

Gospel Suffering

1 Thessalonians 1:6; Acts 17:1-9

Read Acts 17:1-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

1.) It Was Necessary for the Christ To Suffer

*"reasoned with them from the Scriptures, **3** explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead" (Acts 17:2-3)*

*"**26** Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. **27** For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him **28** And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. **29** Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. **30** But God raised Him from the dead." (Acts 13:26-30)*

A.) At the heart of Paul's message was the suffering of Christ

*"**18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust..." (1 Peter 3:18)*

B.) His Suffering was Unique and Unrepeatable

"...Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Gal 3:13)

2.) It Was Necessary for the Apostles To Suffer.

- Jesus had told all his disciples that they would suffer for the sake of His name

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake." (Matthew 24:9)

"40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus" (Acts 5:40)

"7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed– 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you." (2 Corinthians 4:7-12)

3.) It Was Also Necessary for the Thessalonians To Suffer

A.) Their reception of the Gospel of God was in much affliction

"For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans" (1 Thessalonians 2:14)

" 2 and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, 3 that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. 4 For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know." (1 Thessalonians 3:2-4)

"Paul is not thinking of a period of persecution which will pass and the church will then return to normality; normality is persecution." –Ernest Best

B.) This is what Paul taught in all the churches

*"strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying,
"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22)*

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)

*"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some
strange thing happened to you." (1 Peter 4:12)*

4.) It Is Necessary for Us To Suffer.

Lies we have bought that bring harm to a theology of suffering:

1.) The Lie that We Live in a Christian Nation

2.) The Lie that Our Inalienable Right is to Pursue Happiness

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of
heaven. **11** Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against
you falsely for My sake. **12** Rejoice and be exceedingly glad..." (Matthew 5:10-12)*

"...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross..." (Hebrews 12:2)

"rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." (Acts 5:41)

"having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit," (1 Thessalonians 1:6)

3.) The Lie that Favor with God equals Physical, Material or Emotional
blessing

*"**8** For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in
Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired
even of life that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, **10**
who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He
will still deliver us" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10)*

"Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ

*Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; **10** that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, **11** if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." (Philippians 3:8-11)*

Conclusion: What Did Jesus Mean When He Told Us To Count the Cost?

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it" (Luke 14:28)

*"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. **27** And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple...**33** So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26-27, 33)*