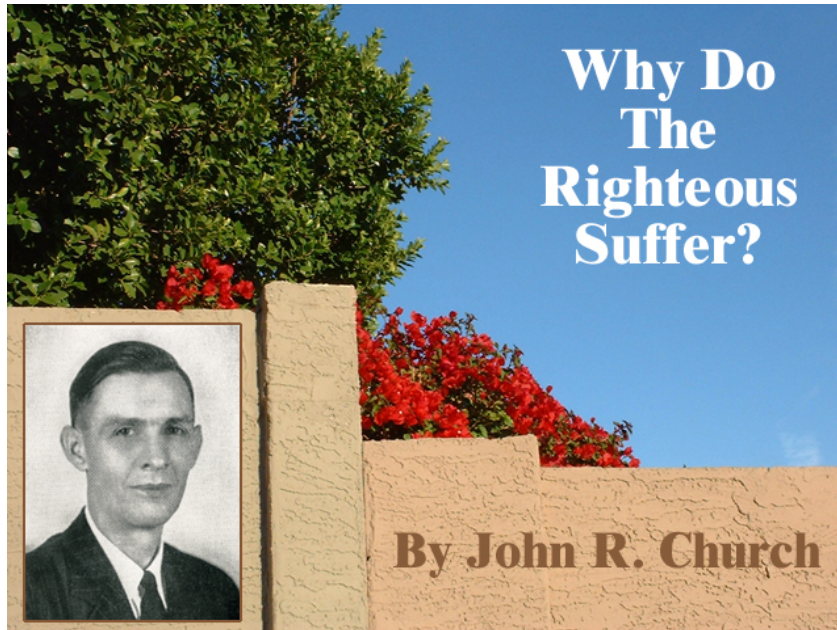


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**WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER?
By John R. Church**



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PREFACE

Dr. John R. Church, of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Approved Evangelist of the Methodist Church, has been a frequent speaker on the Asbury College radio programs. On the occasion of cue of his visits to the campus, he spoke three times over the radio on the question: "Why Do the Righteous Suffer?" These messages met with wide approval of the Asbury radio family.

Dr. Church agreed that this excellent message might be printed in booklet form so that it might be sent forth on a mission which would render service to thousands of readers.

**The first three editions have been exhausted and as this fifth printing is made it is rededicated to those who are partakers with Him in the ministry of suffering.
In His service,**

**J. Byron Crouse
Radio Director of Asbury College**

*** * * * ***

FOREWORD

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to dedicate message to the Asbury College Radio Broadcast, to be used by them for the advancement of the work that they are doing. I am in hearty sympathy with the work of the Broadcast and also of the College, and am happy to have some part in this glorious work. To my mind there is no college in America that is doing a greater work than Asbury, and there is no institution that I love as I do this great College. I rejoice that God is blessing the work in such a wonderful way, I pray that His blessings may abide upon this great institution.

I have learned by actual experience that the Asbury Radio Program is doing a great work, and is a real asset to the College. Therefore I feel that I am helping both the Broadcast and the College in this way. I am also thinking of that host of people who listen in each morning to this program, and my heart goes out to them. Many of you wrote in and said the messages on this subject were of help to you, and my prayer is that the printed message will be of still greater blessing to you. My greatest desire in life is to be of help to others in their efforts to live for Christ. If this message can be used of Him, then I shall be happy.

I trust and pray that this message may be a blessing to those who read it, and that it may also be of help to the Asbury Radio Broadcast.

Sincerely His And Yours,
John R. Church

* * * * *

SCRIPTURE LESSON:

Hebrews 12:5-14-- "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Romans 8:28--"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

Psalm 119:67, 71 -- "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

In the Book of Job we are told, "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble." We certainly find by actual experience that this is true. We are living in a world of trouble; a world that is filled with heartache and suffering of all kinds. All classes of people have their troubles. The rich suffer as well as the poor. The proud suffer as well as the humble. The educated have their troubles as well as the uneducated. The sinner suffers and also the saint. There is none that escapes suffering of some kind.

Whichever way you turn you find suffering of some kind. Some of it is mental, some physical, and some spiritual anguish. Even those people who often appear to be the freest from trouble and care, if you could only get down next to their hearts, you would find them bearing some kind of burden. They are wearing their sackcloth within upon their flesh. Nevertheless they are wearing it, and many times the sorrow that is hidden from the world is hardest to be borne.

