



Empowering People to Change the World

Pick Your Hard
Becoming a Conqueror Trained Through Suffering
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The Lord's Prayer

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Introduction:

- Life is hard for everyone!

Life is hard, but life is not nearly as hard if there is a purpose to our suffering and pain.

Pick your hard:

- A hard life with Christ as your father and defender
or a hard life with yourself as your only defender.
- Suffer with our Lord and be in intimacy with Him
or suffer alone.
- Suffer with the inner peace of your ultimate destiny being heaven
or suffer with the inner questioning and turmoil of wondering what eternity holds.
- Rejoice in suffering because you know that God causes all things to work together for good
or blame God for your suffering for you have no faith in God's sovereignty.

Personally, I don't think I have ever learned any deep, lasting, life-changing lessons on the crest of success. I have learned very little from winning, but have learned a great deal from losing and failure.

Our passage in Romans 8 is all about suffering and becoming more than a conqueror!

- **The Holy Spirit does His deepest work through suffering.**
- **God is training you through what you suffer.**

Becoming a conqueror trained through suffering:

Context of where Paul is taking us, look at Romans 8:36-37.

Romans 8:16-17

1. Trained in suffering: draws you closer to the Spirit.

- Yes, we will suffer as believers, but we suffer within God's family.
- We suffer "with Him" through the intimacy of the Spirit.
- We are never closer to God than when we trust Him in times of trouble.

2. Trained in suffering: prepares us for the victory to come.

- We are Heirs of a kingdom...keeps us unattached to this world.
 - If you were fighting a war but knew that you would win and that the kingdom would be given to you as the heir and king over that kingdom, how would that affect your fight? Would you not fight with courage rather than fear!

Daniel, in seeing visions of the last days, the rise and fall of kingdoms, the Ancient of Days said,

**“Then the kingdom and dominion,
And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,
Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.
His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,
And all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Daniel 7:27).**

Peter preaches on Pentecost, the victory of the Kingdom of God over all the earth,

“Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

‘For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

“The Lord said to my Lord,

‘Sit at My right hand,

Till I make Your enemies Your footstool!’” (Acts 2:33-35).

- No other Old Testament verse is quoted more than Psalm 110:1.
- It was common in David's time for a conquering general to put his foot on the neck of his enemies. That's the picture here.
- The death and resurrection of Christ enthroned Christ over all principalities and powers.

- The Kingdom of God is subversive and is winning.

It takes Courage to Advance the Kingdom of God.

- Courage is not the absence of fear but moving forward despite our fear.
- Courage is facing our fears and giving them over to Christ, laying them at the foot of the cross, and letting Him take care of them.
- Courage is knowing your victory is *in Christ* through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Courage is knowing that the Kingdom of God is mysteriously taking over all other kingdoms.
- In these latter days, the persecution is increasing...our rights are gradually being taken away but God's victory, His glory, is mounting up!

Suffering is not different than the labor and agony of birthing a child.

Verses 19-22

We are groaning over the pains of this life.

- And even all of creation are longing for Heaven!! We are all longing for Heaven, and we keep finding out that this is not heaven.

For the unbeliever, it doesn't get any better than this earth, but for the believer, it doesn't get any worse than this...only better!!

- Ladies, how about being in ceaseless labor for thousands of years; imagine "groans and labors" means all creation is in transition, in labor, for thousands of years!!
- So, it is through our suffering that God is building within us hope for a new day, like having a baby! The baby comes and you rejoice.
- The creation itself and ourselves are awaiting that day for it builds hope within us for a new day.
- Just look at our lives at The Road since COVID...just what we now know about supplements, vitamins, building up our immune system. The agony made us smarter; the labor pains made us investigate more.

Verses 23-25

- We are the “firstfruits of the Spirit.”
 - They say if you took all our DNA in every cell of your body, it would all fit into an ice cube. But if you took all the strands of DNA end to end it would go from the earth to the sun and back, three hundred times! Now that’s a lot of information.
- And we haven’t seen anything yet! Imagine what will happen when all that potential and information is fired up by the Spirit.
- Imagine what we will be like when the constraints of this earth are thrown off.

