

The Secret of Suffering

By: Norman P. Grubb

This is transcribed from an audio tape done by Norman Grubb in 1987

What is suffering? Suffering is what I don't like. That's all. It may be spirit suffering, soul-emotional suffering, or body suffering. I don't like it because it presses me to find the remedy. That's the secret! It presses me to find the remedy.

Do we square with what the Bible says on suffering? Unless I get it from my Bible, I'm not safe in the end. The Bible's got to be interpreted by the Spirit; but I've got to have it in my Bible first, to have it in my spirit. The Bible says that suffering is a necessary quality and that you can't have glory without it. So we'd better understand suffering if we'd have glory. The Scriptures are full of it.

In Romans, Corinthians and Timothy

The great Romans 8 victory chapter is full of suffering. The moment Paul speaks about our inheritance in verse 17, he says; "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him." Oh? One condition that we suffer with him, "that we may be ..glorified.." the two are bound together; heirs--joint-heirs, if so be that you suffer. Then glory.

The whole of this chapter (we call it the victory chapter) but it isn't is full of groans. It says that the whole creation groans in pain, "and not only they, but ourselves also." So we're co-groaners! The Bible says so here in verses 22 and 23. This is not the approaching chapter, but the arriving chapter. So we've arrived in groaning here on earth.

And then Paul says that the Spirit groans with us, too, "with groaning which cannot be uttered." That's interesting. Isn't this the victory chapter with no separation, and all of that? Yet, the chapter closes with: "as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long." Not, "alive all the day long." No! "Killed al the day long." Read It! We'd better be Bible readers and see what it says for ourselves. "We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." That's not trotting about in earthly marble palaces, is it? "..Accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Oh! That's Romans.

Now look at Corinthians, where this mighty Paul does his sharing and confessing. II Corinthians is quite a confessing letter. He says "he is comforted in all his tribulation," "but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God..."(1:9). So he went through something. He, mighty Paul was trusting "himself." That's a little but of Satan, isn't it?

What was Paul's sentence of death? It involved, "here and now, don't stop; don't stop at that suffering stuff." His answer was that "we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who

delivered us from...death, and doth deliver..." In chapter 4, he says it is a continual dying, not only a dying two thousand years ago. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (v.7).

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed" (4:8). Troubled means you feel it. In the Bible there's a difference between trouble and distressed. You're perplexed, but not in despair. There is a separation between perplexity and despair, but there is perplexity.

So there is trouble, there is perplexity, there is persecution. We know a bit about that. We're cast down, not out; "cast down, but not destroyed" (v.9). This is the mighty Paul. If you do better than him, you do pretty well. "Always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus.." (v.10). Not past death, but His present dying. that's in me. I'm bearing about the "dying of the Lord Jesus." There's something in me which is dying always, always, always. That's a strong word isn't it? Continual dying, continual glory. There is continual dying, continual suffering, but because life only comes out of death, "that the life...might be manifested in our body."

A Body Death

But the life is only manifested because of the dying. It says that *my* body shows it. Find it in your Bible: "Bearing about in the body the dying...that the life of the Lord Jesus...might be made manifest in *our*

body" (v.10). So it's physically operated, and it shines out of us. Yet, the basis has been the dying, if there's to be any rising. "For we which live are always delivered unto death.."(v.11). We're stuck into death by God: "**Always** delivered unto death...that the life...of Jesus might be made manifest."

In 11 Corinthians 4:17 Paul calls that death "our light affliction." Some lightness! "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment (some moment)! worketh for us a far more exceeding..." worketh: one builds the other up, doesn't it? They're connected. The suffering works unto glory: "Our light affliction...worketh for us a for more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." So we call it light. It doesn't feel light down here at the start. But the outcome is a "weight of glory."

The whole of Chapter 6 is tough: Stripes, imprisonment's, "in all things approving ourselves as the minister." of the Cross. But how? "By much patience, afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonment's, tumults, labors searching's, fastings" (Vs. 4-5). Wow! That's mounting glory.

And then in 2 Timothy, in his last letter before Paul was executed, he told Timothy, "It is a faithful saying: "for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign..."(2:11-12). There it is again! If you want glory, you have suffering! If you are reigning, you are suffering. If you don't suffer with him, you won't have glory. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.

