

A Revelation Greater Than Our Sufferings



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) April 21, 2020

At one point in his walk of faith, the apostle Paul said, “The Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me that bonds and afflictions await me” (see Acts 20:23). Indeed, throughout Paul’s entire life, his afflictions never let up. You may wonder, “How can this be? The God we serve is almighty and victorious. He only has to speak a word and make it possible for us to go through life in triumph, with no troubles at all. So, why would our loving Father permit his people to suffer?”

Paul responds to such a question, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17). Paul is saying, in essence, “The suffering we go through on this earth is only momentary compared to eternity.” And right now, as we endure our suffering, God is producing in us a revelation of his glory that will last forever.

Paul had a great revelation of Christ, an incredibly strong faith, and abundant spiritual knowledge. And it all came to him through manifold suffering. Time after time he was beaten, robbed, cast into prison, shipwrecked and even buffeted and frustrated by the devil himself. He wrote, “Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us” (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

Paul understood that in everything he endured, the Holy Spirit was teaching him things he couldn’t learn any other way. “I, Paul ... now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ ... to fulfill the word of God” (Colossians 1:23-25). The apostle is saying here, “God is giving me something for you through this trial. He’s revealing to me a truth that’s been hidden throughout the ages, and that truth is Christ in you, the hope of glory. His power is working mightily in you” (see verse 29).

This man had his own full, glorious revelation of Christ; one of the great secrets of Paul’s spirituality was his readiness to accept whatever condition he was in without complaining. Your current situation may become hell on earth, draining you of every tear. But if you’re faithful to remain in it—if you honor God’s word, believing him for endurance—he’ll change you dramatically into a truly spiritual person.

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