven when I die. But see what it says here. You are called to follow in Jesus' steps who suffered.

You are called to suffer. That is what it says here. And Jesus is our example in that.

Because he suffered first. He not only suffered physically. People beat him and spat on him and all that.

I am sure there were times when there was not enough food to eat. In fact he said even the foxes have holes and the birds have nests but I don't have a place to lay my head. He had a lot of suffering which we don't know much details about.

But in all those sufferings it says in verse 22 he did not commit even one sin. What does that mean? Listen. He did not hate any of those people who troubled him.

And it says here verse 21 Christ has left an example for us to follow in his steps. In God's blessing is a lot of money. Then Jesus should have been the richest person that ever lived on this earth.

Because he obeyed God more than anybody else. But the one who obeyed God more than anybody else suffered more than anybody else. They called him Beelzebub, prince of devils.

They tried many times to kill him. Finally they caught him and beat him and killed him. And it says here in all this he is an example for us.

And that is why the early apostles all of them were killed except John. And they accepted it. They said this is our calling.

Paul says in preaching the gospel he got 195 stripes on his back. The Jews beat him. He was stoned and imprisoned so many times.

And he was the greatest apostle. And as I said many of these early Christians were thrown to the lions to be eaten by them. Now some of you also have suffered in some ways because you are Christians.

Some of you have been thrown out of your homes. Maybe your father could not give you an inheritance because you became a Christian. Or different different sufferings.

Now compare your sufferings with the sufferings of those suffering to be Christians. I have done that in my life. And I say Lord if they were eaten by lions what I have experienced is only an ant bite.

One ant bites me on the hand. I just knock it off. And I call that suffering.

Whereas my brothers and sisters in the 1st century were eaten by lions. I am just showing that to you to say that what we call suffering is nothing. Ya many of you suffered because you stood for the faith.

Some of you have suffered from your parents. Some of you from your husbands who are unbelievers. And some of you in Madurai from evil pastors.

They call themselves elders but they are pastors. They call themselves CFC elders but they are worse than any Babylonian pastors. But what did you suffer? What did you suffer? One ant bite.

Compared to those 1st century Christians. So don't worry too much about it. Forgive the ant that bite you.

Never mind. The Lord has got a tremendous inheritance for you. And you know Paul said at the end of his life.

He says there is something I am longing for. Let me first show you 2 Corinthians 11. Where Paul gives us a small history of what he experienced.

Some of you have read this. Some of you don't know this. I will show you.

But it is good to read it again. I read it many times. 2 Corinthians 11 verse 23.

2 Corinthians 11 verse 23. He says I have suffered imprisonment more than all the others. I have been beaten by others so many times I cannot even count.

Often I have been in danger of dying with all this persecution. Five times the Jews beat me with 39 lashes. 195 times he got beaten with lashes.

Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned and he almost died. In those days they used to travel by ship to preach the gospel.

And like traveling like that 3 times I have a shipwreck. And one night and one day 24 hours he was floating around in the sea. Holding on to some piece of wood till he reached the land.

24 hours. And why was he going in the ship? Not to make money. He was going to preach the gospel.

But God allowed it to be shipwrecked. I think it was to show the devil. See my servants will serve me no matter what happens to them.

They will never complain. They will never hate anybody. My dear brothers I want to ask you can the lord boast about you to the devil like that? Can the lord point to the devil and say look at those people over

there in Tamil Nadu.

In this town. See what all they are going through. They have no bitterness against anybody.

That is how Paul was. In verse 26. I have been on frequent journeys.

Dangers from rivers, robberies. Dangers from countrymen, dangers from the heathen, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness. Dangers in the sea.

And here is the worst part. Dangers among false brothers. False brothers who pretend to be sincere believers.

And who deceive Paul. And betray him. And in the midst of all this.

To preach the gospel. Verse 27. I have been in labour, hardship, through many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, many times without food, in cold and exposure.

Verse 27. I have been in labour, hardship, through many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, many times without food, in cold and exposure. Have any of you experienced any of these things while preaching the gospel? I say I have not lord.

I have got one or two ant bites. That's all. This man was being eaten by lions.

Look at the last thing he says. These are all small compared to verse 28. The daily pressure on me because of the problems there are in the churches that I have responsibility for.

The daily pressure on me because of the problems there are in the churches that I have responsibility for. And you ask Paul, what a lot of suffering you went through. Can you describe it all in one word? He says I will tell you.