3. **Trained in suffering: makes us hunger for the full revelation.**

- We are longing for the fulfillment of our adoption and the full revelation of Christ.
- The Spirit of Adoption has given us light and has given hope for something we can’t see right now.
 - We often say, “I’m not as thankful as I should be.” Well, if you were as thankful as you should be, you would have to be looking into the face of Christ...be as thankful as you can be.
- “I need to pray more...study more.” It’s never enough.
- What we are saying is that we are groaning, we are longing for our real home.
- What we are really saying is that “I want to see my wife there...my kids there...my parents...my granddaddy and grandfather...I want to see my brother and my sister” with no worries about kidnappings, muggings, gangs, or terrorism.
- We have a new HOPE, the Spirit has given us a new vision for our life...but it will never be fulfilled completely until we are redeemed.
- We are ruined for this world.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:16

“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace.”

- It is purifying, it is our consolation, it is our grace.
- Read Revelation 21 and 22 again! Hope for that!

Verse 26

4. Trained in suffering: we grow in prayer.

- Prayer doesn't appeal to the flesh...worry does!
- The Spirit guides us in prayer especially during times of turmoil and suffering.
- We have the mind of Christ speaking to us as we pray.
- The Spirit prays through us; He helps us pray.
- He comes alongside us and bears the burden with us; He doesn't take it all, but He comes alongside.
- We come to pray and we think we are going to change things and really He comes and changes us!
- When we experience His presence, something happens that changes us.
- *According to the will of God*; it is in prayer that the Spirit meets us and interprets the will of God through our selfish prayers.

Verse 27

5. Trained in suffering: As we pray, the Holy Spirit leads us into God's will for our lives.

- We don't even know it but as we pray, as we stay in the Spirit, God opens up His will in our lives.
- It is not always what we want but it is always what He wants.

Verse 28

6. Trained in Suffering: we realize that God is sovereign and that all things really do work together for good.

- If you are living according to His purposes, He is using suffering in your life to produce something.
- Pick your hard: trusting that God is in control or left on your own to try and manipulate and cajole your own way.
 - I have now lived long enough to see this to be true...so many times the circumstances seemed so bad, so difficult and now I look back and see the shadow behind it all...God working out His plan.

Verses 29-30

7. Trained in suffering: God uses suffering in our lives to conform us more to His image.

- God's purpose is to change us to be more like his Son.
- It is most often through suffering that we are crushed into His image.
 - The goldsmith places the gold into the vat and slowly turns up the heat and as the dross and impurity floats to the top, he skims it off...until the point where he can clearly see his reflection in the gold...
 - and so it is with the Lord, He is purifying us through pain and suffering that He might see His face, His reflection clearly in us.

Verses 31-39

8. Trained in suffering: through suffering, we are forged into conquerors.

- I like what Winston Churchill, who was not unfamiliar with great failures, said, "Success is going from failure to failure with great enthusiasm".
- You can't be a *conqueror* unless there is something to conquer; some obstacle, barrier, crisis, enemy, or determined foe.
- Our passage says that you can be more than a conqueror over... Reread Verses 35-39.
- Believe it!

**Cripple a man, you have a Sir Walter Raleigh;
Lock him into a prison cell and you have a John Bunyon;**

Bury him in the snows of Valley Forge and you have a George Washington;
Raise him in abject poverty and you have an Abraham Lincoln;
Deafen a genius composer and you have a Ludwig Von Beethoven;
Have him or her born black in a society filled with racial prejudice and you have a Booker T Washington, Harriet Tubman, George Washington Carver, or Martin Luther King Jr.;
Call him a slow learner and deprive him of any parental affection and you have a Winston Churchill.

You are more than conquerors! What are your obstacles? What are your fears? Face them and conquer them through the power of Christ.