



August 31, 2025

- The Suffering Saint

SUMMARY: Suffering is a reality for every believer, and it's one of the most difficult things to reconcile with the goodness and love of our Heavenly Father. Yet, throughout Scripture and in our own lives, we see that God does not spare even His most faithful servants from pain. The story of Paul's conversion is a powerful reminder that suffering is not a sign of God's absence or lack of love, but rather, it is often a necessary part of our spiritual journey. Jesus Himself promised that in this world we would have tribulation, and the cross stands as the ultimate proof of God's love for us—not our circumstances. When we face suffering, it's not because God is indifferent or cruel. The cross of Christ demonstrates that He entered into our pain, suffered alongside us, and gave His very best for our sake. If we ever doubt His love, we need only look to Calvary. The paradox is that God allows suffering because we need it. It is the bedrock of our spiritual life, the means by which we are strengthened, grown, redirected, and given the opportunity to glorify God. Suffering exposes our weakness and brings us to our knees, where we discover that true strength comes from Christ alone. Like Paul, we learn that God's grace is sufficient and His power is made perfect in our weakness. Spiritual growth rarely happens in comfort; it is forged in the fires of adversity. Through suffering, we learn to access the spiritual provisions God has given us—peace, endurance, character, and hope. Sometimes, suffering is God's way of waking us up, redirecting our lives, and shaking us out of spiritual complacency. He disciplines those He loves, not to harm us, but to move us toward His best for us. Looking back, we often see how God used painful seasons to bring about blessings we could never have imagined. Perhaps the greatest privilege suffering affords is the opportunity to glorify God. It is easy to praise Him in times of abundance, but it is in the valley, when we stand in His strength and declare His goodness, that He is most glorified. Our response to suffering becomes a testimony to the world and a source of encouragement to others. United in our suffering and in the grace of Christ, we remember that He is with us, and through Him, we can endure and bring glory to His name.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Cor.12:8-9, Phil.4:13, Rom.5:3-4, 2 Pet.3:18, Heb.12:6, 1 Thess.1:2, Heb.5:8, Phil. 2:7-8, 1 Cor.10:31

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Paul say that God's power is made perfect in weakness? How does this challenge the way most people view strength and success?
2. The sermon suggests that suffering is not a sign of God's absence or lack of love. How does the cross of Christ serve as proof of God's love, even in the midst of pain?
3. The pastor talks about suffering as a way God "redirects" our lives and wakes us up from spiritual complacency. What are some reasons God might allow hardship to come into a believer's life?
4. According to Romans 5, how does hope function in the life of someone who is suffering? What does it mean that hope "does not put us to shame"?