

Sermon Series: “The Darkness and the Dawn”—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN—4/6/2003

Title: “Lessons in Obedience...Taught Severely”

Text: (Selected Scripture)

Intro: *Ills.: Unexpected Benefit*

Theme: As we view the events of Jesus’ suffering and death, we see that the twin sister of obedience is suffering and that through both not only did Jesus accomplish a perfect sacrifice for our sins but by them the Father accomplishes a perfect result of holiness within our lives.

The Purpose of Obedience through Suffering

- Can anything valuable come from suffering?
 1. Chafing under God’s sovereign rule in light of our own inept/sinfully blinded ability to comprehend His future plan
 1. **PRINT AND READ JOB 23: 1-7**
 2. Going through illness, disappointments in school or with a relationship, the loss of job, down-turns in life
 3. **Ills.: example of reporters and retired generals not understanding overall military plan**
 2. Not reasoning that but by the grace of God’s loving hand of discipline, our sinfulness would destroy us
 1. “*For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.*” *Heb12:3-4*
 2. We downplay the *seriousness* of our sin when what we should be *getting serious* about our sin
- God’s tool of refining and purifying
 1. Even Jesus *learned obedience* through his suffering
 1. “*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.*” *Heb. 5: 8-9*
 2. Jesus’ suffering, unlike ours, accomplishes in us the removal of sin’s stain and power and slavery
 2. The Heavenly Father leads us through the refining of suffering toward the purpose of *learning perfecting obedience*
 1. **PRINT AND READ JOB 23: 10-12**
 2. If God could cause quantum leap forward in your spiritual maturity, would you be open to it? (at what cost)

The Process Followed in Obedience through Suffering (PRINT AND READ 1 PETER 2: 20-25)

- When suffering criticism
 1. Jesus endured vulgar insults (illegitimate, demon), accusations of lying (tear down temple), misunderstanding (king)
 2. Often we bristle at smear campaigns, political motives, meanness, or unjust accusation and clamor for justice
 3. Choosing to *remain silent* because of *our witness* to Jesus and *our hope* in the Father’s overview of my life
- When suffering persecution
 1. Jesus slapped, hit, beaten, whipped, crowned with thorns, mocked, nailed, and speared – yet did not retaliate with sin
 2. *Not letting another’s sin lead you to sin* — understanding that Jesus “*bore our sins in his body*” – not add to it
- When suffering silence
 3. Jesus suffered the total alienation of the Father on account of our sins so that we could know that we never would
 4. *Suffering in silence does not mean that Father doesn’t hear you* – we are not left alone in life without a defender
 5. “*We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.*” *2 Cor. 4: 8-10*
- When suffering loss
 6. Jesus suffered the ultimate loss of death by entrusting himself to “*the Shepherd and Guardian of his soul.*”

7. *Everything form of suffering* (inconvenience to death) *cannot separate us for God's love in Christ Jesus*
The Perspective Gain through Obedience through Suffering

- Moving from self-righteousness through sympathy to empathy
 1. **Ills.:** *"Suffering plants within us the seeds of humility."* **Chuck Swindoll**
 2. It keeps us from thinking too highly of ourselves and coming to the aid of others who suffer just as we do
- Gaining the *mind of Christ* toward a lost and hurting world
 3. Jesus willingly suffer even death on a cross—*"because of the joy of his victory and our salvation set before him."*
 4. Willingly enduring life's "crosses" that we might become the life-ring of hope and salvation in Jesus to them
 5. *"And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."* Col. 3: 12-13

Unexpected Benefit

"Contrary to what might be expected, I look back on experiences that at the time seemed especially desolating and painful with particular satisfaction. Indeed, I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I learned in my seventy-five years in this world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my existence, has been through affliction and not through happiness, whether pursued or attained. IN other words, if it ever were to be possible to eliminate affliction from our earthly existence by means of some drug or other medical mumbo jumbo . . .the result would not be to make life delectable, but to make it too banal and trivial to be endurable. This, of course, is what the Cross signifies. And it is the Cross, more than anything else, that has called me inexorably to Christ." **Malcolm Muggeridge, A Twentieth-Century Testimony** (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1978).

Job 23:1-7

¹Then Job replied: ²"Even today my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. ³If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! ⁴I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. ⁵I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say. ⁶Would he oppose me with great power? No, he would not press charges against me. ⁷There an upright man could present his case before him, and I would be delivered forever from my judge.

Job 23:10-12

¹⁰But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. ¹¹My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside. ¹²I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.

1 Peter 2:20-25

²⁰But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²²"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." ²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.