Now the Bible teaches us that suffering in general came into this world as the result of sin. That is, if there had never been any sin in the world, we have reason to believe that there would never have been any suffering; but since sin has come we have suffering to contend with, and always will have as long as there is sin.

However, I hope that you will not misinterpret this general statement. I do not mean to say by that, that because an individual suffers, he is suffering because of his own sin. Job's comforters made that mistake. They reasoned that suffering was the result of sin, and that Job was a great sufferer, and therefore he must be a great sinner. The Book of Job was written for the very purpose of refuting that idea. It was written to show that even saints are called upon to suffer at times, and that when they do suffer it is not necessarily because of their sins.

The truth of the matter is that many people suffer because of the sins of other people. There are wives that suffer because of the sins of wayward husbands. There are parents that suffer because of the sins of wayward sons and daughters. There are children that suffer because of the sins of parents. Sometimes the fathers or mothers reap their crop of wild oats, which were sown in their youth, in the broken and diseased bodies of their children. Their children go through life with the fruits of their parents' sin in them.

Usually when we see unsaved people that are suffering and passing through some kind of trial, especially if they have lived very bad and wicked lives, we can console ourselves by saying, "Well, the wages of sin is death. The way of the transgressor is hard. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Be sure your sins will find you out," and many other such passages as these. And we can usually satisfy our minds in this way, about their suffering and trouble.

However, we find a different problem on our hands when we see the righteous person passing through trials and troubles. When we see a person who has lived a godly life and is consecrated to God, and trying his best to do the Lord's will; when we see him have troubles and trials, we are inclined to ask: Why? Why does God permit that person to suffer? Why does God's saint have to suffer? Why do I, who am trying to do God's will, have to pass through such things as these? Somehow or other we have the feeling that the saint of God ought not to have to bear the same thing as the man or woman who does not try to live for God.

Many times good people are perplexed over this question and cannot find an answer to it. Then, too, oftentimes their children cannot understand, and grow stubborn and resentful about it. Now I realize that it is a big question, and I do not presume to say that I can answer it fully. There are some things that we will never be able to fully understand until we see and know "even as we are also known." "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then we will see face to face." Then we shall be able to understand and tell the story how we overcame. God's ways are above our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. There are some things that we will have to trust to Him and leave in His hands. We do know that He is our Father and that He loves us, and even though we cannot understand and explain everything, we

can at least trust our Father and believe that all things work together for our good, because we love Him. We may not be able to explain how they work for our good, but we can at least believe it, just because He said they would. It is not for us to explain or even understand, but it is for us to believe.

**"If you trust and never doubt,
He will surely bring you out."**

That is one thing that any of us can do. Even the most feeble saint can trust. You can trust when you cannot do anything else.

Now after saying that, I do want to say that there is some light on this most vexing question. I am thankful that God has not left us entirely in the dark on this question. The Bible does give us some suggestions as to why the righteous may be called upon to suffer at times. In fact there are at least four good, Scriptural reasons why a righteous person may be called upon to suffer. I want to invite your attention to a careful consideration of these reasons.

However, before entering upon the study of these reasons, I would like to call your attention to the fact that God has not promised to exempt His children from the common experiences of the world. Suffering is the common lot of all men, and God has not promised to free His children from it. To be frank with you, I am glad that He has not. It would not be good for us if He did.

Christianity is given to us to use in this world. It does not free us from suffering, but it does give us strength and grace to bear all the experiences that are common to man, and be more than conquerors over every trial and test of life. The grace of God does not free us from these tests; but it does make us to triumph over them, and they work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

If God freed us from these experiences of suffering, there would be the temptation to serve God in order to escape them. In other words we would be tempted to serve Him in order to escape the sufferings and trials of life. He does not want us to serve Him because of the loaves and fishes but He wants us to serve Him out of love that we have for Him.

