

Turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians Chapter 11 and we will be looking at verses 24 to 33 today. As we have learned through the past two chapters, the Apostle Paul has once again felt he needed to defend his ministry. He has been labeled as one that truly does not care, false teacher, and is doing all this just for his benefit. But, with every accusation, the Apostle Paul has graciously, lovingly, and at times needing to be very pointed, has refuted and debunked each accusation.

He has proven that those who are making these accusations have actually proven themselves to be the people that are in it all for themselves and will do anything and use anyone to keep their power or create more power for themselves.

In the verses we are about to read, Pastor Kevin began this thought that the Apostle Paul brings to light that if he was in it for himself, would he really endure all that he has endured. Paul used sarcasm to make a point and said if you think me a fool, then do so! Hey, listen to me! I am talking like a madman! The Apostle Paul once again makes a point that if you want to compare notes. Let's compare notes!

Hebrew? I am! Israelites? I am! Offspring of Abraham? I am, line of Benjamin! Here is the big question though! Servants of Christ? Now we are getting to the bottom of this. It is not by a letter, nationality, pedigree if you will, or good works, but by a life totally committed to the Lord Jesus Christ to bring Jesus glory that Paul is going to show them.

What Paul shows the church in Corinth is the physical and the spiritual sufferings that he has been through. What he shows them are things that we may look at as defeats but what was accomplished through his sufferings were victories. Would I really go through all of this if I was not committed to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus and to you so you can know the truth and you can learn through my suffering and learn through your own suffering to be totally surrendered to the Lord Jesus. Let's Read God's Word!

2 Corinthians 11:24-33

²⁴ Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷ in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? ³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, ³³ but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

What Paul has detailed here in these 10 verses is the physical and spiritual sufferings of a man solely dedicated to a life of proclaiming the truth of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now when we think of the word suffer or suffering there are probably many thoughts that come to our mind. The thoughts of suffering through a sickness as many of you have. There are several of you that have and are dealing with cancer, heart disease, constant pain that persists through your body. I was reminded of an elderly lady that Lori's grandmother would invite over for the family Christmas Eve meal in Kentucky. Mrs. Medford!

I remember the first time I asked her this question. I said, “Mrs. Medford, how are you doing?” Mrs. Medford said, “Well, old Arthur has been pretty rough on me!”

I thought, well she must have a pretty mean husband. But what she was referring to was her constant pain she suffered from with her arthritis.

There may be financial issues that we may suffer through. Anxiety, depression, the emotions of a loved one dying as you will miss that person in your life. All legitimate thoughts and emotions due to this fact. We live in a broken world because of sin. Romans 8:20 to 22 speaks to this.

Romans 8:20-22

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

There is going to be pain, death, hurt, and struggles we all go through. But did you catch in verse 20 that even in the sinful act of Adam and Eve that brought this suffering to mankind there is hope! In our sin we are separated from God but God, while that sin was taking place, had the plan in place that brings us hope in all circumstances on this earth. A Savior, a redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Jesus spoke to these issues of the physical pain and suffering we will naturally encounter because of this broken world. In John Chapter 6 verse 25 Jesus said this:

John 6:25

²⁵ “Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

Even with that thought, just a few verses down, Jesus tells us how to handle all things.

John 6:33

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Here we see the first lesson in learning through suffering. Seek God first! His righteousness! Not our righteousness, because we have none outside of Jesus Christ. Not our will! Not our strength! But all in accordance with the Word of God because that is the first place we go as we seek God!

But let’s face it! We do not like to suffer. We don’t like to be inconvenienced or surrender our will or our lives that goes against our plans. Now the suffering I mentioned earlier are circumstances that we all are going to go through in this life. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and those that are lost.

The suffering we want to focus on today is the suffering that we are called to and should be willing to go through. Because what is our goal? To bring glory to the Lord Jesus and for the sake of his name so that he is praised and worshiped. That many will come to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ did you know that we are called to do exactly that. We are called to suffer! We have an example to this calling. Turn to 1 Peter Chapter 2:21-24.

1 Peter 2:21-24

²¹ 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. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

We have been called to suffer and we see that Jesus left us an example for us to follow. Jesus' suffering is twofold. But one main purpose behind both.

Just as we read, he was maligned, reviled, threatened, he was constantly harassed by the Pharisees and Scribes. Remember two weeks ago when we read how the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians that they were taking all this abuse from the Judiazers and mentioned that you even put up with someone that strikes you in the face. We know that Jesus was struck in the face.

Recorded in the Gospel of Luke Chapter 22, at the time of his arrest. Jesus was waiting to come before the Sanhedrin and the men surrounding him blindfolded him and as they were mocking him, they were slapping him, saying, "Prophesy! Who struck you!"

