

The Normal Christian - Has A Mind To Suffer

1 Peter 4:1 [New King James] *“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, **arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,**”*

Note that to have a mind to suffer is part of our Christian armour.

This attitude is an item of spiritual equipment in our spiritual conflict that renders the devil impotent when he attacks us.

Even though Satan uses the power to inflict physical death, [**Hebrews 2:14-15**] to influence people to follow his evil way of life, **Satan is overcome by one who has “a mind to suffer,” following the example of our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

Every human being must eventually die, but physical death is **not** the end, instead it is a doorway to a new life. All who dread physical death should have the opportunity to know the hope that Jesus Christ’s victory over physical death brings.

[Please download and study the articles under the main title ‘*Death And Life After Death.*’ You will be eternally grateful you did.]

There is a certain widely accepted school of thought in our religious communities that every form of enjoyment militates against spiritual growth.

God’s Word, the Christian Bible, emphatically rejects this philosophy, saying that God’s people are blessed in many ways, [**Psalms 84:4-5; Psalms 23:1-6; Isaiah 30:18; Psalms 32:1-2**].

On the other hand, God does **not** exempt His children from trials and chastisement; indeed trials and chastisement are necessary to secure spiritual growth and maturity, [**Hebrews 12:5-11**].

There is much suffering that we can avoid if we wish, by blending into the present world’s society and not standing out as a true Christian, [John 17:14-19].

But if we are to be of use to our Saviour Lord Jesus Christ, it is a fundamental necessity that we make deliberate choice of the path of suffering for His sake. Unless we acquire a disposition to suffer for Him, the work we do for Jesus Christ will be of a very superficial quality.

What do we mean when we speak of having a mind to suffer?

In the first place let us clearly differentiate between suffering and a mind to suffer.

To have a mind to suffer implies that we have willingly chosen the path of suffering for Jesus Christ’s sake, it means we have a heart and mind to endure affliction on His behalf.

The question is not one of the amount of suffering we may be called upon to meet, but of our attitude towards the suffering we meet.

The question is **not** are our external circumstances hard or easy? but is our heart and mind settled to endure hardship? Suffering may **not** be our daily portion, but we must be daily prepared to suffer.

Alas! Too many Christians seem to go on splendidly as long as circumstances are favourable, but the moment any affliction befalls them they come to a halt because they, as yet, are not inwardly prepared to suffer.

Suffering without the mind to suffer is profitless, nothing can be learnt through it.

The Christian should **not** invite trouble or go out in search of it, but when they encounter it they should be of a mind already to endure it gladly for their Lord and Saviour.

It is only those who, whatever their circumstances, favourable or unfavourable, have committed themselves to their Lord and Saviour and have armed themselves with a mind to suffer who will be to endure in the day of testing.

The question naturally arises: “to what extent should we be prepared to suffer?”

Revelation 2:10 [New King James] *“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*

This is how far the Christians in the Church in Smyrna were asked to suffer.

Note that each Church mentioned in the second and third chapters of Revelation were told two things to listen to what the Holy Spirit was saying to each Church and to overcome.

What was implied by “overcoming”?

Revelation 12:9-12 [New King James] *“So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. **And they [the brethren] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.** Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”*

If we are always wondering how far we should go in the matter of suffering, we will never go very far, we will be tricked into letting the work of Jesus Christ suffer to preserve our own life.

In His warning to His disciples, Jesus Christ told them that just before His Second Coming the love of many Christians would “grow cold.”

Matthew 24:3-14 [New King James] *“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.’”*

In spite of this lack of a mind to suffer, the gospel message would be preached worldwide, [verse 16].

Satan scoffed at the idea that Job could possibly serve God without any desire for self-preservation, [Job 2:4-5].

Job had already lost all his family and wealth yet when it happened Job's response was a mind that already accepted suffering, [Job 1:20-22].

Job's wife was very different in her attitude towards suffering, [Job 2:9-10].

Both in the record of Job and the statement in Revelation we see that Satan is impotent to overcome those who are utter in their disregard of their own lives.

If there is a limit to our suffering Satan will sooner or later put us out of commission as far as work for our Saviour and Lord.

May I ask you who are reading this article which is more important to you: to safeguard your personal interests and life or to safeguard your part of your Saviour and Lord's testimony on this earth?