

Introduction .....	1
Undeserved Suffering .....	3
Suffering for Righteousness' Sake .....	8

**The Believer's *Poterion*: A Cup of Suffering**  
(Luke 13:1-5 & Various Passages from 1 Peter)  
Pastor Gene Giguere

<b>Introduction</b>
---------------------

1) Good morning, Church!

We are continuing our study of true biblical spirituality coming off of Jesus' words in **John 12:25** that, "Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

We've covered a lot of ground here.

- ✚ We've talked about the 'two circles' – one representing our *position* in Christ – a position we can never lose – and the other representing our *condition* in Christ – a condition that is constantly changing.
- ✚ We've looked at how the filling of the Holy Spirit keeps us from being deceived – a satanic strategy that will be Satan's most effective as the darkness continues to advance.
- ✚ We've looked at how every believer is compelled by God to be filled with the Holy Spirit as the very practice of his or her life. **Ephesians 5:18b**: "Be filled with the Spirit" – the *present passive* indicative of πληρώω (keep on receiving the action of being filled).
- ✚ And not only to be filled with the Spirit, but to *remain* in the filling of the spirit. True spirituality is continuing/abiding/remaining in the filling of the Spirit.

'Dying' to one's self,' or 'hating' one's life, or 'taking up one's cross' are all practically accomplished by being filled with the Spirit.

✠ And foundational to being filled with the Spirit is the idea of *surrender*.

So, we pulled over to consider the believer's daily presentation – that time, preferably in the morning, when we offer the members of our body – our fingers and toes and tongue – to the Lord for His service (**Romans 6:13**).

We do this as believer-priests (**1 Peter 2:9**), just as the Old Testament priest offered sacrifices pleasing to the Lord.

And so, we begin by confessing our sins (**1 John 1:9**) and asking the Lord to fill us with His Spirit (**Luke 11:13**).

We offer our bodies to the Lord as a living sacrifice for the day (**Romans 12:1**), surrendering control of our lives to Him.

We ask Him to keep us aware of His presence throughout the day so that we might continue in the Spirit's filling throughout the day. **1 John 2:27b**: "just as it has taught you, abide [continue, remain] in him."

We know that **Galatians 5:16** promises that if we "walk by the Spirit" we "will not gratify the desires of the flesh."

And so we listen for His leading and guidance throughout the day and obey what He tells us to do (see **John 14:26, John 16:13, Romans 8:14**).

**Galatians 5:25** calls this keeping "in step with the Spirit."

✠ We saw that all believers have a cup to drink – a *poterion* – which has been sovereignly mixed for each of us by God.

Our 'cup' represents the perfect will of God for our individual lives – and no two cups are the same.

But while each believer's cup is unique, no one's cup is unfair.

Our duty is to drink the cup the Lord has prepared for us individually.

✠ And finally, and of immense importance, *the believer's greatest goal is to glorify God and to always seek to please Him.*

We want to glorify Him through our lives – to make Him shine brighter in the eyes of others.

- 2) This morning, we're going to talk about suffering – the *good kind of suffering*, *undeserved* suffering – and consider how God uses it to glorify Himself through His people.

These constitute some of the deepest truths in Scripture and they answer some of the most-asked questions Christians raise.

Questions like, ‘*Why do bad things happen to good people?*’

And, ‘*Why does God allow those who love Him best to suffer most?*’

## Undeserved Suffering

- 1) Now, as I said, we have talked about the ‘cup’ that God has sovereignly mixed for each of us individually which represents His perfect will for each believer.

And without exception that each believer’s cup will include some measure of suffering.

Jesus said, “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (**John 16:33**).

Believers suffer for any number of reasons.

And, contrary to popular belief, being filled with the Spirit doesn’t make us immune to suffering; in fact, *it may present us to it!*

That’s because suffering is an essential part of *growing* to maturity and of *glorifying* the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our ultimate purpose in this life.

Paul said the quiet part out loud – the part believers don’t love – when he said, “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 ...” (**Philippians 1:29**).

All believers suffer pain and distress in this life.

We also suffer by watching others whom we love suffer – family members or friends – another form of suffering in and of itself.

Suffering can arrive in many forms – anything from physical pain, to depression, loneliness, anxiety, or even harassment or outright persecution because of one’s faith.

