

When I was a boy, some of my friends one after another would be suddenly taken to the hospital and be operated on for appendicitis, which was very common in that day. I became frightened of it, and I was afraid I would get it, this appendicitis. And I thought, Will pray to the Lord to keep me from getting appendicitis. Then I thought, No that is not the prayer I should make. So I prayed, Oh Lord keep me from suffering---but Lord if you have lessons I need to learn that I in my stubborn, human nature refuse to learn and you have to make me suffer in order to make me learn these lessons then give me the suffering that I so would like to avoid. Give them to me if that is the only way I can learn the lessons you want me to learn.

The one who is devoted to Christ, the one who is anxious to have the power of His resurrection must be one also who is ready and willing to go through the fires, to go through the cleansing, to go through the preparation, to go through what God desires to give each of us to make us such as He wants us to be. Oh God wants us to be powerful, He wants us to be active, He wants us to accomplish for Him. Why does he leave us here after we've believed in Christ? Why doesn't He take us right to heaven? He has work for us to do, and it is important that we get the power to do that work, but He is just as anxious that ~~as~~ as anxious as He is to do the work for Him that He wants us to do, just as important to Him is the molding us, and fitting us and making us that which he wants us to be to have fellowship with Him through all eternity.

Jesus learned obedience from what He suffered. We all have a right to pray that God would deliver us from suffering and keep us from suffering, but if we truly belong to Christ know that whatever ~~comes~~ ~~comes~~ comes into our lives, comes because He has sent it with a good purpose for us and we can praise Him for whatever suffering He sends us that He does not leave us as unworthy to spend time to develop us into what He wants us to be, but that He is anxious to mould us and make us and fit us into what He wants us to be. To make us perfect through suffering.

Oh, we should not pray not to have suffering but we should pray that God will teach us the lessons he wants us to have without suffering, the necessity of the suffering. But I believe we should pray that He will teach us what He wants us to know even if it takes suffering. If suffering comes into our lives, if we loose things, loose friends, relatives, if sorrows come into our lives, we can know that God would not permit them to come except He believed that we needed it in order to develop us in the way He wants us to be developed.

God wants us to have Paul's ambition, to want to know Christ, to want to know the power of His resurrection, and to know the fellowship of sharing in His suffering. In Gal. 5:22 we read, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. He wants to develop these qualities in us. How short we all are to reaching those qualities to the extent that He desires that we should have them. Oh, we must pray that God will develop the fruit of the Spirit ~~in~~ in us.

When a man gets married he takes a vow to love and cherish until death do us part. The vow is taken and most find great joy and happiness in the married life that follows. But in some cases there is not joy and happiness, and in all cases there is a certain amount of inconvenience, a certain amount of unpleasantness a certain amount of disappointment but if one has taken that vow in true sincerity, and if one truly knows Christ he can know that his disappointments are part of the suffering that he is to go through in order that he may be moulded and made into what God wants him to be. The fruit of the spirit is love, and love is not just a queer feeling that we get. A great enthusiasm and excitement that comes to us. That's a worldly kind of love. Of course there is an element of that. But the true love is the attitude within us, it is the attitude that God wants us to have toward all