



**Resurrected Life
To Bless
the Nations**





As always, if we can help you in any way, please contact the church here at
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Jesus Suffered Like Us

Hebrews 2 and 3

"We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will.

"It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified:

'What is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet.'

"In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

“In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the Author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the One who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says,

‘I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing Your praises.’

“And again,

‘I will put My trust in Him.’

“And again He says,

‘Here am I, and the children God has given Me.’

“Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity, so that by His death, He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels He helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the One who appointed Him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the Builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house. And we are His house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

“So, as the Holy Spirit says:

‘Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried Me and for forty years saw what I did.

“That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, “Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.”

‘So I declared on oath in my anger, “They shall never enter my rest.”’

“See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the Living God. But encourage one another every day, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said:

‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.’

“Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter His rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.”

Bring on the Suffering

The way in which we build our lives determines how we weather the storms. We don’t weather storms because we want to or because we’re tough enough to. We weather storms because we put into practice God’s Word. And by that, I don’t just mean following the scriptures but I mean finding the fullness of God’s Heart, His Mind and His Purpose for our lives. Putting those into practice and living them out is what allows us to withstand the storms together as well as individually. A lot of what we read in Hebrews 2 and 3 had a ring to it, that suffering does come. Different sorts of things will happen to us at times that make us feel a certain way or that overwhelm us. Every believer and unbeliever encounters things that overwhelm them.

From start to finish in Hebrews 2 and 3 is the encouragement that there will be pain, and suffering will come. The scriptures are clear that Jesus also experienced that pain. If it’s true for an unbeliever and for a believer and it’s true for Jesus, you can rest assured that you’re not going to skirt around it or circumvent it. And to each one of us,

our own pain always seems worse than everyone else's, doesn't it? Our own situation is always tougher than everyone else's situation. That's just how we all feel. Anybody I've ever talked to, including myself, feels like their thing is the worst thing in the world.

The scriptures are very clear that God Himself orchestrates these difficult things for our own good. They are sovereignly under His control and He meters them out to each of us in a measure that's necessary to break us. If you're a strong-willed person, He will meter out something that's more difficult for you than for someone else. If your potential is great, He will meter out things that are far more difficult for you to overcome out of your own flesh than perhaps for someone else. If there's a discrepancy between how difficult your thing is and how difficult you think someone else's thing is, perhaps it's because God has looked at your heart and life and what He's given you and said, "From he who has been given much, much will be demanded. If I'm going to refine this person's life and bring them into supernatural fruitfulness (which is nothing like what they're doing now), and if I'm going to make them into the character of Jesus, My Son (which is nothing like who they are now), I'll have to bring a supernaturally hot fire in order to refine and enable and equip them."

Is your goal in life to be supernaturally fruitful and to see God's face and to experience His Presence rather than just hear about it someplace? Don't you want to Know His Wisdom rather than just read or hear about it from someplace and just borrow it your whole life? If you really want to have the inside of God's Heart and Mind, His Power, His Compassion, His Love, His Sensitivity, His Discernment, His Wisdom, His Thoughts—if you really want those as your primary goal in life, then open up your arms and say, "Bring me suffering!"

Jesus said, "What shall I say? Save me from this hour? It's for this reason that I came" (John 12:27). He didn't want to be saved. Paul was told, "Don't ask for a removal of the thorn in the flesh and the buffeting, even the messenger from satan. Don't even ask for that to be removed. My strength is perfected in your weakness...and Jesus Himself was crucified in weakness." The point is that you need to be willing to embrace your suffering as a tool in God's hands, to make you something more than you currently are. The attitude you

approach this with must be the same as Jesus' attitude, which was, "*Father, not My will but Yours be done.*"

"I have a will and a desire and a thought. I have something I want to do and a way I want to do it. But I don't care about that right now. I'd like this cup to pass because I prefer not to suffer. I prefer to have it the way I want it to be. But God, I submit myself and yield myself to whatever You want. I'm a mere mortal and a lump of clay and I'm not going to be a god. I will have it the way You want it to be. I admit I'm suffering, God. I know it is more than I can bear. The scriptures say that Jesus was overcome with sorrow beyond His ability to bear, and yet He still could open up His hands and say, 'Father, not My will but Yours be done.'"

