

Tuesday, May 1, 2012 – When People Suffer...

John 16:33 tells us, “**In the world ye have tribulation...**” We see the truth of this statement every day. The tribulation may come in the form of adversity, pain, suffering or any number of other miseries that plague mankind. Since Tuesday of last week, my family and I have dealt with the physical and mental suffering that our parents have been dealing with due to my mother’s stroke.

Suffering is not new. We trace its origins all the way back to the Garden of Eden; to the earliest period of man's stay on earth. It is something that is experienced, not by only a few individuals, but by all mankind. Suffering has been a part of the lives of men since that fateful day when Eve took of the forbidden fruit and gave to Adam and he ate of it. Suffering is the shared plight of human kind and has been since sin was introduced into this World; Christians are not exempt from it.

Men suffer from many causes. They suffer from their own evil doings. They suffer because of the wickedness of others. They suffer from ignorance. They suffer because Satan exists. Men suffer physically because of accident, sickness or disease. They suffer mentally or emotionally because of slurs, insinuations and other's wrongful uses of the tongue. Look again at the affirmation of our Lord Jesus, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Men have suffered, do suffer and will suffer while this world lasts.

It is during these times that men often question the existence or goodness of God. They look to Him for answers as their faith in Him begins to wane. We can be thankful that God provides us the answers to the questions associated with suffering through His Word. God intends for His Word to be of great comfort to mankind during times of affliction. The Psalmist reflects, “**This is my comfort in my affliction; For thy word hath quickened me.**”

We, mistakenly, lose sight of the eternal purpose for which we live our lives. We associate the suffering in this life as a weakness in God. Some have looked at suffering and concluded there is no God. Such usually reason that if there were an all-powerful and all loving God, then certainly He would not allow suffering. We should remember the words found in **Psalms 84:11-12** which tells us, “**For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield: Jehovah will give grace and glory; No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Jehovah of hosts, Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.**” It is a fact that man does not always know what is good or what is best. It is still the case that “God's ways are not our ways nor His thoughts our thoughts.” God's ways and thoughts are higher and better! Life is a great battlefield. Those who live with God

understand that in the end, His people gain eternal glory. This knowledge allows us to understand that all that happens in this world is but a blip in time with respect to eternity.

In times of suffering, mankind needs but two things:

- 1) A life filled with prayer to a God who loves you. We pray with the understanding our Mediator, Jesus Christ, understands us, intervenes for us and takes our side. Christ understands the suffering we face in this life.
 - a. **1 Timothy 2:5 – For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.**
 - b. **Hebrews 2:17-18 - Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.**
 - c. **Hebrews 4:15 – 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.**
- 2) Fill your mind with the great passages of Comfort from the Bible. While we need to study all the scriptures, there are many passages which are of special value during times of suffering.
 - a. **1 Peter 5:7 - casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**
 - b. **Psalms 31:7 - I will be glad and rejoice in thy loving-kindness; For thou hast seen my affliction: Thou hast known my soul in adversities.**
 - c. **Psalms 34:4 - I sought Jehovah, and he answered me, And delivered me from all my fears.**
 - d. **Psalms 55:22 - Cast thy burden upon Jehovah, and he will sustain thee...**
 - e. **Isaiah 41:10 - Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee.**
 - f. **Roman 8:28 - And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, [even] to them that are called according to [his] purpose.**

There are so many passages of comfort which assure those that suffer of God's love for them. Our reaction to suffering is a crucial thing in life. Those who suffer must trust in God as their loving Father. They must remain faithful unto the point of death. In doing so they understand they will receive the crown of Life.

**John 16:33 - These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace.
In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**