The Apostle John records in Chapter 18 that as he is now standing before the Sanhedrin, Annas, who was at one time high priest, but is the father-in law of Caiaphas, who is presently the high priest, asks him a question about his disciples and his teachings. Jesus answers the question and then one of the temple officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand. Jesus answered, ***"If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?"***

This brings us to an important point. What was Jesus' suffering for? Truth! Jesus was revealing truth! Yes, Jesus is the The Way, The Truth, and The Life! No one comes to God the Father but through him! Jesus was the fulfillment of all the prophesy of the Old Testament. Jesus said to Pilate these words when Pilate and Jesus were having the discussion if Jesus was a King.

John 18:37

Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose, I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

Now, Jesus embodies and is the revelation of all Truth and speaks all Truth and all of it is contrary to the pharisaical, self-righteous, I am good on my own merit culture of that day and of our culture of today.

Jesus was an example of how in our spirit and in our response to being reviled should be. It was done with humility. He spoke when he needed to, and he didn't speak when it wasn't necessary. As we go through those situations the Holy Spirit will give us the discernment to know what to do in those situations. As we have learned in Corinthians there is a time when we let our body of work speak for itself and then there are times that we must speak directly to the circumstance.

Once again may we be reminded we are not talking about the suffering that we face because we just live in a broken, fallen, sinful world (sickness, death). It isn't suffering we have brought onto ourselves because of sin or bad decisions. It is suffering for the Truth of who Jesus is and that the need of salvation for all people comes through Jesus Christ. It is the suffering for the sake of the name of Jesus.

As I mentioned Jesus' suffering on this earth could be looked at as two-fold. Yes, he is the example for us to follow if we are suffering for the cause of Jesus, for the Gospel. But ultimately Jesus' suffering was to bring redemption for all of mankind.

1 Peter 2:24

24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

I pray that this is not too familiar to us. But may I show us and remind us with pictures and Scripture of what Jesus suffered for the redemption to all that will repent and surrender to the Lord Jesus.



We just read from 1 Peter 2:24. ***By his stripes we are healed.*** That verse is used a lot of times speaking to sickness but in context it speaking to our redemption. It is the stripes, if you can even call them that, that he experienced from the scourging he received.



Mark 15:16-20

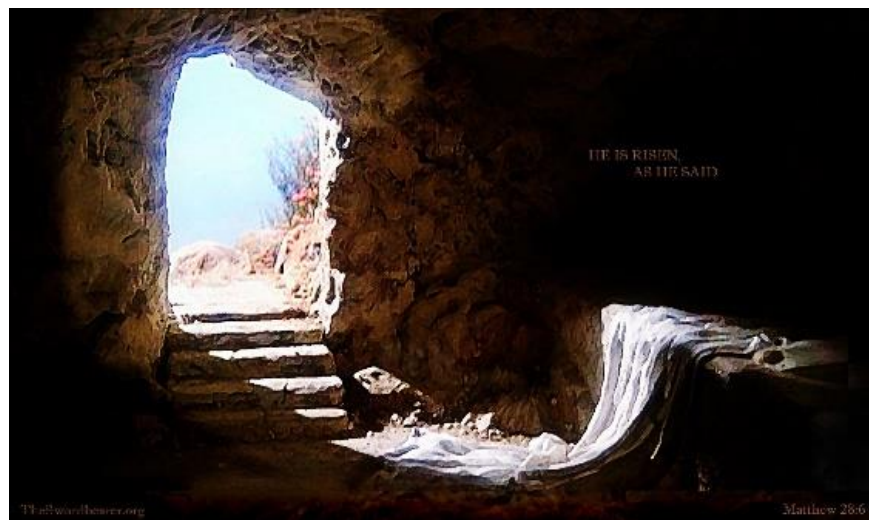
¹⁶ And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. ¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. ¹⁸ And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹ And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. ²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.



Philippians 2:6-8

⁶ Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus. Jesus was buried in a tomb and then what happened 3 days later.



Jesus arose! 1 Corinthians 15:3-6 - ³ *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,* ⁴ *that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,* ⁵ *and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.* ⁶ *Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.*

After Jesus' resurrection Hebrews 1 verse 3 describes it this way. That after Jesus made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. In Philippians Chapter 2 that we read earlier it describes Jesus' humble obedience to what God the Father has called him to do brought him to death on a cross. But because of his obedience God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name above every name, so at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, and every knee will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

Jesus, yes, our example on facing suffering. But through his suffering salvation is available to all that will repent and follow him. Meaning what ladies and gentlemen? Meaning we will obey, and we will live in obedience to his word.

When we stand and say this is the Word of God! This is absolute truth! When we say that Jesus is the Way, The Truth, and the Life! We will suffer. Are we willing? But what do we mean by suffering? Let's look at Paul's list again.

1. Scourged – 5 times
2. Beaten with rods – 3 times
3. Shipwrecked – 3 times
4. Constant Danger – All the time

Is that what we mean? Possibly? Are you willing? As we look at these remember the Apostle Paul is continuing to defend his ministry and his credibility as an Apostle. Remember what Jesus continuously warned his disciples about?

