

Hebrews 2.18

Comfort From Suffering

One of the most difficult things for people to wrap their head around is the need of this world to be broken. It is often charged that a God who could prevent suffering but doesn't is either cruel or negligent. But suffering is an integral part of the plan of God for us, and for this world. It is one of the key ways in which God provides intimate knowledge of Himself for us, and is the vehicle by which we come to know the powerful mercies of the Risen Christ. The knowledge of God as Savior is worth the cost of suffering, *especially* when the Savior Himself suffered so that He could comfort us BY His own sufferings! Let's spend some time today thinking about how the sufferings of Christ comfort us, how His pain is our path to healing and how He calls us to be the same to others!

I. CHRIST SUFFERED IN HIS DEATH FOR US

a. He endured the wrath of God on our behalf

Isaiah 53.4-10

- b. He endured the scorn of those He loved on our behalf

John 19.14-16

- c. He endured the mockery of a broken legal system on our behalf

John 18.20-23

- d. He endured the ignominy of a criminal's death on our behalf
- e. He endured the shame of a pauper's burial on our behalf

II. HE SUFFERED IN HIS TEMPTATION FOR US

- a. The onslaught of evil itself - To tender skin, a thorn is agony, but to calloused and hardened skin it doesn't even puncture... to a lost man,

temptation is mother's milk, but to a man born again it is a horror, especially when it plucks on the remnants of our old nature. The evil that comes at us often ravages our senses, it is a gruesome thing, a savage sort of offense and it is always so raw and intimate when it comes. But for Christ, with His perfect nature and sinless life had to feel it with such force, the sin and wicked misery around Him had to hit him like a physical slap. And it was everywhere...

- b. The certain knowledge that this temptation is not the last... as offensive as the momentary temptation might be, it is made all the worse by the fact that it will not be alone, nor will it be the last. As long as we are drawing breath on this rock, as long as we live here in a fallen world there will always be one more temptation, one more evil to endure. Christ knew this to a degree that we cannot comprehend. The dread of the coming temptation is sometimes worse than the thing itself. Sometimes worse than the fight is the threat of it.

- c. The spiritual source of the temptation - He was GOD in the flesh, and knew not only the reality of that fact but also saw the spiritual component that baffles us... the demons lurking in the trees, rising from the very earth itself all were plain to Him. And although He was also completely in command at all times the constant attacks and the constant knowledge that there were still more coming is a very refined agony. There is truly no rest from it and Jesus knew that better than any of us ever will.

- d. The human source of the temptation or cause of the pain. Just consider how much more it hurts when a loved one wounds you rather than when a stranger does so.
 - i. Jesus endured the sting of his own mother and brothers coming to collect Him thinking He was out of His mind

Mark 3.20-21; 31-35

- ii. He endured the pain of His closest friends attempting to turn Him from the path God had set Him.

Matthew 16.21-23

- iii. He bore the knowledge that the disciples would all fall away and abandon Him

Matthew 26. 30-35

- iv. He suffered the insult of the kiss of betrayal from one of His own...

Luke 22.47-48

- v. He forgave the ones who slew Him, knowing that He died to save them... motivated by love...

Luke 23.32 – 34

e. And never forget that the real horror of temptation comes from the fact that God's

name, glory and honor are almost always under assault. It wounds us, the born again, it angers us, it causes us to suffer, but we have no idea, we whose love is lukewarm at best compared to Christ's burning passion for the glory of God.

III. HIS SUFFERING IS OUR SOURCE OF COMFORT

a. Knowing that He knows brings comfort to us - He does not look down on us when we are tempted, nor even when we fail. He knows the terrible turmoil and the horrible power of the temptation. He knows our weakness. And we are not alone in it. This darkness is not solitary, though all men abandon you, there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

Proverbs 18.24

b. Knowing that He is triumphant and unstained is comfort - to know that end which is promised to us, to know that He has opened

a path to victory for us, knowing that all of the trial will one day end in the place that He has gone to prepare FOR us... this is powerful comfort.

Hebrews 4.14-16

c. That His victory over sin is what gives Him the authority to be our mediator. It is this conquering King who sits at the throne of God and pleads our cause; who boldly proclaims His connection to us and makes pardon upon the mercy seat to cover us with His own perfect righteousness.

Hebrews 7.23-28

d. He also knows the perfect time and place to send His perfect grace to aid us. Having been tempted, having endured the misery He is the One who is able to know exactly what we need. He has the experience required to treat the ailment in the perfect manner. He faithfully upholds us by His own perfect mercy

and communicates the grace of the Godhead to us who He has chosen to shelter under His wing. Having all of the power in the universe available would be of little use if He also did not know when or what was needed... As God He always had the wisdom and knowledge to do so, but has also now added the experience of His own suffering to guide.

IV. HIS SUFFERING BRINGS COMPASSION FOR US

a. He is a friend to sinners

Luke 7.31-35

b. He is the One who will always understand and share in our miseries. So many times, we use our pain as an excuse to walk in sin. We feel justified in our bad choices because we feel utterly alone. Because we feel completely set upon and surrounded by enemies. But He will never leave nor forsake, He will never

harm us, He will always give comfort and aid. He knows your misery, intimately.

- Have you been betrayed?
- Have you been abandoned?
- Have you been abused?
- Have you been misunderstood?
- Have you been hurt by others unintentionally?
- Have you been hurt by others on purpose?
- Have you been misrepresented?
- Have you been neglected?

c. He is the one who not only has compassion but also has the answer, because He IS the answer. Sympathy is nice, empathy is nice, but healing? It is priceless. To have a resource to access all that is needed to cure the disease rather than merely treating the symptoms is beyond our ability to comprehend.

V. OUR SUFFERINGS CAN COMFORT OTHERS

We become that same thing to those around us through our sufferings. One of the greatest trials of our current circumstance is the feeling that none of the difficulties we face have any real purpose. But just as Jesus is able to aid those who are tempted because He was tempted, so we too are able to aid those around us in the same way.