

With Christ In The School Of Suffering

Hebrews 5:8

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FOCAL Read Together Hebrews 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

No one likes to suffer. When we go through suffering and pain in this life our first instinct is to ask God "why?". In our minds we know that God is good, that He is good all the time, and that God always wants the best for us. So when we suffer we tend to blame *sin* or *Satan* or *self* for our suffering. The fact is, God uses suffering to teach us. Jesus Christ Himself suffered. Though you may have left footprints in the sands of sorrow, Jesus was there long before you were.

I was discussing suffering with a dear Saint of God, now bed ridden in the local long term care facility. She told me that there are times when she hurts so bad that all she can do is cry out. When she cries, those around her who are not suffering tell her to be quiet, to hush up. She said that one person told her that crying out doesn't help, but she said - and I agree - there are times when hollering helps.

Then we began to speak of Jesus. As we talked about His suffering and what He went through while He was on this earth we both agreed that we have never suffered as He has. This dear lady, bed ridden and twisted, at least had a bed. She had a pillow to lay on.

Matthew 8:20 ... The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Jesus had no bed, and no pillow. Jesus had nothing.

When do we see Jesus at rest? I can only find one place in the Scripture where He slept, and that was in the bottom of a tossing boat:

Matthew 8:24-26 .. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. {25} And his disciples came to him and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. {26} And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Even that rest was disturbed. Jesus had no place to call His own. He owned no more clothes than those that were on His back. He was **despised and rejected of men**. Though He was the Greatest Teacher Who ever lived He never received commendation from fellow teachers. Though He never told a lie nor spoke an inappropriate word the religious leaders of His day lied, plotted, and conspired until they brought Him to death. Jesus Christ was robbed of His integrity and shamed as He was nailed to a wooden gallows. His closest companions in life were disciples who refused to stay awake while He prayed in Gethsemane, and His closest companions in death were two thieves who hung on either side of Him.

Dear friends, if you are one of God's Children by faith in Christ, then you need to understand suffering. God uses suffering to teach His children obedience. If Christ **"learned obedience by the things which He suffered"** then we who are less than Him should expect to suffer. We are not exempt that which the Master had to go

through. He told His disciples very plainly:

Matthew 16:24-26 ... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. {25} For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. {26} For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

The most valuable thing that you own is not your house, your car, your bank account, nor even your family. The most valuable thing you own is your *soul*. Suffering tempers the soul. Suffering molds the believer, and drives away arrogance while teaching humility and grace. There is no crown without a cross, and no growth as a Christian without suffering.

1. The Only Begotten Son Attended God's School Of Suffering

FOCAL Hebrews 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

"Though He were a Son". Jesus Christ is not just *any* Man. He was not just one Rabbi among many. If you were to read this text with the right amount of emphasis you would need to read it with *astonishment* or *exclamation*.

Jesus Christ was not a *created Son* of God, nor was He an *adopted Son* of God. The King James reads **"though He were a Son"**, but the word **"were"** is mistranslated.

The word translated "were" is the Present Participle of the Greek **ων**, (Pronounced: *oan*), which is better translated "**though BEING the Son**", or "**though He was the Son of God by nature**".

Bible translator **Kenneth Wuest** concurs:

"The translation should read, "Though He was Son by nature." The deity of the Messiah is referred to here. The idea is, "Though He was the Son of God, God the Son, Very God of Very God, yet He learned obedience by the things He suffered." The omniscient God knew what obedience was, but He never experienced it until He became incarnate in human flesh."

Jesus Christ is Very God of Very God. The Scripture says that God the Father said to God the Son:

Hebrews 1:8 ... Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.

The Apostle John tells us that Jesus Christ - the Living Word of God - *was God* and has always *been God*.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and

truth.

He is the **Only Begotten Son of God** not because He was born in eternity, but because He entered this earth - His creation - through the virgin Mary (**Luke 1:35**). Jesus Christ has *forever* been the Son of God. Going back to our text:

FOCAL Hebrews 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

Though eternal God and sinless Son Jesus **learned obedience by the things which He suffered. All humans learn by suffering.**

All humans - even God in the flesh - **learn obedience, learn to obey, while under the stress of suffering.** Jesus Christ suffered. He suffered much. When we believe on Jesus we become Sons of God. The Scripture says:

John 1:12 ... But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

He is THE Son, and we are ADOPTED Sons. He is THE Son forever, and has always been the Son. *We became* Sons when we called upon Jesus and were saved by the power of God. The day you were saved, dear Christian, the Holy Spirit came into your lives.

Romans 8:15-17 KJVR ...ye have received the Spirit

of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. {16} The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: {17} And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ

Oh glorious truth! When the believer is born again by faith and by the Spirit then we are adopted into God's family. We become Sons. We become heirs. We are not second class, and Christ is not satisfied with us being second class. We are **joint heirs with Christ**. Praise God for His wonderful gift! We love to hear this - but HEAR THE REST OF THE TEXT. **Romans 8:17** goes on to say ..

... **if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.**

You are heirs of God, and Sons of God by adoption. All of God's Sons suffer. **IF SO BE THAT WE SUFFER WITH HIM.**

The Christian who does not go to the School of Suffering with Christ is not a Christian at all.

