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“That the Name of Our Lord Jesus may be Glorified in You, and You in Him!” (2 Thessalonians 1:12)

Pastor Gene Giguere, August 9, 2026

Reading

“This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— ⁶since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ¹⁰when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. ¹¹To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹²so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Introduction

- 1) We have been studying Christian suffering in concert with Jesus’ admonition in **John 12:25-26a** that “whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves me, he must follow me ...”

To “hate” one’s life is to hate the life that we had in Adam before we were saved.

We do what Jesus is asking here by surrendering control of our lives to God the Holy Spirit.

Because the promise of **Galatians 5:16** is “walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Rather than relying on willpower to fight temptation, believers are to focus on a continuous, daily connection with the Holy Spirit. As this relationship grows, selfish desires fade into the background and God’s agenda for our lives comes front and center.

- 2) But following Jesus is *not* an easy road by any means. As Christians we *will* suffer. Furthermore, it may please the Father that we experience suffering.

Suffering for believers comes in two broad categories: *deserved* suffering and *undeserved* suffering. And we’ve seen that undeserved suffering takes place for two reasons: *First* is that God might *accelerate our growth to spiritual maturity*. *Second* is that we might *glorify the Lord Jesus Christ through our suffering* in this life, only to be rewarded forever all throughout the **Ω** Ages.

The point is, God may invest a mature Christian with the greatest of all honors he or she could possibly receive in this life: the privilege of glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ through undeserved suffering as one of His true disciples.

- 3) The Apostles Paul and Peter saw suffering as a fundamental part of each believer’s calling.

Paul saw undeserved suffering as a gift on par with the ‘gift’ of believing in Jesus: “It has been granted (**χαρίζομαι**¹) to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only (1) believe in him but (2) also suffer for his sake ...” (**Philippians 1:29**). Peter wrote: “To this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (**1 Peter 2:21**). Paul also expressed the desire to “know” Jesus and to “share his sufferings” (**Philippians 3:10**).

- 4) And so, we spent several Sunday’s studying the historical record of the early Church with respect to their commitment to suffer for their faith in Jesus. We looked at the martyrdoms of some of the Apostles, as well as Timothy, and

¹ The word translated “granted” – **χαρίζομαι** – means “to give freely as a favor, to give graciously.” Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 1078.

Polycarp of Smyrna, and Clement of Rome, and Ignatius of Antioch (ὁ Θεοφόρος), and others. People, who in the words of the writer of Hebrews, ‘the world was not worthy’ (**Hebrews 11:38**).

We saw that these magnificent early followers of Jesus saw the opportunity to glorify Jesus in their death as a gracious gift from the hand of God Himself! Contrary to the thinking of modern believers, they wanted nothing more than the opportunity to glorify in this life the One who gave His life so that they might live.

A Broken World and a Sifting Enemy

Now, both believers and unbelievers suffer undeserved suffering in this life for any number of reasons. But believers have an additional source of suffering that unbelievers do not. Some suffering is brought about by what we might call ‘natural’ causes. But other suffering is brought on by ‘supernatural’ causes.

1) Christians and unbelievers suffer just because we live in a world that has fallen into sin. People hurt one another, and they do it *on purpose*.

✝ A man will kill another man for a few dollars, or just because he can’t control his anger. Or perhaps because of some addiction that’s advanced to the point that he’s no longer making the choices in his life: the addiction is now deciding for him.

✝ Another will rape a person because he’s so powerless in his own life that he seeks to validate his impotency by dominating someone physically weaker. (Rape is far more often about *power* than it is about *sexual gratification*.²)

✝ A man, overtaken by greed, will steal from another the precious little he or she has to live on. Because of the greed that is built into the fallen human heart, some have far more than they could ever spend in a lifetime while others work three jobs to provide canned food for their family. This greed is seen on a national level too, when governments, like Haiti, become so

² Yonack, Lyn, MA, MSW, BCD-P, ‘Sexual Assault Is About Power,’ *Psychology Today*, November 14, 2017; <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psychoanalysis-unplugged/201711/sexual-assault-is-about-power>

corrupt that the billions of dollars sent to them in aid from other countries never make it to the poor people they were intended to help.