Then, too, if the saints did not have to suffer, they would not be in any position to sympathize with the unsaved world that does have to suffer. Just suppose that no child of God ever had to suffer. Suppose that God's children never had any heartache of any kind. They would not know how to sympathize with the rest of the people who did. God does not want His children to be like that. He wants us to know the sorrows of the world, and then be able to sympathize with other people. Jesus suffered in order that He might comfort those who have to suffer. He was made a perfect Captain of our salvation through suffering. He was not made morally perfect by suffering; He was already perfect in that sense. But He was made a perfect Captain of our salvation. In other words, He entered into all the experiences that are common to man, so that He might be our Leader and Captain. He can sympathize with us, because He knows just what we are going through. We need just the same thing in our lives, so that we may be able to help and sympathize with other people.

We need to remember also that some of the best and most precious things have come to us through suffering. The only way that God could fully reveal His love to a lost world was through the cross. God had to suffer in order to let us know how much He loves us. One reason why we love and appreciate our mother so much is because they have suffered so much for us.

I might also call your attention to the fact that the world would never have an example of what the grace of God can really do for people, if it were not for the suffering saints. As the world looks upon one of God's children and sees him passing through the same kind of trials that they have, and yet sees him have light and victory, they are led to see that it is worth while to have something that can bear such a test as that. The greatest proof of religion is to see it put to the test and then see it triumph. I thank God that it can bear the most severe test and shine all the brighter. Some of the most radiant saints that I have ever seen have been those who have had the most severe trials and tests. They did not fail because of them, but they did shine more brightly because of them. They were more than conquerors through Christ in the hour of trial. I thank God for their glorious examples, for I can point to them and say to the world, "It works;" and after all that is the real test.

There are several other reasons that I might suggest as to why it would not be wise for God to let His children escape the suffering that is common to man, but I think these will suffice for the time. I next want to call your attention to four Scriptural reasons why a saint of God may be called upon to suffer. I hope that you will consider them carefully and that you will be benefited by them.

*** * * * ***

01 -- SUFFERING GIVEN AS A TRUST

There are some people who are so holy and consecrated that God can trust them with the ministry of suffering. He has confidence enough in them that He can trust them to suffer for His glory, knowing that His name will be glorified and that the world will be helped by such a ministry as this. Now I am ready to admit that there are not so many people that God can trust like this, but I thank God that there are a few. You have to be very godly and submissive before God can trust you with such an exalted ministry as that. Most of us, I fear, would not be able to stand the test. However, there are some people that God can trust with this, glorious ministry of suffering.

We have a striking illustration of this point in the case of Job. You remember that we are told in the Book of Job that the sons of God came before the throne of God, and Satan came also with them. You also remember that God seemed to get a great deal of satisfaction out of being able to remind Satan that Job was a perfect man, and that he hated sin and loved righteousness. Satan immediately insinuated that Job did not serve God for nothing. Satan is the accuser of saints, and he insinuated that Job served God for what he got out of it. He told God that if He would take his property from Job, Job would curse God to His face. This was a terrible charge, but God met it by turning Job over into the hands of the Devil, and giving him power to take all of Job's property from him. This was a bold thing for God to do, but He had faith in Job and believed that he would stand the test.

Satan went forth and did his best. One calamity after another fell upon Job, until all of his property was gone and even his sons and daughters; but instead of Job cursing God, he lifted his heart in humble

submission and said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And in all of this Job sinned not. My! how pleased the Lord must have been with His servant Job!

When Satan came back before the throne of the Lord, I imagine he stood far back from the throne; and I imagine he was hoping that the question of Job would not come up. Satan had failed and been proved to be a liar. God's servant had stood the test. However, God did not intend that the matter should be dropped. He was proud of His servant, and wanted to talk about him some more. No doubt you are familiar with the story. If not, I would suggest that you go back and read it. It is truly a wonderful story.

You will find that Satan suggested that if Job be afflicted in body, he would curse God to His face. God accepted the challenge and turned Job over into the hands of Satan, with the understanding that Job's life was to be spared.*

[*In passing, may I call your attention to two facts? First, I would like to remind you that God always sets the bounds of our afflictions. He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. He knows how frail we are, and He has promised that we shall never be tempted beyond that which we are able to bear; and He has promised to supply the grace for every reset and trial. Glory to His name! In the second place, I would like to remind you that some of our afflictions come from Satan. Of course they are permitted by the Lord. God in His providence allows certain things, but sometimes Satan is the active agent in our trials and afflictions. He hates us and will do all that he can to wound us and get us to fall. Therefore it behooves us to be on our guard and be careful not to sin when we are tested and tried. Then, too, in view of this fact it is not always wise to hold God responsible for all of our troubles. Of course, He permits them; but oftentimes Satan is the active agent back of them.]

