

LIVING FOR GOD'S GLORY

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SERIES: Living For God's Glory

TITLE: Program 14 – Suffering: The Pathway To Glory

THURSDAY

OPEN

Are you tired of suffering? Are you absolutely worn out? Do you wonder, “God, why am I suffering so much? Why am I having to deal with these broken relationships? You know my heart. Why am I going through these trials? And why are my loved ones suffering?” O Beloved, suffering is the path to glory. We’ll talk about it today.

PART ONE

O Beloved, when you understand from the Word of God that suffering is the path to glory. It’s that glorious path that enables you to show to others the glory of Jesus Christ, the glory of God. And when you understand that, it puts almost a sweetness to the suffering. It puts like an inner contentment deep into your heart. It gives you a sweet satisfaction of knowing that God has trusted you to walk this path so that others might see His glory. In 2 Corinthians chapter 3, in verse 18, we have looked at the scripture several times. But it moves from 3:18 right into chapter 4 where we get this concept

of suffering being a path to glory. And that's what I want to share with you, Beloved. And I know; I know that if you will give me a chance to explain to you the Scriptures, to take you through these truths, that God will use it to take the bitter and make it sweet. So that as you go through the suffering, there will be a smile in your heart, in your heart of hearts that will enable you to walk in an intimate relationship with God and make you determined that you are going to guard His glory no matter the pain, no matter the rejection, no matter what anyone does to you, or no matter what you suffer, that you will just have a sense of the sweet approbation of God. Let's look at it, 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 18. It says, **"But we all, with unveiled face...,"** (2 Corinthians 3:18) now he's talking to those that have become servants of the New Covenant, that have come to realize that Jesus is the Messiah. And who have, in a sense, eaten His flesh and drunk His blood, which means that they have entered into this covenant meal with Him and received forgiveness of sins and become children of God. So, **"...we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord...,"** we look at Jesus, **"...are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."** (2 Corinthians 3:18) We look at Jesus and we are changed. Now I want to stop there for a minute and just take you to the book of Hebrews. The book of Hebrews was written to a group of people that were suffering because of their identification with Christ. They basically were Jewish people who had come to believe that Yeshua, that Jesus, was the Messiah. And having believed, they were now rejected by their own people, and they were rejected by the world because they were persecuting Christians. They were taking away their property. They were putting them in prison. You see this in Hebrews 10. You see this in Hebrews 13. And so what he's doing is, he keeps showing them Jesus. He keeps showing them Jesus. Now we saw Hebrews 1, that [Jesus is the glory of the Father. He is the exact representation of God's nature.] (PARAPHRASE, Hebrews 1:3) [We see that Jesus became flesh and blood,

and tasted death for everyone so that we might be delivered from sin and that we might glorify God, that He might bring many sons to glory,] (PARAPHRASE, Hebrews 2:9-10) as we saw in Hebrews 2, verse 10. Well then we come over to Hebrews chapter 4 where he's showing us, "Hey, you don't have an ordinary priest in Jesus. [You have a **"...priest [after the] order of Melchizedek."** (Hebrews 5:10) You **"...have...[a] high priest [who can] be touched with the feeling of [your] infirmities...."** (Hebrews 4:15, KJV) So in Hebrews chapter 4 this is what he says in verse 14, **"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession."** (Hebrews 4:14) Hey, don't quit confessing Jesus Christ! Don't abandon your faith! Don't go backwards! He says, he wants them to press on. He wants them to continue to believe. And so he's saying to them, **"For we [don't] have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin....let us draw near [then] with confidence to the throne of grace...that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in [the] time of need."** (Hebrews 4:15-16) And it says that Jesus, **"Although He was a Son, He learned obedience [through] the things which He suffered."** (Hebrews 5:8) And so he goes on to tell us in 2 Corinthians, "Look, you're going to suffer. But suffering is the path to glory." (See 2 Corinthians 4:17) Look at the truth of the Word. Look in the mirror of God's Word. You see that Jesus, John chapter 1, verse 11, **"...came [to] His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them [He gave the] power to become the sons of God...."** (John 1:11, KJV) You see in Isaiah 53 the prophecy about Him. And the prophecy was that He was despised and rejected of men, **"...despised and rejected of men....,"** (Isaiah 53:3, KJV) but glorified by God. Jesus prays, as we saw in John 17, ["Give Me the glory that I had with You before the world was.] (PARAPHRASE, John 17:5) **"...Father...glorify Your Son, [so] that the Son [might] glorify You."**