These sins which cause suffering to others will continue to ramp up in the last days, for Paul warns that “in the last days there will come times of difficulty.

²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive ...

³heartless, ... without self-control, brutal ...” (**2 Timothy 3:1-3**). I’m sorry to say that *all* of these spirit trends are on abundant display today in our untoward culture!

Add to that the fact that disease continues to run rampant – and plague-like global pandemics will not only be a part of the end times eschatological scenario, they will be a key component of it! In **Matthew 24:7-**

8, Jesus explicitly warns that “famines, pestilences, and earthquakes” will occur in various places – and that these are only the “beginning of sorrows.” You can also look at **Revelation 6:8**, where the fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse named ‘Death’ is given power to kill by means of sword, famine, and pestilence.

And so, all of these things constitute a significant source of suffering for believers and unbelievers alike. As Jesus said in **Matthew 5:45**, God causes the rain to fall on ‘the just and the unjust,’ or on ‘the righteous and the unrighteous,’ or on the ‘good and the evil’ – depending on your translation.

So, one reason we suffer is simply that we live in a broken world.

- 2) But there’s another reason why people suffer – and this one is unique to Christians. It’s one that those with an anti-supernaturalist bent often dismiss to their own detriment: We suffer *because we have a powerful enemy* – and it may please God to use him to test us.

Job’s trials are a perfect illustration of this – and, as we all know, Job is the oldest book in the Bible! I have no need to prove this to you; you know the Scriptures. Job’s sufferings come about because of a cosmic battle between God and Satan. We know this because we read it clearly in the story (**1:6-12, 2:1-7**).

Job, of course, has no idea why his world has suddenly fallen apart! Which makes an important point: *every* believer is engaged in continual spiritual warfare, although few seem to know it.

Believers who are walking in the Holy Spirit are protected from the attacks of the enemy – *unless the Lord permits him to attack*.

- 3) Now, there's an interesting passage in **Luke 22** (vss. **24-27**) – one I've alluded to in this series, but want to consider more carefully. We read that, at some point,

“a dispute also arose among them [that is, the disciples], as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. ²⁵ And he [Jesus] said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. ²⁷ For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”

Do you see the *pride* creeping in, even among the Apostles? The Christian life should always be characterized by *humility*, even as our Lord was humble and humbled Himself. **Philippians 2:8**: “Being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Fallen human nature is characterized by *pride*, even as Satan was driven by pride to rebel against God. And, mark it down, the devil was at work here!

Continuing in **Luke 22:28-30**, Jesus said,

“You [Apostles] are those who have stayed with me in my trials, ²⁹ and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

‘YAY! Cool beans! We’re ALL gonna be great! We’re ALL gonna get thrones!’

But no sooner had He said this than He said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat ...” (**Luke 22:31**).

Whoa! Talk about slamming on the brakes! And what this does not say explicitly, but what the Greek sentence explicitly demands, is that Jesus said YES to Satan's request! We should understand it as, ‘Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, *and I have said YES!*’ It's only in understanding this that what Jesus says next makes sense:

“But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again [*once you have returned*], strengthen your brothers” (22:32).

How Peter did this? He ‘strengthened his brothers’ by writing two phenomenal epistles, which are largely about suffering and the danger Satan poses to believers.

So, you who have been faithful will be rewarded; *but you will also be sifted*.

OK, but let’s ask a few honest hermeneutical questions (*hermeneutics* is the science of biblical interpretation). *Is it right to apply this promise of Peter’s satanic sifting to others? Does this apply to us? Or was it a trial unique to Peter?* The answer is, *yes!* It is fair to apply this to all believers; it was not unique to Peter. As we’ve seen, each believer has a ‘cup’ to drink, a *poterion*, and while each one’s cup is different, they all contain some measure of suffering and sifting.