Christians suffer just as Christ suffered, though certainly with not the same degree of intensity that Christ suffered.

2. All Of God's Children Learn By Suffering

FOCAL Hebrews 5:8 **Though [being the] Son, yet learned He obedience** by the things which he suffered;

Is all suffering that comes to a Christian *because of sin*?

There are times in our lives when we are sinful, and we suffer the consequences of sin. The Scripture says that **the wages of sin is death**, and when we are

Titus 3:3 ... foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

We bring suffering on ourselves. Churches are wounded, and sometimes die, because its members will not govern their senses.

God is the Best Father. When His children do wrong He punishes them with the rod of correction. The Scripture says:

Revelation 3:19 KJVR As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Our Heavenly Father never read Dr Benjamin Spock's *Baby Book*. The Lord says:

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him quickly.

a good parent punishes his child, spanking him when he gets out of line. A poor parent looks the other way or excuses the foolishness of their child. God is not a poor

parent.

Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If God loves us, and we love Him, He punishes us when we sin. The Bible uses words like **chasten** or **scourge** to describe God's punishment of His wayward children. Even our favorite Psalm states:

Psalms 23:4 ... thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

The Great Shepherd carries a Shepherd's Crook. One end of it is used for drawing the wayward sheep out of danger. But the other end, the **rod** end, is used for discipline. If the sheep continues to wander from God then, like a good Shepherd, He may turn His rod upon it. He does that - not because He hates the child - but because He loves it.

But what happens when the child is not disobedient? Hasn't Jesus told us that:

John 15:2 .. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

What does John 15:2 teach us about suffering?

If you **do not bear fruit God takes you away**. The

believer who will not serve the Lord is removed from this life. God's children are to bear fruit. But then Jesus says, "**every branch that beareth fruit, God PURGES or PRUNES it, that it may bring forth MORE FRUIT**". Every gardener knows that fruit trees must be pruned, they must be cut, they must be disciplined, or they will grow wild and produce little fruit. This has nothing at all to do with disciplining for sin. Jesus Christ Himself was without sin. God said of Him:

Matthew 3:17 ... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

The Great I AM is forever pleased in Christ - yet Jesus suffered. Jesus never caused the Father anxiety, nor did He disappoint the Almighty. He came to do His Father's business - and yet He suffered. **He learned obedience through the things that He suffered.** We who are adopted also **learn obedience through the things that we suffer.** The great Baptist preacher **C.H. Spurgeon** made a great observation when he said:

"God had one Son without sin, but has never had a Son who was without sorrow".

Christ suffered. If He was not exempt from suffering, why do we believe we should be free from suffering? Our society despises suffering, but suffering **teaches obedience.** Though Christ were a perfect Son, **He learned obedience by those things that He suffered.**

ILLUSTRATE Dear friends, your souls will never have depth unless you cling to Christ while in the School of

Suffering. I am a knife collector, and have been one for most of my life. There was a time when I bought knives because they were pretty, or unique, or in some way attractive to my eye. Then I discovered something. Many of these *pretty knives* would not hold an edge at all. Some became quickly dull even if you were just cutting bananas with them. Why was that? Because the blades, though pretty, had never been tempered by fire. Steel that is not tempered by fire will not hold an edge. In the same way, the soul that is not tempered by trial is shallow and unusable. God's greatest servants suffer the greatest.

Joseph was a braggart before he was tossed into a pit and sold into slavery by his brothers. **Moses** was a stutterer and a murderer until he spent 47 years in the desert of Midian. **David** was the youngest and most discounted son of Jesse, considered fit only to watch his father's sheep. **Saul of Tarsus** had to be smuggled out of Jerusalem, being let down the wall in a basket, lest he be killed. The Bible is filled with stories of adopted sons of God who were relatively useless until they went through God's School of Suffering.

Can you name *one person of faith* in the Scripture that *never suffered*? What does this tell you about suffering?

Those who have learned to suffer with Christ can say, as the Apostle said:

2 Corinthians 12:8-10 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. {9} And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for**

my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. {10} Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

You will never be strong for God until you are surrendered to God. Suffering teaches surrender.

Jacob would not be called Israel until he learned to walk with a limp. Abram would not be called Abraham until he experienced the dread of the Lord. You will not be a champion for God until you abide with Christ in the School of Suffering.

3. Suffering Tests - and Trains - Our Sonship

FOCAL Hebrews 5:8 Though [being the] Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which he suffered;

ILLUSTRATE Chaff, when it is baked, turns to ash. But wheat, when it is baked, becomes bread.

Suffering tests our sonship, but it never disproves those who are truly sons of God.

