CUP of SUFFERING Pt. 1

It is my hope that this sermon will be encouraging to you in whatever circumstance you find yourself in throughout your life as a Christian. I know the title doesn't sound encouraging at all. Seems ironic that I'm saying I hope this will encourage you. But there are so many times when we suffer and we just don't get it. We wonder why? We could understand if we were being punished for sin but when there seems to be no reason, it is not easy to endure suffering. If that's you, you don't have doors open to satan and you are doing your best to live a righteous life but you are suffering, I hope this message will minister to you and give you hope and encouragement.

1 Peter 5:9 - Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Believers all over the world are suffering too, you are not alone.

All through Scripture there are various times when there is a cup from The Lord that must be drank. In the Old Testament, God's cup often represented His wrath against sin **(Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17)**. But each Christian will face suffering in different ways.

Even Jesus was faced with a cup from The Lord to drink.

Mark 10:38 - But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

This cup and baptism is talking about the suffering appointed for Christ, including His bearing of divine judgment against sin at the cross.

John 18:11 - Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?

This cup signifies the suffering and judgment Jesus would bear as the substitute for sinners. He had already submitted Himself to the Father's will in prayer, though the cost of the cross filled Him with anguish **(Matthew 26:39)**. As the suffering Servant foretold in Isaiah 53 and the Lamb of God who takes away the

sin of the world **(John 1:29)**, He accepted the cross in obedience so that salvation could be accomplished.

Matthew 26:39 - And He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou *wilt*.

The cup represented the wrath of God against sin, long portrayed in Scripture as a cup of judgment. Jesus would drink it fully, bearing in Himself the penalty deserved by sinners. I always like this passage because it shows us just how hard this thing was that Jesus did for all of us. So hard in fact, that His flesh wanted it to be removed but God was silent because it was His will for Jesus to endure what He did for us.

The "cup" Jesus accepted from the Father represents the complete emotional, physical, and spiritual suffering of the crucifixion, including taking the judgment for human sin. Jesus became the atonement for sin by drinking that cup. He endured the punishment for sin on behalf of humanity, transforming the judgment into grace.

Luke 14:27 – (Jesus said) And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.

In ancient times it was a shameful thing to have to carry a cross. Criminals were the ones who carried crosses and were nailed to crosses. Jesus tells us we are to bear a cross and if we cannot bear up under the weight of it and carry it daily we are not worthy to be His disciple.

In one sense our cross pertains to the nuts and bolts of being a real Christian and adhering to God's Word. Just for doing that we will be ridiculed, mocked, rejected, persecuted verbally and possibly physically too, treated unjustly and possibly murdered. In another way, carrying our cross pertains to the cup of suffering that each Christian has to drink just as our Master Jesus did. We are not greater than The Master and we will suffer too. **(John 13:16)**

I want to share some examples:

A few years back Pastor Erustus asked for prayer for sister Dorcus who was diagnosed with breast cancer. He shared some of her and her husband's testimony with me:

This couple attends and serves in Kenya at Bungoma, Pastor Erustus' church headquarters. He said, Now so sad his wife Dorcus was diagnosed with cancer in her left breast. This couple have been and are still support and big pillars in our ministry work way back from 2009. Bro. Geoffrey is our ministry treasurer and his wife Dorcus is our women leader in our Bungoma church.



Sister Dorcus

Sister Dorcus last year in December after Doctors carried some test she was advised to undergo surgery and the left breast was removed.
It really affected them and they went low but we encouraged and prayed for her and I thank God she is strong in the work. Now early this month she went for more tests and the doctors said the cancer cells were spreading very fast and now the cancer is developing to stage 3 and they advised her to start chemotherapy immediately to kill and stop the cancer cells from spreading to other parts of the body. Chemotherapy is very expensive here, most of our hospitals don't have facilities just about 3 hospitals in our country.

So she initially had her breast removed and was remaining strengthened in The Lord. But then the cancer was still there. When they were facing chemo treatments, Pastor Erustus reached out because they just can't afford that there. Praise God we were able to help them afford her treatments.

She under went her first Chemotherapy Monday this week and she is to under go 8 chemotherapies. They are so draining but I thank God she is stable and now doing well. This has really hit us hard as a church and Ministry. But we serve a GOD Who heals we are believing God for the miracle of healing.

