

Your Part in The Plan To Destroy Wickedness

Being Faithful to God – Living for God - Christ's Example to Be Followed

1 Peter 4:1-4 Christ suffered here on earth. Now you must be ready to suffer as he did, because suffering shows that you have stopped sinning. **2 *It means you have turned from your own desires and want to obey God for the rest of your life.*** **3** You have already lived long enough like people who don't know God. You were immoral and followed your evil desires. You went around drinking and partying and carrying on. In fact, you even worshiped disgusting idols. **4 *Now your former friends wonder why you have stopped running around with them, and they curse you for it.***

Suffering helps us be like Christ, yet people will do anything to avoid pain.

- ***Followers of Christ***, however, should be willing and prepared to do God's will, ***even when it requires suffering.***

People whose lives change radically at conversion may experience astonishment or possibly contempt from old friends.

- They may be scorned because they refuse to participate in certain activities
- But also, because their priorities have changed
- And they are now heading in the opposite direction.

1 Peter 4:12-14 - Suffering for God's Glory

12 Beloved do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; **13** but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. **14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you**, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

CEV - 12 Dear friends, don't be surprised or shocked that you are ***going through testing*** that is like walking through fire. **13 Be glad for the chance to suffer as Christ suffered.** It will prepare you for even greater happiness when he makes his glorious return. **14 Count it a blessing when you suffer for being a Christian.** This shows that God's glorious Spirit **is with you.**

- Again, Peter brings to mind Jesus' words: ***"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. (Matthew 5:11)***

1 Peter 3:13-18 - Suffering for Right and Wrong - 13 Can anyone really harm you for being eager to do good deeds? 14 Even if you have to suffer for doing good things, God will bless you.

So, stop being afraid and don't worry about what people might do. 15 Honor Christ and let him be the Lord of your life. Always be ready to give an answer when someone asks you about your hope. 16 Give a kind and respectful answer and keep your conscience clear. This way you will make people ashamed for saying bad things about your good conduct as a follower of Christ. 17 You are better off to obey God and suffer for doing right than to suffer for doing wrong. 18 Christ died once for our sins. An innocent person died for those who are guilty. Christ did this to bring you to God, when his body was put to death and his spirit was made alive.

- Instead of being afraid of people, **believers are to focus on Christ.**
- This means **Jesus is Lord of our hearts.**
- Where fear **formally dwelt!**

- You **may not** be able to keep people from ***speaking evil against you***,
- **BUT** you **CAN stop supplying them with ammunition.**
- **KEEP your conduct above their criticism...**

The story of Job begins with a very wealthy man who had a reputation of being upright and full of integrity, as well as perfect in heart.

- **Satan is told to then enter God's presence** where God challenges him as to consider Job and how he loves God.
- **Satan excuses Job's dedication** for his true desire for the material possessions given as blessing from God.
- God then **allows** Satan to destroy all Job's possessions and children!
- However, **Job retains his integrity** and refuses to blaspheme God.
- **He has trust in God.**

Satan is then challenged by God once again.

- Satan then **excuses Job's continued dedication** by **the assertion that Job's own flesh** was not touched.
- Satan reasons that **if God should let Satan touch Job's flesh**, then **Job would not** continue to **stand true for God.**

- He says (Satan), that a man **may give all** he has **to continue to exist** and not be personally harmed.

In both instances of trial upon Job, **Satan accused Job of being selfish.**

- **The first debate** over Job had Satan say **Job was selfish** and it was *because of the materialism* God had blessed him with **that Job stayed true** to God.
- **The second debate** had Satan see *the first argument was wrong*, so he insists **selfishness was still part of Job's life.**
- **Satan says Job** was perhaps **more selfish** than initially thought.
- **Job would indeed give up all**, including his houses and livestock and even children, if his own life could be spared.

Satan could not imagine someone genuinely loving God!

Satan was said by Jesus to have **fallen** like lightning from heaven.

- **Lucifer** is told in **Isaiah 12** to have fallen from heaven.
- Most agree that **Lucifer is Satan.**
- If so, **Lucifer was in glory** and held **a powerful position** in heaven.
- And he was so **self-centered** that he sought to **lift his own throne above the throne of God.**
- He was so **self-centered**, that he **reasoned if he could not truly love God with all his blessings,** then surely **a mere mortal like Job** does not truly love God.
- But **Satan was so wrong.**

The story of Job shows Satan touching Job's flesh directly and inflicting boils and sores, showing us that some sickness can be direct attacks of the devil.