If you will read the story, you will find that Satan certainly went the limit. He caused Job to be afflicted with boils from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. His property was gone, his children all taken, and now his wife turns her back on him. Finally, to cap the climax, his friends come; and instead of comforting him and trying to help lighten his burden, they begin to accuse him and try to get him to

doubt his own religious experience. Truly this was a dark hour. I doubt if any other mortal man has ever been put to such a test, and I thank God that he stood the test and that God was vindicated in all of His claims for this man. I am glad that the world has produced one man that God could trust fully with such a ministry as this. This case has been of help and encouragement to thousands of men and women all down through the ages. It will take eternity to reveal the blessings that have come to the world through the trials and tests of this man.

Now I realize that this was a trying experience for this man, and there were many things that he could not understand about it. He could no more understand his afflictions than we can understand ours at times. However, there is one thing that he could do, and that was trust God; and he did that very thing. Some of the most beautiful expressions of faith came from the heart of this man in this trying hour. He said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." "He may put me in the fire, but I know that I shall come forth as pure gold." "Even though the skin worms devour this body of mine, yet I know that I shall see my Redeemer." He could not understand his afflictions; but, thank God, he could bear them for the glory of God.

The point that I am trying to get you to see is this: even though Job could not understand his afflictions, yet he did glorify God by bearing them in the right way. The same is true of us today. We may not be able to understand why we have to suffer. We may not be able to explain why tests have to come. In fact it is not our business to try to explain. The only thing that we have to do is to hold still and suffer for the glory of God. If Job could have known that he was being put on exhibition for the whole world to see what faith God had in him, and had known the blessings that would come to the world through his suffering, I imagine that he would have taken a shouting spell right in the midst of his worst trial, and said, "Lord, if You have that much confidence in me, and can trust me that much, then I will bear it for Thy glory and not one word of complaint will I utter." Just think, my dear reader, of such an honor as this. To be trusted with the ministry of suffering! I wonder if God could trust us that much.

May I say to you, my dear reader, do be careful how you bear your afflictions. It may be that God is trusting you with this glorious ministry of suffering, and it would be too bad for you to betray His trust.

Bear it as a true Christian and saint, and you shall have your crown.

*** * * * ***

02 -- SUFFERING GIVES JESUS A CHANCE TO GET GLORY

It takes the darkness of the night to bring out the beauty of the stars, and it takes the clouds and the storm to bring out the glories of the rainbow. The same is true of suffering and trials. Many times we do not appreciate the beauty of Jesus, the bright and morning star of our lives, until the dark night of test comes; and then He shines forth with new glory. It is after the storms of life, or even during the storm, that we come to appreciate the beauties of Jesus, our rainbow of hope and promise.

Many times we take the most precious things of life more or less as a matter of course until some dark hour comes, and then we awake to a real sense of their true worth. Many times the husband does not really realize how much he loves his wife, and what she means to him, until he is about to lose her or some test comes; and then he comes to see what she really means to him, and he has a greater appreciation for her. The same thing is often true of Jesus. In the sunny hours of life, when all is running smoothly, we take Jesus more or less as a matter of course; but when the dark days come, we awake to realize just how much He does mean to us.

Many times Jesus does not get a real chance to show to us just how much He can mean to us, until some dark trial comes into our lives; and then, when no one else can meet our needs, He has the chance that He has coveted so long.

You remember the story of the man that was born blind. When the disciples found him they raised the question, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus answered them by saying, "Neither this man nor his parents, but that the Son of man might be glorified." In other words, "The question of who was to blame for his condition is a matter of minor importance, but the thing that really counts is that this man's condition gives Me a chance to reveal My

power and glory." This is just as true with many of us today. We might spend a great deal of time in quibbling over what caused the trouble, but the important thing is to call in Jesus and let Him get glory out of it. That is the thing that really counts.

You will also recall the story of Lazarus and his death. You will remember, that when he was taken sick, his sisters did not spend precious time in quibbling over what caused his sickness. So far as we know they did not have a long debate over why this had to come to them; but they did send for Jesus. Whatever the cause might be, they felt sure that Jesus could meet their need.