Supernatural Life

The scriptures are clear on the fact that the Power of the Indestructible Life that Jesus was able to live out and the glory that the Father deposited on Him were in direct proportion to His willingness to suffer with the right attitude, opening His hands to the will of God, regardless of what it cost Him personally. That's got to be our attitude if we want to be something more than just a bunch of lumps of clay that are basically religious lumps of clay. If someone doesn't want to live a supernatural life, then they should go do something else. Natural lives are a dime a dozen and the road is filled with them. "Many will be those that find that road" and that way of life. But if you want a supernatural life, the scriptures are very, very clear.

God's thoughts have been communicated to us on this matter, and those thoughts are abundantly clear that you must be willing to embrace suffering. In the midst of it you fix your eyes on Jesus and you aren't amongst those that shrink back and are destroyed (as the Hebrews writer said), but you hold on tenaciously to the confidence we had at first and say to God, "Not my will but Yours be done. I don't have to have my will in order to progress with confidence. I don't have to do it my way. I want Your will, God. Whatever that is, I want it." That's the end of the story. I'm not saying it's easy. If it were easy, you wouldn't grow. Of course it's not easy to do God's will. He wants to expand you to have the very heart and mind of God Himself! That's our Destiny. That's what the scriptures say: "the full

measure of the stature, the fullness of Christ.” That’s what He wants for us.

So, how is He going to get that? Will He get it by you reading a bunch of books? I don’t think so. Will He get it by the quality of your prayer time in the morning? I’m afraid not. As useful and wonderful as those are, I’ve not met a person yet who has known the Heart and Mind of God and could speak Supernatural Wisdom and depth from the very bosom of God, that hasn’t suffered immensely. In the midst of their pain, they’ve turned their eyes toward Jesus and said, “Not my will, but Yours be done. Whatever You want, I’m Yours. You own me. I belong to You. Whatever You want, I’m putty in Your hands.”

There has never been a person who is Supernaturally fruitful or wise or loving (anything beyond being a mere human who is well-educated in Christian principles) that didn’t embrace suffering. There never has been a person that has gotten into a level of Supernatural Life that didn’t embrace suffering and said to God in the midst of it, “Whatever You want, I’m Yours. Whatever it costs me makes no difference—right up to and including my very life, if necessary. Everything about me is Yours.”

Embrace The Cross

Again, the choice is ours. If you really do want the whole thing in your personal and corporate life, you need to understand what we’ve been talking about. You have to understand it because just “hanging around” won’t get you there. You already know that. You can be miserable and shallow and lonely when you’re just hanging around. It’s embracing the Cross and taking up your own cross that will get you there. And that means the end of your ambition, the end of your comfort, and the end of your enjoyment level and all your aspirations. It’s an end to all of those things. That’s what a cross is. “If you will come after Me and take up your cross, you will encounter the same Resurrection Life that I am encountering.” That’s His Invitation to us and you need to know that.

It’s a Privilege and an Honor to be able to accept His Cross and to die to yourself—you no longer live, but He now lives within you. It’s a privilege to face the cross of denying your very self for His sake.

It’s a privilege and it’s a Doorway and Invitation into glory. It’s an Invitation into your Giftedness and into True Fellowship with Him and with one another. So accept it as that. Don’t reject it, don’t fight it, don’t scream and kick. That’s not profitable. God said to Paul, “It’s hard for you to kick at the goads. You’re only making yourself more miserable. When I’m trying to get your attention and move you in a certain direction and you’re kicking at Me, it’s hard for you, isn’t it?” He makes it hard for us to disobey Him and ignore His Will and turn our faces away from Him. And that’s His kindness. He’s persistent.

Quite frankly, sometimes I wish He would just snap His fingers and make us who He wants us to be. I’ve suffered enough, and you all no doubt feel the same way, that you’ve suffered enough already in life and you’d rather not go through it. I wish He could just snap His fingers and we’d all be totally different people—full and free and strong, wise and powerful in His Word and Spirit and Personality, and in Fruitfulness towards others. But it is not going to happen without sovereignly designed challenges of a Cross where it’s actually your choice to enter into the pain—and to do it joyfully. Jesus didn’t whine and mope and complain about it, “Okay, okay...I’ll do it.” That wasn’t His attitude. “God loves a cheerful giver.” He wants us to truly give away our hearts and not just our obedience. All of us that have children know that reluctant obedience is better than no obedience. But it doesn’t bring a lot of joy to our parental hearts to have reluctant obedience. He really wants us to enjoy abandoning ourselves into His hands.

“Not My Will But Yours...”

