

Welcome & Intro :: The Purpose of Suffering?

The Purpose of Suffering? - posted by thesaintdan, on: 2008/8/15 15:06

We all suffer with various things right? - relationship problems/physical ailments/unmet desires but how do we find God amidst it all and most importantly keep a right attitude about it all.
 I find it so easy to doubt God and to get resentful and just give up, I'm not about to completely give up but just give up on hoping.
 Obviously through it all our faith can grow, we become more like Christ which is great but also really tough at the same time.....'our light affliction is but for a moment when compared to the eternal weight of Glory' Just as well then...

Re: The Purpose of Suffering? - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/8/15 15:20

I can relate and understand exactly what you are saying, seems the Christian life sometimes just is one loooooong fire with intense burnings and trials and sufferings. One reason can be we doing something wrong, The Lord said his yoke is easy and His burden light. So either we are carrying the wrong yoke, or we perhaps are lifting it wrong.

but we can always come ask HIM.

and i beg of you to take 30 minutes to listen to this message, it is profound and i never heard anyone speak about the Grace of God this deep.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid1373>) The Grace of God by T. Austin-Sparks

I know you will be blessed by this.

Christian

Re: The Purpose of Suffering? - posted by RevBenjamin, on: 2008/8/15 16:19

Quote:
 -----We all suffer with various things right? - relationship problems/physical ailments/unmet desires but how do we find God amidst it all and most importantly keep a right attitude about it all.

It is interesting many think just the every day problems of life that all suffer is equated with the fellowship of His sufferings.

I don't believe Jesus actually suffered unmet desires and such.

The purpose of suffering is the sufferings of a Christian, and our obedience that brings about that suffering.

Jesus became obedient unto death of a cross...as we too are to have this mind in us.

We die to self. A very painful process in our sanctification.

Unsaved people also suffer unmet desires, etc, but do they have that power within to overcome and triumph over our own desires, and do what He desires?

I don't believe they do.

Regards,

R.G. Benjamin

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2008/8/15 18:24

"Needless suffering" goes beyond the making or perfecting of godly character. Job suffered and it didn't give him better character (the Book already says he was blameless). Rather, he suffered ultimately to demonstrate the wisdom of God to wicked forces in heavenly places.

Re: - posted by Friedrich (), on: 2008/8/15 18:55

Quote:

KingJimmy wrote:

"Needless suffering" goes beyond the making or perfecting of godly character. Job suffered and it didn't give him better character (the Book already says he was blameless). Rather, he suffered ultimately to demonstrate the wisdom of God to wicked forces in heavenly places.

Amen brother.

Re: - posted by Friedrich (), on: 2008/8/15 19:15

Here is a short paper written by a youngster (me), but I think there are some good points in here about suffering. I am open to criticism on this work brothers; by the will of God may it bless some. I apologize about the formatting...

The Glory of God and the Fluid of Suffering

“But the fruit of the Spirit is... longsuffering...” (Galatians 5:22)

Suffering has been largely overlooked in modern European and Western Christianity despite the clear details that the Israelites, the followers of Jesus, and Jesus himself as God were all characterized by a spirit of suffering. This sufferance, ipso facto, has allowed them to attain the level of supernaturalism and unity with God which is attainable to anyone who is willing to enter this level of sonship. The sonship of God is other than what the world would perceive it to be; it requires revelation of and from God to understand the fulfillment of his will and the requirement thereof. Suffering is required for his glory; there is no substitute. The suffering that precedes his glory is not self-inflicted religious ascetic suffering; it is God-inflicted, resulting in his name alone receiving glory forever. Many professing Christians do not adhere to the God who would allow Israel to be so utterly reduced as a nation. Likewise, the Jews cannot stand a God who would come as a man and suffer as a half piece of flesh, naked, and humiliated, it contradicts every notion in their tradition of who the messiah would be. That is why it is written, “we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (King James Version, 1 Corinthians 1:23, 24). There is no need to argue the presence or definition of suffering. Both believer and nonbeliever encounter it regularly enough to know exactly what suffering is. The suffering this essay will address is the disliked kind, not like the type that one feels when they go lift weights to strengthen their muscles (Lewis 2001, 88). Christians are not to seek this disliked suffering which often comes in forms of waiting, trials, and tribulations; rather, a Christian should embrace all forms of suffering as to glorify God through whom is life indeed whether one suffers or not. Suffering is evident only since Adam and Eve ate of the tree of good and evil, A. G. Hogg writes: “The story of the Fall of Man has for its centre of interest not the origin of sin, of which it offers no explanation, but the origin of suffering” (Hogg 1922, 88). The Old Testament gives repeated accounts of human suffering. Maybe one of the greatest accounts is of the Israelites in the desert after fleeing Egypt. It is in this time of blindly traveling, waiting and depending wholly on God, that the Israelites receive the law of God and revelation of His righteousness. God allowed the Israelites to suffer so that the universe would experience the revelation of his manifold wisdom (Katz 1995). There is a clear doom/salvation union throughout scripture, and especially present with the Israelites (Raitt 1977, 11) which deserves attention that I cannot give it in this paper because of the complexities and misinterpretations found in it. On the other hand, the Israelites have made it axiomatic in the Old Testament that some form of sufferance precedes glory. The saga of Israel is still in motion and is being prophetically fulfilled, even now. The prophets spoke of the Israelites being scattered all over the earth (Amos 9:9) and also of God's redeeming power which will gather them together again (Jeremiah