In Hebrews

And then we come to the pattern. It becomes God that we are perfected in suffering, not perfected in glory. And it becomes the One “for whom are all things, and by whom are all things...to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering” (Heb. 2:10). This number one person--the captain, the leader--is made like unto us.

Beginning in 2:9, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels...that he...should taste death for every man. For it became him (God)...” It becomes and suits Him; it’s right and fitting. What is fitting? “In bringing many sons unto glory, to make the leader of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” What sufferings, then?

Temptation is called suffering in Hebrews, 2:18, “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted...” The word for both temptation and trial is the same in the Bible, In some sense temptation is an inner pull, while the trial is outer impact. But they are really same thing, as it’s the same work in the original. “He suffered being tempted.” So there’s suffering in being tried.

Then in 5:7 we discover an amazing description of perfect salvation: “Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears (this is Jesus) unto him that was able to save him from death...was heard in that he feared.” He

wasn't saved from having death: he was saved from the product of death, and then went through death to resurrection.

Jesus wasn't saved from outer death, but through the outer death came the resurrection. No death, no resurrection. So the salvation didn't take place to get Jesus saved from the Cross, because if there hadn't been the Cross there wouldn't have been the resurrection. Resurrection comes after the death, as after the suffering comes the glory. The Bible says so.

It goes on to say in verse 8, that "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Do you see? You learn a thing and get it, as do those becoming doctors or taking on any other occupation. You become a "be-er," a "God-er." You learn obedience.

Obedience is a product of believing

The only obedience we have is not doing, but believing. You see, we believe that He is the doer, so all the doing we do, and will ever do, is believing. And then when we're doing, it's really He. That's learning obedience.

So Jesus "was perfected through suffering" (2:10) "being made perfect...by the things which he suffered,"(5:8&9), and he was settled in something. So sufferings settle you into something. What does it mean to settles you in something? "Being made perfect, he (then) became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him," who go the way, the obedient way. Always remember that obeying is

just believing. We are so keyed into thinking that obeying is working. but this is the obedience of faith.

Inside Me

The great Kierkegaard says, "Life is inside you." Subjectivity is truth. Objectivity is outside you." You always escape by saying, "Oh, it's out there, somewhere." Life's real answer is inside. But life's suffering forces me, if I'm real, to find my answer inside. His great work "existentialism" means that you live in existence; existence inside you.

How do I make that suffering operative? You live from inside you. You don't say, "Oh, I'll get over it somehow. It'll go away tomorrow. It'll leave off me eventually." Life is not objective. Objective is operating by: "Oh we'll handle our problems out here." Subjectivity is: "What does that mean to me? Why is that like that? I must find my answer inside me."

That's dialectic. That's opposite. I don't like it. Aha! I've got to find that one thing I don't like inside me. "Oh, I'll find that tomorrow," is not the answer. It's to find the daylight in the storm. That's subjective. Objective is, "Oh, it'll be found tomorrow." Subjective say, "It's a fine day today." But it isn't a fine day; it's a bad day. Find out how it's a fine day. Find out how a nasty day's a nice day. That's inside you: subjective, existential living.

How do I honestly handle that? suffering forces me, if I'm real, to find my answer inside. And then it comes out through my body. The

Scripture says that if you bear the dying inside you, and find out how to die, and rise inside you, then you show, it. It's spontaneous.

We know how Paul explained that glory comes out of suffering. And the writer of Hebrews showed how the perfect person was made perfect in suffering, having learned obedience. So then, I'm not made perfect through victory, or through glory, but through suffering. The Bible says so. The number one Person, Jesus was perfected through suffering. And when he knew how to handle, and turn the sufferings, the glory came out.

How is that done? Sufferings force me to be what I don't like and face it that I don't like it. Suffering is, "I don't like it." Someone was saying, "I hate me. I couldn't stand me." Hopefully, we all have said that. But I don't find the solution on the outside by pretending something. How can I turn nasty me into nice me? I've got to get my answer.

Kierkegaard, the great teacher, says that subjectivity means the subject is inside of me. Objective is on the outside of me. I must find my answer within, and it starts with conflict. I don't find the answer, and I don't like it. How can I turn a don't like into a do like? Inside me!

