

Perspective on Sufferings Part 1.

Good day, everyone. Today, we are starting a powerful and necessary teaching: **Perspective on Sufferings — Part 1.**

I want to say this right up front: getting the *proper perspective* — *God's* point of view — on suffering is crucial. If we miss this, we may get overwhelmed and give up. But with the right perspective, we can continue our walk of faith with stability and strength.

Without God's perspective, we can become emotional wrecks. But with understanding, we can hold steady even in pain.

Let's begin by observing some verses that will give us this perspective. Turn with me to Galatians chapter 4, starting at verse 8. I'll be reading from the New Living Translation.

[Read Galatians 4:8-20 NLT.]

Now let's zoom in on *verse 19* — and I believe this could be a life-changing verse for many of us today.

Galatians 4:19 says:

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (KJV)

Let's pause here. Paul's goal was that *Christ would be formed* in these Galatians. That's what all his labor, his pain, his suffering was aimed at.

So here's my first question for you today:

What is your goal?

What are *you* believing God for?

Because as we wait — as we pursue that goal — we will be in *travail*. There will be spiritual labor.

Let's talk about what that word *travail* means.

In the Greek, *travail* refers to the pain of childbirth. Paul says he feels like he's in labor pains for these people until they come into full maturity in Christ.

Listen to some definitions of *travail*:

- To feel the pains of childbirth.
- Striving with intense effort and anguish to conform someone to the mind of Christ.
- A work especially of painful or laborious nature — toil, effort, agony, torment.

And notice this word in the verse: "**again**".

This shows that travail isn't a one-time thing — it repeats. It continues until the goal is fulfilled.

Now let's hear this verse from a couple of other translations:

Galatians 4:19 (TEV):

"My dear children! Once again, just like a mother in childbirth, I feel the same kind of pain for you until Christ's nature is formed in you."

Galatians 4:19 (TLB):

"Oh, my children, how you are hurting me! I am once again suffering for you the pains of a mother waiting for her child to be born—longing for the time when you will finally be filled with Christ."

Let's think about this:

What kinds of pains are in childbirth?

- Stress — mental tension and pressure.
- Nausea — distress that even affects the body.

It touches every part of us: spirit, soul, and body.

Cheryl and I actually experienced a very real travail this past week. We were believing God for something — and as we waited, we could feel the stress. We felt knots in our stomachs. Our faces even changed with the pressure.

Now, the answer we were waiting for came — but it took about 20 minutes of intense waiting that capped off a year-long journey. We were in the spiritual labor room.

When the fulfillment arrived, it felt like a new baby had been born. We could feel the *push* and then the release. But even then, we knew now that the baby is born, *maintenance* is required.

Let's go back to Galatians 4:19 and look at another key word: "**until**."

The Greek word means *up to a certain point*.

Paul says he will be in pain, in travail, *until* Christ is formed in them.

And friends, until we conform to the Word of God, we will continue to suffer — we will feel the stress, the nausea, the pressure — more than we should.

Because suffering is part of the journey. But we have a choice:

Godly suffering or **unnecessary suffering**.

Either way, it will take the Word of God to maneuver through it.

As we conform to the Word, we won't be perfect, but we will be equipped to handle the suffering better.

Let's remember:

There is no situation that God cannot handle.

Listen to these verses:

Mark 10:27

"With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

Romans 4:20-21

"No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised."

Romans 14:4

"Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is *able* to make him stand."

That word "*able*" is powerful:

- It means to be mighty, powerful, capable, competent, and qualified.

So whatever travail you're in today — remember:

God is able.

Let's bring some conclusions together:

- *Proper perspective* is huge when it involves people.
- Paul is like a mother to the Galatians — he feels deep, tender feelings and is suffering for them.
- Paul is in *travail* until Christ is formed in them.
- And the same is true for us — in whatever we are believing God for.

Travail is not just a one-time event. It comes again and again. And it should drive us to prayer.

There will be a certain amount of travail with every person we encounter.
And that travail will affect us mentally, emotionally, even physically.

We will all experience suffering. The question is:

Will it be godly suffering with purpose, or unnecessary suffering from resisting God's way?

When we travail, it might *feel* impossible. But God is able.

Isaiah 51:6 says:

"My salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended."

Finally, let's arm ourselves with this thought:

1 Peter 4:1

"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought."

The Greek word *arm* means: *prepare yourself, equip yourself, get ready with the same understanding.*

So today, as we close, I challenge you:

Arm yourself with this mindset.

Travail is part of the journey. Pain has a purpose. And God is able.

Let's press through *until* Christ is formed in us — and in those we are praying and laboring for.

Amen.

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