

Principles That Relate To Suffering
(Revelation 2:10-11)

Introduction:

1. Last Sunday our lesson was based on information revealed in 1 John 4:16.
 - a. In this verse the apostle John stated that "God is love."
 - b. He also said that we have known and believed the love that God has for His children.
2. In Revelation 2:10-11 the same apostle John wrote a message from the Lord to the church in Smyrna.
 - a. The Lord said that His people in Smyrna would suffer, and they would be tried.
 - b. He also encouraged them to be faithful and to overcome.
3. Quite often we hear people question why a loving God will allow people to suffer.
4. Some people go so far as to say that suffering proves that God does not exist.
5. This illustrates why we need to study Bible "principles that relate to suffering."
6. Let us first point out that . . .

Discussion:

I. PEOPLE MAY SUFFER FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS

- A. It is possible for a person to suffer because of his own actions.
 1. To illustrate, Solomon discussed the effects of alcohol in Proverbs 23:29-30.
 2. Let us remember the law of sowing and reaping mentioned in Galatians 6:7.
- B. It is possible for a person to suffer because of the actions of other people.
 1. Abel died because Cain killed him (Genesis 4:8).
 2. Some people from Galilee died because Pilate had them killed (Luke 13:1-3).
- C. It is possible for a person to suffer because of an accident (Luke 13:4-5).
- D. It is possible for a person to suffer from natural causes such as sickness and disease (John 9:1-3a).
- E. It is possible for a person to suffer as a result of doing the Lord's will.
 1. Paul suffered greatly for the cause of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:24-28).
 2. Godly living is sometimes accompanied by persecution (2 Timothy 3:12).
- F. Although we may suffer for a variety of reasons, . . .

II. THE BIBLE GIVES US CERTAIN GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW

- A. Let us understand that affliction can be beneficial (Psalm 119:67, 71).
- B. Let us use caution when speaking to people who are suffering (Proverbs 25:11).
- C. Let us remember that God will not allow His people to be tested above what we are able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- D. Let us remember that suffering can lead us to depend upon God for strength (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).
- E. Let us remember that the suffering of other people may provide opportunities for us to do God's work (Galatians 6:2; John 9:3-4).
- F. Let us receive encouragement from positive examples (James 5:10-11).
- G. Let us remember to pray (James 5:13a).
- H. Let us strive to maintain a positive outlook (1 Peter 4:16).

Conclusion:

1. In closing, let us read Romans 8:18.
2. This is a powerful verse at the beginning of an uplifting section of Scripture.
3. It teaches us that:
 - a. suffering is confined to this life
 - b. suffering is not worthy to be compared to future glory.
4. This message of hope is for God's children.
5. We learn from Galatians 3:26-27 how to become His children.