

I Rejoice in My Sufferings

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Hello! This is Dorothy -

How many times have you looked back over your life and realized the awesome blessings of the Lord in dealing with you? The Apostle Paul in the **Book of Colossians, chapter 1, verse 24**, says - **24 [Even] now I rejoice in the midst of my sufferings of your behalf. And in my own person I am making up whatever is still lacking and remains to be completed [on our part] of Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church.** You say, "That is all very strange." Paul speaks of his *flesh*, instead of his body. What he is doing is contrasting the spiritual body of Christ and, in **verse 22**, referring to . . . **the body of his flesh.** . . as that in which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself suffered death. Now he is speaking to us as a believer. All believers, in all ages, have suffered for the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of the spiritual body, which belongs to Him. This current generation literally has suffered and is suffering more than any other generation. The true Church of Jesus Christ consists of every believer throughout every age since our Lord Jesus ascended from His short time on earth following the resurrection from the dead. When we are called upon to suffer for Christ, we suffer on behalf of the spiritual body, which belongs to Him Vast numbers are suffering

even now, who are in the Name of Jesus making up that suffering.

Paul was not only suffering for Christ's sake, but he was literally suffering for the Christians who received the spiritual help benefitted from his life, which was poured forth as an offering unto Christ. What you are going through, whatever the conflict, whatever the situation, I do not know, but God knows. Whatever you are going through likewise can bring forth spiritual enrichment. . . . ***that which is lacking . . . of Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, which is the church.***

As the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Colossians, the Gospel is committed to each one of us, to every believer, to every one who believes on Christ Jesus, to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus down here. The more we enter into this phase of suffering and fellowship with Him for the perfecting of the saints, the more it will overflow for other lives. There is a price and we must not shun it. **Verse 25** in the Amplified says —

25 In it I -that is Paul - became a minister in accordance with the divine stewardship which was entrusted to me for you [as its object and for your benefit], to make the Word of God fully known.

That is what it is all about. For every true born-again believer, through your life and mine, unless we deliberately decline,

sufferings will be endured by His followers. As the Church of the body of Jesus Christ is being made complete, we are one day going to be His bride in Heaven.

Old Isaac Watts wrote a challenge -

— Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His Name?

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,

The principle is not by my suffering, not by what I can do, not by my dishonoring my body, flogging my body or doing something to earn my salvation. No. The emphasis is that I am in the body of Jesus Christ. We are not those who you could say belong to this world, therefore, there is hatred, and resentment, and feeling, and being in the body of Jesus Christ, there is persecution and difficulty. I was told but two days ago of a nation in this world who said, "There is no room for anybody who is a Christian. We have one religion only, and we will kill any who say they are Christians!" In other words, we are not loved down here. But does that mean we are not lovely? Does that mean we are not going to be the vessel in our suffering for others to be added to the Church? I want you to know that when you really are a vessel for the living God, you will understand that the normal is that you are misunderstood many times. There is no one to turn to but to run into the arms of the Lord Jesus. The Lord allows this to happen. It is His way of giving you a fellowship level that you would never have had if the whole crowd had been on your side. You follow according to the Word of God and you let the life of the Lord flow through you in those things you count as joy, which the world would call suffering, for the glory, the supreme glory, of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Amen.