

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

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Suffering

"He who suffers, remembers." – Cicero

"The only cure for suffering is to face it head on, grasp it round the neck, and use it." – Mary Craig

"The way of surviving is to find meaning in suffering." – Laurel Lee, *Signs of Spring*

"Out of suffering come the strongest souls. God's wounded often make his best soldiers." – Anonymous

"Being myself no stranger to suffering, I have learned to relieve the suffering of others." – Virgil

Suffering simply means, "The state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship." While it is easily defined, it is not something that is pleasant to face.

There have been many good people inundated with suffering due to some physical problem. Or, it could even be something mental. One thing is certain, when it does come, and it will, it comes in varying degrees.

Thankfully, most of us will never know the agony our Lord faced in being crucified. The anguish and pain must have been incredible. We sing about it and talk about it, but really have no concept of it since we have never faced such horrific pain. One cannot help but marvel that our Lord faced such agony and did not retaliate. "Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23).

Suffering can certainly fall into the realm of mental anguish. One can only imagine what Peter must have felt for having denied the Lord, not once, but three times! The Bible reveals that Peter "went out and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75). What is interesting is to study the Greek word translated "bitterly." You will note that it carries with it the idea of violent. It certainly helps us to understand that Peter suffered greatly for his betrayal of our Lord. While thankfully Peter was able to repent and be forgiven, Judas instead couldn't face such suffering, and elected to hang himself (Matt. 27:5).

Perhaps what would help us, is to remember what James told his readers. "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2-3). And to remember the later exhortation: "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray..." (James 5:13).

And what of Peter's words of exhortation: "But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. ...For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil" (1 Pet. 3:17).