

Sympathy in Suffering



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) January 15, 2020

There is a “Holy Ghost school of sympathy” that consists of tested saints who have suffered greatly, enduring temptation, trials and mistreatment. The Bible speaks of “the fellowship of His sufferings” (Philippians 3:10) — a fellowship of shared suffering. Jesus founded this school and he proved that it is possible to endure every sort of hardship and graduate as an overcomer.

Jesus was rejected, distrusted, abused, mocked, falsely accused. He knew what it was like to be lonely, hungry, poor, unloved, shamed, slandered, taunted; he was called a liar, a fraud, a false prophet. His own family misunderstood him; his most trusted friends lost faith in him; his own disciples forsook him and fled; and, finally, he was spat upon, mocked, and murdered.

Jesus certainly sympathizes with all our hurt and suffering because he went through it all himself. “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

You may love Jesus now more than ever before, but you also may be going through hurts and trials. You can be very sure that God has a divine purpose behind every one. The Jews believed that if God was pleased with you, you would always be blessed and never suffer. Because of this, Paul did not want converts to be confused by the troubles that swarmed around him. Reports of his sufferings spread through the churches so he wrote, “No one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation” (1 Thessalonians 3:3-4).

It is not suffering in itself that teaches us; rather, it is understanding and accepting that it is from his hand, for his purposes, for our good. Remember, God’s Word says, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but *the Lord delivers him out of them all*” (Psalm 34:19).

Do not be surprised when you suffer! But be assured that God proves himself faithful and he always produces life out of death. Jesus said, “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, *I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33).

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