Leap of Faith

The secret of the Cross is that you handle your sins by a leap of faith inside of you that seeks a new way. It sounds absurd. Where's God and this resurrection stuff? You've leapt by the absurdity of faith. You

say, "I believe He did it. I believe in the resurrection. I believe in the Holy Spirit to forgive me. So I resolve my sin problem by my Jesus inside me. He took them away! Salvation! New Birth! You've had the inside solution. You couldn't be saved unless you were miserable inside.

The whole world, tries, to escape their sins. That's objectivity. They call adultery a mistake. Our papers are full about girlfriends, which leads to fornication and adultery. We never say so. Only the Bible says so. Or we might call it a mistake. It isn't a mistake. It's sin!

Have you been in adultery? You could say, "Well, I'm sorry I have, but God's had mercy." And we'd believe you. You say we shouldn't ask that. Don't say, "Shouldn't ask that." Say, "I have done that, and I'm sorry." That's honesty. It isn't a mistake; it's a sin. Your subjectivity is truth. We must face it, and find the honest answer.

How can I find the answer inside me when I'm a nasty person? I'd best find out how I'm a nice person, by a leap of faith. I discovered the nasty person was Satan in me, and Jesus Christ put him out. The nice person is Jesus in me, so I find I'm a nice person inside. Now my body shows the inner harmony. Once I was a Satan person; but Jesus put him out, and now I'm Jesus person. I believe that!

It's a leap of faith. I can't prove it. Kierkegaard says we walk on 60,000 fathoms of water, because life is built on doubt, and doubt is

suffering. He says you will always suffer. And faith is built on the doubt. You are in a battle of Faith: "Shall I starve? Shall I do this?" You can't prove any of it.

You can't prove you're saved. You've only got a book, called the Bible. Who says the book's true, anyhow? You can't prove anything. The leap's inside you. Of course, you get the inside Person, but you can't prove Him. The Holy Spirit says, "Oh yes, that's so." But you can't prove that.

You're a fool of faith. It's the foolishness of faith-- "the wisdom of God, which is wiser than men--and the weakness of God is stronger than men." You can't prove it, but somehow you know it. And the world won't talk about it. But you have found the inner secret which resolves suffering.

How does it work in daily lives?

Both temptations and trials produce sufferings. And suffering forces you, if you're real, to find the answer inside yourself. Scripture is clear on that, as we have said before. Now how do we resolve these inner sufferings by faith in all of life?

Suffering means I'm pulled by something I don't like. But I'm supposed to like everything! Oh, then I must be off beam! Jesus had to get His inner self right at Gethsemane: "I don't like the Cross; but

I'd better like it, because I've come to do it! "Not my will, but Thine be done." "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" It took Him three hours to see that one!

It's not out of place to be upset, or pulled, by suffering. It may be suffering by imagination: what you think will come, what has come, or what might come. It may come on the soul level, through our full range of feelings. We use our feelings rightly to love each other, or are meant to. But all feelings can be the other way around: fear, fuss, hate, and so on. Or suffering can be physical. It doesn't matter in what form it comes to us.

The Faith Process

The point is: suffering has diverted my attention to something I don't like. It's meant to do that in order to start the process of faith. Coming to faith on the issue means I've got to resolve it inside properly, whatever outer form it takes. I don't like that! I must start with, "What shall I do with that?" Jesus started there. You must start there.

You don't live by what you see. If the house burns down another one's coming. You see through the burned down house to the new house. We must be real. We don't like this, don't like that. But you cannot resolve it by saying, "Oh, it will pass over." That's what the world does.

The world says, "It's a mistake." It isn't a mistake; It's adultery. It isn't a mistake; he's an alcoholic, drunkard, murderer, or something. Cut out the word "mistake." It shows how hypocritical we are. We talk about national mistakes. The President thinks he should have done better and so and so. But they aren't mistakes; they're real.