How do we know that from the text? Well, from something you can’t readily see in the ESV Text, but which is clear in the Greek. You see, when Jesus says, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat” (Luke 22:31), the two occurrences of the word “you” in the Text are plural!³ So, ‘Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you [σὺ, plural, *you all*], that he might sift you [σὺ, plural, *you all*] like wheat, *and I have said YES!*’

In many translations this is ambiguous, but a few of them manage to get the plurals across:

✠ NET Bible: “Simon, Simon, pay attention! Satan has demanded to have you all ...”⁴

✠ The NIV: “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat.”

✠ CEV: “Jesus said, “Simon, listen to me! Satan has demanded the right to test each one of you, as a farmer does when he separates wheat from the husks.”

³ The Amplified Version brings out the plural: “Simon, Simon (Peter), listen! Satan has demanded *permission* to sift [all of] you like grain.” Also, the NLT: “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat.” And the Good News Translation: “Simon, Simon! Listen! Satan has received permission to test all of you ...”

⁴ See also The International Standard Version, The Faithful Version, The Berean Literal Bible, The Lamsa Bible, The Weymouth New Testament, The Aramaic Bible in Plain English and The Mace New Testament.

Now, in the ‘you’ve never seen everything’ category, virtually every one of my go-to literal translations (save the NET) make *no attempt* to distinguish the plurals while some of the loosest translations do!⁵ Which just goes to prove yet again: You have NEVER seen everything!

And then, in verse **32**, Jesus continued addressing Peter and, this time, all four occurrences of the word “you/your” are in the *singular*.

“But I have prayed for you [singular] that your [singular] faith may not fail. And when you [singular] have turned again [*once you have returned*], strengthen your [singular] brothers” (**Luke 22:32**).

Peter’s divinely-allowed, satanic sifting would come when he was identified as a disciple of Jesus and denied three times that he even knew Him. Jesus tells him that next in the Text: Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.”³⁴ Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me” (**Luke 22:33-34**).

Well, Peter obeyed Jesus’ command to strengthen his brothers by writing his epistles. Remember, it’s Peter who in very strong language later warned believers about Satan’s attacks and how to think about them. Why? Because he’d been bitten by him!

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (**1 Peter 5:8-11**).

When Peter wrote this, he was speaking from experience!

⁵ These translation make no attempt to distinguish the plurals: The English Standard Version, The King James Bible, The Worrell New Testament, The Christian Standard Bible, The Holman Christian Standard Bible, The NASB 1995, The New King James Version, The American Standard Version, The Literal Standard Version, The Literal Emphasis Translation, Young's Literal Translation, Smith's Literal Translation, The King James 2000 Bible, The New Heart English Bible, The World English Bible, The American King James Version, The Godbey New Testament, The Haweis New Testament, The Darby Bible Translation, The English Revised Version, Webster's Bible Translation, The Douay-Rheims Bible, The Catholic Public Domain Version.

For those whom the Lord is using to glorify Himself, our day of sifting has either come, or is coming. Let's be ready for it so that we might, with Paul, "do all things to the glory of God" (1 **Corinthians 10:31**). For, if we suffer for His sake, we will certainly share in His glory!

Job's Evidence Testing

- 1) Now, this magnificent opportunity to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ through suffering in this life is a gift that is only given to *mature* believers. Those who do so, have graduated Summa Cum Laude – they have achieved the highest biblically-defined objective of the Christian life. He or she has given evidence in both the visible and invisible realms that God is sovereign and He is also good.

We call this *evidence testing*, and it is the very reason why believers get sifted. Sifting is used in agriculture to separate that which is genuine from that which is not: *genuine* wheat from the *counterfeit* wheat. It separates the true wheat from the zizania, the false wheat – chaff.

In like manner, sifting exposes the genuineness of our faith in Jesus and our love for Him. When a mature Christian is sifted, he or she is being called to take the witness stand and testify on behalf of the One who gave His life that he or she might live. And this testimony is given under extreme cross-examination.

- 2) How important is this theme in Scripture? It's the subject of the Bible's very first book!