2) Now, there are two broad categories of suffering that believers experience in life – and they are very different indeed.

They have different causes, different purposes and different results.

They are so different that we’ll have to take them up separately.

I’m talking about *deserved* suffering and *undeserved* suffering.

*Deserved* suffering is the suffering we bring upon ourselves by continually saying ‘No’ to the Holy Spirit and embracing sin.

*Undeserved* suffering is the suffering we encounter just

✠ Because we live in a world of sin, or

✠ Because God is testing our faith in order to propel us to spiritual maturity  
or

✠ Because God is using us to glorify Himself in the eyes of others.

For example, think about a car accident that leads to a violent and sudden death.

That accident might constitute *deserved* suffering if you were driving drunk.

Or, it might constitute *undeserved* suffering, if you were killed by a drunk driver.

Jesus dealt with undeserved suffering when He commented on two current events which we know very little about: *Pilate’s Massacre* and the *Tower of Siloam Tragedy*:

“There were some present at that very time who told him [Jesus] about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? <sup>3</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

<sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” **(Luke 13:1-5)**.

Jesus is teaching us here that calamity can befall us *just because we're living in the world*.

It's likely that the Galileans who were killed by Pilate while offering sacrifices experienced *undeserved* suffering **(Luke 13:1-2)**.

These Galileans were apparently killed by soldiers of Pilate while they were in the act of slaughtering their sacrificial animals. Therefore, their own blood was literally “mingled” with the blood of their sacrifices.<sup>1</sup>

The same is true of the countless citizens who've been put to death by wicked governments, or who have suffered undeserved persecution because of their faith. You might just be in the wrong country when who you are or what you believe becomes unpopular!

The same is true of the 18 innocent people in Siloam who were killed when a tower fell on them **(Luke 13:4)**.

Jesus' point is that being killed or not being killed is not a measure of a person's righteousness.

Anyone can be killed in what we might call an undeserving way.

You might just be showing up for work on a Tuesday that is like any other Tuesday to your office in the World Trade Center and ....

---

<sup>1</sup> Bratcher, Robert G., *A Translator's Guide to the Gospel of Luke* (London, New York: United Bible Societies, 1982), on Luke 13:1-5.



But Jesus used this occasion to bring out a more important lesson.

He says it twice in our Text, in verses **3** and **5**: “I tell you; but unless you repent, *you will all likewise perish.*”

What did He mean by this?

Well, He’s *not* saying that unless you repent a tower will fall on your head!

He’s saying that *everyone* will die – and maybe unexpectedly.

And only repentance can make us ready for that moment.

Only repentance can give us the life we need to enter God’s kingdom.”<sup>2 3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Martin, John A., “Luke,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. by J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), II:240.

<sup>3</sup> Some think Jesus’ point may have been that death can be violent and sudden, or that He was looking ahead to the destruction of Jerusalem that was just a few years away (A.D. 70). Others think He was warning against dying tragically and perishing ultimately before God (Bock, Darrell L., *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996, II, 1206). In other words, “in one way or another disaster will strike all those who will not repent in the face of the new situation created by the presence and the ministry of Jesus and by his proclamation of the coming of the kingdom of God” (Nolland, John, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, Word Biblical

The only way to be delivered from the judgment that death brings is *repentance*, *μετανοεῖν* – changing one’s mind about who He is.<sup>4</sup>

3) When we think about disaster in life, we should consider that there are “three horizons of God’s judgment” identified in Scripture.<sup>5 6</sup> These are:

✠ *Judgements through human history* (such as the Cycles of Divine Discipline, **Leviticus 26:14-33 & Deuteronomy 28:15–68**);

✠ *The judgement for unbelievers after death* (‘Torments,’ **Luke 16:19-31**);  
and

✠ *The final judgment at the Great White Throne* (**Revelation 20:11-15**).

For believers, however, there is no condemnation (**Romans 8:1**).

4) *Deserved* suffering comes to believers as divine discipline when they’ve continued to grieve the Spirit or to quenched Him.

The nth degree of divine discipline is the sin unto physical death where the Lord takes the believer home early as a divine judgment (**1 John 5:16**, cf., **Acts 5:1–10, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 11:30**).

We’ll study all of these things in detail when we get to deserved suffering.

