The Beatitudes

Spiritual Sword

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Blessed Are Those Who Suffer

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Matthew 5:10-12 will be the key verses for this study.

(10) “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. (11) Blessed are ye, when men revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner against you falsely, for my sake. (12) Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

Why do men suffer?

Sometimes it is because of their sins

Sometimes it is because of the sins of others

I Peter 4:14-16

(14) “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. (15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. (16) Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed: but let him glorify God on his behalf.”

Suffering because one faithfully stands for Christ or God is a source of great blessings. Matt: 5:10-12; I Peter 1:6-9; I Peter 4: 12-13:

I Peter 1:6-9—“(6) Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: (7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory as the appearing of Jesus Christ: (8) Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: (9) Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

Suffering may be either beneficial or destructive to the one who suffers.

The consequences of suffering depends upon how the sufferer reacts to it.

Suffering drives some men away from the Lord into discouragement and even despair.

Suffering also drives men to closer to God.

Suffering is like a hot poker: It will be destructive or helpful depending on which end we grasp, the cool end or the hot end.

If one does not react properly suffering can result in terrible spiritual and psychological scars.

If one does react properly, suffering can be the source of wonderful blessings.

The Blessings of Suffering When We React As God Would Have Us To:

Suffering helps the sufferer to know himself:

Psalms 139: 23-24: “(23) Search me O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. (24) And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Before failing in his greatest test of faith, Peter considered himself as a tower of strength for the Lord. Matt. 26: 31-35. We all know the story where Peter denied that no matter the consequences that he would not deny Christ, yet, Christ told him that he would deny him thrice before the cock would crow.

Matt. 26: 69-74 Peter denied the Lord.

When men pray for divine aid in knowing themselves, it may be that God will answer their prayers by allowing them to be put into the “the crux of suffering.”

Suffering Helps The Sufferer To Attain A Proper Set Of Values:

It is easier for a man who is in the midst of great suffering realize what is important and what is not.

A man with good health might pray for “Wealth, popularity, position, and pleasure,” whereas;

A man that is not in good health and may be dying, the afore mentioned items are not an important item to him.

Suffering Helps The Sufferer To Be Thankful For His Blessings:

Most people in general take for granted the many blessings in life that they enjoy.

Forgetting many times about the blessings of a loving spouse, children, brethren in Christ, the various physical blessings in life, hearing and obeying the Gospel of Christ, the privilege of prayer through Christ, and the privilege of worship.

Ephesians 2: 8-9

(8) “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Properly Reacting To Suffering Helps The Sufferer To Avoid Self-Pity:

Proper reaction to suffering leads one to spend time in prayer for others.

Being truly concerned for others and their welfare through prayer helps prevent us from getting into a pity-party.

Both gratitude and self-pity cannot fill the same heart at the same time.

Suffering Helps The Sufferer To See The Value Of Prayer:

When one is filled with prosperity and good health it is hard for them to fill the need of dependence on God.

Adversity helps the sufferer to see the value of prayer and to pray more intensely.

Manasseh king of Judah was very wicked, but his severe distress caused him to humble himself and pray to God. II Chronicles 33: 9-13

Suffering Helps The Sufferer To Understand What A Blessing It Is Not To Be Able To See What The Future Holds:

If we could see the future we might be so overwhelmed that we could not bear what our future holds.

Each person is given his or her own loads of burden one day at a time, and we must learn to carry our daily load as it comes to us.

We must trust upon the Lord that he will not thrust upon us more that we can bear. (I Corinthians 10:13) (Matthew 6:33)

Suffering Helps The Sufferer To Better Understand The Fatherhood Of God.

The relationship to God and the saved is that of Father to his children. Matt. 7:7-11

If earthly men who partake of worldly lust and such know how to give good gifts to their own children, then how much more will God give to his own children.

Suffering Helps The Sufferer To Better Understand His Own Love For Others:

Most people love their spouses, their children, close friends and associates, and fellow Christians, but when adversity strikes and we may be facing death or at the point of death, we will see the love that we actually have for them.

Suffering Helps The Sufferer To Overlook The Faults And See The Good In Those Whom They Love:

Those whom the sufferer loves are only human and have shortcomings and faults just like they do. Suffering helps to see this fact.

Because of this the sufferer will minimize those shortcomings and begin to emphasize and dwell upon the good in their hearts and lives. Matthew 5: 43-48; Romans 12

Suffering Helps One To Better Realize The Value Of A Kind Word:

Psalms 23: When one goes into the valley of the shadow of death, in suffering his heart is made tenderer and the value of a kind word is better for that individual.

Sometimes even a simple handclasp, or a pat on the back helps. That person will remember the person who followed through with an act of kindness.

Suffering Helps One To See That The Darkest Hours May Precede Those Which Are The Brightest:

Men of great faith and courage “die but once.” While those of little faith and courage often give up in despair when, without their realizing it, they were on the verge of victory.

Many people at this point have given up, taken their own lives, when if they had hung on a little longer would have made it.

Suffering Helps The Sufferer To Realize That Some “Mountain Heights” Can Be Reached Only By Going Through The Valley, Which Is In Front Of The Mountain.

Paul taught that some spiritual heights are reached by way of the valley of affliction and tears. (II Corinthians 4: 17-18)

(17) “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; (18) While we look not at the things which are seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Moses taught the children of Israel that their afflictions would cause them to return to the Lord. (Deuteronomy 4:40)

Suffering also helps one to learn what the word of God teaches. (Psalms 119:71)

CONCLUSION:

The prayerful considerations of these matters, usually brings forth conclusions that allow us to make changes in our lives.

Suffering provides the sufferer with the opportunity to begin anew.

Instead of acting in bitterness toward God (as some have done) each sufferer should recognize that he and his family might be richly blessed.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How can severe suffering be detrimental to both emotional and spiritual life?
2. How can suffering help a person to know himself?
3. How is suffering like a poker?
4. How does suffering relate to the development of the proper set of values?
5. How does suffering relate to the fatherhood of God?
6. What do atheist claim about suffering
7. How does suffering help one to understand better his love for others?
8. How does suffering help one to develop courage?
9. What must one do to reach some “mountain tops” of spiritual attainment?
10. Why is it easy for some to bear the suffering of others?