We've mentioned how Job was called to take the stand and how magnificently he testified of God's goodness even in the midst of severe loss and suffering in his own body.

Yet, from the very depths of his pain, he affirmed his unshakable faith in God. *Faith words* spoken under an extreme cross-examination by the devil, as we'll see in a moment.

- 3) Peter became a magnificent witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, but he arrived there by a long and sinuous path. Most of us do!

Peter *failed* his sifting on the morning Jesus was crucified by denying that he even knew Him three times. But, as we've seen recently, he *passed* the test wonderfully in his martyrdom. You'll remember that Church tradition tells us he asked to be crucified upside-down because he was not worthy to die the same way his Lord died.⁶

And so, the nth degree of satanic sifting is evidence testing. It's Job's story, and it's the domain of only the maturest of Christians. And, in the Bible's first book, we see precisely what that looks like in spades!

Job's Faith Declarations Under Extreme Adversity

When we are called to the witness stand, the Lord expects us to testify with affirmations of faith. All throughout his satanically-engineered trials, Job responded with some of the most profound affirmations of faith recorded in Scripture. And all of these declarations of trust in God were spoken from the depths of *intense* physical, psychological and spiritual suffering. Let me consider four of these briefly.

- 1) After the death of his children, the loss of his wealth, and the loss of his health, *Job refused to blame God*. When he learned that his children had perished,

“Job arose ... tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped.²¹ And he said, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”²² *In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong*” (Job 1:20-22).

⁶ Christian tradition holds that Peter was crucified upside down in Rome under Emperor Nero, though the historical evidence and reasoning behind this claim deserve careful examination. The earliest detailed account appears in the Acts of Peter, a narrative that solidified from oral tradition in the early second century and includes a specific account of Peter's martyrdom. However, the explanations for the inverted crucifixion have shifted over time. The original Acts of Peter states that Peter was crucified upside down but makes no mention of unworthiness as the reason. The familiar explanation—that Peter requested this method because he felt unworthy to die like Jesus—appears only in a later edition attributed to “Hegesippus” around 370. Regarding historical plausibility, Romans were known to crucify people upside down, and since the martyrdom story was already developing in the early second century, it might have been recording an actual eyewitness remembrance. Yet this doesn't validate the spiritual motivations later attached to it. Victims of Roman crucifixion were not given the chance to make requests about the method of their execution; the intent was to shame them grotesquely, not accommodate their wishes. See Mark Allan Powell, “Peter,” in *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary (Revised and Updated)*, ed. Mark Allan Powell (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), p.784; and Bryan Litfin, *After Acts: Exploring the Lives and Legends of the Apostles* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2015), pp. 149–150.

And so, Job took the witness stand when the integrity of God was on trial and testified that God was *still* good and had done him no wrong. He affirmed God's sovereignty and His right as the Potter to do as He desires with the clay. Even though the Lord has "taken away" something from Job, he blessed His name. God had given and God had the right to take what He had given away.

And "in all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong" (**Job 1:22**). Evidence of God's goodness presented from the witness stand under extreme adversity. Evidence testing.

Here Job acknowledged God's *absolute ownership over everything, even his very life*. The thought that God would be unfair to him was impossible for Job to imagine. And so, where most believers would choose bitterness and rebellion, Job chose to worship. It's astonishing considering the circumstances, but in **Job 1:20** we read that Job "arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped." He fell to the ground, but he did so *worshiping*.

- 2) Then, in **Job 13:15a**, we find this absolute declaration of faith in God: "Though he slay me, I will hope in him."

Some have called this the "faith of desperation," – in other words, 'what else can I do!' But that's *not* what's happening here! Job is saying, 'Even if these trials end in my physical death, with my last thought I will hope in the good and Almighty God!'

He knew that to blame God would be a lie spoken out of the emotion of the moment and the sting of his suffering. And Job *absolutely refused to lie about God!* In another place he said, "As long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils, ⁴ my lips will not speak falsehood, and my tongue will not utter deceit" (**Job 27:3-4**).

