

The Work of the Apostle

Colossians 1:24-2:5

Suffering

The Work of the Apostle - Paul's purpose in suffering - Colossians 1:24-25; ministry - Colossians 1:26-29; instruction - Colossians 2:1-5

Is there a proper Christian response to suffering?

First, suffering will bring out of me what is in me (Job, Joseph, Paul, Jesus).

Second, Job's response in chapters 1-2 (God is doing something!) and Job's reaction to his friends and to God in chapters 3-37 (This is not punishment).

How does suffering "fill up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" for the Church?

First, Paul is not saying that Christ's sufferings are insufficient and need to be added to by his followers. (Romans 3:21-26; 1 John 2:2).

Second, Christ's afflictions lack a "personal picture" so that others can see the love of Jesus in our suffering. (2 Corinthians 1:9; 4:12)

Are some people assigned the 'task of suffering'? (Job, Paul, Jesus)

First, those who 'brought it on themselves'. (Galatians 6:7).

Second, a life of suffering well is a life that is fully surrendered to God. (Matthew 10:24; Luke 6:40)

How does suffering make "the word of God fully known"?

First, a mature Christian responds well to the world, the flesh and the devil.

Second, suffering well exposes our motives.

Conclusion: Chosen by God means that we are called to suffer. ("Israel" & 2 Corinthians 4:10-11)

Paul looked for the benefit that his suffering would bring to others—especially the Church. (Acts 5:41); Ephesians 3:13; Philippians 1:29; Romans 5:3-5) Suffering is never pointless!

Preaching with suffering has an enhanced purpose in those who respond to it. (Philippians 3:10; Romans 8:17-18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; John 15:18; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:14)