2 Corinthians 4.17 He says I will say it in two words. 2 Corinthians 4.17 First of all it was a very light affliction. Light affliction.

All the things that we just read. All the things that we just read. He says it was a light affliction.

And for how long? For many years Paul. No, no, no. He says only for a brief moment.

He says it was a very light affliction. Just for a short time. Just 5 seconds.

He says it was a light affliction. Just for a short time. Just 5 seconds.

How did he say that? Because he saw that even a 100 years on this earth is just like 1 second of eternity. He always looked at it in terms of eternity. Ok, I live.

Maybe if I suffer for 100 years I suffer on this earth. Compared to eternity is 1 second. So I have to say I suffered for Jesus for 1 second.

So I have to say I suffered for Jesus for 1 second. You are talking so much about suffering. You suffered only for 1 second.

Why does our suffering look so big and for such a long period of time? Because we are thinking so much of this world. We have forgotten that we are creatures of eternity. Animals and all are this world only.

When they die that is the end. For us this is a short period of time before we go to our real home, eternity. For us this is a short period of time before we go to our real home, eternity.

Paul always had that in mind. And that's not all. First of all it's a light affliction.

Only for 4 or 5 seconds. But on top of that it's all producing for me, verse 17, an eternal weight of glory for all eternity. For all eternity I am going to get a glory.

For all eternity I am going to get a glory. And you say Paul how did you get it? When you get to heaven you ask Paul how did you get it? Because I suffered for the gospel. And I did not complain.

I didn't go and make people feel sorry for me. I didn't go and make people feel sorry for me. It's right to tell.

Paul told also in 2 Corinthians 11. He made a big list of his sufferings. But along with that he said this is going to produce a great glory for me in eternity.

But along with that he said this is going to produce a great glory for me in eternity. Christ's sufferings are also described very clearly in the Bible. There is nothing wrong in telling people what all suffering we went through.

It's written in the Bible they spat on Jesus face and they beat him with a whip and put a crown of thorns on his head. All the suffering is written there. And it is written also what all sufferings the apostles went through.

There is nothing wrong in telling people what we suffered. But we must see that it is a privilege and an honor to suffer that for Jesus Christ. We must not feel sorry for ourselves or make other people sorry for us.

We must have a spirit of triumph in it all. See what Paul says in Romans chapter 8. He says nothing can separate me from the love of Christ. And here are some of the things he suffers.

Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, thorn, being put to death the whole day long. So in all these things what shall we do? Verse 37. We are more than conquerors in Christ.

I am going to be a victor in all these things. See it is like if you throw a rubber ball into the ground it bounces up. We are like that.

The harder you throw it the higher it goes. I want to be a Christian like that. The harder people throw me down the higher I will go.

I don't want to be like a stone that is thrown and I just get stuck there. I am going to be a conqueror. Nothing on earth can conquer me.

Jesus Christ has conquered my heart. He lives in me. And he makes me a conqueror in every situation that I face on this earth.

I mean compared to the apostle Paul's sufferings mine is only an ant bite. I agree. Paul is a great example for me.

Some brothers and sisters in Tamil Nadu have suffered more for their faith than I have suffered. Especially those who have come from non-Christian homes. I don't know what all you have suffered my dear

brothers and sisters.

But don't feel sorry for yourself. Think of it as an honor God has given you. It is like getting a first prize in the school prize giving day.

Now we go to 1 Peter 2. It says Christ has suffered for us leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps. 1 Peter 2. I worked in the military for about 11 years. One of the things they taught us in the military was If you are an officer you must not ask some junior soldier to do something you are afraid to do.

You are not a good leader. You must not ask your junior soldiers to do something which you cannot do. When we were trained we were told to do every type of job that other people had to do.

When we were trained we were told to do every type of job that other people had to do. They taught us that we must be willing to be examples. Jesus is our greatest example.

He has suffered and showing us an example. But the wonderful thing about him and his suffering is Many people have suffered. Even non-Christians many people have suffered many things.

But what is the difference about Christ's suffering? When he suffered in 1 Peter 2.22 he did not even commit one sin. He did not complain. He did not tell a lie.

There was no lie found in his mouth. Sometimes in an office you can escape suffering by telling a lie. Sometimes in an office you can escape suffering by telling a lie.

For example you are working in an office where you have spoiled an expensive machine. For example you are working in an office where you have spoiled an expensive machine. But nobody saw you.

And when the senior officer comes and asks who spoiled this machine? And when the senior officer comes and asks who spoiled this machine? If you are a Christian. You say Sir I did that. I am sorry.

