

NECESSARY ROUGHNESS PART 2

Matthew 16:21

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Apparently, Jesus saw his suffering as necessary (a “must”). But, just as suffering was a *must* for Jesus, it’s also a *must* for anyone who will follow Jesus!

Matthew 16:24

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Why is it necessary that we suffer? Suffering is necessary if we want to...

CEASE FROM SIN

1 Peter 4:1

1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

Notice, we “suffer in the flesh” that we might cease from sin. Therefore, we can’t cater to the flesh and expect not to sin. If we truly want to cease from sinning, then we have to stop giving ourselves (our flesh) what it wants. But, this will not come without some pain, either *internally* (in our mind), OR *externally* (from others)!

1 Peter 4:4

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

Sometimes our greatest suffering will come in the form of persecution. No one likes to be an outcast. Therefore, sometimes to avoid being an outcast we will do what others are doing, which is pleasing (being *kind*) to their flesh.

Matthew 16:22

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

“Be it far from thee, Lord” is another way of saying, “Be *kind* to yourself, Lord.”

Matthew 16:22 *Young's Literal Translation*

22 *And having taken him aside, Peter began to rebuke him, saying, 'Be kind to thyself, sir; this shall not be to thee;'*

There are a lot of well-meaning people who will plead with you to “be kind” to yourself and avoid *any* kind of suffering.

Acts 21:10–12

10 *And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. 12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.*

Notice, Paul's friends (like Peter) tried to persuade him *not* to go Jerusalem where he would no doubt encounter trouble.

Acts 21:13, 14

13 *Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. 14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.*

Paul's companions continued to urge him not to go UNTIL they realized he would not be persuaded. This tells us that persecution (suffering) will continue *until* we prove we will not change our mind!

Unfortunately, many are showing mercy to themselves choosing not to carry out the *full* sentence against their flesh.

1 Kings 20:28–31

28 *And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. 29 And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day. 30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left.*

And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber. ³¹ And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life.

Although God had delivered the enemy into Israel's hand, Ahab refused to carry out the full sentence against his enemies by utterly destroying them. In fact, Ahab (and the other kings of Israel) developed a reputation for being “soft on crime.”

Are we guilty of the same thing today? Have we developed a reputation for being *soft on sin*?

1 Corinthians 5:1, 2

¹ It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. ² And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

The Church at Corinth was notorious for their immorality. Therefore, it's not surprising that they had a reputation for not judging sin (sinners). In fact, Paul said that they were “puffed up” or proud of their *liberalism*. However, Paul reminds them that their failure to confront sin was bringing harm on the body!

1 Corinthians 5:6

⁶ Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

Therefore, suffering is necessary if we want to...

SAVE THE BODY

Matthew 18:7

⁷ Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Again, we are told that offences **MUST** come (i.e. they are *necessary*). What is an offence? An *offence* is anything that promotes sinful behavior or tempts you to sin. Also, offences can come from *without* (like in the case of Peter when he tried to prevent Jesus from going to His cross, Jesus said “Thou are an *OFFENCE* to me”), OR offences can come from *within* (i.e. our own selves/flesh)!

Matthew 18:8

8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

Dealing with an offence (putting it away) can be similar to amputating a limb (hand, foot, etc). In other words, dealing with offences can be quite painful. However, failing to deal with an offence can be even MORE costly (i.e. “cast the whole body into hell”)!

Jesus offers more insight into this issue when he contrasts our *reluctance* to leave (or abandon) what offends with God’s *willingness* to abandon what offends!

Matthew 18:12, 13

12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? 13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

People wonder why anyone would leave 99 just to save 1? It sounds like bad math. But, we have to understand that the number 99 is associated in the Bible with the *flesh*.

Genesis 17:24

24 And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

Abraham circumcised his flesh at 99! Therefore, when Jesus talks about “leaving the 99,” He’s talking about how God is willing to abandon the “many” (those who are Jews according to the flesh) for the “one” (those who are Jews by faith).

If I had to summarize this series in one statement, I would say, “The hard thing is often the needful thing. Therefore, don’t avoid the hard thing for the easy thing when the hard thing is the needful thing.”