

# SUFFERING TO GLORY

James Orhosere

## INTRODUCTION

The two contending words in the phrase are *Suffering* and *Glory*.

The two words to a reasonable extent appear to be opposite to each other; while *suffering* means *mental or physical pain or problem*, *glory* on the other hand conveys *a sense of great joy or pleasure because of something*.

Whatever the disparity between them there is a link which is the basis of the lesson.

There was the fable of a wealthy farmer who told his children who were very lazy that he buried a bag of money in the farm and that they should work hard to get it.

Not too long after that the man died and the children started digging in the farm in an effort to get the bag of money but to no avail.

This prompted them to report their findings to their uncle who advised them to till the soil and do exactly the way the father was doing it and they would find the bag of money.

The children went into action and eventually discovered that there was much money in farming business.

In our secular world there are sayings: '*Suffer before pleasure*', nothing good comes easy.

Of a truth, if you want to make it in life you must be prepared to work hard or suffer.

Of course, we can recall the story of Joseph in the Bible how he suffered greatly before God rewarded him with exalted office in Egypt.

**Genesis 41:40-45** - *You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So, he set him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."*

He was sold as a slave. **Genesis 37:28** - *Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out*

*of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.*

He went to prison for an offence he did not commit and the chief butler of Pharaoh who promised to help him out of prison abandoned him to his fate **Genesis 40:21** - *Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.*

## THE SUFFERING OF JESUS

Jesus' suffering started right from birth. He was born in a manger. **Luke 2:16** - *and they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.*

Soon after His birth, Herod planned to eliminate him prompting his parents to take refuge in Egypt.

**Matthew 2:13** - *Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."*

He suffered mental torture **Matthew 26:38-39** - *Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from*

*Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

They bore false witness against Him.

**Matthew 26:59-61** - *Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last, two false witnesses came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"*

His closest disciple denied Him. **Matthew 26:69-70** - *Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."*

His clothes were torn **Matthew 26:65** - *Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!"*

They mock him, wore Him a crown of thorns, spat on Him. **Matthew 27:27-31** - *Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the*

*knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified. (cf. Mark 15:16-20).*

They crucified Him in the midst of two robbers **Matthew 27:38** - *Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.*

And His grave was sealed **Matthew 27:66** - *So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.*

Jesus went through all these traumas and the third day He rose from the grave. **Mark 16:6** - *But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him*

After all of these, Jesus had this to say *"All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:19).*

The Scripture also says that *...God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).*

Jesus predicted the world would treat us the way he was treated. **John 15:20** - *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. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also*

True to the prediction of Jesus, His first disciples experienced persecution of various types. **Acts 8:1** - *Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

Peter was kept in prison. **Acts 12:5** - *Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church*

James was beheaded. **Acts 12:2** - *Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*

## **THE SUFFERING OF PAUL**

Paul went through series of agonies as an apostle of Christ.

He said *...the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me (Acts 20:23).*

He was kidnapped. **Acts 21:27** - *Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him.*

He was beaten. **Acts 21:30-31** - *And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut. Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.*

He was threatened. **Acts 22:22** - *And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!"*

He was arrested many times. **Acts 21:33** - *Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. Acts 22:24* - *The commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.*

He was interrogated **Acts 25:24** - *And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer.*

He was ridiculed. **Acts 26:24** - *Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud*

*voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"*

He shipwrecked. **Acts 27:41** - *But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.*

He was bitten by snake. **Acts 28:3** - *But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.*

At the end of it all, Paul said *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing (II Timothy 4:7,8).*

In his epistle to Timothy, Paul noted; *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12).*

For followers of Jesus, the picture is also worrisome. The Bible actually attested to it. **II Timothy 1:8** - *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.*

As followers of Jesus, we do not rejoice in suffering because we



enjoy pain, but because we delight in being identified with him.

To us Christians, suffering is temporary and is not worth comparing with the glory that awaits us.

*Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. (II Corinthians 4:16).*

When we start enjoying the glory of God, all pains and suffering will disappear for ever. *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4).*

## LESSONS FROM THE SUFFERING OF JESUS AND THE FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIANS

1. Followers of Jesus should not be surprised or caught off guard by suffering. *I Peter 4:12 - Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.*
2. They need to endure suffering without compromising their integrity. *II Timothy 4:5 - But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry (cf. I Peter 2:19).*

3. They must love their persecutors and pray for their welfare. *Matthew 5:43-47 - "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?*

4. They are to renounce any intention to take revenge. *Romans 12:14-21 - Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends*

*on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

5. They are to trust God in their suffering and respond by proactively doing good  
***I Peter 4:19*** - *Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator*
6. They are to use their experiences as a basis for comforting and counselling others who suffer  
***1 Corinthians 1:3-7*** - *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ*

7. They are to fix their eyes on Jesus.

***Hebrews 12:1-3*** - *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls*

8. They are commended to rejoice in so far as you share in Christ suffering.  
***I Peter 4:12-13*** - *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

## CONCLUSION

Our natural first reaction to suffering is frustration, fear or anxiety.

When your heart is broken and your world is falling apart take heart.

Remind yourself ***“Jesus has overcome the world”***.

Trust in His character. Remember that God loves His children and He is ultimately good. Do not forget these truths for they are life blood in times of suffering.

Regardless of your present circumstances or frustration, danger or disease or persecutions do not give up on God.

It is times like these that God manifests His power on our lives, so do not slack in prayer and supplication.

Finally, remember that our situation is temporary compared to eternity. In the closing chapters of the final book of the bible, God makes a beautiful promise to His children

**Revelation 21:3** - *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

If the present world were the end of the story and we have no Savior on whom we place our hope it would have been sorrowful, but that is not our case so cling to the Savior with the rich promises He has given and you will find comfort in the midst of pain and suffering.