

**“Christ Tasted Your Death & Completed All Suffering”  
(Hebrews 2:1-13)**

**Rev. Dr. Alfonso O. Espinosa**

**Suffering: Not Exactly Our Favorite Subject!**

**A. There are two universal reasons for it:**

1. Consequence of the Fall (Gen. 2:17 & 3:16-19).

**Romans 8:22: “For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.”**

2. Direct consequences of violation of God’s Law (Deut. 27-28 warned that disobedience would bring destruction or exile; Romans 13 teaches about the authorities which “bear the sword”).

**B. But there are also reasons why Christians, those made righteous by Christ suffer:**

1. Christians suffer because they are disciplined by God in order for their faith to be preserved and to grow (Hebrews 12).
2. Christians suffer when they are persecuted for being witnesses for Christ (Acts 5:25-41).
3. Christians suffer out of loving service to other people...St. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:24: “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your

sake...”and we “bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2).”

4. Christians suffer as they learn to rely on Christ and on Christ alone.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:9: “But [the LORD] said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.’”**

5. Christians suffer for no apparent reason at all sometimes (consider Job).

**C. But beyond all systematic analysis, there is just grief and weakness real people experience:**

**Lewis described grief in *A Grief Observed*: “For in grief nothing ‘stays put.’ One keeps on emerging from a phase, but it always recurs. Round and round. Everything repeats. Am I going in circles, or dare I hope I am on a spiral? But if a spiral, am I going up or down it? How often – will it be for always? – how often will the vast emptiness astonish me like a complete novelty and make me say, ‘I never realized my loss till this moment’? The same leg is cut off time after time. The first plunge of the knife into the flesh is felt again and again (67).”**

**And Garth Ludwig (of blessed memory) wrote in his personal journal on March 6, 1998: “When I did my exegetical work on the Hebrew word for sickness, the root word meant to be weak. How poignant that I would ever experience the real**

meaning of the word I was trying to research. No more descriptive a condition exists than being usurped by a weakness that allows little expression of energy, dependency upon others, difficulty in thinking, depression, frustration, and irritation. It is walking the line between life and death. It is to want so much – but to be denied almost everything...But here is strength in weakness as Paul was reminded by God – for herein comes the grace of God. Let me not forget the weakness that Christ submitted on to at the cross!" (*Order Restored*, 242)

Part I: We are led to back to Christ and what He freely entered into for you and for me! Going back to our consideration of the reasons for suffering:

- A. The universal reasons do not technically personally apply to Jesus (He was not sinful nor did He commit sin), but for all intents and purposes, *they do* since He permitted Himself to be numbered among the transgressors (Isaiah 53:12) while He hung on the cross!
- B. Furthermore, the LORD Jesus very much relates to the specific reasons for Christian suffering *because He became one of us!*
  - 1. He humbled Himself and accepted discipline!
  - 2. He humbled Himself and accepted persecution!
  - 3. He humbled Himself and accepted the consequences of serving us!

- 4. He humbled Himself while relying solely on the Heavenly Father!
- 5. He humbled Himself to even accept suffering that seemed & seems cruel, unusual, and extreme...and to many, this seems as though there was indeed no good reason for it!

C. But as a result dear Christian, Jesus relates to every pain, to every tear, to the spiral of grief, and to the weakness of sickness!

D. And there *was* good reason for all of it!

E. The writer of Hebrews says:

- 1. At 2:9: He tasted death for you!
- 2. At 2:10: He was made perfect through suffering!

Part II: That is, suffering has a HUGE role for our good!

- A. Those who want to reject God through “the problem of evil,” intimate that there is no good *reason* for evil to occur! And that if God *was* God He would – out of His goodness and power – intervene, but because these critics *assume* that God does *nothing*, they excuse themselves from believing in Him!
- B. The assumptions are astounding!

1. First of all, it is assumed that there couldn't possibly be any good *reason* for suffering!
2. Secondly, it is assumed that God has done *nothing* about it!

**C. Wrong!**

1. There is a good reason: God made us so that we could be real people with the real ability to love...and this requires the ability to choose to love...to will to love. People – NOT God – chose suffering! It's time for us to take responsibility and to stop making excuses to blame God!
2. But more importantly, since we chose to rebel, God did not stand idly by! God INTERVENED! God has done something about ALL evil in the world!
  1. He sent Jesus to taste the worse evil called "death"...*for you!*
  2. He sent Jesus who completed the worst suffering EVER...the suffering of all sin, all heart-ache, all doubt, all anger, all lust, all evil, all wickedness, all "meaningless" pain...all of it...to the extent that He was made "perfect" through suffering!

**D. This means that Jesus drank all of the poison which leads to our death, so that death would lose its power over us! Death cannot take us from God; it cannot take us from life!**

1. Consider how connected you are to Christ and how nothing could possibly change this fact!

Isaiah 49:16: *"Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands..."*

**2. And Jesus makes this promise:**

John 11:25-26: *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup>and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."*

**E. But how can we be sure? We are led back to the second saying in our reading from Hebrews: "[Jesus was made] perfect through suffering."**

1. Because Jesus our Savior did all that The Heavenly Father sent Him to do...He completed His mission; He perfected (or completed) His saving work!
2. There is no doubt, because He actually entered our death...tasted death and said, "It is finished (John 19:30)!" All that was required for you to be saved and rescued from all evil, all sin, all failure, all weakness, all fear...all of it, every ounce of it dear Christian, was met by Jesus fulfilling those requirements...He tasted your death by dying your death with your sin on Him; He completed the work...and perfected your salvation...there is no doubt and this is the truth sealed in Jesus' blood!

**Conclusion: Now we see suffering differently...**

- A. It is easy to think that it starts with you...no, but from the moment sin entered the world, the LORD planned for Christ to enter our lives *and* to enter our suffering *and yes, even to enter our death. It all starts and ends with Christ!*
- B. So don't let this truth become something that sounds trite (as skeptics treat the truth of the Gospel): God is truly with you through all suffering to the extent that even the suffering is sanctified (made holy)...it cannot harm your communion with God...it cannot take your eternal life...it cannot remove you from Christ...if anything, His grip around you grows stronger so that even -- especially -- through the suffering, He works the results of having tasted it for you; and having completed it for you...He reminds you: "I have tasted it for you!" He reminds you: "I was made perfect through it so that I am able to save you through it!"
- C. You will not die, but live...for Christ has tasted all death; for Christ has perfected all suffering...leading these to lose their conquering power since they were conquered by Him so that we are not alone in our suffering...listen, He is speaking to you:

Isaiah 43:1-3: *"But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. <sup>2</sup>When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when*

*you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. <sup>3</sup>For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."*