31:10). Until the day when God restores Israel he will allow them, by delaying his action, to be scattered and reduced until they have become a stench to all nations. Isaiah said about Israel:

“Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still” (Isaiah 5:25). Only until it becomes utterly impossible for Israel to even cry out, “Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off...” (Ezekiel 37:11) will God receive glory in the regeneration of his chosen people. Some scholars suggest that Israel must suffer because they are God's chosen people; that, “whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Proverbs 3:12) and, the historic condition of the Jewish people – the destruction of the Second Temple and the exile of the Jewish people from the land of Israel – is not the direct result of the sinfulness of the people but of their favored status. The suffering of the Jewish people is a sign of their chosenness and future redemption, as well as of God's love for the people” (Batnitzky 2000, 208).

The Israelites then and Jewish people now, live out of the ability of their mind; they seek to do and to know but are not willing to be and to wait (Katz 1995). Jewish tradition perceives the people of Israel to be the suffering servant; they did not, and do not desire a son from God who would fulfill that position to prelude God's coming glory. Hogg suggests that the Israelites sought the supernatural Messiah, but not the suffering servant. If they would have known the latter was a prerequisite for the former they would not have missed the time of their visitation: In spite of this apostasy God's kingdom would still come in that generation; but

because of this apostasy it would be a kingdom strangely different from that of prophetic vision. It would be a kingdom in which Israel as a nation could exercise no distinctive spiritual function, for as a nation she had now finally sacrificed her birthright by failing to recognize the time of her visitation, and has doomed herself to political extinction (Hogg 1922, 100).

Judaism has never been blind to theological and ethical value in suffering, but unlike Christianity, has maybe never drawn a direct line between suffering and God (Batnitzky 2000, 205). The disciples of Jesus, being raised in the Jewish community, expected a political king Jesus rebuked them saying, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:25-26). Jesus Christ, was fully aware of the role of suffering in his life and knew that his death would be ignominious. Jesus is nowhere better summed up than in the cross and: “Suffering and rejection sum up the whole cross of Jesus” (Bonhoeffer 1995, 87). The early and present theology of the cross of Christ has not been radical enough according to Jürgen Moltmann; the cross is more than a door to

salvation for humankind. Moltmann, like Luther in his *theologia crucis*,² states that: The death of Jesus on the cross is the centre of all Christian theology. It is not the only theme of theology, but it is in effect the entry to its problems and answers on earth. All Christian statements about God, about creation, about sin and death have their focal point in the crucified Christ (Moltmann 1993, 204). Moltmann makes it clear in *The Crucified God* that it truly requires a trinitarian view of God to

understand the fullness of Christ crucified; that God also suffered what Christ suffered on the cross. Jesus suffered more than humanistic shame and pain on the cross, he bore the wrath of God as Isaiah prophesied, “it pleased the Lord to bruise him” (Isaiah 53:10). It was the death of God in Jesus Christ on the cross that makes God who he is. God is only as powerful as Christ was helpless on the cross, as great as Christ was humiliated, and as divine as Christ was human (Moltmann 1993, 205). It would be

worth while to go beyond these conclusions of Moltmann and say that as much as Christ was rejected by his own people will God be praised by them in the final age. The centrality of the cross in everything is no better summed up than in the last words Jesus spoke on the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30). To the same measure that the cross of Christ is in us, so will God be in us in his fullness. Art Katz makes note of the lack of the cross in modern Protestant and Catholic Christianity: “Maybe we've been able to accept it much too readily and easily. It's just not offended us as much as it ought. We really have not been stabbed by the repulsiveness of it, nor been stunned by its horror. Our faith has become domesticated” (Katz 1997). The Church truly needs a revelation of the true cross of Christ not only for personal redemption from this world³ but also in order to fulfill God's universal purpose for the Church. The Church can only overcome by her willingness to suffer, not by determination. Also, the Church can only provoke Israel to Jealousy by the glory of God revealed through her sufferings, which is the eternal purpose of the Church (Katz 1997). This is what Jesus called the Church to do, “If any

man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Luke 9:23-24). The motivation of the Church is not Israel's restoration, but the glory of God in Israel's restoration, as Katz explains: “The only explanation of a Gentile Church willing to embrace a calling so demanding as this is that the issue is not Israel alone, per se, but the glory of God that is obtained through Israel's redemption” (Katz 1995). Perhaps the reason the Church has overlooked the eternal purpose of its existence and been unwilling to consider the dramatic future of Israel is because each member of the Church has not welcomed the same apocalyptic and violent end in their own life by the hand of God. God is wanting to repeat a demonstration which he made in the creation of the world through his wo

Welcome & Intro :: The Purpose of Suffering?

rk of redemption. God's glory as creator can only be revealed in his complete redemptive work in men, women, and nations when they have become reduced to nothing and cry out in repentance, asking that God would supernaturally make their dead bones live.