*Undeserved* suffering, though, comes to the believer for two important reasons:

The *first* is that God might *accelerate our growth to spiritual maturity*.

The *second* is that we might *glorify the Lord Jesus Christ through our suffering* in this life, only to be astonishingly rewarded forever in the Omega Ages.

---

Commentary, Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1993, 35B, 718). Jesus may simply be saying, ‘*Everyone is going to come to the same end*,’ that is, ‘*Everyone is going to die*.’

<sup>4</sup> Lenski, R. C. H., *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 724.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 35B, p.718.

<sup>6</sup> Cf., Korzec, Cezary (ed.), *Bible Caught in Violence*, European Studies in Theology, Philosophy and History of Religions, edited by Bartosz Adamczewski, vol. 22 (Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH, 2019).

## Suffering for Righteousness' Sake

- 1) It is a lie of modern-day bad theology that it is not God's will that His people should ever suffer.

The Bible teaches just the opposite.

Suffering is one of God's most effective means of advancing us to maturity.

Sometimes He strips away something that we love because it's hindering us from seeing Him more clearly or following Him more nearly.

God also uses suffering to glorify Himself in the eyes of others.

When mature Christians declare in the midst of intense suffering that 'God is good and worthy to be praised,' it stuns unbelievers into considering the depth and genuineness of their faith in the invisible God.

Job's story is well-known.

A man who was righteous, blameless in his generation.

The horrible disease that fell upon him – not to mention the loss of all his wealth, the death of his children, and the preservation of his miserable wife (**Job 2:9**).

All of this was allowed by God as a test of Job's spiritual maturity to see if he would depend upon God's provisions even in severely adverse circumstances.

Remember: at the heart of Job's suffering was *spiritual warfare* – Satan asking God if he could test him!

Suffering can come to us because of the wickedness others (as with Pilate's murder of the Galilean worshipers in **Luke 13:1**).

But it can also come to us because God is working deeply in us to bring about an important end.

That said, there is no believer who faithfully endures undeserved suffering that God will not reward astonishingly for all eternity in the coming cosmic renewal.

In **Matthew 19:28-30**: “Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world [the *παλιγγενεσία* – *the cosmic renewal or regeneration*], when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. <sup>30</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

All sacrifice will be rewarded.

5) In **1 Peter 3:14**, the Apostle talks about suffering “for righteousness’ sake.”

We can either suffer because of *unrighteousness* – because we’ve continually said, ‘No’, to the Holy Spirit – or we can suffer to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter mentions suffering “as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler” (**1 Peter 4:12**).

Peter’s words serve as a wonderful overview, a general introduction, to the subject of Christian suffering.

Consider his words and let the overall sense of these things to wash over you:

**1 Peter 3:8-9, 13-17**: “All of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. <sup>9</sup> Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing [reward] ...

<sup>13</sup> Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed [rewarded]. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it

is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

**1 Peter 4:12-16, 19:** “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 [don't say, ‘Why is this happening to me!']. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed [we will have no regrets when we meet Him]. <sup>14</sup> If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

<sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler [all *deserved* suffering]. <sup>16</sup> Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian [undeserved suffering], let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name ... <sup>19</sup> Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

**1 Peter 5:6-11:** “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup> casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Now, enter the *spiritual warfare* angle of Christian suffering:

<sup>8</sup> Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that *the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world*. <sup>10</sup> And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup> To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

- 6) It should be obvious from these words that suffering is very much a part of Christian life.

And, while we can certainly suffer because of sin – more on that next time – all throughout the history of the Church, godly Christians have suffered terribly for one simple reason: because *they belong to Jesus*.

Jesus told His followers in **John 15:18-20a**: “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”

So, being a Christian does not insulate us from suffering!

In fact, closely identifying with the Lord Jesus Christ may very well *present us to* suffering!

Why? Because *the world hates Jesus* – the *biblical* Jesus, that is.

So, Peter urges us to understand that there is a purpose for God allowing trial in our lives.

And what is that purpose: “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” (1 Peter 1:7)

Notice it: *suffering reveals the genuineness of our faith and abounds to “praise and glory and honor” toward God.*

So, *we glorify God* by faithfully enduring suffering in this life, and then *He glorifies us* for our faithfulness throughout all eternity.

That’s not what I call *unfair*; that’s what I call A DEAL!

Amen?