



THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING CHRISTIANS! “Does God’s Love Mean no Suffering?”

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Within the scope of what we call the End Time Message, there have been many mysteries revealed. No doubt many more await God’s timing and God’s Spirit to quicken them to us. In this study we will ask the gracious Lord to shine His powerful light of revelation on one of the most perplexing problems facing the Bride of Christ in this hour. I refer to the very real fact of SUFFERING in the lives of God’s own Elect Children.

What born-again Christian (And I refer to those with the true Holy Ghost Token.) has not been greatly perplexed by the circumstances of his life? These circumstances are often worse than those of his neighbor who has no thought of serving the Living God. How are we to take stock of our sore sufferings and make them to harmonize and be compatible with the scriptural fact that God LOVES us with undying LOVE? Does our suffering disprove that Love?

It would seem to the carnal mind that there is a great contradiction between what the scripture says about God’s love for us, and in what we are actually experiencing. It is at this point that we desperately need to understand the PRINCIPAL GOAL of God’s love as it is poured out upon us. First, let it be said that God’s love is never given, “To make provision for the FLESH.” (Rom. 13:14) God’s love is sent, not to open up a way for us to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, but just the opposite. God’s love is poured out to SAVE us from our FLESH (ourselves).

This then is the lesson we must learn, and learn quickly, if we are to keep our heads above the raging tide of circumstances that seemingly have come to destroy us. God’s love has as its number one goal the GROWTH OF THE INNER, SPIRITUAL MAN, and has nothing at all to do with the pampering of the flesh. That is not to say that our Father is not concerned with our flesh and its sufferings, but we are saying that He stands ready at anytime to put it through whatever suffering it must needs suffer, in order to reach His true goal of blessing us SPIRITUALLY. During these times of His chastening rod being applied, we are often tempted to doubt what the scriptures SAYS about His love.

God’s LOVE is not regulated by emotion, as ours often is. At times, in a spasm of emotion, we give our children things, and allow things that we honestly know is not good for them. God will never be guilty of such so called love. His love is not controlled by passion or sentiment but always by PRINCIPLE. And, as has already been stated, that PRINCIPLE has as its first goal the perfecting of the CHARACTER of the Inner Man.

QUOTE: CHOOSING A BRIDE, PAGES 28-29. “Character, there never was a character like Jesus

Christ. It lives in Him. (It) manifest Him. We see it true. (We see that His character is true.) It is no worldly beauty of Him that attract the Bride, it is His CHARACTER the character of the Church is what Jesus looks for. Not whether it is big buildings, or whether it is great denominations, whether it is big membership.—He is looking for Her character, the character of Christ. (In Her)

Page 29, “He chooses a Bride to reflect His character, to which the modern churches of today certainly misses His program here a million miles, because they deny this to be the truth. Now, He is looking for the day for that Bride to be formed just exactly like He was.....until the Church becomes that, they are not One.....She must be molded like He is.” (End quote)

Here the prophet gives us abundant reason to trust our Father and be patient under Divine affliction. His ultimate goal is to produce in us the same Character that is in Himself. At first we may exclaim: “Impossible. I could never have that character of Christ Jesus.” Oh, but we can! Not that we could ever produce this within ourselves, but with God all things are possible.

There is, at this moment, being produced in every Holy Ghost filled

Christian the very character of Christ. The veil of flesh keeps us from recognizing what is being done, in that very often this Inner Character is so affected by the outer flesh man that we confuse the two and fail to keep them separate.

In teaching on this vital subject, Brother Branham once said to a Godly little woman who complained about having so many things wrong in her life, "But Sister, you are not suppose to look at the wrong things you do and say (This is after repentance.), but you are to look at what your DESIRE is. Look at the things your Inner Most Being would like to do, and at what you would like to be." (End quote) Character then is judged by our heart's desire.

The real truth is that even now there are those people of God who have a character that if separated from the drag of their fleshly body and united with their Theophany, would immediately begin to manifest the exact character of Christ. This must be so because no Bride member is taken out until this is accomplished in them. And we do know that some Bride out of this age are regularly crossing over.

As we look into the scriptures and the Prophet's message, we learn that God's love is not a soft, weak thing that bows itself before the carnal, fleshly prayers of His untrained children. But it is strong in that it will not overlook sin even in His own Elect. His love is pure enough to cause Him to "**Scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.**" (Heb. 12:6) Though it is not always so in the human family, God's correction of His family is His love in action.

Many of us in times past have preached about the Love of God but without the revelation of what God's love really is. It is not just that *God*

loves, but that *He is Love itself*. Love is His very nature. We have talked about the Love of God without being acquainted with the God of Love and how He demonstrates it to us.