I want to invite you to see clearly the doorway and the key that unlocks the door into the Father’s mansion and into all that He has for your life. It is sovereignly designed pain. It is a cross and suffering. It’s the opportunities to enter into sharing in the fellowship of His suffering, to abandon ourselves into His will, and to obey Him with the right attitude in the midst of it. “*Not my will but Yours be done*” is the key to eternal glory.

Jesus could have given us redemption through the sacrifice of His Blood when He was still an infant. The Blood of God is sufficient to redeem any man that would turn to Him. But that isn’t how He chose

to do it. He went ahead and lived a life of suffering and rejection and abandonment of His own will and abandonment into the Father's hands. He chose to do that to show us how to live a life that is filled with power and fruitfulness and supernatural wisdom. Not only did He give redemption by His Blood, but He showed us how to be empowered by His Spirit. It's through the way of the cross, which means taking up His cross with a glad heart, the cross that He has assigned for each of us. Please don't miss it! Hebrews 12 says that He brings the pain and discipline to us because He loves us. And for those of us who are trained by it, it yields a wonderful harvest in our lives. But we have to be willing to be trained by it, which means we have to see what it's all about.

Whether you've heard these things before or not, don't be guilty of not embracing them. Don't be guilty of being a hearer only and so deceive yourself as James would say, but be a doer! Really think practically about your own life. Pause for a second. Selah. Pause for a second and think about the things that God has brought into your life that are troublesome or difficult or painful for you. Consider those things and actually apply what we're talking about to those particular things for your life. If you don't do that, then you're wasting God's time and your own. You'll continue to backpedal in mediocrity and never fulfill your destiny in this very short life that He has given you.

Consider exactly what it is that He has called you into and where your suffering lies. Make a decision that you're going to have the kind of heart that He can be overjoyed with and that He can choose. He only empowers His Son. So only as far as we are willing to abandon ourselves into His Son, can He empower us. There's a direct correlation there. If we won't abandon ourselves into Christ and into His will—"Not my will but Yours be done"—then He can't empower us. He only empowers His Son. Consider that and that you're making choices about your destiny.

Bless All the Nations

I recently heard a man speaking about Abraham and the call that God had for him to sacrifice his son. This man said that we shouldn't be worried about *our* being satisfied but we should be worried about *God* being satisfied. When he got his son Isaac, Abraham was satisfied. But

it wasn't until Abraham was willing to die to his desires and come to a sanctification, a giving away, an abandonment of his life and all the things God had given him...it wasn't until he was willing to sacrifice Isaac that *God* was satisfied. Because what was God after? Making Abraham happy? No, God wasn't after making Abraham happy. God was after blessing every tribe and tongue! That was what the Promise was about. He wasn't just trying to bless Abraham, but He wanted to bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham.

If Abraham wouldn't cooperate, then God couldn't bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham, could He? Abraham's willingness to sacrifice himself and let go of himself (which is what he did when he sacrificed Isaac), was what satisfied the Father. Because only through that act, the scriptures say, could God bless the nations through Abraham.

Again, Abraham was empowered by his willingness to abandon himself. He was empowered to the extent that his life could bless all the nations of the earth. It was only because he abandoned himself into the Father's will, which was quite a costly, extravagant, and excruciatingly painful thing that God called him to do. Certainly beyond anything any of us have ever been called to do. And yet it was only then that God could bless all the nations of the earth. God's satisfaction was dependent on Abraham's choice to sacrifice a part of himself in Isaac.

I want us to ponder the fact that God wants to bless the nations of the earth through your life and through our lives. I just want us to have that kind of mindset. Don't think about yourself and what could make *you* happy and what could satisfy *you*. Think about what will satisfy God! It's not just your obedience that satisfies God. That does make Him happy, but He wants to bless the nations of the earth through your life and our lives. He can't do that unless we sanctify ourselves and pass these tests of giving away our very life as He called Abraham to do.

Our satisfying God only happens when He has blessed the nations of the earth through us. And He can't empower us with the power of His Son unless we empty ourselves, make ourselves nothing and become wet clay in His hands. So consider the bigger picture here.

He wants to bless the nations of the earth through each and all of us and He can't do that if you won't abandon yourself. He wants to bear much fruit, but if the seed won't fall to the ground and die, it abides alone, as John 12:24 says. That seed won't bless the nations of the earth. For those that will die however, it bears much fruit. Ponder all of that—the meaning of suffering and its enlarging and deepening and refining and equipping aspects, and then respond correctly to that. The beauty of that process is phenomenal.