(**John 17:1**) So we behold His glory. We see that His path to glory was through suffering, and we can see then that our path to glory is through suffering. Now, chapter 4 of 2 Corinthians, verse 1, **“Therefore, since we have this ministry...,” (2 Corinthians 4:1)** and when he says, “this ministry” it’s referring back to 2 Corinthians chapter 3, the ministry of the new covenant. **“...Since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.” (2 Corinthians 4:1)** In other words, we’re not gonna quit. We’re not gonna faint. We’re not going to give up. Now he’s gonna mention we do not lose heart at the beginning of the chapter and then when you get to verse 16, he’s going to say, **“Therefore we do not lose heart...” (2 Corinthians 4:16)** We don’t lose heart, why? Because suffering is the path to glory! He says, **“...we do not lose heart,”** chapter 4, verse 1, **“but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame....” (2 Corinthians 4:1-2)** Our past that we hid, that we covered up, that we painted whitewash over although it was black and dirty; that past we have renounced. **“...we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God....” (2 Corinthians 4:2)** To adulterate the word of God means to make it impure. To adulterate sugar is to put salt in it. To adulterate salt is to put sugar in it. You mix two things that look like the same, but they’re not. And he says, **“...but by the manifestation of truth [we are] commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:2)** What is he saying? He’s saying this, “Listen, we are here on this earth to glorify God. We are being changed from glory to glory to glory into the image of God. It’s not easy, but we’re not losing heart. We have renounced the things that really distorted the image of God that really kept man from seeing the glory of God.” In Romans chapter 1 and I think it would be good for you to look there for just a minute. But in Romans chapter 1 and we’ve already looked at this chapter, but in Romans chapter 1, he talks about not glorifying God as God. In Romans chapter 1 he says in verse 19 he’s talking about

“...God is evident within....” (Romans 1:19) There’s a God-consciousness here. God is evident within creation. But it goes on to say, **“Because that which is known about God is evident within them...”**[God made it evident to them]...**For since the creation of the world His invisible [power and divine] attributes, His...divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood [by that which] has been made, so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:19-20)** But God is going to deal with them. Why? Well, go back to verse 18. It says that, **“...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth [in their ungodliness,] in their unrighteousness.” (Romans 1:18)** He says: That’s the way we lived before. You could not see the glory of God in us because the image was so distorted. But because we are on the path to glory, we have renounced the hidden things. We have renounced the sin. We have renounced the craftiness of life. And now we are walking in purity. So you go back to 2 Corinthians chapter 4. He says, **“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.” (2 Corinthians 4:3)** And they’re perishing because they can’t see the glory of the gospel in Jesus. We’ll talk about it in just a minute.

PART TWO

I’m so glad you’re back! I’m so glad that although we’re talking about suffering that you want to know and understand that it has a purpose. And it does have a purpose. And once you know that purpose, once you grab a hold of that truth, Precious One, I mean, you’ve got a truth that you can hold on to that will carry you through all sorts of suffering. You know, I was just reading a brochure from Voice of the Martyrs and I love Richard Wurmbrand. And I had the privilege of meeting this man who was in prison, who was tortured for his faith. And one day I was at the Christian Booksellers Convention and someone said to me, “Did you see Richard Wurmbrand?” And I said, “No!” They said, “He’s here!” Well I knew that

