

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A Practical Guide to Living Out The Law of Christ, Pt 7

Selected Passages

Keywords: The Law of Christ, Holiness, Obedience, Love, Sanctification, suffering

PowerPoint Presentation included: A Practical Guide to Living Out The Law of Christ role of suffering.ppt

SermonAudio Blurb: Having resolved that the bible teaches that the New Testament believer is not under the Law of Moses, but rather, the Law of Christ, the question is then raised, “What does this look like in one’s life?” This series seeks to help bring out the various facets related to holiness, sanctification and godliness in the life of a believer. Today we begin to see the role of the Holy Spirit in how we are able to obey the Law of Christ. In this sermon we see the role that suffering plays in moving us toward godliness, obedience and Christ-likeness..

I. Introduction.

- A. We again come to the issue of living out the law of Christ in the life of a Christian.
- B. God has not left us to ourselves as His children. He has given us “everything pertaining to life and godliness. . . .” (2 Peter 1:3). This comes in two basic ways:
 - 1. Through the Word of God.
 - 2. Through the Holy Spirit.
- C. I want to bring our attention to a final way that we can live out the Law of Christ today and it is through the testing ground of suffering.
- D. Martin Luther gave three key parts to effectively studying theology. Through prayer, meditation on scripture and through testing or suffering.
 - 1. Theology, when you learn it for its own sake, is a waste of time usually.
 - 2. But theology, as Luther viewed it, is the foundation off of which everything I do or do not do builds. And so, if we are to be stable in our theology then it must be tested through trials and suffering.
 - 3. Because only through the testing that suffering brings, does the validity of your theology show to be solid or but a vapor.
- E. The Church of God was born in the midst of suffering and bloodshed—our Lord’s.
 - 1. And it continues on to this day. The call of the gospel is not just to get saved. Rather it is far more glorious and far more dangerous.

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2. It is a call to take up our cross and follow our Lord.
3. And this is what we will explore together today.

II. A Practical Guide to Living Out The Law of Christ.

- A. Beloved, I can say one thing with absolute certainty: all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
 1. Do you know why? (2 Timothy 3:12). It is found in the prepositional phrase, “in Christ Jesus.”
 2. It is the truth that all who are Christ’s will suffer in one degree or another simply because they are Christ’s and they seek to live for Him.
- B. Let me ask this simple question to each of you: Do you really wish to follow Jesus?
 1. Matthew 8:19, “Then a scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”
 2. John 15:20, “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”
 3. Matthew 10:25-28, “It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! “Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. “What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. “And do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
 4. 1 Peter 2:21, “For to this you have been called, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps.”
 5. 1 Peter 4:12, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you.”
 6. Acts 14:22, “. . . strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘Through many afflictions we must enter the kingdom of God.’”

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C. Matthew 16:21-25.

1. Vss 21-23 Note the “package” deal. Both the suffering, death, and resurrection were all part of His calling.
2. Vss. 22-23 is a parenthetical event.
3. Vss. 24-26 Jesus continues with his lesson on His own sufferings, death and resurrection. But now it involves those who wish to be His disciples.
4. “Deny self.” Something Christ certainly did. Something that we find often repulsive, though we would not like to admit it.
5. “Take up cross.” Speaks of the suffering that we are called to endure.
6. “Gain world” . . . “lose soul.” Here we see that there is a connection between suffering and salvation.
7. Beloved, this says that we are called to cross bearing. We are not greater than our Master, we are expected to walk as He has walked.

D. Acts 9:15-16.

1. Vs 15 seems pretty cool. Paul is going to be used to influence all sorts of people. But notice the “for” in vs 16.
2. This shows us that not all will suffer alike. There are different callings. But I believe that all believers will suffer and that we must not spend a lot of time trying to escape it.

E. Romans 8:17-28.

1. Vss 1-4 he is preparing to connect our suffering with our Lord’s.
2. A mark of a believer is setting his mind upon the things of the Spirit. (5) Those things bring about life and peace (6).
3. The Spirit dwells in us. He is called Christ’s Spirit and because of His presence in us, Christ is present as well.(9-10a).
4. Vs. 10b describes that “here and not yet” concept that we have spoken of before.
5. Vs 14 gives the mark of a Christian. To be led by the Spirit is one who submits to the will of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.
6. Vs 17 is beautiful but with an edge to it.
7. Vss 18-28 then brings this whole thing together.
 - a. Suffering is a battle of the mind more than the body (18).

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- b. Suffering is seen everywhere we look and all of creation yearns for the coming new age (19-22).
 - c. We also groan and hurt. But we must not focus on that; rather, we look to the coming fulfillment (23).
 - d. And in all of this the Holy Spirit intercedes for us (26).
 - e. And we live by faith and NOT sight (28).
- F. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5.
- 1. Note how the afflictions of Paul were potential stumbling blocks for these believers.
 - 2. Suffering is a process used by God to perfect His saints. But it is also used by Satan to cause us to shipwreck our faith.
 - 3. But only when we take on the false belief of victimhood. Only when we begin to murmur that it is not fair, that we did not deserve this or that.
 - 4. Only then is our faith ready to crash upon the rocks prepared by our enemy.
- G. 2 Thess 1.
- 1. Here we see that the Thess. Church also was called to then endure suffering and hardship.
 - 2. Note the great value that Paul places upon spiritual growth. And note that this growth is not some vague growth of mere knowledge or grasping of deeper things in the Word. Rather it is focused in a relational realm, in their love toward one another.
 - 3. Note that this spiritual growth is a work of grace. It is not a place for boasting or arrogance. Paul is giving thanks to God for their growth, why? For the growth comes through God.
 - 4. Notice that in vss 3-4 that love and faith can, and I believe, should, thrive and prosper even in times of suffering.
 - 5. This goes against the common conception of living as Christians. We find ourselves easily depressed in the times of difficulty and the reason is that our hearts are not directed toward being satisfied in God. Rather, we are looking to this world and the things of this world for our satisfaction.
 - 6. In vss 5ff we see then the presence of God in the midst of these struggles. How God is not absent or helpless when wrong things are perpetrated upon us. Rather, He is mysteriously and marvelously present.

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- a. We can learn here that this suffering is a preparation for the kingdom of God. Suffering and persecution has a winnowing effect.
 - b. It clarifies and purifies. It has a way of causing many of the false professors, false believers to fall away. And it has a way of building and confirming the true believer as his faith is strengthened by the grace of God.
7. Vss. 6-9 gives the basis for our ability to persevere in the midst of suffering and persecution. What is the promise? Christ's return and His judgement of all who have mocked us as believers, all who have hated us as believers. It will be a time of giving of relief from our labors.

I think that child birth is the best sense of this passage. The woman endures much discomfort for nine months. The time of birth comes but with great pain and even agony. Yet she perseveres for there is a promise at the end of it all, the new life in her arms.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Nothing reveals your heart more than suffering. It strikes at the depths of your soul and brings out the hidden things.
- B. Nothing shows your areas of weakness and disobedience more than trials and hardships. This is the parable of the soils in Luke 8.
- C. Nothing clarifies things the way suffering does. It brings everything into very simple terms. It burns away options that clutter our minds.

Benediction

May our God cause you to rejoice in the Lord, to be made complete in all aspects, and to be comforted by the Spirit. May He move in and among us to be like-minded in the Word and to live in peace with one another. Amen