

From the Heart

Pastors Rodney & Adonica Howard-Browne

WHY DO CHRISTIANS SUFFER?

Foundation scripture:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Hosea 4:6 KJV

1. People Suffer Because of Lack of Knowledge:

- a. People need to be teachable, humble themselves, and learn.
- b. 2 Timothy 2:15 KJV – *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*
- c. God’s word is freely available to us. There is no reason to be ignorant. We have access to books, CDs, DVDs, the Internet, etc.

2. Not Acting on the Word of God:

- a. Matthew 7:24-27 KJV – *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”*
- b. James 1:22 KJV – *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*

3. Opposing the Truth:

- a. 2 Kings 5:9-14 KJV – Naaman, the Syrian, wanted to be healed of leprosy, but he didn’t want to dip himself in the Jordan as Elisha commanded him, because he thought the Jordan was not as good as his rivers back home. Although it was a simple enough assignment, he thought it was beneath him. It was only when he swallowed his pride and dipped where he was told to dip, that he received his healing.
- b. Some people call themselves Christians, but have no respect for the Word of God. They don’t think that it applies to them.
- c. Some people are in outright rebellion toward the Word of God. They are going to do it their way no matter what the word says.
- d. Humble yourself and obey.

4. Living in Sin:

- a. Galatians 6:7-8 KJV – *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”*
- b. If you sow to the flesh – rebellion; self-will; carnality - you will reap corruption. The wages of sin is still death.
- c. Isaiah 1:19-20 KJV – *“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”*

5. Not Discerning the Lord’s Body:

- a. 1 Corinthians 11:17-30 KJV

b. Verses 29-30 KJV – *“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”*

c. Discern the Lord’s body – beaten and broken for you – His stripes for your healing.

d. Discern the Lord’s body – love your brothers and sisters – walk in love toward the Body of Christ.

6. Unforgiveness:

- a. Mark 11:22-26 KJV
- b. Verse 25-26 KJV – *“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”*

7. Envy, Strife, and Pride:

- a. James 3:14-16 KJV – *“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.”*
- b. Proverbs 16:18 KJV – *“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”*

8. Murmuring and Complaining:

- a. 1 Corinthians 10:10 KJV – *“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.”*
- b. Deuteronomy 28:45-48 KJV
- c. Verse 47 KJV – *You are cursed with a curse: “Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things”*

9. Persecution:

- a. It is scriptural to suffer persecution for preaching the Gospel, and nothing to be ashamed of. God will grace you to handle it and deal with your enemies on your behalf.
- b. 2 Timothy 3:12 KJV – *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”*
- c. Mark 10:29-30 KJV – *“And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”*
- d. If you suffer as a result of your own foolishness or wrongdoing, then you must also suffer the consequences – this suffering is your fault, not God’s. Bear it without complaining.
- e. 1 Peter 4:15-16 KJV – *“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”*
- f. The suffering that is NOT God’s plan for you is sickness, disease, poverty, lack, torment, misery, fear, curses, etc.

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WHY DO CHRISTIANS SUFFER? PART TWO

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1. People Suffer Because of Lack of Knowledge:

2. Not Acting on the Word of God:

3. Opposing the Truth:

4. Living in Sin:

5. Not Discerning the Lord's Body:

a. 1 Corinthians 11:17-31 KJV

Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. 23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

b. Discern the Lord's body – beaten and broken for you – His stripes for your healing.

c. Discern the Lord's body – love your brothers and sisters – walk in love toward the Body of Christ.

6. Unforgiveness:

a. Mark 11:22-26 KJV – “And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that

those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. 24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. 25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

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8. Murmuring and Complaining:

a. 1 Corinthians 10:10 KJV – “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.”
b. Deuteronomy 28:45-47 KJV – “Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.”

9. Persecution:

a. It is scriptural to suffer persecution for preaching the Gospel, and nothing to be ashamed of. God will grace you to handle it and deal with your enemies on your behalf.
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