

Searching for Suffering

Text: Colossians 1:24 (NASB)

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am supplementing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions in behalf of His body, which is the church.

Context: 1:21-24 (NASB)

²¹ And although you were previously alienated and hostile in attitude, *engaged* in evil deeds, ²² yet He has now reconciled you in His body of flesh through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am supplementing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions in behalf of His body, which is the church.

KEY WORDS:

Sufferings (pathēmasin) / πάθημασιν): (Dative plural of *pathēma*, meaning sufferings, afflictions, or experiences, often implying painful experiences.

Afflictions (thlipsis / θλίψις): This word is never used in the New Testament to describe the redemptive, atoning suffering of Jesus on the cross. Instead, it typically refers to "pressure," "tribulation," or the "messianic woes" that the Church must endure before the end of the age.

Supplementing (KJV "Fill up") / Complete (antanaplēroō / ἀνταναπληρόω): A rare double-compound verb meaning to "fill up in turn" or "supply in the place of".

Lacking (hysterēma / ὑστέρημα): Refers to something that is "behind" or "deficient." Commentators argue the "lack" is not in the quality of Christ's sacrifice, but in the proclamation and extension of those benefits to the world.

The Bible Says We Suffer for the Church When We:

1. Pursue
2. Probe
3. Practice

Point #1: Pursue

- Colossians 2:20-21 (NASB)
- Colossians 3:1 (NASB)

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Colossians 2:20-21 (NASB)

²⁰ If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, *such as*, ²¹ "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" ²² (which all *refer to* things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of man?

Colossians 3:1 (NASB)

Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Point #2: Pursue (Measure)

- Galatians 6:4-5 (NASB)
- Mark 10:21 (NASB)

Galatians 6:4-5 (NASB)

⁴ But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have *reason for* boasting, *but* to himself alone, and not to another. ⁵ For each one will bear his own load.

Mark 10:21 (NASB)

Looking at him, Jesus showed love to him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

Point #3: Practice

- Mark 8:34 (NASB)
- Revelation 2:10 (NASB)

Mark 8:34 (NASB)

And He summoned the crowd together with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.

Revelation 2:10 (NASB)

'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

RESPONSE TO THE INVITATION OF FAITH:

1. HEAR the GOSPEL ~ Romans 10:17
2. BELIEVE ~ Hebrews 11:6
3. REPENT ~ Luke 13:3
4. CONFESS ~ Matthew 10:32-33
5. BE BAPTIZED ~ Acts 22:16
6. BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH ~ Revelation 2:10