

Strength in Suffering

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It is a 'universal language'...it is no respecter of persons...no one is exempt from potentially experiencing it...not even a believer! The Great Apostle Paul was a man who endured much suffering throughout his ministry (see 2 Cor. 11:23ff.). Here in his final 'swan song' to Timothy, he offers some insightful counsel concerning what to draw upon when we suffer. These are words of affirmation and encouragement from a 'seasoned veteran' of the faith who has been on the front-line of faith battling in the trenches on a daily basis!

SUMMARY:

The Apostle Paul's life is literally on-the-line and we find him in a Roman Prison. Previously, he was under 'house-arrest' (A.D. 60-62, see Philippians 1:12-14). Time is short and he has so much to pass along to this young protégé concerning the ministry. It appears as though Timothy may not be 'measuring-up' in certain ways due to the persecution of Nero, difficulties in pastoring the believers at Ephesus or perhaps due to his connection to Paul. Paul firmly reminds him to 'stir up the gift' and not to succumb to 'fear' (timidity)...which is not from God! Here is the mighty Apostle Paul who has planted churches, authored many letters, mentored people, preached countless sermons and has even healed people in Jesus' name. He has literally 'lost' everything...but one thing. He has 'kept the faith' despite his intense suffering (see 2 Tim. 4:7). The word for 'suffering' 'pascho' (in Greek) used in this passage means, 'to endure intense pain, to be vexed, distraught.'

NOTES:

What practical counsel does Paul offer us as we potentially experience 'suffering, pain or trials' in our lives?

- G _____ F _____ (1:5)
- G _____ F _____ (1:9)
- G _____ F _____ (1:16)
- G _____ F _____ (2:3)

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Describe a time when you personally went through a time of 'intense suffering' for the cause of Jesus Christ...how did you feel?
- What did you do to help you endure through such trials?
- Did you have someone who encouraged you as you went through this painful time? Who was it and what did they do to 'help' you?
- Notice the Apostle Paul's commendable attitude. How important is our 'attitude' in the midst of suffering?
- Peter tells us that we have an 'example' in the Lord Jesus Christ as One who suffered mercilessly and 'we should follow in his steps' (see 1 Peter 2:21ff.). What 'strength' does Jesus Christ supply as you go through times of suffering?
- Timothy seemed to need this 'pep talk' from this seasoned veteran, Paul. Have there been times when 'fear' has taken root in your life? What do you do at those times?

APPLICATION:

To recognize that we have One who suffered on our behalf (see Isaiah 53) and He offers us supernatural strength that we can draw upon in 'times of need!' That is what sustained Paul throughout his ministry and life!

ON YOUR OWN...

Please Read & Meditate Upon The Word

2 Timothy