

In this lesson we are going to continue looking at the suffering of Job which we introduced in lesson one. Job was a man who suffered greatly at the hand of Satan, yet in all of this suffering Job held fast to both his faith and his integrity and in the end, Job was blessed by God because of his faithfulness.

From Job can know that God is in control, and if we understand that, then we simply put our to trust in the Lord. The Bible says, ***“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Prov. 3:5-6).*** This is what Job did.

In Job 13:15, we find one of the most interested statements in the Book of Job. Job said, ***“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.”*** Job said, ***“Even if I die, even if God kills me, I still will trust in God.”*** That is the attitude we need today. That is what real faith is all about—trusting in God even when we do not understand why. This is what Job had to learn.

Why did Job suffer? Why do Christians suffer today? From the Book of Job we can see some of the reasons as to why suffering occurs. **FIRST WE KNOW THAT SATAN AND SIN CAUSE SUFFERING.** Satan was the active force behind Job losing his wealth, his family, and really all that he had. It was at the hand of Satan that these things occurred. Today, we also suffer because of Satan and the effects of sin. Listen to ***Job 2:7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*** Who caused Job such physical pain? Was it God? Was it his friends? No. Satan was the reason that Job was suffering. We need to realize that Satan is an active adversary for us today. Satan wants to cause us to lose our immortal souls. He will use any means possible to cause us to curse God, to give up on Christianity, and to leave The Faith. Judas didn’t betray Jesus until Satan entered his heart.

We cannot help but think of 1 Peter 5:8 as we think Satan in the book of Job going to and fro, back and forth, on the Earth. ***1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*** Satan is actively trying to cause people to be lost. He may use physical illness against us. He may use friends against us. He may use calamity in ways that we cannot even imagine. But Satan is going to do whatever he can to cause us to be lost.

Knowing that helps us to **First** understand how Satan works, and **secondly** it helps us not to blame God for the problems that occur. When bad things happen, we do not need to blame God. We ought to get angry at the devil and/or sin because Satan is trying to get us to deny The Faith.

Why do Christians suffer today? **SOMETIMES IT IS BECAUSE THEY ARE RIGHTEOUS.** If you read the Book of Acts, why was it that people stoned Paul and left him outside the city to die? It was because he was a righteous man who was preaching the Gospel. He told people what God said and they didn't like it. The same principle is true for us today. Sometimes we suffer *“for righteousness’ sake.”*

That's what Jesus said in Matthew 5:10-12. ***Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.***

SOMETIMES WE SUFFER BECAUSE UNGODLY PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE BEING AROUND THEM. They would rather have friends around them who are ungodly, but regardless of what it costs us we must continue to be righteous. In Acts 14:22 Paul said, ***“We must through many***

tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” Yes, there will be trials and tribulations. But we can go to Heaven even if those trials come our way.

Paul promised that we would have to suffer as Christians. **2 Timothy 3:12** *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* Notice he did not say “might,” or “may,” but **will** suffer persecution. We are going to suffer as Christians. We need to be sure that being righteous is more important than avoiding suffering. So, yes, Christians **do** suffer for righteousness’ sake.

Christians Also May Suffer Today As A Means Of Purification. Our suffering may help us to refine things in our lives that are lacking. Suffering may point out areas in which we need improvement. James taught us a very important principle about suffering when he said, *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (Jas. 1:2-4).*

This is the opposite of the way the world thinks. *“Count it a joy when you fall into various trials?!”* Why? It is because those trials can help test our faith and help us to have patience and endurance, just like Job gained during his suffering. Job gained endurance through his trials.

No doubt Job was blessed in the end as a result of his endurance, his faithfulness, and his integrity. In Psalms 119 there are a couple of passages which teach us that suffering can have a positive effect in our lives. **Psalms 119 (67)** *Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. ...* **(71)** *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.*

Here, the psalmist finally was able to see the good that came from his sufferings—which helped him learn and keep the Word of God. Today, we have the principle set before us that sometimes suffering is good for us and helps us to see our weaknesses.

SUFFERING CAN HELP US SEE OUR WEAKNESSES. It helps us have more faith and trust in God. James commented on Job in the Book of James. In James 5:11, James said, *Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* Some versions use the word perseverance in the place of patience. Through suffering Job gained endurance. He is described by James as a patient and persevering man. Today, we too can gain endurance through our trials.

Long-distance runners do not gain their endurance to run 26 miles all of a sudden. They work up to it. They start out with all they can do at one time; two miles, three, or whatever it may be. Then they build up to five miles, ten etc. Eventually, they are able to run a complete marathon. The same is true of the Christian walk. We build upon the trials we experience so that we can gain endurance.

When we face certain trials, they prepare us for things that we may have to face in the future. When we face sickness, and we are caused to ask some really difficult questions, answering those questions by using God’s Word can help us prepare for some things that we may have to face in the future. So, suffering causes endurance.

SUFFERING ALSO CAUSES US TO LOOK FORWARD TO HEAVEN. One of the things that we see in the Book of Job is that Job longed for a Redeemer. He longed for someone to hear his case. He wanted to present his case before God. And when he finally was able to take his case before God, he realized that he had not understood all that he needed to understand. He realized that the suffering he endured would eventually be worth it because of Heaven.

Today, our suffering can cause us to look forward to Heaven. Romans 8:18 reminds us that heaven **is** going to be worth it all. Paul wrote, ***Romans 8:18 For I***

reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Regardless of how much we suffer, or what we have to endure in this life, if we remain faithful, we can know that Heaven **will** be worth it all. What if we **do** have to suffer in this life? That is not what is important. What is important is this: **Did we remain faithful to God?** Like Job, let us hold fast to our integrity; stay true to God and His Word in the midst of our suffering.

We must not give up on Him, and we must not blame God. Rather, we must understand that God is in control and that if we remain true to Him and His Word, He will see us through to the end. Job learned this, because Job 42 tells us that Job was blessed more at the end of the book than he had been at the beginning. Job repented, and admitted that he had said some things that he should not have said because he did not understand certain things. ***Job 34:32 That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.***

He asked God to forgive him, and no doubt God did.

Today, I want to encourage you to put your trust in God. Maybe you are suffering because of sin in your life. If you have a life filled with sin, you will never find true peace and happiness of any kind until you get your life right with the Lord. You do not have to suffer because sin; Jesus can help you with the sin problem.

Invitation