No place else on earth but in Christianity will you understand the mind of God and the place of suffering as being a friend and not an enemy. *“You meant this for my harm, but God meant it for good.”* The terrible act of Joseph being thrown into a pit by his own brothers ended up meaning the redemption of multitudes. The redemption of multitudes then ended up in four hundred years of slavery. So you might say, “They were redeemed but then they were enslaved so did it really work?” Well, then Moses set the captives free and delivered them into the Promised Land. The whole flow of how God does His business involves cycles of suffering and cycles of choices that God has sovereignly made and involves our willingness to be obedient to Him.

In that short span of time in Hebrews 2 and 3, you can see four or five times, the value of even Jesus Himself suffering. If Jesus can suffer and be enlarged by it and be equipped by it and be brought into supernatural resurrection power by it—why not us? Why do we have to fight it? Why do we have to kick and scratch and scream? It's hard to kick at the goads anyway. We're not going to be happy when we're fighting God, having clenched fists and fussing and fuming.

I personally can think of at least 10 things that are happening right now in different people's lives where these things we've been talking about apply very, very directly. And if we were to take a poll in here and write them on the wall one by one, there are probably 200 or more additional things that are exactly what we're talking about. Maybe just a few people closest to you know about it. In any case, these things are very, very true, and if you won't embrace them you will die in mediocrity, and that would really be a shame. Your life is already short. It withers like the grass and the flower and it vanishes like the vapor. It's already short. Let's make the most of it and use it to bless the nations rather than to die alone.

Change your thoughts to embrace God's way of equipping you in supernatural ways. Quit whining about it or backing away from it or trying to put it out of your mind if those are things you're inclined to do. The way to find God isn't to steel yourself to it or resist it with a fury or a vengeance. That isn't the way to find God. Few will be those who find the supernatural quality of life. There is no reason we all can't be amongst those few, because now you understand. If you didn't understand God's mind about it before, you do now. So now you can choose to have the right attitude, if you are willing, for Jesus' sake, and to bless the nations.

Weeping For Ourselves

*Teach us, O Lord what it really means to rend our hearts
instead of outer things.*

*Teach us, O God what we do not see about our hearts
and of Your ways.*

*And Father, deal with our carnal desires to move
in Your power but not live the life*

And to love our neighbor with all that we have

And to keep our tongues from saying things we have not seen.

Oh, break our hearts with the things that break Yours.

If we sow in tears we will reap in joy

That we might pass through Your refining fire

Where brokenness awaits on the other side.

Raise up an army like Joel saw

Your Church that is stronger than ever before.

They do not break rank when they plunge through defenses

But the fear of the Lord will be their wisdom

That they might weep as Jesus wept

A fountain of tears for the wounded and lost.

Who ever heard of an army of God

That conquered the earth by weeping and mourning and brokenness?

But there will be a day when the nations will bow

And our Lord will be King over all the earth

And He will be the only one

And also His Name will be the only one.

(“Break our Hearts” Copyright 1992 Kevin Prosch)

The lyrics to that song give the idea that the mourning, the weeping and the brokenness were for other people. That theme is accurate, that it's an army that overcomes satanic powers over the face of the earth by weeping and mourning and brokenness. That is accurate. But it's not necessarily a weeping and mourning because we have such compassion for people's lostness. That will certainly be the case at times, but the fact is, that in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus wasn't weeping over lost souls. He was weeping because of Himself. He hurt and He didn't want to go through what the Father wanted Him to go through. He was weeping and sweating drops of blood for Himself.

As it says in Colossians 2, Satan is triumphed over only on the Cross, and the Cross means that we're willing to be humiliated and we're willing to suffer unfair things. The Cross was unfair. The thing that the Father wanted Him to do was unfair. It was totally illogical and unfair and unreasonable. It was humiliating. It was painful and it was degrading. But it was what God wanted in order to redeem others.

So Jesus' tears and His mourning in that case weren't about, "Oh, all these lost people." He did weep for lost souls, no doubt. He did weep over Jerusalem, "I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks." But that's not the only kind of weeping that the army of God encounters. Sometimes they encounter weeping in the process of wanting to remove the thorn in the flesh, the buffeting, the messenger from Satan. Paul wasn't weeping in 2 Corinthians for lost souls. He was weeping and crying out to God three times that the thorn in the flesh and the discomfort to himself would be removed. He wanted the unfair beating that he was taking to go away—that's why he was weeping in 2 Corinthians. And yet God said, "My strength is perfected in your weakness."

