

MADE
PERFECT
Through
Suffering



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We may feel the joy of the Lord or sense His presence with us, but there is also an experience in God of His suffering. I know we talk about suffering, but I do not think we realize what Christ went through or recognize that our salvation was bought with suffering. A lot of people in the world are suffering from poverty or disease; children are suffering because they do not have enough to eat, but these are human experiences. Yeshua (Jesus) saw that level of suffering and was concerned about it, and I know God wants to minister to this suffering. In fact, Isaiah talks about how Yeshua bore our suffering. He was immersed into the suffering of humanity that was a result of our sin and disobedience (Isaiah 53:3–12). Christ was moved by human suffering, but that is not what I am talking about. There is a difference in what Christ experienced and what someone goes through when he faces disease, hunger, or poverty. The suffering that Christ went through was an experience from God.



Christ Bought Our Salvation Through Suffering

Yeshua was introduced to a suffering that allowed God to work in Him in a way that would not have happened otherwise. Understanding this type of suffering, James wrote, “Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray” (James 5:13). James did not say, “Call the body together”; he said, “You pray.” It is something you must go through in God. When Christ suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed fervently. Remember, He was not suffering at the Passover table. He told the disciples, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 22:15). But after the Passover Sedar meal, Yeshua went out into the Garden of Gethsemane and was in tremendous agony. He began to sweat drops of blood and entered a period of suffering that took Him from that point on through the cross (Matthew 26:36–46).

It is almost like there is a timeframe to this experience of suffering. Yeshua experienced it in the Garden. And in great agony His response was to do what James said: He prayed. Yeshua cried out to God in that time of suffering to be able to hold Himself before the Father in the agony of intercession. There is an element of isolation in this experience. When Christ suffered on the cross, He felt isolated from the Father and said, “MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?” (Matthew 27:46). Of course, we know that if one suffers, we all suffer (1 Corinthians 12:26). I know we pray for each other, but there is a way in which you cannot carry me. This experience of suffering is something personal the Lord takes you through, so you find yourself praying a lot in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18).



Consider Job and the Prophets

In another Scripture James tells us to look at examples of people who suffered:

As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. (James 5:10–11)

Go through the Scriptures and read about men and women who really moved in the things of God. Look at the examples they left for us. Look at Job and realize not what he went through as much as the outcome of the Lord’s dealings in his life. James called it a dealing of God that rested on Job. And Job is a tremendous example for us because as much as he suffered, he refused to curse God. He did not get a bad spirit about it.

God has done so much good for us and given us so many blessings. So do not complain now because He chooses to deal with you in a different way. As James recommended, “Observe Job and the prophets and what they went through.” They are examples for us by the grace of God of how to go through this suffering. It does not make it any easier but at least you know one thing: God is in it. It is not demonic oppression or spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare could be considered fun compared to suffering. Suffering is something between you and God. It is something God is doing for you. If you want to build a megachurch, you do not want to talk about the sufferings of God. You want to talk about getting rich and how everything is wonderful. But if you come into God and have a walk with Yeshua, you will suffer at some point. And when you do, like Job, you will not look good. It is not joyous, but God is in it.

When we see each other, the question is not “How are you doing?” Rather, we should ask, “What is God doing in you?” When Yeshua met Saul of Tarsus, He blinded him and sent the prophet Ananias to him. The Lord said to Ananias, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:15–16). This was Christ’s introductory Word of personal ministry to Saul, and it was true that Paul suffered. He suffered physically and he suffered spiritually. But it was not demonic warfare; it was what God chose for Paul. You need to get this point: God uses suffering to do something in your spirit.



Christ Was Made Perfect Through Suffering

God also used suffering in His relationship with Yeshua—not just the suffering of the cross, but there were experiences of suffering that Yeshua went through while He was being created and prepared for the ministry. Hebrews gives us a good example:

But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. (Hebrews 2:9–10)

We know that Yeshua was perfect, but it is easy to forget that He was made perfect. He was perfected into the perfect Son of God through that which He suffered. “For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father” (Hebrews 2:11). We are coming into this relationship with the same Father. And if He perfected Yeshua through suffering, why should it surprise us that He will perfect us with the same methodology? We are all from one Father. Verse 11 continues, “For which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Isn’t that beautiful?

Speaking of Yeshua, the author of Hebrews writes,

In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation. (Hebrews 5:7–9)

This experience of suffering is beyond words. It is easier to talk about what God is doing through it than it is to describe how it feels or what the actual emotion is to experience it. But the response that Yeshua had expresses it. There is something that makes you pray with loud crying and tears to the One who is able to save you.





The Fellowship of His Sufferings

I think this experience of suffering does have a lot to do with salvation. We know that we are saved by Yeshua's experience of suffering for us. But as Peter said, there is "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5). I am believing for the appearings of Christ. Yeshua appeared the first time to deal with our sin. But I am looking for the appearings of Christ that will bring about the fulfillment of our salvation. When He appears to us, something happens. *Phanerōo* is the Greek, and it means "to make manifest or visible." We have experienced Yeshua's coming to deal with our sin, but we know there is another experience whereby we are changed from glory to glory into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18). When He appears, we will no longer see in a mirror dimly, but we will see Him face to face and be transformed into His likeness (1 Corinthians 13:12).

