

UNDERSTANDING AND DOING GOD'S WILL
PART 4-WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?-PT 3
SUFFERING FOR CHRIST
1 PETER 4:1-2; 10-19 (*Text Vs 19*)

Introduction

Tonight we continue the series of messages that we began before my vacation. Let me remind you of what we have seen thus far and share with you what happened after the last message.

We're in a series on the subject of **UNDERSTANDING AND DOING GOD'S WILL**. And we are in **PART 4** of that series looking at – **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?**

In PART 1 OF PART 4– We saw that the BIBLES SAYS IT IS GOD'S WILL FOR THE LOST TO GET SAVED!

We also saw the BIBLE SAYS IT IS GOD'S WILL FOR THOSE WHO ARE SAVED TO LIVE SANCTIFIED LIVES!

Then in PART 2, WE SAW THAT IT IS GOD'S WILL FOR US TO GIVE THANKS IN EVERYTHING!

(e.g. My wife and I were poised to take a trip that next Tuesday to OKC to begin our vacation. However, God put us in one of those difficult circumstances to give thanks!)

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This evening, we are going to deal with a subject that I can almost guarantee you is no one's favorite subject—**SUFFERING FOR CHRIST!**

Let's read our text here written by the **APOSTLE PETER**.

As we **SEEK to LIVE GODLY in CHRIST JESUS** as **BELIEVERS**, and as we **MAKE CHOICES in OUR LIVES TO PLEASE GOD** rather than men, we are guaranteed that **PERSECUTION will come our way!**

In *2 Timothy 3:10-11*, **PAUL** wrote that **TIMOTHY** had fully known about the **PERSECUTIONS** and **AFFLICTIONS** that had come to **PAUL** on his missionary journey at three places— **Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra**. (*Recorded in Acts 13 -14*) **Raised persecution and expelled at Antioch... assaulted and almost stoned in Iconium, and then stoned at Lystra!**

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He then went to Derbe and preached and then back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch!

Acts 14:22–23– “22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.”

PAUL wrote two things about that time in his life:

- 1) He said that he **ENDURED** those **PERSECUTIONS...**and...
- 2) He said the **LORD DELIVERED** him out of them all!

And then he wrote this in: 2 Timothy 3:12– “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

PAUL also wrote the **PHILIPPIAN CHURCH** these words:

Philippians 1:29– “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;”

“given” = “show favor”

Did you know that sometimes it is **GOD'S WILL** for us as **BELIEVERS** to exhibit **HIS GRACE** in a **MINISTRY OF SUFFERING**.

A **MINISTRY OF SUFFERING** may sound and seem unusual because it is certainly not something that our flesh desires. (Can I get a witness?)

In fact, we may have difficulty seeing our **PERSONAL ADVERSITY AND SUFFERING** in this life as being related to **GOD'S WILL** for us at all and especially seeing it as a **MINISTRY!**

But the **WORD OF GOD** clearly indicates that it is something that **GOD** uses in our lives for **OUR GOOD** and **HIS GLORY!**

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.”

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The “**ALL THINGS**” there includes the times of **ADVERSITY** and **SUFFERING** we face in this life!

The thought of our **text verse (Vs 19)** is that when **PERSONAL SUFFERING** comes it is **ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD.**

Some Questions To Consider:

- 1) **Do we BELIEVE that GOD IS SOVEREIGN?**
HE is whether we BELIEVE it or not! GOD’S WORD says so!
- 2) **Do we BELIEVE that GOD CAN DELIVER US FROM SUFFERING if that is in HIS WILL?**
Again, HE can do so whether we BELIEVE it or not!
Ephesians 3:20– “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,”
- 3) **Do we BELIEVE that GOD CAN DELIVER US THROUGH SUFFERING if that is in HIS WILL and for HIS GLORY?**

Remember what the APOSTLE PAUL wrote in:

Philippians 3:10– “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;”

When we got **SAVED**, we were excited to come to **KNOW CHRIST!**
After we got **SAVED**, we began to **GROW** in our **KNOWLEDGE CHRIST!**
If you are not **GROWING IN CHRIST**, I would question whether you **KNOW HIM!** (Where there is **LIFE** there is **GROWTH!**)

After we got **SAVED**, we began to experience the **POWER OF CHRIST’S RESURRECTION** as which helps us live as **CHRIST** would have us live as **CHRIST IS LIVING IN US AND THROUGH US!**

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But what about **THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS** and **BEING MADE CONFORMABLE UNTO HIS DEATH!**

That was **PAUL’S desire in his life**, but I’m not so sure that is the desire of most who name the name of **CHRIST!**

Now, we all know that **SUFFERING** can take **many forms** and can come our way **from many different places** and **in many different ways.**

Sometimes **SUFFERING** may come our way from a chronic or lifelong illness or handicap in our flesh such as the **APOSTLE PAUL’S THORN IN THE FLESH.** (*2 Corinthians 12:7-10*)

[e.g. That reminds me of my first ministry as a preacher preaching in a nursing home in Brunswick, GA. There was a man in the nursing home who exemplified what we’re talking about. There was a believer who was totally blind and bedridden with painful, crippling, disfiguring arthritis.

I dare say that most people in his circumstance of life would question God and even blame God and possibly want nothing to do with God ever again for allowing his own to suffer in such a way.

But, what I remember most about the man was his testimony for Christ and praise for Christ and his glorying in Christ in the midst of his suffering! I visited him to try to encourage him and pray for him and he wound up helping me more than I helped him!]

So, sometimes SUFFERING may come that way...

But we may also be called on to endure **SUFFERING caused by our presence among ungodly people in varying situations of life**—in the home or at work, at school, or other places.

(This can also be seen in the life of the **APOSTLE PAUL** that we mentioned **previously but also shown** in his second letter to the Church at Corinth...*2 Corinthians 11:20-30*)

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Listen to what **JESUS** said about this in *Matthew 5:10-12*– “**10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 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. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.**”

Many in different places in our country are being **PERSECUTED** for their **FAITH** and it is getting more widespread all the time! It could come our way before the **LORD** comes back!

Can we **ENDURE PERSECUTION** and **GLORIFY GOD** at the same time? We don’t like to think about that happening, but it could come our way!

Sometimes our **SUFFERING** may come in the form of **INWARD PRESSURES** (i.e. **EMOTIONAL DISTRESS**) that we must bear because of **REJECTION, ABUSE, LACK OF FULFILLMENT** or **PERSECUTION**.

But listen, whatever the **SUFFERING** may be, and whatever the direction it may come from, **SCRIPTURE** does speak to our **SUFFERING** as **CHRISTIANS** and show that it is for the purpose of bringing **GLORY TO THE LORD!** (*1 Peter 1:6-7; 2:19-23; 3:14-18; 4:1-2, 4, 10-19; 5:8-11*)

(*1 Corinthians 10:31*– “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*”)

“*Whatsoever ye do*” would include **SUFFERING!**

GOD’S DESIRE is for us to **COMMIT THE KEEPING OF OUR SOULS TO HIM** and to **CONTINUE FAITHFUL IN OUR WALK!**