You have to be dismissed and you have to pay so much money. You have to be dismissed and you have to pay so much money. Ok if that is a punishment I will accept it.

Ok if that is a punishment I will accept it. But I will not tell a lie. But I will not tell a lie.

That is to follow Jesus. By telling a lie you can escape many difficult situations on this earth. By telling a lie you can escape many difficult situations on this earth.

But you will not experience the blessing God wants you to have. But you will not experience the blessing God wants you to have. And then further in verse 23 it says When people reviled Jesus, he did not revile in return.

He did not speak to them in the same way they spoke to him. He did not use the same language. These are examples for us.

People have called me all types of names. They have called me the devil. They have called me the antichrist.

They have called me spiritual terrorist. I don't know all types of names. I don't know many other names.

I am a cult leader. But I try to follow Jesus. I am not going to say anything back.

I say, bless those who curse you. So I say, may God bless you. I can say before God that I love every person who has harmed me.

I bless everyone who has cursed me. I love all my enemies. I don't have enemies.

They are my enemies. I love them. Jesus is my example.

And that is not difficult for me because God gave me grace through the Holy Spirit. It turned out to be a blessing. And you know I forgive them.

Many years later they come and ask forgiveness. Even recently I got a number of letters. One person wrote, COVID-19 is killing many people.

I don't know when I will die. I am an old person. But I remember brother Zach, I spoke a lot of things against you many years ago.

Please forgive me. I say brother I don't even remember it. And if there was anything then itself I would have forgiven you.

So this COVID-19 is doing something good also. It is getting people to repentance. Praise the Lord.

We can follow Jesus' example that when people reviled him in verse 23, he did not revile in return. And while suffering he did not utter any threats. When they were hitting him and whipping him, he did not say just wait till one day I come as a judge and I will teach you a lesson.

His mouth was shut. He did not say God will judge you. When you read in Matthew 12, when the Pharisees said he is the prince of devils.

When Miriam criticized her brother Moses, do you know what she got? Leprosy. Criticizing Moses saying why did you marry a non-Israelite. That's all she said.

And God said how dare you speak against my servant. Leprosy. Elisha.

Some young men said oh you bald man. They made fun of his bald head. And you know what happened? Some bears came from the forest and ate up those young people.

That is how God judged people there. Now you come to the new covenant time. They called Jesus prince of devils.

What did they get? Did they get leprosy? Did they get bears eating them up? I will tell you what they got. They got forgiveness from Jesus. You read that in Matthew 12.

Jesus said if you have spoken a word against the son of man, you are forgiven. He did not threaten them saying one day I am going to come as a judge. You better learn a lesson.

Pastors will speak like that. But a true disciple of Jesus never. It is a privilege and honor to walk in these footsteps of Jesus.

What did Jesus do? He kept entrusting himself to the one who judges righteously. Kept on doing it as they beat him and whipped him. Called him the devil.

Spat on him. Inwardly he was saying father I commit myself to your hand. I will not judge these people.

Forgive them because they don't know what they are doing. I believe he said that even before he hung on the cross. In his heart.

He was praying to the father when they beat him and put crown of thorns on his head. All the time. This is the meaning of his prayer.

Father forgive them. They don't know what they are doing. They don't know that I am the son of God.

Please forgive them. Otherwise their judgment will be terrible. And that is our example.

We follow this Jesus. We are not followers of Moses who brings leprosy on those who criticize him. Or like Elisha who brings bears to kill those who criticize him.

This is all old testament. We follow Jesus who committed everything to the father. And finally on the cross also he shouted out.

Father forgive them. Let them hear me say. Forgive them.

They don't know what they are doing. So verse 21. Why have you been called? 1 Peter 2.21. You ask the average believer why have you been called.

He says I have been called to go to heaven. But look what Peter says. You have been called to suffer like Jesus and follow his example.

To forgive and not judge. And not to utter any threats. But to commit your case to the ultimate judge of the universe to God.

See what it says in Romans chapter 12. Romans 12. We should never tell lies.

Never lust after a woman. Never kill. Never get angry.

Never commit adultery. Here is one more. Romans 12.19. Never take your own revenge.

Never. So what should I do? Pull back and leave room for God to judge that person. God is a righteous judge.

See Jesus also committed his cause to the one who judges righteously. So God says don't worry. I will take vengeance.

I will repay. So what should we do? Verse 20. If your enemy is hungry give him something to eat.