Dorcus managed to receive her 1st Chemo and we thank God for giving her the strength to undergo this. We travelled back safely 🙏. She's scheduled for Daily Radiotherapies starting from 29th of this month up to 23rd of February, this will mean she'll have to be hospitalized for the entire 25 days because Radios are done daily, there after she'll continue with her Chemos."

So Pastor that is the state of our dear sister Dorcus at the moment. They have 2 children, a boy and a girl and she has been advised not to bear more children. It has not been easy but I thank God for His sufficient grace and the comfort through the Holy Spirit.

Just sharing with you Pastor to know what is happening with my 2 key leaders in ministry and more importantly requesting for your prayers. In Christ Jesus we are more than conquerors. Have a nice weekend and Sunday service Pastor. We love you.

Pastor shared with me how discouraged this couple was at different times going through all of this. From bad news to more bad news and even the news of knowing they could not have any more children. I praise God they had strong spiritual encouragement and guidance through Pastor Erustus and Pastor Sarah and their church body to love on them and help them through this hard circumstance.

They did question God. They wondered why this was happening to them and yet they had been so faithful and even serving in the church. They were very disheartened at times.



L-R: Sister Dorcus' husband Geoffrey, Sister Dorcus and her dad on far right.



In the picture above sister Dorcus in the Sunday service testifying and thanking God for providing and taking her through successfully in cancer treatment. We appreciate your prayers Pastor. God bless you.

In all of this, she managed to keep standing and not turn away from God. The suffering we go through in this life is not easy. Many people who are weak in the faith will leave God over something like this. It's that age old question of why bad things happen to good people. The Bible tells us there is no one good but God. **(Mark 10:18)** And the simple answer is that we are in a fallen world, a world that chose to follow satan and not God. So now this world is our testing ground to see what master we will serve and we must endure tests, trials and tribulation in this life.

You could say, well even unbelievers go through this kind of thing. That's true, but when you do it as a Christian it is for God's glory. And because we know Jesus gave His life for us to be saved and healed, we know He could heal us without ever having to go through chemo or radiation. With God all things are possible. **(Matt.19:26)** So when He doesn't remove it and instead works through modern medicine and doctors to bring healing about, it is a hard thing to face, a cup of suffering. Anything we as Christians have to endure will be easier with Jesus than those who don't know Him or have Him in their life.

Faith anchors us to Christ - when suffering, fear, or temptation threatens to shake us. Like a house founded on rock, those of us who hear and obey Christ remain secure amid storms **(Matthew 7:24–25)**. The Holy Spirit strengthens us inwardly so that Christ's presence and truth govern our hearts **(Ephesians 3:16–17)**.

Opposition, loss, rejection, and persecution were familiar realities for the early church and that has not changed over all these years for the faithful Christian witness. Jesus warned us that we would have tribulation in this world, yet He also declared His victory over the world **(John 16:33)**. Suffering tests and refines our faith as fire refines gold **(1 Peter 1:6–7).**

The shared sufferings of God's people all around this world directs our eyes to Christ, Who suffered for sins and now reigns in glory. He is our hope and strength. Stay focused on Christ Who has already won the victory and cleared the way for us.

CLOSING

The length of our suffering varies depending on the type of work God has called us to and what He is doing in us. King David was on the run from King Saul for probably at least 10 years or more. Even though God told him he was to be king and anointed him at an early age, he still had to endure King Saul trying to kill him because of jealousy. It wasn't easy being on the run and living and hiding out in caves for all that time. He managed to keep his faith in God even though there were times he actually thought King Saul was going to get the upper hand and manage to kill him somehow.

Never give up no matter what you endure, face and go through in this life, you are not alone. Keep lifting it up to God in prayer and trust Him for the outcome. He knows exactly why you are suffering and if He doesn't lift it off of you, then He will give you strength to bear up under it, endure it and go through it until He does deliver you from it or takes you home to be with Him. Don't let anything crush your faith and pull you away from Jesus. The devil loves to use suffering to try to drive a wedge between us and Jesus. Look at what he did to Job. We gotta be like Job and no matter how bad it gets, keep clinging to Jesus.

PRAYER