



Suffering With Our Savior

Section 1: Suffering with Purpose

John 9:1–3

1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” 3 Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

When the disciples saw suffering, they assumed guilt and blame. That was the acceptable cultural explanation of the time, which sometimes permeates our world today. But Jesus reframed it, because while there are consequences for our actions, not all suffering is punishment. Sometimes physical suffering is solely a function of biology or heredity, and it can become a platform for God’s power and glory to be revealed.

Questions:

The disciples assumed the man’s suffering was caused by _____.

Jesus said the suffering existed so that the _____ of God might be displayed.

God can use our suffering as a _____ to reveal His power to others.

How do you think God can use one person’s suffering for the benefit of others? _____

“This happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

John 9:3

Section 2: Suffering as a Disciple

Take Up Your Cross

Matthew 16:21–26

21 From that time Jesus began to point out to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem and to suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised up on the third day. 22 And yet Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You!” 23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s purposes, but men’s.”

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself,



take up his cross, and follow Me. **25** For whoever wants to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. **26** For what good will it do a person if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul? Or what will a person give in exchange for his soul?

Jesus makes clear: being His disciple is not about comfort, but about commitment. He gave everything for us because He loves us unconditionally. Therefore, loving and serving Him is about doing His will, not ours. Suffering should not be a surprise for us; it's part of the calling. But it's a natural desire to want our lives to become comfortable, so the expectation to avoid loss can permeate our lives. Discipleship is found by surrendering to Christ, not surrendering to what makes us feel good.

Questions:

Jesus calls His followers to _____ themselves.

Taking up your cross means choosing _____ over comfort.

According to Jesus, we find real life by _____ it for His sake.

Why do you think Jesus said to Peter: "Get behind me, Satan"? _____

Supporting Scripture

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Matthew 16:24

Section 3: Suffering Right Next to God

Matthew 26:36–46

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and told His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." **37** And He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with Him, and began to be grieved and distressed. **38** Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."

39 And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." **40** And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and He said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? **41** Keep watching and praying, so that you do not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

42 He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cup cannot pass away unless I drink from it, Your will be done." **43** Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. **44** And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time,



saying the same thing once more. **45** Then He came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. **46** Get up, let’s go; behold, the one who is betraying Me is near!”

Questions:

Jesus was honest with the Father about His _____.

God did not remove the cup, but He gave _____.

Obedience through suffering ultimately leads to _____.

If Jesus knew that His disciples would fall asleep, why did He emphasize to them the importance of being awake with Him? _____

_____.

“Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

Matthew 26:39

Section 4: Suffering That Speaks the Gospel

2 Corinthians 4:7–10

***7** But we have this treasure in earthen containers, so that the extraordinary greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; **8** we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; **9** persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed; **10** always carrying around in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.*

Suffering doesn’t silence our witness—it amplifies it. When believers endure hardship with faith, the life of Jesus is made visible. God uses people with difficult circumstances to display eternal hope, because it is in the greatest challenges that the world expects to see great failures, yet Jesus gave us the example of giving up His life and conquering everything.

At any given moment of any given day of your struggles, your suffering may seem like a burden only you recognize. It can seem like your pain is pointless, solely destructive to you and those you love, but what Paul teaches is that your pain is a witness for Jesus Christ. Because while you are afflicted, you are not crushed under the weight of struggle. You may be dumbfounded by why it is happening, but you keep going. It feels like the greatest kind of persecution upon your life, but you know God is with you. You may often be brought to your knees, but you keep focusing on Him in prayer. In the truest way, your existence is a testimony of what Jesus died for, because you are dying every day in to reveal His power in your life.



Questions:

We are described as jars of _____ holding God's treasure.

Our weakness reveals that the power comes from _____.

Through suffering, the life of _____ is revealed in us.

What does understanding this responsibility for Jesus do for your perspective? _____

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

2 Corinthians 4:7

Key Insight

Suffering is never wasted in God's hands. Whether it reveals His power and plans, refines our discipleship, draws us closer to Him, or helps us express the Gospel to others, He meets us in our suffering and brings purpose to it. Even when there seems to be no explanation why—such as the blind man—God can use it for His purposes, which are to bring others to salvation through Jesus Christ. We are afforded great opportunities to bring others to Him when we allow our worst pain to be used for good.