- **Job's wife** even urges him to curse God so that God would slay him and put him out of his misery.
- **Job refuses.**
- **Naked he came into the world** and he will leave naked.
- Though God slay him, yet **Job would still trust God.**

Three arrive to **comfort Job**, but wind up **charging him with iniquity.**

- **Three rounds of debates begin** at this point between the "friends" of Job and Job.

- These men insist that **Job must have committed some sin** for the tragedies to befall him as they did.
- **Job insists he is innocent.**
- These men **cannot** understand **suffering without a reason** of iniquity for it.

This is where our sermon today truly digs into the issue of how we have a part in destroying wickedness. Chapters 3 through 37 show this debating going on.

God comes along after time, and **he scoffs at the three others' viewpoints**, and offer his own.

Read the reasonings of the men who thought suffering demands there have been iniquity as cause for it in the form of punishment.

Job 4:7-8 - 7 “Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? 8 As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it.

- After all this, **God reveals Himself awesomely to Job** and the others.
- It is false that anyone who is good and innocent will never suffer!

Job 38:2-3 - 2 “Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? 3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.

- **It appears God is rebuking Job.**
- Telling him to **simply accept what God does** and **not to ask questions**,
- Which has been the opinion of many scholars, plus some critics of recent times **seeking to find fault with God**. **God himself is the standard.**

But it's far more noble than that!

- As God reveals his glory, **we begin to hear God speaking** about **BEHEMOTH and LEVIATHAN**.
- As we read **descriptions of these creatures**, **God is referring to Satan!**
- **Satan** - The one who **first** came to God and **sought to show Job a pathetic, selfish fake** who truly **did not love God** at all!

Behemoth Large Land Animal = Job 40:19 - It ranks first among the works of God, yet its Maker can approach it with his sword.

This Reminds you of Lucifer being the first and highest of all angels.

Leviathan was a sea creature - Job 41:19-21 – 19 Out of his mouth go burning lights; Sparks of fire shoot out. 20 Smoke goes out of his nostrils, As from a boiling pot and burning rushes. 21 His breath kindles coals, And a flame goes out of his mouth.

- **Leviathan breathes forth fire like a dragon.**
- **Rev. 12:3** says **Satan is the dragon John saw in the vision.**

Job 41:33-34 - 33 On earth there is nothing like him, Which is made without fear. 34 He beholds every high thing; He is king over all the children of pride.”

Leviathan rules over all the worldly "**sons of pride**" as their king, and "**on earth is not his equal.**"

- God is referring to **the one who first came to speak** to him regarding Job!

Can Job bind this fearsome devil? Job 41:1 - God's Power in the Leviathan - “Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, Or snare his tongue with a line which you lower?

- While Job was a **wealthy and powerful** man at one time.
- His reach was **nothing compared to the unlimited power of God**.

Job 41:5 Will you play with him as with a bird, Or will you leash him for your maidens?

- **God asked Job** rhetorically if **he could catch it and turn it into a pet**.
- **Job obviously could not capture or kill it.**

Job 41:8-10 - Lay your hand on him; Remember the battle—Never do it again! 9 Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false; Shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him? 10 No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against Me?

Why is God mentioning the destruction of the devil?

- **The true picture and intent of this story begins to unveil!**

Job was told to humble this being.

- **He was challenged by God to track down and hide and bind this devil.**
- But this is **impossible** for man to do... alone.
- However, **we are not alone!** **God is with us!**

Job then, in awe, speaks to God humbly and confesses his weakness.

God addresses the others and *rebukes them and notes that Job* is indeed upright, and they were so wrong in thinking suffering is only due to sin and iniquity on the part of the sufferer.

Job 42:7-10 - 7 And so it was, after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. 8 Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.” 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord commanded them; for the Lord had accepted Job. 10 And the Lord restored Job’s losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

- **Job is sort of resurrected** into status and wealth again,
- With precisely twice as many cattle as he had before, **A double portion!**

Job acts as a high priest in making atonement *for his friends* at the command of God to the friends to take sacrifices and go to Job that Job might pray for them.

But the message I have in all of this today is that God brought up the issue of controlling and binding the devil after Job's suffering occurred.