Evidence testing: presenting evidence of God's faithfulness from a place of deep suffering.

- 3) Then there's Job's remarkable statement in **19:25-27**.

"For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

²⁶ And after my skin has been thus destroyed,
yet in my flesh I shall see God,
²⁷ whom I shall see for myself,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”
(**Job 19:25-27a**)

Now this *is* truly extraordinary! While it’s easy to miss all that is in here, it is the Bible’s earliest *theological* triumph! In the Bible’s earliest book, in these magnificent verses, Job declared four important Christian doctrines:

- (a) He declared that God is his *Redeemer* – a *living* Redeemer. This means he understood his need to be redeemed.
- (b) He declared that his Redeemer would come and “stand upon the earth.” And Jesus, our Redeemer, did just that!⁷
- (c) He declared that life continues after death. “After my skin has been thus destroyed ... I shall see God.”
- (d) And He declared that there will be a physical bodily resurrection. “After my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.” Even before the coming of Christ, even before the prophecies that Messiah would be born as a human being, Job affirmed a belief in a living Redeemer and a future bodily resurrection.

Remarkable words of faith from the midst of intense personal suffering.
Evidence testing.

- 4) And finally, Job affirmed that (1) God will enable him to endure this trial, that (2) it was God who was trying him, and that (3) his faith will be rewarded! “He knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold” (**Job 23:10**).

⁷ Jesus is our Redeemer who freed us from sin and paid the price for our lives through His blood. Key Bible verses about Jesus as our Redeemer highlight His sacrifice, love, and eternal promise: Ephesians 1:7: “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”; 1 Peter 1:18-19: “Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot”; Titus 2:13b-4: “our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works”; Galatians 3:13: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.”

Here Job affirms that his suffering is *not* meaningless; *God has a purpose in it*. He knows that God is aware of his path and that he is not suffering because he has sinned; he is “blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil” (**Job 1:1**).

He goes on to say that,

“My foot has held fast to his steps;
I have kept his way and have not turned aside.
¹² I have not departed from the commandment of his lips;
I have treasured the words of his mouth
more than my portion of food”
(**Job 23:11-12**).

Because he has not walked in sin but has prioritized his relationship with God above even his food, he knows this is not discipline; he knows it is a test. And so, He knows he will pass through it and that his trustworthiness as a servant of God will be proved through his witness. “When he has tried me,” he says, “I SHALL come out as gold” (**23:10b**).

Glorifying the King: A Primer

So, in closing out this brief look at undeserved suffering, let me review with you a study I developed many years ago that gets more wonderous to me with the passing of time. We might think about it as the six stages believers traverse in their quest to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot state strongly enough that this is *the ultimate goal that God has set before each and every born-again man and woman*. As the very flawed King David finally came to realize (**Psalms 86:12**):

“I give thanks to you, O Lord my God,
with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.”

In these six stages we see not only the progression of how we come to glorify Jesus in real time, but also what our journey to spiritual maturity looks like step-by-step. So, as I briefly run through them, look to see where you are – plot your own place in this trajectory of Christian spiritual growth.

- 1) Now, what we might call the first stage in glorifying Jesus is a simple acknowledgement that, from the moment of salvation, Jesus indwells every believer. Whether you're a carnal, immature Christian or a deeply-spiritual follower of Jesus, *He lives in you*.

Paul writes in **Colossians 1:26-27** [NASB95], that this is “the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints ... which is Christ in you [plural, ‘*all of you*’] [ὁ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν], the hope of glory.”

- 2) But things advance significantly in the second stage. This is when we make a decision to get serious with God and we begin walking by faith. As **Ephesians 3:17a** [NASB95], puts it, “so that Christ may dwell [κατοικέω] in your hearts through faith.”

