

Grace to You :: *esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

It's God's Will That You Suffer for Righteousness' Sake

Scripture: Matthew 5:11; 1 Peter 3:17

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It's God's will that you suffer . . . for righteousness' sake.

Though every Christian would affirm that statement, people interpret it in a number of different ways. For some, it's doing ministry in an inner-city homeless shelter. For others, it's absorbing whatever comments your critics make about your ministry methodology—e.g., the mega-church or multi-site pastor who gets called out for franchising his brand. Still others completely ignore the issue of righteousness and godliness. For them, suffering is doing something *radical*, something crazy, unpopular, even shocking.

Is that what God wants? *Crazy* suffering? Or should we interpret suffering from a more biblical paradigm, such as,

Matthew 5:11, “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Or,

1 Peter 3:17, “For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”

There are a number of popular Christian leaders these days who speak of suffering in terms that affirm their own brand of ministry—it can come across as somewhat self-congratulatory. But take a look around. You have to look long and hard to find Christians who are profoundly committed to the pursuit of *righteousness* in their lives. It's not popular to confront and condemn the wicked culture, to live apart from it. It's not easy to embrace the scorn of the culture.

Even within evangelicalism, there are those who are quick to ridicule earnest, godly Christians for holding to scruples they deem to be prudish, fundamentalist, or way too traditional. It's the cool, culturally relevant Christians who trumpet contextualization and talk about being missional. Sadly, they join the world's chorus, ridiculing sincere, pure-hearted Christians who hunger and thirst for righteousness. For doing right, they unjustly suffer, and that's God's will.

Are you following *this* aspect of God's will? Here's John MacArthur to explain . . .

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