

Second – the suffering of which Paul speaks is *how God used Paul to powerfully show the love of Christ to others!* Imagine this: What if Paul lived for Christ and suffered a little, *then threw in the towel?* That would make the love of Christ would appear insignificant to others! *But Paul did the opposite!* He wrote: ^{NIV} **2 Corinthians 11:23** “I have... been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.” Paul endured much AND *was powerfully used by God to help people know Jesus Christ!* May God also use us!

Conclusion: Now, as we conclude this series on the *Biblical relationship between faith and works*, let us ✦ know we are saved by faith alone, ✦ see our works as the evidence of our faith, and ✦ actively live our faith: by ➔ following God’s Word, ➔ properly reflecting Christ to others, and ➔ patiently suffering for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ! And all God’s people said: *Amen!*

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The Biblical Relationship between Faith and Works – Part 8

Passive Faith Saves!

(Passive Faith is God’s gift of faith, which unites a person to Jesus!)



Active Faith Serves ➔ By Suffering for Jesus Christ!

Based on Various Passages

15th Sunday after Pentecost, 14th Sunday after Trinity – 2010

Sunday † September 5 † 8:15 & 10:45

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, today, in this final sermon in the series, we focus on suffering – *not on the completed suffering of Jesus for our salvation, but on the suffering we will experience in this life as His followers!*

1. **Mistreatment of Christians by the World:** It *began* with Cain murdering Abel and *will continue* until Jesus returns! Let’s see what the Bible says:
 - a. Jesus said these words to His twelve disciples before He sent them out: ^{NAS} **Matthew 10:22** “**And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.**” Whenever people hate us for Jesus’ sake, *let us trust in God to keep us in Christ to the end!*
 - b. Jesus said these words to help His twelve disciples understand why they would suffer: ^{NIV} **John 16:2** “**They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think**

he is offering a service to God.” That was Paul’s belief when he arrested and imprisoned Christians; *he actually thought he was serving God!* Even today misguided people may do the same to you and me!

- c. This verse states that all Christians will be persecuted: ^{NAS} 2 Timothy 3:12 “**And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**” So WHO will be persecuted? *All who desire to live godly!* WHO has such a desire? *All who know Jesus Christ as their Savior!*
- d. The New American Bible for Catholics, 2 Maccabees 7:1-9, 37-41 – An excerpt of the reading entitled: **Martyrdom of a Mother and Her Sons**, which took place about 170 B.C. We believe this account from the Apocrypha is true *but not inspired by God!*
- e. The writer of Hebrews wants us to think about Jesus’ sufferings in comparison to ours: ^{NAS} **Hebrews 12:3** “**For consider [Jesus] who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin...**” How might we respond? Let us: ✦ be ever-thankful for Jesus’ suffering on our behalf, ✦ not fear our own suffering, and ✦ *know that God will enable us to endure to the end!*

2. **Suffering by Christians in the World:**

- a. Notice the attitude of the apostles: ^{NIV} Acts 5:41 “[They] left the Sanhedrin, **rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name [that is, the name of JESUS].**”

- b. God moved Peter to write these words of instruction about our suffering: ^{NIV} 1 Peter 4:12 “**Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**” WHY is being insulted because of the name of Christ a BLESSING? The insult itself is not a blessing, *but the insult points to the reality of truly being united to Jesus Christ* – thus forgiven through Him and heaven bound! *The blessing is assurance!*
- c. Paul explained his attitude about suffering: ^{NAS} Romans 8:18 “**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**” Our Christian lives will include at least some suffering *because of our connection with Christ*; nevertheless, our sufferings will be very minor *in comparison to the blessings we will enjoy in eternity!*
- d. Paul described both suffering and faith as blessings: ^{NAS} **Philippians 1:29** “**For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake...**” Faith *unites us to Christ*; suffering for His sake *confirms our union with Christ!*
- e. Let’s rightly understand these words of Paul: ^{NIV} Colossians 1:24 “**...I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.**” First – Jesus did a FINISHED WORK; *His suffering is sufficient for all!*