
1. Introduction

Fellowship of His Sufferings is the fourth of the fellowships with God.

They enter the first [Fellowship in the Gospel](#), followed by [Fellowship with Holy Spirit](#) and

When we become believers in Jesus, we know He forgives us. Child-like faith acknowledges the kingdom of God within us. God does not want us to stop at the fellowship in the gospel, so He encourages us to have the Holy Spirit come upon us through baptism in the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit baptism allows connection with the Holy Spirit to grow and mature. As we discovered in the third in this series, the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus.

2. What is the Fellowship of His Suffering?

Jesus suffered at the hands of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then He also suffered in the garden of Gethsemane in His struggle to do the will of God. He suffered from His twelve apostles leaving Him, denying Him, and not understanding or believing in Him. And Jesus suffered at the hands of the mob who sentenced Him to death. He also suffered at the hands of Pontius Pilate and the Roman soldiers.

As with Paul, a call into the ministry is a call into a fellowship of suffering:

PHILIPPIANS 3:10

THAT I MAY KNOW HIM AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS, BEING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH, IF, BY ANY MEANS, I MAY ATTAIN TO THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

3. How can we Fellowship in His Sufferings?

Fellowship in suffering can be some of the most precious things we can experience. Facing persecution, concern for the churches' lack, or sickness can bring us into a place of intimacy with God as we discover how much He loves us.

It is a place where we bring our needs to Him because He cares for us:

1 PETER 5:7

CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM, FOR HE CARES FOR YOU.

God understands that we live in a world that allows suffering due to the fall of Adam and Eve. He understands that there are good and evil people because they love the darkness more than the light. Therefore, Jesus suffered these abuses too.

4. Purpose of this Fellowship

A. Becoming Like Jesus

The New Covenant brings victory over sin, sickness, and torment. However, it also brings suffering and persecution. When someone abuses or speaks against us, retaliating is easy; however, that is not the way of the gospel.

B. To Grow in Grace

Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' was not sickness, but rather a person who was tormenting him, keeping him humble:

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7

AND LEST I SHOULD BE EXALTED ABOVE MEASURE BY THE ABUNDANCE OF THE REVELATIONS, A THORN IN THE FLESH WAS GIVEN TO ME, A MESSENGER OF SATAN TO BUFFET ME, LEST I BE EXALTED ABOVE MEASURE.

The Greek meaning of aggelos:

When it uses the word messenger of Satan, it is the word *aggelos* where we get angel.

Aggelos, in this context, is defined as a demon or person of evil intent.

We know that humility brings grace:

JAMES 4:6

**BUT HE GIVES MORE GRACE. THEREFORE HE SAYS:
"GOD RESISTS THE PROUD,
BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."**

C. To Grow from Glory to Glory

God wants us to grow from glory to glory. So Jesus suffered to bring glory upon us:

HEBREWS 2:10

FOR IT WAS FITTING FOR HIM, FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS AND BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, IN BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY, TO MAKE THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.

The stepping stone from one level of glory to another level of glory is usually suffering:

ROMANS 8:16-18

THE SPIRIT HIMSELF BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS—HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST, IF INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM, THAT WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER. FOR I CONSIDER THAT THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTH COMPARISON WITH THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US.

Just because we suffer does not mean we automatically grow from glory to glory. We also need to ensure that we have the right attitude.

D. Resurrection Life

Paul teaches us that if we want resurrection, life flowing through us into others (which releases healing, deliverance, and victory over death) comes through suffering.

PHILIPPIANS 3:10

THAT I MAY KNOW HIM AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS, BEING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH, IF, BY ANY MEANS, I MAY ATTAIN TO THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

5. Dangers of False Fellowship in His Sufferings

If we dwell too much on our sufferings, we can move into a poverty mindset, self-pity, or persecution complex. It can also become a place of begging that is not healthy. These attitudes can stop the growth of grace and glory in our lives.

God will never turn away someone who comes with a contrite heart and a broken spirit:

ISAIAH 66:2

**“BUT ON THIS ONE WILL I LOOK:
ON HIM WHO IS POOR AND OF A CONTRITE SPIRIT,
AND WHO TREMBLES AT MY WORD.**

God does not want us to stay in a self-pity or poverty mindset. He wants us to grow in faith:

HEBREWS 11:6

BUT WITHOUT FAITH, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM, FOR HE WHO COMES TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS AND THAT HE IS A REWARDER OF THOSE WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.

It is a genuine danger for a minister to camp in self-pity and lose closeness with God due to the ministry's demands. A leader must balance the ministry priorities with the other aspects of life: fellowship with God, marriage, parenting, and finances.

HEBREWS 12:12-13

THEREFORE, STRENGTHEN THE HANDS THAT HANG DOWN AND THE FEEBLE KNEES, AND MAKE STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET SO THAT WHAT IS LAME MAY NOT BE DISLOCATED BUT RATHER BE HEALED.

6. Escaping the Snare

A. Speaking out the Word of God

When we HEAR the word of God, it produces faith:

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ROMANS 10:17

SO THEN FAITH COMES BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.

B. Praise and Worship

When we praise God, we focus on the goodness and greatness of God, not our problems.

EPHESIANS 5:18-21

AND DO NOT BE DRUNK WITH WINE, IN WHICH IS DISSIPATION; BUT BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, SPEAKING TO ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, SINGING AND MAKING MELODY IN YOUR HEART TO THE LORD, GIVING THANKS ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS TO GOD THE FATHER IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, SUBMITTING TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE FEAR OF GOD.

7. Summary of the Fellowship of His Suffering

This equally precious fellowship comes after Fellowship in the Gospel, Fellowship with the Holy Spirit and His Son. Participating in the same sufferings as Jesus comes with great rewards of resurrection life, grace and growth in glory. But it comes with a snare of falling into discouragement, self-pity or poverty mindset. The way out of this is by declaring God's word and praising and worshipping.

Next, we will examine the final and possibly most powerful fellowship, [Fellowship with the Mystery of His Will](#). This mystery revealed to the Ephesians God's original intention to have sons and daughters through Jesus Christ.