In our natural minds we have compared God's love with our own human love, which most often is a sort of good-natured weakness, and a kind of indulgence geared to keep the peace at any cost. But God's pure love is no sickly sentiment patterned after our human emotions. The love of God cannot be influenced to give those things which would not add to the perfecting of our character. We are here to regain the character that Adam lost in Eden.

We can say then that God's love is measured, given out and controlled, so that it accomplishes the purpose He had in mind from the beginning. (II Tim. 1:9), "**Who hath saved us and called us with an Holy calling, not according to our works, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.**"

According to His own Word then, His eternal purpose was to PERFECT THE SAINTS, "**till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man (in character) unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**" (Ephs. 4:12-13)

With these things in mind, we can begin to understand that we are not here to be turned over to the fallen nature that we acquired from Adam, but rather to be saved from it through the manifold dealings of God. These dealings are absolute proof of His eternal love. His is a love that will not tolerate any

interference with His perfecting process being brought to bear on His children.

We sinful, depraved, human beings, masses of corruption with no good thing in us, should never cease day nor night to praise and give thanks to the One whose love is completely unmoved by our wrong, carnal prayer. "**Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lust.**" (James 4:3) How tranquilizing for the soul to understand that the love of God is under no obligation to the fallen nature of man, but that it is sovereign and acts always according to His own Holy desire to bring His Children back into perfect oneness with Himself.

Our Prophet, William Branham, was moved upon to explain how God's love is manifested toward us in the following statements:

QUOTE: CHURCH AGE BOOK, PAGES 116-117, "Now the Lord God Almighty says, 'I know'. There He is walking in the midst of His people. There He is, the Chief Shepherd of the flock. But does He hold back the persecution? Does He stem the tribulation? No, He does not. He simply says, 'I know your tribulation.....I am not at all unaware of your suffering. What a stumbling block this is to so many people. Like Israel, they wonder if God really loves them. How can God be just and loving if He stands by and watches His people suffer?'"

CONT. QUOTE: "That is what they asked in Malachi 1:1-3, '**The burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet we say, wherein hast Thou loved us?**' (Or, 'How can you say you have loved us?') You see they could not figure out God's love. THEY

THOUGHT THAT LOVE MEANT NO SUFFERING. They thought that love meant a baby with parental care. (That is to say a kind of care that would never allow any crying or suffering, but would always supply whatever it took to satisfy the flesh.) but God said that His love was *elective love*. The proof of His love is ELECTION...that no matter what happened, His love was proven truly by the fact that they were chosen for salvation.”

CONT. QUOTE: “.....He may commit you to death as He did Paul. He may commit you to suffering as He did Job. That is His prerogative. He is sovereign. But, it is all with a purpose. If He did not have a purpose, then He would be the Author of frustration and not of peace. HIS PURPOSE IS THAT AFTER WE HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE, WE WOULD BE MADE PERFECT, BE ESTABLISHED, STRENGTHENED AND SETTLED..... You see, He Himself suffered. He learned obedience by the things He suffered. He was actually made perfect by the things He suffered.” (Heb. 5:8-9)

CONT. QUOTE: “.....In plain language, the very character of Jesus was perfected by suffering. And, according to Paul, He has left His Church a measure of suffering, that they, too, by their faith in God while suffering for Him, would come to a place of perfection.”

CONT. QUOTE: “.....Why does He stand by? (And allow us to suffer) The reason is in Rom. 8:17-18, ‘**And if Children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with**

the Glory that shall be revealed in us.”

CONT. QUOTE: “Unless we suffer with Him, we cannot reign with Him. You have to suffer to reign. THE REASON FOR THAT IS THAT CHARACTER SIMPLY IS NEVER MADE WITHOUT SUFFERING. CHARACTER IS A VICTORY, NOT A GIFT. A man without character can’t reign because power apart from character is Satanic..... Think it not strange concerning the fiery trials that come to try you. That is what Peter said. Is it strange that God wants us to develop a Christ-like character that comes through SUFFERING? No sir! And we all have trials. We are all tried and chastened as Sons. Not one but goes through that. THE CHURCH THAT IS NOT SUFFERING AND IS NOT BEING TRIED HASN’T GOT IT. IT ISN’T OF GOD. Heb. 12:6, “**For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom He receiveth. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof we are all partakers, then are ye bastards, and not Sons.**” (End quote)

And so we see Children of God, real Saints with the Holy Ghost Token, often suffering sorely and are brought to their wits end. How strange this is and how opposed to most religious teaching. To see true Joint Heirs with Christ kept poor in this world’s goods, and at times even made to wonder about the next meal, and for wherewith to pay the bills that are due, this causes a real strain on the mind not renewed by the scriptures.