If he is thirsty give him a drink. Verse 21. Don't be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

Now I want to ask you all a question. Have you understood this gospel of suffering? Of forgiving those who harm us and hurt us. Why do we do that? Let me show you another verse in Hebrews.

In chapter 10. It is written about some people who suffered a lot. Their property was stolen from them.

Hebrews 10. Verse 32. After you were enlightened in those days you endured a great conflict of sufferings.

You were made a public spectacle by people through reproaches and tribulations. Verse 34. You showed sympathy to the Christian prisoners.

And listen to this. You accepted joyfully the seizure of your property by these non-Christian people. Christians will never seize your property.

But people who call themselves Christians may seize it. They are Babylonian Christians. We have had a few cases in our CFC where CFC money was used to build some church building.

Somebody just took it. The elder left CFC and said the property is mine. He is a thief.

Like Judas Iscariot. Stealing what he did not pay for. But you say ok.

God is in control. Verse 34. Because we know that in eternity I have a far better possession and a lasting one.

These are not just verses for us to read and memorize. These are for us to experience. And when God allows us to experience it, we say God's scripture is now being fulfilled in my life.

And like it says about Jesus, the word is becoming flesh in me now. Till then it was a word inside this book. Now that word is becoming flesh in me.

It is a tremendous honor to suffer for Jesus Christ. We must think of it like a crown. In the old testament it was different.

But we follow Jesus. We don't follow Moses. We don't follow these old testament kings who went and fought with their enemies.

We follow Jesus who spoke very strong words. When they were making money in the temple, he spoke so strongly and chased them out. But when they spat on his face, he forgave them.

He must be concerned that the glory of God is being touched in the church. But if they hurt us, we forgive them. I am not preaching what I have not practiced.

I preach what I have practiced. But as I said, I have not experienced like Paul. 2 or 3 ant bites, that's all.

Like all of you, I don't know how many ant bites you have all had. Think of it as ant bites and think of these early Christians who were eaten by lions. Make one decision in your life.

I will never never feel sorry for myself. I will always be a happy rejoicing Christian. And even if I tell other people what I have been through, like Paul did, I will say that's a very small thing.

It's a light affliction for a short time. And I have no bitterness against those people who hurt me. I have forgiven them.

God bless them. That is the triumphant victorious Christian. God could point out Job to the devil in the Old Testament.

But if you read the book of Job, God could point him out to Satan. See Satan, you have taken away his property. You have taken away Job's property.

He is praising you. But now Satan, you have killed his children. But still Job is praising you.

Now Satan, you have put boils on his body and he is suffering in his body. He is still praising you. Now Satan, you have put boils on his body and he is suffering in his body.

He is still praising you. You have burnt Job through your wife. But still Job is praising you.

But Job could not go beyond that. After that he started complaining. From chapter 3 onwards.

Oh why is God treating me like this? And in a sense, the devil could have said, God see what he is doing now. He is complaining. See, I told you he will complain.

So God deals with Job. And finally Job says, I shut my mouth. I take back all the words I said from chapter 3 onwards to the end of Job.

One sentence. It's a very interesting verse. Please turn with me to Job.

From chapter 3 onwards right up to 37, Job is complaining. Sometimes he will say good things. Oh my redeemer is living.

But most of the time he is complaining. But then God speaks to him strongly. And then Job says, Job 40 verse 4. Lord I put my hand on my mouth.

I have spoken. I will not say anymore. I have nothing more to add.

I am sorry. He was saying, I take back everything that I said. Job 42 verse 6. I retract and I repent.

Retract means I take back all the words I said. What all he said from chapter 3 to 37. In one sentence he took it back.

And immediately God forgave him. And next verse God says, My servant Job has spoken what is right. Chapter 1 and 2 he said the right things.

Chapter 3 to 37 he did so many wrong things he said. And you say Lord how can you say he said what is right. The Lord will say because of one sentence.

Verse 6. Job 42 verse 6. He took back everything in one sentence. He repented and said I am sorry. What a tremendous encouragement that is to us.

All the complaints you have made in your life. And all the rebellion you have had against God. All the questioning Lord why you have treated me like this.

You can take it all back in one sentence. Everything. Even if you said it for years.

Lord I am sorry. I spoke what is wrong against you and against other people. Lord I repent in dust and ashes.

One sentence. And because Jesus died for our sins. It's blotted out.

It's as if you have never sinned in your whole life. What a wonderful salvation. That again Jesus can boast about you to the devil.

