



Season 8 Podcasts

Suffering for the Gospel

By

Mark McGee

So far in my 8th Season Podcast series I've shared thoughts with you about:

- 8 Rules for Bible Study
- 40 Rules for Ministry
- The Heart of the Gospel
- Defending and Confirming the Gospel
- Your Fellowship in the Gospel
- The Completion of the Gospel
- The Affection of the Gospel
- The Discernment of the Gospel
- The Excellence of the Gospel
- The Sincerity of the Gospel
- The Fruit of the Gospel
- The Advancement of the Gospel
- The Preaching of the Gospel
- Living for the Gospel
- Conduct Worthy of the Gospel

The next aspect I'd like to share with you is 'suffering' for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul continued his letter to the Christians in Philippi by writing:

"For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me." Philippians 1:29-30

Faith in Christ is one thing that unites true Christians. Another is suffering for His sake. Christians, real Christians, have the same conflict that the Philippians had seen in Paul's life. To think differently is to miss a primary point of what it means to be a Christian.

Look through the history of God's people and what do you see? Suffering .. struggle .. opposition .. persecution. God told Adam and Eve that they would suffer, then die, and they did. God said that He would send the 'Seed of the woman' who would also struggle, then die, and He did. However, Jesus rose from the dead and promised His followers that they too would rise from the dead.

Jesus, who is the Seed of the Woman, was sent into the world to 'destroy the works of the devil.' He told Ananias that Saul of Tarsus (Paul) would suffer greatly .. and he did (Acts 9). Paul told the Philippian Christians that they would suffer .. and they did. So will you. So will I. That is what it means to be a child of God in this broken world. We suffer 'on behalf of' Christ and 'for His 'sake.'

I found Paul's way of explaining 'suffering' to the Philippians to be unique in a world that avoids suffering at all costs. He wrote: 'For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.' The Greek word translated 'on behalf of' is *huper*. It is a preposition that means 'over, beyond, above, conferring benefit, for the sake of, more than.' The words 'it has been granted' in the Greek is *charizomai* and means 'to grant as a favor, extend favor, to extend grace.' The root word for *charizoma* is *charis* (grace, unmerited favor).

Does that strike you as unusual or even a strange way to describe 'suffering?' We believe and suffer 'on behalf of' Christ and His 'sake.' Believing in Christ makes perfect sense, but why would Paul place 'suffering' within the framework of God being 'gracious' to His people?

I believe that Paul joined two important spiritual ideas together: belief in Christ and suffering for His sake. Faith and suffering go together. There is not one without the other. What Paul was telling the Philippians, and is telling us, is that believing (having saving faith) in Christ includes suffering for Christ.

Paul knew, as did the Philippians, that life in Heaven would be a beautiful experience. Paul had already written his letters to the Galatians, Thessalonians, Corinthians, and Romans by the time he wrote Philippians. The Christians in Philippi may have read copies of those letters, but Paul would have certainly taught them about what awaited for them in Heaven. However, Paul also made it clear that part of believing in Christ included suffering for 'Christ's sake' while in our mortal bodies.

We can deny it, wish it weren't so, even try to pray it away, but that doesn't change the fact that – 'it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.' And, just in case anyone in the Philippian church needed an example of what Paul meant by 'suffering,' he added these words: 'having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.' The Greek word for 'conflict' is *agón* and means 'fight, struggle, contention.' We get our English word 'agony' from the Greek *agón*. The Philippians knew how Paul had suffered through the years for the 'sake of Christ.' He was their example of 'suffering' and how God wanted them to respond to it in their daily lives. God graciously 'granted' them 'on behalf of Christ' to suffer for His sake.

God has done the same for us. He has granted us to both 'believe' in Christ and 'suffer' for Christ. Thank you, Lord. May you be glorified.

[Play Podcast](#)

In Christ's Love and Grace,

Mark McGee

GraceLife / Faith and Self Defense / Grace Martial Arts /
Substack

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®.
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission.
All rights reserved.

© 1971-2026