What we walk in on a daily basis is far too limited for what I read about in the Scriptures. Yet I am encouraged because there is a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. And our sufferings are related to it. However, we are not suffering like Christ suffered. I know we suffer with Yeshua that we might reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12, KJV). But we are not suffering with Him to save the world. We are not repeating what Christ did on the cross in dying for our sins. No one else will ever do that. We also know that Paul said, "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Colossians 1:24). The cross of Christ was not lacking salvation, but there is something more Yeshua won on the cross that we have yet to experience. There is a release from this body of death that Paul talks about in Romans: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18). I look forward to the day when He speaks to us and says, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased" (Matthew 17:5).



God Is Perfecting Your Spirit

While you may not recognize it or be able to explain it, something happens in the perfecting of your spirit when you experience the sufferings from God. We need to break into this level of experiencing the salvation that was won for us on the cross. And so we press on to know the Lord (Hosea 6:3). Paul said, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:10–11). He literally was craving that experience of not just knowing the Lord but of coming into resurrection life. We want to know Him and the power of His resurrection. We want the likeness of His resurrection turned loose in us. But do we want to know the fellowship of His sufferings?

When we look at what Christ experienced in suffering, we see that God used the sufferings to create Yeshua into the perfect sacrifice. Christ was made perfect, and we are going to be made perfect. This is not a suffering of the flesh with poverty, hunger, or disease. It is an experience in God. And “after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you” (1 Peter 5:10). Remember, right as Christ was going to the cross, Peter was thrown into this experience of the sufferings (Matthew 16:21–25). The Lord warned him about that and said, “You’re going to suffer.” That pronoun *you* in the Greek is in the plural form. Yeshua was talking to all the disciples when He said, “You will drink the cup. You will experience what I’m getting ready to go through” (see Mark 10:39). All the disciples were thrown into a grieving over Yeshua’s death. But this was a different experience than grief. Someone in that group had to go through the sufferings of Christ so that he would be prepared for the Day of Pentecost—and it was Peter who spoke from what he had suffered.

Do not be confused about your calling when you go through something like this. Do not doubt who you are or think that something negative is happening. It is God in His grace who called you to His eternal glory in Christ. And when you have suffered for a little while, God will perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. Suffering is not without a purpose. God is creating your spirit into His image.



More Precious Than Gold or Silver

Paul writes in Romans,

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:16–23)

By His grace God puts you into an experience that creates a level of groaning, travailing, interceding, praying, and crying out to God that you could never emote on your own—neither the length nor the consistency nor the drive behind it. Your spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak (Mark 14:38). No matter how much we want to cry out to God with this intensity, we cannot do it on our own. But He enables us by His grace to cry unto Him, and it will be effective.

God is not trying to hurt us. Do not ever have that in your thinking. He is always trying to bring us into His image. The Father is always looking to do good for us.

“For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me

and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 29:11–14)

What greater promise can there be? Who cares about the motivation that drives us into praying with all our heart and seeking after Him? Let your heart cry, “Whatever it takes, Lord.” How many times have we signed that blank check to say yes to the will of God? It is God’s enabling that we might seek Him with all our heart. No greater gift could we have than the enabling to cry out to God with all our heart. It is more precious than gold or silver. If we do this, we have the promise that He will listen, and He will hear. He will allow Himself to be found by us in the day that we cry to Him with all our heart.



Thank God for This Experience

We thank God for this experience. I have experienced deep grieving at the passing of loved ones, but this suffering is something different. It is a suffering-induced prayer and intercession with groanings that are too deep for words (Romans 8:26). It is not born out of human emotion. God would not do this if it were not part of His deep love and plan for our lives. Our cry is to see His Kingdom come on this earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). Through pain and suffering that is beyond words, we know that this experience is from the Lord’s hands. It will result in the perfection of our spirits to accomplish His will because we want to be pleasing to Him.

So Lord, let us be pleasing to You. I pray that this experience of suffering does something for the earth right now in what God is doing with the sons of God around the globe. Let there be a release. So many times when the Scriptures talk about the suffering of Christ, they also talk about His Sonship at the same time (Acts 17:3; 1 Peter 4:13). Lord, perfect us into sonship. We believe for it in the name of the Lord. Amen.



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All Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible 1995 (NASB1995).

ABOUT GARY HARGRAVE



GARY HARGRAVE has a passion for leading people into spiritual maturity. Gary effectively ministers the life-changing truth of God's Word through Bible teaching and prophetic revelation that emphasizes the Lordship of Christ.

Gary embraces the teachings and insights of the Hebrew Scriptures as the essential foundation of God's Kingdom and the roots of Christian faith.

By cultivating spiritual maturity in Christians, Gary is deeply committed to teaching and inspiring unity in the Body of Christ and between Christians and the Jewish people.

Throughout decades of ministry, Gary has worked closely with leaders in the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant communities to build relationships based on commonality and understanding. He frequently leads study tours to Israel in the land of the Bible.

Gary is the host of a weekly podcast entitled *Growing In God* and is the founder of Shiloh University, an accredited online Bible college and seminary.

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For other insightful resources by Gary Hargrave, including podcasts, books, articles, videos, and other educational materials, please visit: www.HargraveMinistries.org.

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