However, in this case Jesus did a very strange thing. When they sent for Him He did not go immediately. He waited until Lazarus was dead and had been buried four days. That certainly does look strange, when we think of how much Jesus loved them and how much they loved Him. He even went so far as to say that He was glad that He was not there. That really sounds cruel and heartless when we think of how much those sisters needed Him at that time, and how they must have looked for Him. They could not understand it. I imagine that they felt very much as we do at times when we send for Him and He does not come. Martha even went so far as to go out and meet Him, and she virtually accused Him of being responsible for the death of her brother. She said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died." In other words, "You are the one that is responsible for his death. It was just pure neglect on Your part. You should have come." That sounds very much like many people today. When Jesus does not answer their prayers at just the time they pray, or in just the manner they think He should answer them, they are ready to murmur and complain and some even become rebellious.

Jesus just ignored the unjust charge of Martha and asked to be shown where Lazarus was buried, Martha reminded Him it is too late now to do anything. She said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh." However, Jesus knew just what He was going to do, and He spoke the word that called this brother back from death. In doing this He convinced many of the Jews that He was really what He claimed to be. Many Jews came to believe on Him as the real Messiah because of this great miracle.

Just try to imagine Martha and Mary after this great miracle. They could not understand before, but now they see how Jesus has been glorified in this great miracle, and they realize that it was an opportunity for Him to get glory to Himself. I can almost hear them say, "Lord, we could not understand awhile ago; but now we see, and we are rather glad that You did not come sooner." It was just such an opportunity as this that Jesus needed to demonstrate His power. Oh, of course, it meant some heartaches for them. But was it not worth it? Think of the glory that Jesus got out of it.

There have been many people who, when they were passing through their trials and afflictions, could not understand; they may even have felt like becoming rebellious. But later on they were made to see that it was best for them, and that it gave Jesus a chance to get glory for Himself, and they have been led to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

In some dark hour Jesus has come to us with a new light and glory. He has stood by us at the open grave and wept with us, as He did with Martha and Mary; and we have found Him to be more precious to us in such an hour as that than at any other time in our lives. There have been times when we were like Mary on the first Easter morning. We are told that "As she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and saw two men clothed in white." Her tears became telescopes through which she could look and catch glimpses of men from heaven. Many times our tears have turned out to be telescopes through which we could catch new glimpses of the glory of Jesus Christ. When such an hour comes to us, may we have the grace to stoop down. May we not harden our hearts and stiffen our necks, but may we bend in humble submission to the will of God and catch a fresh glimpse of the glory of Jesus.

"What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear,
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear--
All because we do not carry,
Everything to God in prayer!"

* * * * *

03 -- GOD CHASTENS US TO MAKE US HOLY

In Hebrews, the 12th chapter, we are told that God chastens us because He loves us, and He does it for our good, that we might be made partakers of His holiness. May I call your attention especially to the fact that He chastens us because He loves us? He never does it just in order to satisfy Himself or to make us suffer for our sins. He never does that. Sometimes we do punish our children just in order to relieve our own feelings and to satisfy ourselves. God never does that. He has only one thing in mind, and that is our good. He does not chasten us just to punish us for our past sins, but always with the idea of making us better in the future. His one and only objective is that we might become holy partakers of His holiness. This is the prime objective that He has in mind.

In fact the great central idea of all God's plans for us is that we might become holy. This is the grand objective both in Providence and in Redemption. He has nothing else in mind for us, and is trying to do nothing else for us, but to make us like unto Himself and partakers of His holy nature and character. Oh, that we might see this great truth!

It is rather strange, the idea that some people have about holiness and the attitude they take toward it. They seem to feel that when a preacher begins to preach on holiness he has jumped the track, or gone off on some side line. They seem to feel that it is a kind of hobby with some men, and that it is an elective course that you can take or leave alone. However, my dear reader, I want to assure you that is not the case. It is not an elective course. It is not a side issue that can be taken or left alone. It is the main line. The one thing that God has in mind for all of us is that we might be holy.

In Ephesians 1:4 we are told, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

God has commanded us to be holy. 1 Peter 1:16, "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

"This is the will of God, even your sanctification." -- 1 Thess. 4:3.

"God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth (or rejecteth), despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit." -- 1 Thess. 4:7-8.

"Jesus suffered without the gate, that he might sanctify us with his own blood." (Notice that it says with His own blood. It is not by growth or by our own efforts, but it is by His own blood). Hebrews 13:12.

