

**"Paul's Letter to the Philippians —
'The Witness of the Apostle Paul —
Sharing Christ's Suffering Is Our Glory and Should Be Our Joy!'"**

Review:

- ***Christ's Resurrection Power Was at Work in Paul:***
 - ***Its Demand, Great Sacrifice***
 - ***Its Clear Reality***
 - ***Its Purity of Motive***
 - ***Its Renunciation of Self***
 - ***Its Sharing with the Body***
- ***The seven-fold emptying of Christ leads directly in this letter to the seven-fold offering up by Paul. Christ "willingly" offered himself. Paul also did the same, right? And he asks us to enter into this as well with the same hope and expectation that was his!***

Phil. 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . .

- ***But our motivation was central to Paul who was focused on Christ's own. The joy that was set before Christ was Paul's as he testified and it was that that made the difference. This motivation must be a central focus here or we will miss the whole point of what Paul is writing here.***
- ***But much was sacrificed for this glorious goal to be reached. What Christ gave up in the Incarnation and then in his death for sin and sins may seem quite incomprehensible. What Paul gave up for the sake of Christ and his ministry may be much more understandable for us perhaps.***
 - ***But what was his witness, his testimony in this regard? What had Paul given up? Well, everything, he writes here (and do not forget the motivation behind it!!):***

Phil. 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

- ***And since the motives here were all important, he even says he had lost the confidence in the flesh. Such an amazing statement this is.***
- ***Note that Saul had been the Grand Inquisitor. And that (persecuting the believers) was the last mark of distinction he listed. This is most***

important here. The apostle had willingly given up all that was most important to him for the sake of Christ. His own “exaltation” will be the necessary consequence of his own humbling, he surely hopes. And so that great and ongoing sacrifice in that case would have been clearly justified (and more).

- *We would do well to remember Moses in that regard:*

[READ] Heb. 11:24-26

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ **[the anointed, the Messiah]** greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

- *Note also that this was not a “carnal” hope based on carnal and religious desires since the point of it is taking God at his word regarding his own sure promises.*

Our Scripture (Again):

Phil. 3:8-11

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things [but] loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them [but] dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Our Subject Today: “Sharing Christ’s Suffering Should Be Our Joy!”

Our Outline:

- ***Paul Testifies that Christ’s Resurrection Power Requires Our Great Suffering***
- ***Paul Testifies that Christ’s Resurrection Power Involves the “Fellowship in Christ’s Own Suffering”!***

- ***Paul Testifies that Christ's Resurrection Power Includes "Conformity to His Death"***
- ***Paul Testifies that Christ's Resurrection Power Promises Great Glory?***

I. Paul Testifies that Christ's Resurrection Power Requires Our Great Suffering:

Phil. 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death

- ***This verse summarizes it all: Today we will examine it again, as if we are starting fresh. We should always start fresh with his word of truth so that he might meet our needs through it as spiritual food.***
- ***Again, this is regarding the resurrection power found in our risen savior, the life giving spirit you will recall from earlier studies here. This is not the resurrection itself but rather the "power" of his resurrection. This is the life of the spirit of Jesus Christ he has written about in chapter one. The indwelling Christ suffered and died for each of us — but now we are to willingly enter into these various dimensions of this life and by his resurrection power we are to "enjoy" this life as further described here and elsewhere:***
- ***Paul's sufferings for Christ began at his Damascus Road experience and continued on from there:***

Acts 9:15-16

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For I will shew him **how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.**

- ***It was very personal therefore for Paul. Remember what the apostle had written in our verse here. But this is not only about what sufferings were brought upon Paul (persecutions, for example) but rather his desire to enter into suffering for his precious Lord Jesus, and, as we shall soon see, even more than this!***
- ***There is a great passage regarding suffering in 2 Corinthians 4 where I would like now to go. This passage well sets the stage for our study in God's word of truth today:***

[READ] 2 Cor. 4:6-11

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8 [We are] troubled on every side, yet not distressed; [we are] perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

- *Oh, there is so much truth here for the hungry spirit! Have you entered into this truth yet? Are these words drawing you? There is so much here to consider. Again, consider what is written here:*

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus”:

“that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body”:

“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.”

- *The apostle continues with this theme later in the letter, in chapter 6, and also (for your own personal study), chapter 11:*

[READ] 2 Cor. 6:1-5, 8-10

1 We then, [as] workers together [with him], beseech [you] also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation.)

3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

4 But in all [things] approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

...

8 . . . By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and [yet] true;

9 As unknown, and [yet] well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

10 As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and [yet] possessing all things.

- *“No offense in anything . . .”:*
- *“But in all [things] approving ourselves as the ministers of God”:*
- *“. . . in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings. . .”:*
- *The exhortation here is powerful indeed: “I beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain”. After such words as these we are not surprised at all with what follows in chapter 3 and verse 10 regarding “Fellowship in Christ’s Own Suffering”:*

II. Paul Testifies that Christ’s Resurrection Power Involves the “Fellowship in Christ’s Own Suffering”!

- *What depth of meaning this holds for us. For this is about an actual “sharing”. “The fellowship of His suffering”: But Christ’s suffering for sin and sins has finished, has it not. What can this continuing suffering therefore be about?*

And it seems that this suffering is “optional”, doesn’t it? What if we choose NOT to enter into it??

- *It may help us to see what the apostle is writing about here if we also look elsewhere: Remember:*

Acts 9:4-5

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, **why persecutest thou me?**

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:** [it is] hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

- ***So Christ is so connected to his people that he suffers with them! Saul was persecuting the believers but the Lord reveals that he was in fact also persecuting him! The Old Testament gives great witness to this:***
 - ***Is. 63:9*** In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.
 - ***Zech. 2:8*** For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.
- ***Such a special relationship exists between the Lord God and his people down through the ages. But that relationship is even more precious today as we are His Body and He is our head!!***
 - ***Now perhaps the most important statement of this truth to be found anywhere:***

[READ] Col. 1:24-27
24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:
25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to ***the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;***
26 [Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:
27 To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:
- ***So, we are left with this question: Will we follow [or imitate] Paul as he imitates Christ, suffering together with him? It means of course taking the form of a servant as well and suffering the loss of all things, even our own confidence in the flesh. Amen. May it be so.***

Conclusions & Exhortation:

- ***Well, more on the motivations behind this great sacrifice next time is my intention.***

WHAT ABOUT US? WHAT ABOUT YOU AND ME?

- *I trust that we will reach a deeper understanding of these verses in due time. For now let us simply reflect on where we have come so far:*
 - *The Law is not for us the vehicle to righteousness and the glory of God as so many have been teaching. BUT FAITH ALONE IS THE ONLY ANSWER!*
 - *Law surely short-circuits the working of grace.*
 - *This principle always applies: first the suffering — then the glory.*
 - *Will you enter into Christ's ongoing suffering? Is so, great glory will be yours. Indeed his resurrection life with all of its blessing. Amen.*