Matthew 10:24-25

A disciple is not above his teacher nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

Jesus made it very clear to the apostles that there was going to be a life of suffering. In that Chapter of Matthew Jesus warned them they would be brought before courts, governors, and kings for his sake. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death.

When you bring the truth before lies there will be a contention. There will be a battle that rages. When light is brought into darkness. The darkness will fight against the light!

You may ask, well that is the disciples. How does Paul fit into this situation?

Remember Paul was Saul, and he was persecuting followers of Christ. Even putting some to death. On the road to Damascus, he was met by Jesus and a bright light surrounded him and he became blind. Jesus revealed himself to Paul and he was then led into Damascus and a disciple named Ananias was told by Jesus to go and seek Saul and lay his hands on him. Ananias was like, Uh Lord I know who this is! Somehow like Jesus didn't! Come on Ananias! You are speaking to Jesus here!

In Chapter 9 of Acts verse 15 and 16, Jesus says this to Ananias:

Acts 9:15-16

¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”

Paul knew it was going to be hard. But he was willing to go forth and face those hardships for the sake of Jesus' name. But I want to show you verse 28 again in 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 11:28

²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

The beatings! Yes, they were hard. Possibly looking over his shoulder a lot wondering what was coming next. The scourging's, stoned, shipwrecked! I couldn't imagine. But I can relate to that verse. Paul says there are other things, but this is what is before me all the time.

The daily pressure of his desire to make sure all the believers are doing well. How are the churches doing? Are they getting it? Are they living for Christ? Are they studying the Scriptures? Are they praying? Are they truly maturing in their faith? Are they staying bold in face of opposition? Are they being deceived and following heretical teachings from false teachers and the lies of the culture around them that is trying to pull them away?

Are people repenting of sin and turning from their sin? Are they willing to hold the Bible in their hand and say this is God's Word and is Truth for every aspect of life! Especially to the point of salvation is only through Jesus Christ and that he calls us to a life of complete submission to his Word and follow him and that will bring suffering.

That is the weight that your shepherds bear daily for this flock.

In verse 29 to 31 Paul wrote:

2 Corinthians 11:29-31

²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? ³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

Paul once again to give affirmation of his call, he says, I am boasting only in what gives the Lord Jesus glory. Not myself! All that I went through, the physical beatings, the personal attacks, if that brings you closer to Jesus, I am willing to suffer. I am willing to take the ridicule, I am willing to take the imprisonments so someone will come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord.

Why? Because there is a hell to shun and a heaven to gain. There is an eternity for every person on this earth and it is in one of two places. Heaven or Hell! That is determined by whether they repent of their sin and turn to Jesus or don't.

Paul knew something about this suffering though. There is something that is always with him and at the end of each time he suffered. God's peace and God's grace. That is why Paul could look all this in the face and pen these words also from Romans 8 verses 18.

Romans 8:18

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

If we can get our eyes off ourselves and our desires and get focused on Jesus and look to eternity, then the temporary pleasures of this world are not worth going after or seeking.

Though it may get hard! Peace! Though we go through suffering because we are willing to stand on the truth of God's Word! Grace! Well done, good and faithful servant! That is where we learn to take this life and with open hands say as Jesus said in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Not my will Lord, but yours be done!" "Here am I!"

Do you profess to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ? Then according to Scripture, you are a disciple. Jesus said you will suffer for his sake. Peter said in Chapter 4 verse 12 why are you surprised when fiery trial comes against you to test you. James, Jesus' half-brother said, "Count it all joy my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds that test your faith!"

At this time, we may not be suffering as described of what Paul went through. At this time, we may not be suffering like our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan are suffering not knowing when they may be dragged out into the street and killed. Same with so many of those that live in these countries that are hostile to the Gospel.

But if you, if I, profess to be a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ then our suffering can look like this. When the temptation comes I will not be sexually impure, which is any sexual act outside of marriage between a man and a woman. Though the temptation to lie, to steal, to curse, to slander, I will not.

To read and study God's Word and to pray I may have to sacrifice a little sleep, a little TV time.

If you have taken God's Word and comprised the truth so you can live a selfish, fleeting pleasurable lifestyle you may have to suffer and repent and say no more. I am standing on the truth of God's Word.

Will we suffer a little ridicule, a little discomfort, to share the Gospel with a lost person? I want to share some statistics with you as I close. As you know we support Scott and Anna Kilby as missionaries in Queens, New York. Where they live there are people groups from about every country in the world. They were having a training session in their home with other believers of how to go out and share the Gospel and he sent this to me.

New York's population is around 20,000,000 people

74% are estimated to be lost

2020 – 164,817 deaths

That means 121,964 went to Hell

10,164 per month

2245 per week

335 per day

14 per hour

With someone dying every 4 minutes with Jesus as their Savior

Are we willing to suffer for the sake of Jesus? Are we willing to suffer for the sake of someone's soul? Someone did for you to come to know Jesus!