

Courageous Living

Inspired By God

and

Inspiring To Others!

What Does A Courageous Christian
Look Like
and
From Where Does Courage Come?

A Courageous Christian Life...

Can Occur

When A Person Of God
In A Community Of God
Is Seeking The Word Of God
Empowered By The Spirit Of God
To Live The Life Of God
While Engaged In The Mission Of God.

A Courageous Christian...
Has Come To Terms
With Suffering!

“There is only one question that
really matters:”

*“Why do bad things happen to
good people?”*

–Rabbi Harold S. Kushner

Others simply call it,
“The Cry of Why?”

The Cry of “Why?”

I doubt there will ever be an answer to this question that is fully satisfying for everyone.

Some Basic Assertions About Suffering

- We who, in the past and now, comprise the human race, need to take direct responsibility for much if not most of the suffering that has occurred and is occurring in the world, and stop blaming it on God.
- Does God allow all suffering? YES
- Does God directly cause some suffering? YES
- Does God directly cause all suffering? NO
- We can't embrace the free will to choose and then blame God when people use free will a way that hurts people.

Seven Observations About The People Who Live Courageously Through Suffering

1. People Who Live Courageously
View Their Painful Questions As
Normal Part of the
Human Experience.

- Moses Moaned
- Job Lashed Out
- Elijah Whined
- Jeremiah Complained
- Habakkuk Was Stunned
- David Almost Lost His Faith
- The Preacher In Ecclesiastes Protested The
Vanity of it all.
- Even Jesus Prayed, “Let this cup pass from me.”

2. People Who Live Courageously Don't Give Up On God.

The same Moses who moaned and complained about the burden of leading the people of Israel ended his life singing God's praises, even though God does not let him enter the promised land with Israel.

Hebrews 5:7-9

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

3. People Who Live Courageously Don't Have A Soft View Of God

- Jesus does not apologize for getting us into trouble.
 - *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* John 16:33
- Peter writes:
 - *"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you."* 1 Peter 4:12

4. People Who Live Courageously Make Sure They Are Not Causing Their Own Pain.

- Play with fire – you get burned
- Gossip – your friends won't trust you
- Be demanding – You will be avoided
- Lie – you lose the respect of everyone
- Steal – you live in fear of being discovered
- Ignore natural law – you die an early death
- Abuse your body – you contract illness/disease

5. People Who Live Courageously Ask “Why Not Me?” Rather Than “Why Me?”

- Millions have suffered before us and millions will suffer after us.
- Pain and suffering are a part of life and sometimes they are a part of your life and my life.
- If people need to be taught how to live joyfully and even courageously in spite of suffering. Is it unfair of God to ask me to be that example? Must all suffering be done by others.
- Claudette Jones Story

6. People Who Live Courageously Are Comforted By Helping Others.

2 Corinthians 1:3-10

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,...

7. People Who Live Courageously Let The Resurrection Have The Final Word.

- The suffering of the Cross without the Resurrection is...
“simply unjust suffering.”
 - The cross becomes another Gulag in Siberia, Death March in Batan, or Auschwitz or Buchenwald in Europe, empty of redeeming value.
 - The cross without the resurrection is meaningless in God’s scheme of redemption. The Christian message and life are empty.

The Cross With The Resurrection Has Much To Say

- The Cross with the Resurrection says Evil LOSES!
- The Cross with the Resurrection says Death is Bad but it is Beaten!
- The Cross with the Resurrection says in the words of the black evangelist, “It’s Friday but Sunday’s coming.”
- Bad Friday became Good Friday because of Sunday came.

In The Spring, Nature Heralds Resurrection

- Every blade of grass
- Every Butter Cup
- Every Apple Blossom
- Every Germinated Seed says
“Life Wins.”
- Every Flower in the driveway
is a message from God.

*“Just wanted
to remind
you...”*



Bad News – Good News

- The bad news is – sufferings exist.
- The good news is that they will end when we pass into the age to come.
- Knowing they are temporary helps us endure them.
- So in the midst of his own ordeal, Paul writes:
 - *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*
Romans 8:18

We May Never Understand All The “Why’s” Of Suffering.

People who live courageously have come to terms with it and use it for a purpose greater than themselves.

A Prayer For Courage

Oh Heavenly Father, you who have suffered much in the suffering of your Son, remind us that we are not alone in suffering.

Dear Jesus, you learned obedience by the things that you suffered and therein became perfected to become the author our salvation.

Holy Spirit, you have suffered with us, comforted us, and helped us to voice our pain when our words failed us.

Holy Trinity, point us to those who suffer without comfort and use us as channels of blessing. May we in comforting them find our hurts healed. In Jesus name, Amen.