God hath sworn that "we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, should live before him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life." -- Luke 1:73-75.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." -- Matthew 5:8. We are also told that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. -- Hebrews 12:14.

There are many other such passages to which we might call your attention, but I think that these will be sufficient for our purpose. We are taught that God purposed that we should be holy. He has commanded us to be holy. He has willed our sanctification. He has sworn that we shall be able to have it and live it even in this present life and all the days of our lives. He has promised that those who have a pure heart shall be blessed and shall be permitted to see God, and He has warned us that we shall not see God unless we are holy. I think that these statements are enough for us to see that holiness of heart and life is the great central idea of the whole plan of salvation. The one thing that God is working at, in both Providence and Redemption, is that each and every child of His shall be made a partaker of His holiness and be conformed to the image of His own Son.

Now I believe that the Bible is clear in its teaching that God is trying to accomplish His plan and purpose for us in two ways. His first and best plan is that we should willingly, of our own volition and choice, make complete surrender of our will and life to Him, and let Him sanctify our hearts by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This is His first and best choice for us. He had much rather do it this way than any

other. He does not like to coerce us and force us to go against our own will and wishes.

However, there are a great many people who are stubborn, and they are not willing to make that kind of surrender. They had rather go on having their own will and way. The Lord tries to lead them to make a complete consecration of their lives, but they refuse and go on living their own way.

Now the Lord loves us too much to let us go our headlong way and make a wreck of our lives, and sometimes He has to do us as we do our own children. We love our children and do not like to punish them, but sometimes they will not listen to our advice and submit to our wishes and plans. We coax them and admonish them and do all within our power to try to get them to do as we want, but in spite of all our efforts they go on in their headlong way. Now we love them too much to let them go on in their rebellion; for we realize that, if we do, their lives will be wrecked and ruined, and so we have to take them to task. In other words, we chasten them and punish them for their rebellion. We do that, not because we hate the child and want to punish it, but we do it because we love our child and wish for the best in his life.

That same thing is often true with God and us. He tries to get us to submit and do His will of our own choice, but we are headstrong and rebellious. We want to have our own way. God tries to woo us by love and we refuse to follow. He tries to admonish us and warns us, but we go right on in our rebellion. Finally, He realizes that if we are not turned in some way our lives will be wrecked; and so He chastens us. In other words, He takes us to the woodshed. He does not do this because He hates us, or because He takes pleasure in punishing us; but He does it because He loves us too much to let us go on and make shipwreck of our lives.

I firmly believe that many people have made the surrender of their lives and their wills to God in some such hour of trial, when really they should have made it at an altar of prayer. God sometimes has to lay us flat on our back in order to get us to say, "Thy will be done, not mine." However, it would have been far better to have said it while we were well and strong. There may be some one who will read these lines, that God is dealing with in that way. If so, my dear reader, will you not let

sorrow do her perfect work? Why not look up just now and make the surrender of your life to Jesus?

I fear that there have been times when God had to take a little idol out of some mother's arms in order save her from idolatry. He did not want to do it, but He loved that woman so much that He could not let her life be wrecked. God sometimes has to take men's property from them in order to save them from idolatry. He does it because He loves them. Oh, if we could only make the surrender without having to go through such things! I trust that we may have grace and strength to do it even now. He wants you to be holy and He wants me to be holy. May God help us to want robe all that He would have us to be.

**"Would you live for Jesus,
And be always pure and good?
Would you walk with Him
Within the narrow road?
Would you have Him bear your burden,
Carry all your load?
Let Him have His way with thee."**

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04 -- SUFFERING FITS US FOR THE MINISTRY OF SYMPATHY

This old world is filled with suffering and heartaches. People of all walks of life are having their trials and troubles. One of the greatest needs of such people is someone who can comfort them and sympathize with them in their trouble. If the people who know Jesus Christ and follow Him do not give them comfort and sympathy, then to whom shall they turn? Jesus wants us to be of help to such people as that. He came into this world and took upon Himself a human form and entered into all of our sorrows with us, in order that He might know how to sympathize and help those who needed help. The servant of Christ is supposed to fill up his ministry of suffering. We are to do this in order that we might help those who need our help.

