

Living in Union with Christ

Session #6 - United with Christ in His Suffering and in Our Suffering

**All Saints Church
2024-04-07**

<https://georgekong.me/asc/living-in-union-with-christ.zip>

introductory question

What connection is there between experiences of suffering in our lives and the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ?

you are here

Sessions

- 1) Living in the Presence of God - Psalm 139, Psalm 1, proactivity, "bring it on"
- 2) Taste and See - The Affections and Loving God - Edwards, Piper, Smith
- 3) Union With the Present, Loving Lord Jesus Christ - John 14
- 4) Your Sanctification Story in Christ - Ferguson, Macaskill, Johnson, Powlison
- 5) Your Calling in Christ and Christ in Your Calling
- 6) United with Christ in His Suffering and in Our Suffering**
- 7) United with Each Other Through Christ

Christ was called to suffer

... he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

[Heb 2:14-18]

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ... Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

[Heb 4:14-5:10]

we are called to suffer

... if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

[1Pet 2:20-21]

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ... [Matt 16:24]

... they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

[Acts 14:21-22]

... all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted ...

[2Tim 3:13]

our union with Christ in His suffering

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. [Gal 2:20]

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. [Rom 6:3-11]

our union with Christ in our suffering

... I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. [Phil 3:8-11]

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. [1Pet 4:12-14]

our union with Christ in our suffering

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church [Col 1:24]

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. [2Cor 12:7-10]

our union with each other in our suffering

But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. [1Cor 12:26]

suffering as discipline

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. [Heb. 12:7-13]

suffering as training

... we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. [Rom 5:3-5]

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. [James 1:2-4]

suffering and glory

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. [Rom 8:18-19]

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith - more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. [1Pet 1:6-9]

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. [2Cor 4:16-18]

joy in suffering

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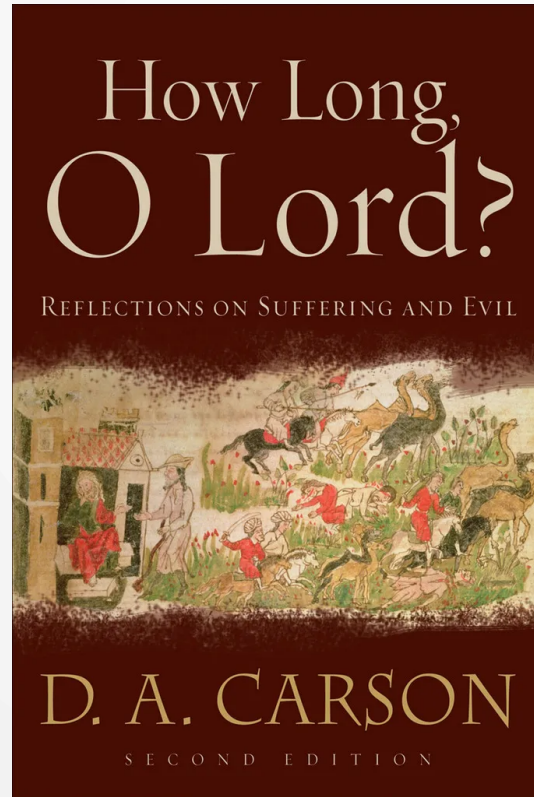
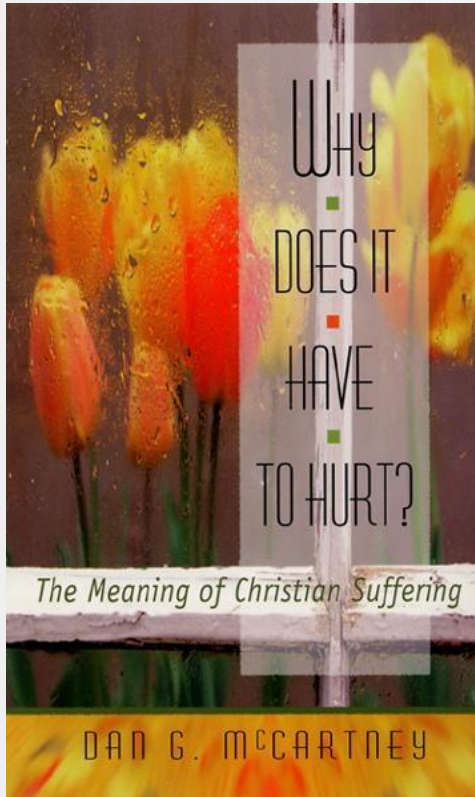
Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body ... [Col 1:24]

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Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven ... [Matt 5:10-12]

for further study

Douglas Wilson interview - problem of evil - <https://georgekong.me/for-smallgroup/wilson-tbn.mp4>



our stories

My Story

- reading *Why Does It Have To Hurt?* by Dan McCartney, major family health issues

Your Stories

- How do these biblical perspectives help you understand a past or present experience of suffering in your life?
- The Bible texts we've looked at give many benefits of suffering - fellowship with Christ, the presence of the Spirit, the power of Christ, the peaceful fruit of righteousness, endurance, character, hope, steadfastness, maturity, and glory. Share an experience of suffering in which you are conscious of having received one or more of these benefits.