Baby Stuff

"Mistakes" is babyhood objectivity. You don't live objectively--**out there**. You live subjectively--**in here**. "What does it mean to me? Why don't I solve that? What happened? Why have I got a mess? What's the mess? How can I turn the mess into a solution?" **Inside me!**

Maybe you don't read about inside solutions because silly men have turned existentialism--Kierkegaard's great word--into heresy. But I have learned something from both Jacob Boehme, the mystic, and Kierkegaard, the great philosopher. Subjectivity is existence. You're a subject; you exist. You're a subject, not an object. Subjectivity is finding the answer in you, not out there. "Why don't I like that?~Why is that doing this?" Now then, the answer is in me.

But of course, in the absurdity of faith, the answer is the inner Person who came once. They say He came, and they say He died, and they say He rose again: and I've believe it. If I don't believe that, of all things I'm most miserable. I'm believing this Person: and, by the leap of faith, comes the solution. **Satan is God's devil**. And you get it, finally. He's God's devil.

Jesus found Calvary to be God's devil: "The cup my Father has given me..." (Jn. 18:11). He said as He sat at the last supper table, "The prince of this world cometh, and has nothing in me" (Jn. 14:30). Everything *on* Him; but nothing *in* him. He'd got it there. But He had to go to Gethsemane, and face it out: "the prince of this world cometh..." and, "My day has come." We baby people call the police if someone threatens us with death, and we get protection. Baby stuff!

Jesus lived under the threat of death from His first miracle, when He raised and healed that person going to the water on the Sabbath day. And from that day they said, "We're going to kill this man." He comes back with, "My day hasn't come. They won't get me." But He lived under the threat. That's suffering. He didn't just get threatened later on. He was always threatened. Later on He was under constant threat. And we howl, and make a great fuss if we're threatened.

One of my dear missionary friends had a great fuss recently. Some robber got into the house. We all commiserated with her and spoke of God's faithfulness, knowing it's a terrible thing to be threatened like that. But be raped and glorified! One of our precious women was once grateful because she was raped; and she glorified God, and told everybody. She even went back to the people who raped her to win them to Christ. She's blessed thousands since.

You see, **objectivity escapes; subjectivity resolves.** It resolves inside you. Now many of you have done that. You're resolved your sins. You resolved it inside you by a Jesus you couldn't prove. The Spirit had to show you that the real Jesus died for you. The thing is done, and therefore your sins aren't there anymore. You've found your peace--resolved.

Kierkegaard said that the truth that edifies is truth to you. It edifies that you're a saved sinner, and brings the peace of God inside you, not outside. That's subjectivity" an absurdity of faith you can't prove. You have a Bible, and you can't even prove the book. Who is this Spirit? Some weird person who's done something to me? I don't know. But He's real to me, and the truth edifies. I live by that. We live by that.

An Edifying Form

And now we find our deeper edification to be that we're Christ as us. We were Satan as us; now we're Christ as us. That's our great secret, of course, which edifies because it is the truth. So we passionately give ourselves for it and would die for it.

We're made of fire passion--made of fire. Everything is fire. God is fire, only His consuming fire has become blessed light. So the Bible calls Him fire and light (Heb. 12:29; 1 Jn. 1:5). Tremendous realization there.

Fire either consumes, or something happens to it, and it becomes light. We know scientifically that a death takes place in this helium~atom business; and it releases energy, and becomes light. Instead of burning, it blesses. That's the paradox. What burns, blesses when resolved inside.

The whole of life is the secret of light. Electricity is light, as Walter Russell taught us. God is light. Everything is light. Light is fire, in an edifying, self-giving form, instead of a self-getting form. And that's what God is: **fire & light**. And we become that. We're all fire. We're passionate. Of course, we're passionate, and thank God that we are. What matters is where your passion goes.

"Lust" is a beautiful word. We put bad connotations on some words, but there they are. In the Greek, this word "lust" is *epithamia*, which means simply strong desire. "With lust I have lusted to eat this feast with you before I suffer," Jesus said (Luke 22:15). It's really just strong desire--passion.

And now our passion goes in this--into giving Jesus to others. We've got the inner solution. I give people the whole business now; "I as He." But it's **suffering, suffering!**

Background to Glory

Suffering is every trial. Suffering is "I don't like it." We always get it, since all of life consists of it. Paul said he was perplexed, and who isn't perplexed? Don't run away. **Accept your perplexity, and turn it into solution.** Don't say, "Oh well, we'll find the answer somewhere." Get the answer *inside* you.

