



Through Suffering

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PURPOSE

In times of senseless violence and tragedy, we are often left wondering WHY? We can also be left wondering what we can do during a time like this. This Bible Study is designed especially for you to process the feelings and questions that you may be surfacing at this time. Recent events put cruelty in front of us and can deeply discourage us just as the first readers of the Letter to the Hebrews were discouraged. Yet, we have hope in Jesus. We invite you to break open the Sacred Scripture below and turn your hearts and ears to God as you offer your prayers during this time of great tragedy.

This is a personal Bible Study designed for individual use by Teens. Feel free to download a copy and provide to the teens in your ministry.

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Verse:

A Reading from Hebrews 2:9-10

⁹ but we do see Jesus “crowned with glory and honor” because he suffered death, he who “for a little while” was made “lower than the angels,” that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the leader to their salvation perfect through suffering.

Context

The Letter to the Hebrews was written to people who seemed to be discouraged. We get several clues to this fact from within the letter itself. When we look in chapter 13, verse 22, the writer of the letter



describes his work as a message of encouragement. It appears that the community who received the letter were growing tired in their efforts to follow Christ. It was a difficult time for these early Christians. They were not well liked outside of their circle. The Romans saw the Christians as a threat to the rulers' authority and society's well-run structure. They wanted to do away with them. Christians emerged from the Jewish faith and the traditional Jews saw Christians as a threat to their faith. From these two sources outside of their community, there was pressure and even violence. But that wasn't the only threat.

There was also tension coming from within their community. The letter seems to indicate that there were many who thought it was all too much to bear and they were questioning their faith in Christ. This is what the writer wanted to address. The writer wanted to give encouragement and to present the reasons why Jesus is Lord and why faith in Him is the way of salvation. Because of this, the Letter to the Hebrews beautifully proclaims the Lordship of Jesus Christ and why we can have faith in Him as our Savior. With this in mind, take a moment to re-read the passage and then read about the key words below.

Key Words and Phrases

The Letter to the Hebrews wasn't written in English. It was written in Greek. What we are reading is a translation from Greek into English and it is an excellent translation. None the less, to more deeply understand the Bible, hearing more about the Greek words will help.

Suffered and Suffering: Found in both verses 9 and 10, the Greek word is "pathēma" (PAHTH-ee-mah). In addition to meaning suffering, it also means to endure a calamity. It is the root of the English word "pathos" and "sympathy".

Perfect: Found in verse 10, the Greek word is "teleos" (TEH-lee-ohs). It means to be brought to the final goal or to completion.

Interpretation

It should strike us odd that Jesus needed to be made perfect. If He is God, why does He need to be made perfect? Isn't He already perfect? Yes. He is perfect in the sense that He was without sin. But being sinless is not the meaning of the Greek word "teleos".

When Jesus was born, He was the savior of the world. But when He was in the manger He had not yet reached His destiny or His goal of being the savior. He had not yet become perfectly the savior. There was much more that He needed to endure and much more that He needed to suffer in order to reach



His goal, His “teleos” of being the savior of all. Jesus’s perfection came through the violence that was inflicted upon Him by others’ hatred, rage, and cruelty.

Every day, people around the world are victims of hatred, selfishness, rage, cruelty, senselessness, and illness. Yet, some days that violence is more evident than others. Recently, the deaths of precious people at the hands of a racist in Buffalo, NY, the deaths of humble churchgoers in California, and the killing of innocent elementary school students and teachers in Texas put cruelty in front of us and can deeply discourage us just as the first readers of the Letter to the Hebrews were discouraged. **Yet, we have hope in Jesus.**

Many times we can look at the cross and think, “Jesus suffered, so I can, too.” But the fact of Jesus’s “pathēma” demands that we look at that differently. Jesus says, “I see you, my people, suffering, so I can, too.” When experiencing the depths of human suffering, He reached His goal and became our savior. If we didn’t have Jesus, we would have nothing but despair in the face of such horrible violence. With Jesus, we have hope because the story of Jesus doesn’t end in His suffering. The story of Jesus ends with Him in victory over sin, suffering, and even death. Jesus wins. Even when we are rightly clouded by the grief of horrible violence, Jesus wins. When the world feels insane and our anxiety over the state of the world is as close to us as our breath, Jesus is suffering with us and Jesus wins. **Jesus wins.**

Prayer Time

Begin with the Sign of the Cross

Take some time to think of the ways you are suffering now. Ask Jesus to help you become aware of how He is present with you in your own suffering.

- | Pray for the families of those who have lost loved ones at the hands of these violent acts.
- | Pray for those who are so disturbed that they are thinking about committing acts of violence and death. Pray that they would be stopped before violence happens.
- | Pray for those who have committed these acts. Pray that the love of God would touch their hearts.
- | Pray for the innocent victims that they would experience the embrace of God.

After your time of intercession, you may offer an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and the closing prayer below.

Father, thank you for seeing our suffering and for sending your only son, Jesus, to be with us in our pain. In faith, we acknowledge that He is the savior and we are asking for His saving help right now. We pray all these things to you Father in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



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