- And **it was the devil** who was behind all of Job's sufferings.
- Is this not like Christ's cross and suffering while **Christ** remained innocent?

Satan deals with people as weaklings in his own mind.

- They are as helpless as sheep!
- In fact, ***Jesus was God manifest in flesh***.

In Revelation 5, John saw God on the throne holding a book and a voice bidding one to come and retrieve the book.

- None ventured forth, and John wept and wept.

- We know this is speaking about ***gaining atonement for man's sins***, because **verse 9 informs us** that when the book was taken, **man was redeemed by the blood of Jesus**.
- So, it's little wonder that **John weeps so terribly**, ***since man could not be redeemed if none are worthy*** to take the book.
- But then ***John is told to see the lion of Judah who prevailed to take the Book***.
- **John sees not a lion, but a lamb!**
- The lamb was apparently slain yet **standing on its feet!**

What is weaker than a Lamb?

- You can lead a lamb to slaughter, **it remains dumb, silent, W/ no fight back**.
- **God was manifest in flesh as a weak man**.
- **Through the suffering and weakness of a man, that Christ defeated the devil!**

Now we know **why God mentions the devil** after **He allowed the devil to cause Job to suffer**.

Our part in the work of God destroying wickedness is a great one! Satan looks at us **as weak**, and **we are!** However, **God uses weakness to destroy wickedness!**

The greatest show of **weakness** was Christ's crucifixion, led like a lamb dumb to the slaughter.

But that cross of suffering defeated hell's hold on man, for all those who would accept its work.

When you feel like you are being **cheated and treated unfairly**, remember that Job was, too!

- ***When Job was treated so by wickedness, he held onto his integrity w/ God***
- And it turned out that **God destroyed wickedness' rant and bragging using Job**.

God brought down **those who were proud in their accusations against Job** to their knees!

If you give up before God is finished with His work in defeating Satan, you will spoil God's purpose in using you to destroy the wickedness.

- God stopped by this morning to unveil the picture of what is really occurring behind the scenes, because someone needs to know.
- It encourages us while we suffer, when we live right, to know that behind the scenes - God is using us to destroy wickedness.
- Satan played himself into God's hands as a pawn!
- Satan caught the bait of attacking weak humanity!
- Alone we cannot bind the devil, but with God, in Jesus' name, we can!

You need to always remember that God allows such suffering because He is fixing to draw Satan into a trap and then smash him for it.

Hold on when things are not fair.

- Many think that living right is not worth it if they're going to suffer unfairly.
- However, they do not know what good God is doing!
- He is using them to defeat wickedness!

Many give up living right, and let themselves go to sin because they think life is not fair anyway.

- Don't fool yourself!
- The devil is soon going to be dealt with THROUGH YOU,
- if you'll let God do what He needs to do!
- And you will share the glory of victory in defeating the devil!

Don't give up and live loose. Don't give up and sin. Hold on! You can do it! God will not let the devil do more than you can bear.

He is letting the devil do enough to entrap him and eventually destroy him.

You are being used to destroy wickedness.

Acts 5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

God reveals His glory through this strange means of the innocent suffering.

- He is not the one causing suffering.
- But God is doing so to destroy wickedness.

Hold on! God sees what you are going through. He is **not ignorant** of your plight.

- **If you are sincere, and only you and God know that, and are suffering due to no iniquity nor sin on your part, then God is using you!**
- You have **the spirit of glory resting on you!**

Job's suffering was like Christ's. He was innocent and did not sin. But suffered.

Peter told us that **if we suffer having done no wrong**, then **we are sharing Christ's sort of experience**.

- **We know what Christ accomplished through his suffering!**

He destroyed wickedness!

Satan cannot understand someone loving God and suffering for no wrongs done, and still loving God!

- **He cannot even understand what I am saying to you, and he does hear me.**
- **Satan is insane with evil and selfishness and hate, that he cannot believe people can love God and hold on when things get hard.**
- So, let us continue to **allow the spirit of Glory to rest upon our lives!**
- When we suffer for **no wrongs done, then the Spirit of Glory is on us!**

You know what the spirit of Glory did when Christ suffered and died!

- It raised Him from the dead, and **over all evil and wickedness!**

Let the spirit of glory rest on you by holding on to God even when you suffer for no wrongs done!

You are being used by God to destroy wickedness.

Do not spoil what God is doing!