Find the answer to that perplexity. "Perplexed, but not in despair" (11 Cor. 4:8). "Oh, I see. It's a bit of a mess, but it's God's mess. You watch, God's coming through that mess." Now then, I've got inner harmony, and I've died to being governed by negative perplexity.

I've turned my perplexity into God's perplexity. I've not seen quite how yet, but God has the answer. I'm back in harmony, and His life--the resurrection life--is coming through my body. I'm beginning to catch the harmony.

All life is that. Every form gets pressure, pressure; suffering, suffering comes to every life. Life's built on it. We shouldn't kid ourselves. But the point of getting it is that then we see it's the background to glory. We aren't fighting our sufferings as the poor world is fighting.

Many try to escape or resolve life's pressures by calling them mistakes, or something. It's ridiculous how we put the whole nation into debt with all this miserable outer stuff we do from fear. We try to solve life with outer stuff--making armaments, and all this sort of thing.

Existentialism is finding the solution inside you. And the solution inside you, of course, is God's stuff--God's devil. Jesus came to this subjectivity and said, "The prince of this world cometh, and has nothing in me." Outwardly, inwardly, he didn't get Him. You're an inner person. These "things that are seen are temporal." This is only passing, light affliction. Inside is me.

Jesus was an existentialist: "Satan has nothing in Me." After the supper table, He went out to the garden and took three bloody hours to settle it. He said, "Well, I don't like this. If it be possible, I don't want to do it." That's real.

Of course, we see it as Satan, because Satan on the tempting level is good practice. Satan's only a nuisance when he gets us into sin. Then it's trouble. Sin that's only rare and occasional. Tempting level is good practice.

Jesus had the same thing on the tempting level: "Not my will" (Lk. 22:15). He sensed that this was Satan saying, "Come on. Come on. You shouldn't do that." But Jesus responded, "No, I should do it, because God said I should," and resolved it inside Him in bloody sweat. His disciples couldn't help through their prayer. They went to sleep three times over. He was alone in the garden, with the light inside Him. Inside He resolved it.

When the soldiers came and Peter cut the ear off the high priest's servant, Jesus healed him and said, "The cup which my Father hath given me..." He's got it. **The devil was God's cup.** So you also resolve trouble where the enemy becomes your friend--your means by which God does something. Satan was God's cup. God's cup. that's inner solution.

That's perplexity, not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. But you are first cast down, and you are first persecuted, and you are first perplexed. That's suffering! There isn't glory without the suffering. and we always suffer until we recognize that we must get His principle.

Everybody suffers. The poor world suffers, but it doesn't know what to do with it. We're to be the people who do know what to do with it. You have to reverse the outside, inside yourself, to find the answer. Existentialism: in existence. I'm in existence. I'm inside me.

Then How do I respond? By: "I don't like that outside stuff"? Now wait, wait, wait! That "I" is Satan getting at me. My real "I" is Christ. Oh! Satan gets at my suffering. Satan gets at "me" in my "Don't like it, don't like it." It must start that way. It gets "me."

We always get pulled, and the whole of our life is how to resolve the pulling. We can say, "Well, I am pulled, and I forgot who I am. That's all." You must be pulled, and that pull is Satan pulling on you. That's

good health--good practice. That's all. Do you see? It may take days, or a long time. It took even Jesus three hours, and that's Jesus.

Being pulled is okay. Satan is saying, "Here, here, here." You hear him, and you see it in situations, imaginations and trouble. That's real. "Hey, wait a minute. I'll go inside myself." There I find, "Satan, you're not me! That's Jesus. You're me! You're not that stuff out there. You're the real me." Inside you move back to who you are: Christ as you. You always were; you just forgot.

So temptation means you forget who you are. You must do so to be real, and the suffering is there. It begins to be glory when you know God's got an answer. You watch. God's playing tricks. He's going to turn this thing into a good thing, as He turned Calvary into resurrection.

All life is this suffering for every kind of form: big forms, little forms outer forms, inner forms. All life is suffering, because that is the only real perfecting. You've got to be pressed into a thing until you practice it, as trained physicians practice their medicine. After we learn who we are as Christ, then we practice being ourselves as He. The suffering perfect us. It's the only way.

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