To be an object of God’s everlasting LOVE, and to have been chosen to be His ELECT BRIDE, and yet to be tossed up and down

upon a sea of trouble, with the circumstances often bearing witness that our frail ship will capsize at any moment, is hard to understand. Hard that is, until we receive the revelation of what the Prophet meant when He said, “She (the Bride) must be molded like HE IS.” If He learned obedience through the things He suffered (Heb. 5:8) can we do any less?

For one who has been truly BORN AGAIN and now has the Spirit of Jesus Christ indwelling his flesh body, to be daily harassed by Satan and buffeted blow after blow, (See II Cor. 12:7) and at times overcome by indwelling sin so that the things we hate, that we do (Rom. 7:15), this is indeed a mystery to the carnal mind.

To be so loved of the father that he came down Himself and redeemed us with His own blood, yet to be left in this sinful world year after year, to suffer affliction and persecution, to mourn and be broken hearted over our many failures, to face one trial after another, to sigh and cry for relief, yet at times for the suffering to only increase, how can these things be explained?

Only one thing will explain the suffering that our Father God is subjecting His Bride to, and that is the revelation of what the love of God has as its main goal and purpose, which is perfecting of a CHARACTER in her that will allow her to spend eternity with Him.

When we see Him, we will be LIKE HIM. When we meet Him in the air, we will have lost forever the drag of a sin-cursed flesh body. The character that He is now perfecting will have been transferred to our first created body which was made in God’s own Image. (See Gen. 1:26-27) Back in our Theophany, we will

have reached **“The stature of the fullness of Christ.”** (Eph. 4:13) This is not to say the Inner Man does not reach that place in his CHARACTER while still in the flesh, but we speak of the time when we will loose the downward pull of the flesh and will be all together as our lovely Lord.

In the meantime, how can we that are so weak in ourselves bear up under our trials that are so numerous and at times so long lasting and crushing? We could not, and therefore, Divine Grace has sent us a COMFORTER. Without His help (the Token), we would have long ago been defeated. His spirit in us enables us to look forward to the Glory that is to be ours later. In the long periods of waiting to be delivered from some trial or other, the Spirit supports our poor hearts and keeps Faith in Grace alive in us.

Frail and helpless we are in ourselves, for **“All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.”** (Isa. 40:6) We are compassed with infirmity (Heb. 5:2). When trials and troubles come, we are often bewildered and **“Think it strange”** that these fiery trials have come upon us and are greatly tempted to faint before them. (I Pet.4:12)

When family and friends come against us for our belief in an end-time message, and persecution breaks out against us, we are staggered. Often when the chastening rod of our Father falls upon us we fail to understand that it's His love being manifested, and we fret and fume. **“The curse commeth not without cause.”** (Pro. 26:2) There is a lesson, or lessons, to be learned from every circumstance of our lives, and we must be constantly striving to learn from each one.

How easily disturbed we are by the “little foxes” that spoil our vines. How little it takes to cause our souls to be cast down and the promises of God forgotten. We forget the glorious future that awaits us in the new city of Jerusalem. How easy it is to say as Jacob said, **“All these things are against me.”** Or to yield to the wrong spirit that was upon David when he said, **“I shall now perish one day at the hand of Saul.”**

Here is a divine revelation that comes to us from the Word, for we would never understand it except God had set it forth in the scriptures: **GOD DOES NOT TAKE AWAY THE MESSENGER OF SATAN SENT TO BUFFET HIS ELECT.** The Spirit of God does not lead us around our trials, but rather does He

lead us through them and upholds us during them. Is not this the scripture? Did not the first church age messenger (Paul) pray to have his infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions and distresses removed, and was refused? (II Cor. 12:9) The reason being that God's strength (character) was made perfect in Paul (and us) through the weakness (suffering) of the flesh.

But during all the troubles and trials of life that His Love subjects us to, that same Love that cannot be expressed by the human tongue watches over us, and He places His mighty arm underneath us and tenderly sustains us through each one. Although we have failed Him a thousand times, and though He has been grieved at our biting the Hand that has come in Love to perfect us, He still places beneath us those arms of everlasting Love and keeps us from sinking into hopeless despair.

Therefore, we should never call into question God's love when we are subjected to painful afflictions and hard trials, but realize they are the result of His love, sent with the purpose of blessing us in our Spiritual Man. To God be all the glory, Amen!

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