he was tall. I knew that he had white hair. But there are lots of tall men at the Christian Booksellers Convention with white hair! But there was one way I knew I could identify him. And I went down the aisles looking to see if I saw the white hair on the tall man. And when I saw white hair on the tall man, I looked from his head to his feet. And I knew that if he didn't have on shoes that that was Richard Wurmbrand. Why? Because that dear man had been so tortured on his feet that he could never again put his feet in shoes. He was marked by his suffering. And when you stood, and when you talked to him, when you looked in his eyes, you saw Jesus. You saw that there was Someone that was worthy of laying down your life for. There was Someone that was worthy of following even though it led to a cross. And as I read just these little notes from people that are suffering and we have people that are suffering. But even as I read them, Precious One, I saw them say, "We're just telling you about our suffering, not for you to feel sorry for us. But so that you might pray for us that we would be faithful and glorify God in our suffering." Let's go back to 2 Corinthians chapter 4. And listen very carefully. He says, ["We have forsaken those things of the past. We are by manifestation of the truth."] (PARAPHRASE, 2 Corinthians 4:2) In other words demonstrating truth, "...[We are] **commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And** [even if our conscience] **even if our gospel is veiled....**" (2 Corinthians 4:2-3) In other words, even if they don't get it, even if they don't believe, even if they think they're saved by works and that they don't need Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. It's "**...veiled to those who are perishing.**" (2 Corinthians 4:3) The fact that they don't get it shows, hey, they're perishing. They're lost. "**In whose case the god of this world....**" here's another description of Satan, and I put a red pitch fork over it, "**...has blinded....**" now watch, "**...the minds of the unbelieving....**" (2 Corinthians 4:4) Duh! They don't get it. It doesn't compute. And when you meet someone and you're sharing with them and I mean, they're in la-la land, or they don't want to hear it or whatever. You

can know this, hey Satan has blinded their mind, so that, now listen carefully, **“...so that they might not see the light of the...glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:4)** Their minds are blinded. And they miss the glory of Jesus, **“...who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves....” (2 Corinthians 4:4-5)** Remember, if we’re going to glorify God, we’re not going to seek our own glory. So we don’t preach ourselves. I mean, if you’re all hung up on your wonderful, awesome testimony and the fact that you can stand before crowds and you can get lots of money as a speaker, and you can ask for it: you’re on the speaker’s bureau, and they’re buying your books and they’re loving you. And they’re laughing, and they’re praising God and that. But they are just absolutely adoring you. And you’re caught up in the fact that it is your testimony and you’re wowing them. Oh, Precious One, Precious One, fall on your face and repent. Fall on your face and repent. You know I was just talking to the head of a women’s ministry. And this was confirmed over and over again. She said, “We want people to come and minister. They want \$9,000 to \$10, 000 for a weekend! And they bring the same canned message.” I can tell you the people that are doing that are not seeking the glory of God. And he says, **“...We do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants...,”** a bond-servant was a slave, **“...for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shown in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:5-6)** In other words, you look at Jesus. And you and I look at Him by looking at the gospels, by looking at all that was written about Him. I look at Jesus, and I see the glory of God. And I remember God doesn’t share His glory with any man. But because the Father and the Son are one, I look and I see the glory, the true estimate of Christ. And the true estimate of Christ is the true estimate of the Father. Have you got that? So that when people see me, they’re to see what Jesus is, what Jesus has done. The glory doesn’t stop with you. It goes on.

He says, "...‘Light [will] shine out of darkness,’ [this] is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of...God in the face of Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6) Now listen, here's the suffering. **"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels...,**" in a human body. **"...so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves."** (2 Corinthians 4:7) We, we who have this vessel, we who have Jesus inside of us, we who [our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit that are to glorify God.] (PARAPHRASE, 1 Corinthians 6:19) **"...we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not [of] ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body...,**" in our human bodies, **"...the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus...may be manifested in our body."** (2 Corinthians 4:7-10)

Suffering is the path to glory. In other words, as I suffer, that suffering is showing me that I am going to be in heaven. It's Romans chapter 8, Romans chapter 8, verse 16, **"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children...heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him."** (Romans 8:16-17) Suffering it is the path to glory. And we're going to look at it more in the next lesson. I just want you to know, don't despise the sufferings. Rejoice in them. It equals glory!