We are told to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. We are also told that after we have suffered we are to comfort those who need it. The only way to know how to comfort others and

sympathize with them is to suffer ourselves. There are some things that can be learned in the schools. We can have teacher training courses and take courses in citizenship and many other things. However, there is one thing that we have to learn by actual experience, and that is how to sympathize with other people. Jesus, because He has suffered and been tempted, is able to succor them that are tempted and tried. The same must be true of us. We have all learned by actual experience that the person who can help us most in our trials is the one who has already passed through something just like ours. When that one comes to us, he knows just what to do and say.

I can say from personal experience that I never knew how to sympathize with people properly until I had passed through some sorrow of my own. For a long time I tried to sympathize with people when they had lost a loved one; but I did not know how until death came and took one of my loved ones away. Then I found that I really knew how they felt, and since that time I have been better able to comfort those who are bereaved.

I can testify, to the glory of God, that as deep trials and troubles have come into my own life, my fellowship with Jesus has been enriched and I feel that I am better able to go out and help a sin-sick world. As my heart and life have been mellowed by the fires of afflictions and trials, I have found Jesus more precious and have had a greater compassion for other people. I find a great yearning in my heart to go out and bind up the broken hearts of people who are in distress. I realize that I could not have learned this in any other way. It has not always been easy to bear; but I do thank God for the privilege of entering into the fellowship of His suffering, and I feel that I am a better man by having passed through it. I also feel that I have a greater love and sympathy for my fellow man because I have suffered.

This leads me to say one other thing on this line. The best way to bear your own burden is to go out and help some one else bear his. As you try to help him you will find comfort for your own heart. Too many people draw aside from the world and hide away in seclusion when trouble comes to them. If you do this and spend your time in brooding over your own troubles, you will find yourself becoming morose and bitter; but if you will go out and try to help someone else you will find yourself getting more Christlike, and you will find that your life is richer

by having had sorrows and trials come to you. You can always find someone else that has a heavier burden than yours; and in helping him to bear it, you will find One like unto the Son of man, who will walk with you on the way. Presently you will find your heart burning with a new love and joy, and you will be led to say, "It was good for me that I was afflicted."

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05 -- WHAT ATTITUDE WILL YOU TAKE?

In this passage in Hebrews, the 12th chapter, we find that there are three different attitudes a person can take toward his trials and afflictions.

In the first place you can despise it. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." Many people take this attitude toward their troubles. They despise them and rebel against them. This is a dangerous thing to do. It will make you sour, cynical and hard. You will find that your life and faith will be wrecked by such an attitude as this.

In the second place, we can just endure it. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." A great many people take this attitude toward their sorrows. They just grit their teeth and make up their minds that they will bear it the best they can. Many times they take the position that we all have our troubles. "Other people bear theirs, and I will take mine like a man." This is better than the other way, but it is not the best way. There is a better attitude than this to take.

The best attitude to take is to be exercised by them, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." If you will be exercised by your trials and afflictions, you will find them bearing the fruits of righteousness in your life. You will find that they have brought a real blessing into your heart and life, and that your life has really been enriched. There are thousands of saints scattered up and down this land who can bear such a testimony as that, and they show by their lives that it is true.

Some of the greatest saints that the world has ever known have been those who suffered most. They were entrusted with the ministry of suffering, and in bearing it as true Christians they have found that their lives have been enriched by their trials. They have proved to be a blessing to the world because they knew how to sympathize with those that needed it and give comfort to those that were in distress.

Just remember that even though you cannot understand why your troubles have come, there is One who does understand, and that He is your Father. He knows how frail you are, and He has promised that you shall not be tempted beyond that which you are able to bear; and with each test He has promised to provide the grace to bear it. He has also promised that all things shall work together for your good, if you love Him. He has predestinated that you shall be conformed to the image of His Son. One of these days all of the tests will be over and God Himself shall wipe away our tears and take us to that place where there is no more sorrow, suffering or death; but all things shall be made new and we shall walk with Him in white.

**"We are often tossed and driv'n
On the restless sea of time,
Somber skies and howling tempests
Oft succeed a bright sunshine;
In that land of perfect day,
When the mists have rolled away,
We will understand it better by and by.**

**By and by, when the morning comes,
When the saints of God are gathered home,
We'll tell the story how we've overcome,
We will understand it better by and by."**

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THE END