Jesus Christ suffered temptation. The Bible says:

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not a high priest which

cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. He was tempted and slandered by the religious crowd, every one of them suited messengers of Satan. He endured slander, and yet was still a Son. God's people will be slandered by false brethren. You will be slandered and spoken evil of if you are a son of God by faith in Christ. The Apostle Paul often spoke of the perils that he went through. He said:

2 Corinthians 11:26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

Galatians 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

One of the greatest perils you will have will be **false brethren, pretenders to sonship**. In many cases the Judas Iscariots are the greatest of our enemies. They pretend to be brothers in the Lord, but in the darkness and behind our backs they do as the Pharisees did with Jesus. They plot and plan and prevaricate evil in order to promote their own agendas. Our Lord Jesus suffered the same thing. Jesus was slandered by the religious crowd. The Pharisees said:

Matthew 9:34 ... He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

Oh, how that must have hurt. But Beloved, **false brethren will also smite you**. When this happens remember that our Lord said:

Matthew 5:11 ... Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Christ was deserted by every friend and by every disciple - and yet He was still a Son. He suffered the most felonious death imaginable, hanging on the Tree of Calvary - and yet He was still a Son. Christ endured suffering for us.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

ILLUSTRATE And now - if you have believed in Him - we must endure suffering for His sake. Among humanity - among flesh and bone creatures - we do not learn until we suffer. As children your parents said "do this" and "do not do this". Did you learn the stove was hot until you touched it? Absolutely not! A soldier, sitting in class and studying war, will never be a soldier until he goes on to the battlefield. You must experience war if you are to do war. When Saul asked David's qualification to fight Goliath he replied:

1 Samuel 17:34-37 ... Thy servant kept his father's

sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: {35} And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. {36} Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. {37} David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

We learn by doing. We learn by suffering. You will not learn to ride a bike except by falling. You will not learn to drive a car without running into something.

When we suffer - and come through the fire - our souls are tempered so that we can do greater things for God. David had to kill the bear and the lion before he killed Goliath. He had to choke down fear and kill Goliath before he could rule a kingdom. Trials come to God's Sons to toughen them, to teach them, and to ultimately make us usable in the hands of our Heavenly Father.

Suffering teaches us submission. Adrian Rogers often taught the principle that "we can never be over until you are under. You can never be over the things of God until you are submitted to God". We must learn - as Jesus learned - to say:

Matthew 26:42 .. He went away again the second

time, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.**

ILLUSTRATE Obedience is never fully learned until faith is put in the fire of trials. You do not even know that you are saved until you have been tried. You can say "I'm saved" now - but will you cling to these words when the storms of life hit? Some people are wonderful Christians until trials come, their tears wash the actor's makeup from their faces. Some people are powerful and fearless until the lion is in sight.

The untried Peter rashly told Jesus:

Matthew 26:35 ... Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Yet when the milk maiden said, "You are one of those who were with Jesus", Peter's proximity to danger suddenly changed his tune. **Peter bragged till the cock crowed, then he wept bitterly and in shame.** I prefer the Peter weeping to the Peter bragging, for the Peter weeping was the Peter blessed by grace and gracious himself. Trials, like a strong wind, blow away the chaff. Suffering, like a jeweler's fire, separates the dross from the gold.

No Christian is truly *gracious* until he has been truly *broken*. The arrogant and self righteous avoids the fire of God, whereas the humble and the usable Son

stands willingly in the flame.

Dear Christian - if you are a Christian - your High Priest suffered. Shall you not do the same? If you are suffering, **prove yourselves**. Cling to Christ in the storm. Trust God Who loves you, and say with Jesus "**not My will, but Thine be done**". You will never be a Great Christian until you pass through Great Suffering. Trust God. Cling to Jesus. Be with Christ in the School of Suffering.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.

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Matthew 8:20; Matthew 8:24-26; Matthew 16:24-26

1. The Only Begotten Son Attended God's School Of Suffering

**Hebrews 5:8; Hebrews 1:8; John 1:1; John 1:14;
Luke 1:35; Hebrews 5:8; John 1:12; Romans 8:15-17;**

- The word translated "were" is the Present Participle of the Greek $\omega\nu$, (Pronounced: *oan*), which is better translated _____

- Though eternal God and sinless Son **Jesus** _____

- The Christian who does not go to the School of Suffering with Christ _____

2. All Of God's Children Learn By Suffering

Hebrews 5:8; Titus 3:3; Revelation 3:19; Proverbs 13:24; Hebrews 12:6; Psalms 23:4; John 15:2; Matthew 3:17

- Is all suffering that comes to a Christian *because of sin*? _____

- What does John 15:2 teach us about suffering? _____

- Can you name *one person of faith* in the Scripture that *never suffered*? What does this tell you about suffering?

- You will never be _____ for God until you are _____ to God. Suffering teaches _____.

3. Suffering Tests - and Trains - Our Sonship

**Hebrews 5:8; Hebrews 4:15; 2 Corinthians 11:26;
Galatians 2:4; Matthew 9:34; Matthew 5:11;
Galatians 3:13; 1 Samuel 17:34-37; Matthew 26:42;
Matthew 26:35**

- Suffering tests our sonship, but it never _____ those who are truly sons of God.

- We learn by _____. We learn by _____.
You will not learn to ride a bike except by falling. You will not learn to drive a car without running into something.

- No Christian is truly _____ until he has been truly _____. The arrogant and self righteous avoids the fire of God, whereas the humble and the usable Son stands willingly in the flame.



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