The word that's translate “dwell” here is not the simple declaration of Christ's indwelling that we find in **Colossians 1:27** [Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν]. It's a compound word [κατοικέω] which pairs the preposition meaning ‘down from something’⁸ [κατά] with the simple verb meaning ‘to dwell.’ Hence, we might translate it to ‘dwell down’ or to ‘relax’ or [as BDAG has it] to ‘settle down.’⁹

A few translations, like the NLT, try to convey this meaning by rendering it, “Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him.”¹⁰ This is the point where the believer begins resting in faith and thus truly starts to ‘know’ his/her Shepherd (**Philippians 3:10**).

Ephesians 3:17 isn't a statement of fact; it's a prayer. And what a prayer it is! Let's pick it up in verse **14**. Paul writes:

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father ...¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and

⁸ **Κατά** = of a location that is relatively lower, *down from something* (Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. 511).

⁹ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 534.

¹⁰ cf., The Good News Translation, The ISV, and The Weymouth New Testament.

depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Paul is saying, ‘I’m praying for you – literally on “my knees before the Father.” I’m asking God to strengthen you so that Jesus might do more than simply dwell in you [οἰκέω, *to reside in a place, live, dwell*], but that He might settle down in you [κατοικέω] because you’re walking in faith. And to help you to comprehend the ‘bigness’ of your life with God: “what is the breadth and length and height and depth” of it. O, and that you would come to know something that is impossible to know: “the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.”

When we begin to walk by faith, Jesus not only dwells within us; He’s *relaxed* – *at home, settled down* [κατοικέω] – in us!

- 3) The third stage is Christ *being formed* in you: In **Galatians 4:19**, NASB95, Paul said to the Galatians: “I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you [μορφωθῇ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν].”

Simply put, as we continue to walk with Jesus we become more and more like Him: Christ is being “formed” in us. Jesus gradually makes us more and more like Himself. This is the promise of **Luke 6:40**: “A disciple is not above his teacher, but *everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.*” And so, as we walk with Him day after day, Christ is formed in us: we take on *His* character and take up *His* agenda.

- 4) The fourth stage is the *manifestation* of Christ in you: the place where the Lord begins to use suffering to refine us. And this is also the point where the life of Jesus within us begins to break out into the world! Yes! The life He gave us in our new birth, the ‘life that is truly life’ (**1 Timothy 6:19**) – becomes evident [‘manifest’] to others. This happens through undeserved suffering.

2 Corinthians 4:7-10, NASB95: “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels [our new life in Jesus], so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that [‘for this reason’] the life of Jesus also may be manifested [φανερώω - *to cause to become visible, to reveal, to expose publicly*] in our body.”

The “treasure” contained within our ‘earthen vessel’ [NASB95] – this body “formed ... of dust from the ground” (**Genesis 2:7**), this ‘jar of clay’ [ESV]) – is the new life Jesus gave us in the new birth (see vs. **10b**).

As the ‘earthen vessel’ experiences pressure, the treasure within comes flooding out for all to see. God does this so that “the life of Jesus also may be manifested [*revealed, become visible*] in our body” (**2 Corinthians 4:10**).

5) The fifth stage is the *magnification* of Christ in you:

Philippians 1:20: “... according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted [or magnified] in my body, whether by life or by death.”

At this stage, making Jesus famous everywhere we go becomes our greatest desire – whether by life or by death.

The Greek word translated “exalted” [NASB95, NET, ISV] or “magnified” [KJV, NKJV, ERV] is **μεγαλύνω**, which means to cause to be *large* or *great*.¹¹ *It means to glorify – to cause something to be held in greater esteem through praise.* You can certainly see the elevated maturity of the Jesus-follower being described here!

6) And finally, the sixth stage is the *glorification* of Christ in you:

2 Thessalonians 1:12: “so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified [**ἐνδοξάζομαι**] in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.”

Simply put: the degree to which we glorify Him, He will someday glorify us. Let that settle upon your heart for a few eternities! Just as star differs from star in glory, so is it in the resurrection of the dead (**1 Corinthians 15:41-42**)!

¹¹ **μεγαλύνω** means (1) to cause to be large, of either physical or nonphysical entities, make large/long, make great; (2) to cause to be held in greater esteem through praise or deeds, exalt, glorify, magnify, speak highly of. Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 623.