

Making Peace with Suffering

- *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. Rom 8:18*
- Paul knew suffering far more than most of us will ever understand.
- Yet he could write these words.

Suffering of this Present Time

● For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. ... 11 To the present hour we both **hunger** and **thirst**, and we are **poorly clothed**, and **beaten**, and **homeless**. 12 And we **labor**, working with our own hands. Being **reviled**, we bless; being **persecuted**, we endure; 13 being **defamed**, we entreat. We have been **made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now**. 1Cr 4:9-13

Paul's Sufferings Dwarf Our Own

- *in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 2 Cor 11:23-29*

Paul's Sufferings Dwarf Our Own

- *26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness — 2 Cor 11:23-29*

Paul's Sufferings Dwarf Our Own

- *28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? 2 Cor 11:23-29*
- *a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 2 Cor 12:7-10*

Paul's Sufferings Dwarf Our Own

- *9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Cor 12:7-10*

Paul Learned the Secret

- *Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned the secret both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil 4:11-13*
- Suffering had no impact on him. He was content regardless of his outer state. This is what true faith will conclude for all of us.

The Reckoning that Reveals Truth

- *18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. ...*
- *22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Rom 8:18, 22-25*

Sufferings & Glory

- *Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor 4:16-18*

Suffering is Like a Tunnel



But Finding No Way Out

Hope Gradually Fading



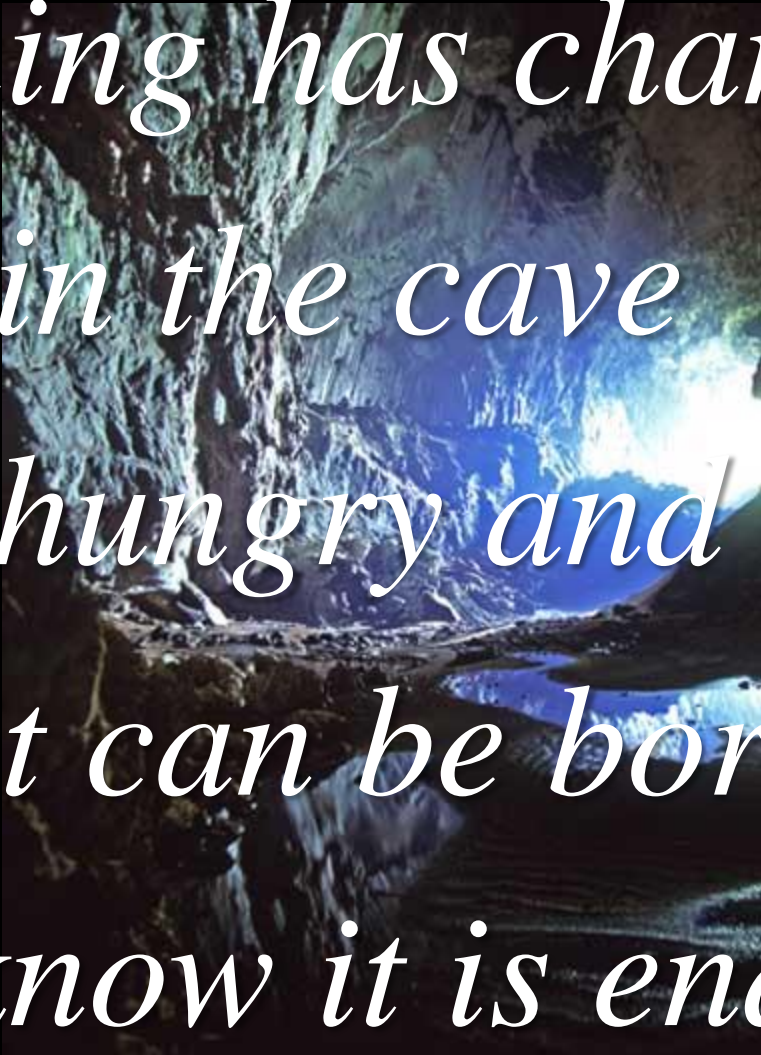
What Happens

If We See a Glimmer of Light?

Realizing it is Coming to an End



Hope Blazing into Joy

- *Nothing has changed*
 - *Still in the cave*
 - *Still hungry and bruised*
 - *But it can be borne*
 - *We know it is ending*
- 

I Reckon

• *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared*



• *with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.*
Rom 8:18

We Know We are Learning When...

- *And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Rom 5:1-5*

We Know We are Learning When...

- *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:2-6*

Learning the Secret ... Applications

- *My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord — that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. James 5:10-11*

Be anxious for nothing

● *but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*



● *and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
Phil 4:6-7*