And when the devil says but but but he said all this he said all this he did all this. God will say that's all cleansed in the blood of my son. It's not there.

It's gone. His life is clean. We are the most blessed people in the whole world.

Because we have such a wonderful saviour. My dear brothers and sisters. Do what Paul said.

I will close with this Philippians 3. I told you earlier that Paul was longing for something towards the end of his life. He went through all the suffering I told you. And he called it all a light affliction.

Then in Philippians 3 towards the end of his life. You ask him Paul what do you want to know now in your life. What experience do you want? You want some supernatural miraculous gift.

Philippians 3.10. He says no. I want to know the fellowship of his sufferings. The fellowship of Jesus sufferings.

He said Paul you have already suffered such a lot. Yeah but not as much as small compared to what Jesus went through. I want to know more of the fellowship of his sufferings.

Because that way I will know him better. That way I will also know the power of his resurrection. He says I am not verse 12.

I have not yet obtained all this. I have not become perfect. But I am pressing on.

So I am now verse 13 forgetting all the sufferings I had in the past. I am reaching forward to see if there is something new I have to experience to the Lord. My goal verse 14 is to go upward more and more to become like Jesus more and more.

Verse 15 he invites us. You brothers and sisters. Let us also have this attitude.

And if you don't have this attitude verse 15 God will show it to you. Repent. Say Lord help me to have the same attitude that Jesus had.

Brothers I could go on for hours. It is such a wonderful gospel. I am speaking more now a days through zoom than I ever did in my life.

I have already spoken for about 5 or 6 hours before I came to you today. Again little later I have to speak again for another hour or so. But it is exciting.

It is wonderful gospel. I have tasted a little bit of it. I say like Paul I want to know more and more.

Because when we suffer I have discovered we come very close to Jesus. Those who just make a lot of money and have a lot of comfortable life on earth they don't come close to Jesus. I want to come close to Jesus.

Are you a wife who is ill treated by your husband? You can come close to Jesus through that suffering. Don't hate your husband. Love him.

Forgive him. One day God will bring him also to you with faith. Or if you have a very difficult wife.

Even if she is like the devil. Forgive her. Love her.

God will bring her to salvation. Our aim must not be how can I live a comfortable life. No.

That is not our goal in life. How can I be a little more like Jesus. In my behavior, my conduct.

If somebody has done harm to me I say Lord I leave his judgment to you. You deal with him. I am only going to forgive him.

The Lord will one day deal with him. He will deal with every person who has harmed you. I will tell you that.

See what Paul says in 2 Timothy 4. 2 Timothy 4.14. Alexander the copper smith did me much harm. I forgive him. But the Lord will one day repay him.

The Lord will judge him. We read that in Romans 12. Vengeance is mine.

I will repay says the Lord. I can't say no no no Lord don't repay. That is his business.

My business is to forgive him. God's business is to judge him. I don't want to interfere in God's business.

That is what Jesus did on the cross. Those Jewish people killed him. He said father forgive them.

And for 40 years God waited for the people of Israel to repent. For repenting of killing Jesus. But they did not repent.

You know what happened? 40 years later Jesus was killed around 30 A.D. Or 29 perhaps. In 70 A.D. the Roman soldiers came and destroyed Jerusalem and occupied Israel. The temple and everything.

The Jews were scattered to all the countries of the earth. For 1800 years. Yeah God punished them.

But Jesus forgave them. God says vengeance is mine. I will repay.

Paul says Alexander the copper smith has done me much harm. I forgive him but God will repay him one day. Jesus did not threaten.

But he committed it to one who will judge righteously those people who hurt Jesus. So brother or sister has somebody harmed you? Forgive them. Love them.

Bless them. If they are hungry feed them. We hope they will repent.

But if they don't repent, the judgment from God one day will be very severe. That day will never escape. We must not have such revengeful attitudes in our heart because we are not God.

I praise God for such a wonderful Gospel. If you live in this way, you will become more and more like Christ everyday of your life. The choice is yours.

God bless you all. Thank you for listening patiently. I realize I have been speaking for one and a half hours.

I didn't realize it took so long. But I am excited about this message. God bless you.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to see clearly the way Jesus walked and to cling close to him and walk the same way ourselves. Loving our enemies.

Blessing those who curse us. Doing good to those who hate us. Feeding our enemy if he is hungry.

And following in Jesus' footsteps. Help everyone of us. In Jesus name.

Amen.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/7_bNohC_5zk.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/jesus-calls-us-to-follow-his-path-of-suffering/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net