

MEANINGS OF SUFFERING
Follow Christ
Banská Štiavnica, 30th January 2022

<p>כִּי לֹא יֵצֵא מֵעָפָר אֱנוֹן וּמֵאֲדָמָה לֹא יֵצְמַח עֵמֶל כִּי־אָדָם לְעֵמֶל יוֹלֵד וּבְנֵי־רֶשֶׁף יִגְבִּיהוּ עֵוֹף</p>	<p>Job 5:6-7 For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble sprout from the ground, ⁷ but man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.</p>
<p>Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ θλίψιν ἔχετε· ἀλλὰ θαρσεῖτε, ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον.</p>	<p>John 16:33 In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.</p>
<p>Ἀγαπητοί, μὴ ξενίζεσθε τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη, ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος·</p>	<p>1 Peter 4:12 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.</p>
<p>ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ χριστοῦ, οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν·</p>	<p>Phil 1:29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake</p>

OUTLINE

0. INTRODUCTION

- 0.1. WHAT IS SUFFERING?
- 0.2. THE MEANING OF LIFE

1. BELIEVERS' SUFFERING

- 1.1. PERSECUTION FOR CHRIST
- 1.2. FATHER'S DISCIPLINE
- 1.3. CONTEMPT FROM THE WORLD

2. ACCEPTED SUFFERING

- 2.1. FRUITFUL LIFE
- 2.2. SPIRITUAL GROWTH
- 2.3. GLORY

3. RESPONDING TO SUFFERING

- 3.1. CRITICAL
- 3.2. HOPEFUL
- 3.3. FAITHFUL

4. TO REMEMBER

0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. WHAT IS SUFFERING?

- Is every suffering a “cross”?

- physical pain; war; catastrophe; hunger; sickness; imprisonment; torture;...
- psychological → fear; doubts; disappointment; bereavement; loneliness; depression;...
- social → deception; ostracism; hate; contempt; slander; persecution;

0.2. THE MEANING OF LIFE

- happiness?
- freedom?
- → created in the IMAGE OF GOD → meaning; joy
- → called to FOLLOW JESUS → fulfillment;

1. BELIEVERS' SUFFERING

- **Acts 14:21-22** When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that **through many tribulations** (διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων) we must enter the kingdom of God.

1.1. PERSECUTION FOR CHRIST

- “the cross” → **Lk 9:23** "If anyone would come after me, let him **deny himself** and **take up his cross daily** and follow me.
- **Mt 5:11-12** "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1.2. FATHER'S DISCIPLINE

- **Heb 12:7-8** It is for **discipline** (Εἰς παιδείαν ὑπομένετε) that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

1.3. CONTEMPT FROM THE WORLD

- **Mt 5:13** "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet
- **Dt 28:15** "But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these **curses** shall come upon you and overtake you

2. ACCEPTED SUFFERING

- **Rom 5:3-5** More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ 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

2.1. SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- **1Pt 1:6-7** In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, as was necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ 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.

2.2. FRUITFUL LIFE

- **John 12:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- **2Cor 4:11-12** For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us, but life in you.

2.3. GLORY

- **Rom 8:16-17** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs- heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.
- **2 Timothy 2:10** Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹ The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful- for he cannot deny himself. ¹⁴ Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.

3. RESPONDING TO SUFFERING

3.1. CRITICAL

- Avoid *self-pity*!
- submission → Paul in Philippi (imprisoned)
- defense → Paul sent out of Philippi
- modification → Paul to Rome (not from Jews)

3.2. HOPEFUL

- **Heb 12:1-2** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

3.3. FAITHFUL

- **John 6:67-68** So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,

4. TO REMEMBER

- It is impossible to avoid suffering and be human.
- The most important difference is *why* we suffer and *how* we respond.
- Suffering received from the hands of the Father makes us mature and fruitful as disciples of Jesus.