It is true that God will overcome the enemy and bless the nations through our weeping and our mourning and our brokenness. But it's not just a righteous weeping for others. Sometimes it's for the cup that He wants us to drink and the baptism that He wants us to undergo that could be humiliating and painful and unfair. But that doesn't mean it's not from Him. And that doesn't make it any less important to face it and say, "Not my will but Yours be done," and to drink the cup. And Jesus didn't say the cup was only for Him. He

said if you want to sit at My right hand and My left, can you drink the cup? Can you undergo the baptism? Well, you will.

Deepened by Everything

When Jesus came he had righteous suffering. In my own life, some of my "challenges" are the ten loads of laundry to do or the children needing to be educated and the baby's crying. To me, that's not really righteous suffering but just my circumstances. Perhaps it's discipline for me and testing and refining, but I wouldn't want to have an unhealthy view and think that I'm suffering for God by having to do all this work. The suffering would perhaps be to deny my flesh in the middle of that and not lash out at my children for example.

The type of suffering that Jesus went through just seems levels above that! He was suffering from things in the heavenlies that were unfair because He was pure. So, I was wondering what the difference is between the discipline of God in order to refine our characters and the pain we go through because of our own selfish, sinful nature. Some of the suffering is because of who we are on the inside and we're punished for that. Can you say any more about discerning the difference? I can think I have all these trials, but are they really trials unto the Kingdom of God?

I don't think it really matters because basically, we are who we are. We're the product of decisions we've made all along and God's going to take us from where we are and challenge the things that are not of Him and deepen us. I don't know if there's a big difference between spanking me for sinning...or causing me to suffer in order to make me deeper, to know Him better and to be more useful to others. I don't think there's a big line between those two things because in the end He loves us. We've been adopted as sons and daughters into His Family and we wear His Name. We're His children, He's washed us in His blood, and we're made perfect and being made holy or useful. Our perfection, our sonship and our forgiveness are all intact because of the Cross of Jesus and the Blood of the Son. That's all solid and settled.

Anything after that is God deepening us by challenging blatant sins or challenging our emptiness. He challenges the sins of omission and the

sins of commission. Because we're already made perfect by the Blood of Christ and the rest of it is being made holy by the Spirit of Christ, God works it all together as long as we respond properly to it. Yes, we've dug our own holes with sins of commission. But once you deal with all the sins of commission, you'll then find yourself being challenged and suffering in "unfair" ways. But whether "fair" or "unfair," who really cares? Because the real issue is whether we'll open up our hands to God, soften ourselves, and worship like Job did in response to it. Will we let Him teach us that He's not just a God who does things, but He's a God Who wants to befriend us and speak with us face to face?

I'll grant you that we do create a lot of our own problems. When we choose to sin, we create five or six other things as a natural result which then brings pain to ourselves and to others. We begin to sear our conscience and harden it, and other things start to happen as a result, and more suffering takes place. That all may be true but it really doesn't matter where we are on the spectrum, because He'll work it together if we'll hear Him and respond to Him, "Today if you hear His voice, harden not your heart." So whether you're hearing His voice about sins of commission or sins of omission, I don't know that it really matters.

Just a few days ago I wrote down a full page of character things and had to stop when I got to eight because it was overwhelming. I know there are even more things that I need to change in my life—character issues and deepening things and things for which I have no excuse. It was through pain that I learned these things. God sharpened me to areas that He wants me to move ahead in that I hadn't given much thought to. It wasn't because I was intending to be rebellious—that's not been my heart. But He needed to awaken me to things in that gap between who I am and who Jesus is.

So again, I don't know that it much matters why the source of pain comes, as long as we respond with a gentle and humble heart. He'll get what He wants and teach us if we get on the road with the right heart and response. He'll move us toward the goal of the image and personality of the Son. So it's okay either way.

It's also important to realize that it's not any more glorious to suffer persecution because you've stood up and said something at a pastors'

meeting, or because you're persecuted by your coworkers because you took a stand for Jesus. There's not anything more meritorious or spiritual about suffering in those ways than suffering when all three children are calling at the same time, "Mommy!" Can anybody relate to that? :) God uses all of those things, and one kind of suffering shouldn't be categorized as being more mundane or more trivial than another. He's getting at things in our hearts either way, and that's all that matters. Both are spiritual and both are ordained by God, so it's good either way.