Christ said to his Father, "let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt"(Matthew 26:39). Just as Christ drank down this cup, so must all who claim to follow him; for Paul said: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecution, in distress for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). God's glory is revealed in our suffering de facto the strength of a true Christian flows from Christ who is life, and he is life indeed! When the Church takes hold of this truth they will experience the supernatural life of God through Christ which will lead Israel to jealousy, thus resulting in the fulfillment of the restoration of Israel — which is the ultimate purpose of the universe and through which God will receive ultimate glory.

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2008/8/15 19:46

There is a wonderful book on this written by Horatius Bonar called "Night of Weeping, Morning of Joy".

I highly recommend it to you all.

Re: Suffering - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/8/16 8:05

Quote:

-----Job suffered and it didn't give him better character (the Book already says he was blameless).

Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Job 42:1-6

Re: The Purpose of Suffering? - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/8/16 8:17

Dear Hearts,—The choicest saints are 'born to troubles as the sparks fly upwards', Job v. 7. 'Many are the troubles of the righteous;' if they were many, and not troubles, then, as it is in the proverb, the more the merrier; or if they were troubles and not many, then the fewer the better cheer. But God, who is infinite in wisdom and matchless in goodness, hath ordered troubles, yea, many troubles to come trooping in upon us on every side. As our mercies, so our crosses seldom come single; they usually come treading one upon the heels of another; they are like April showers, no sooner is one over but another comes. And yet, Christians, it is mercy, it is rich mercy, that every affliction is not an execution, that every correction is not a damnation. The higher the waters rise, the nearer Noah's ark was lifted up to heaven; the more thy afflictions are increased, the more thy heart shall be raised heavenward.

... The afflicting hand of God hath been hard upon myself, and upon my dearest relations in this world, and upon many of my precious Christian friends, whom I much love and honour in the Lord, which put me upon studying of the mind of God in that scripture that I have made the subject-matter of this following discourse. Luther could not understand some Psalms till he was afflicted; the Christ-cross is no letter in the book, and yet, saith he, it hath taught one more than all the letters in the book. Afflictions are a golden key by which the Lord opens the rich treasure of his word to his people's souls; and this in some measure, through grace, my soul hath experienced. When Samson had found honey, he gave some to his father and mother to eat, Judges xiv, 9, 10; some honey I have found in my following text; and therefore I may not, I cannot be such a churl as not to give them some of my honey to taste, who have drunk deep of my gall and wormwood. Austin observes on that, Ps. lxxvi. 16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.'

(<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-10/web/brooks-mute-christian-00.html>) The Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod ~ Thomas Brooks

Re: - posted by murrcoir (), on: 2008/10/13 13:58

Quote:

KingJimmy wrote:

"Needless suffering" goes beyond the making or perfecting of godly character. Job suffered and it didn't give him better character (the Book already says he was blameless). Rather, he suffered ultimately to demonstrate the wisdom of God to wicked forces in heavenly places.

Job 42 v 5 I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.

Job entered into a deeper relationship with God through suffering. Yes Job was blameless but he had only heard of God with the hearing of his ears. Then Job declares but know my eyes see you and know I repent. To see God you must have a pure heart.

Mathew 5v8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

So although Job was blameless he was not pure in heart. Job was cleansed made pure but he had to go through suffering first.

Any man that God is going to use must go through that suffering (testing, sifting). He must have a pure heart. (Clue as to why there is so much wrong in the church today)

Matthew 4 v 1 Jesus taken into the wilderness to be tested.

Luke 22v31 Jesus tells Peter that Satan has desires to sift you as wheat.

Men that have claimed to have been made Holy, (some call it the Second blessing, Christian Perfection and/or Sanctification) speak about a crisis time just before the purification. This crisis time they mention is the sifting that Satan performs. God will allow this to happen as it serves his purpose, as it shows the man what is really inside him. Imagine the dry place, the wilderness, no one to turn to, the devil tempting and testing you see if there is any wicked way in you and having full permission to do it. Can you imagine it what it's like, can you imagine what comes up to the surface in your life.

So do you still want to be a Man of God, do you still want to be the man that moves your nation back to God, well then be prepared to be just like Job.