

# The Meaning of Carrying the Cross

(by: Father Samaan Saint Paul)

We are all sure of God's love to us and no one doubts in this but sometimes God permits some suffering or pain to His children and He Himself ordered us saying "come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28). And the next following verse says "Take My yoke upon you... for My yoke is easy and My load is light" (Matt 11: 29, 30). And in other place He says "He who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt10: 38).

So how could this come, that He loves us and orders us to carry the cross and the yoke...? Doesn't this seem to be contradictory!!!

1. Carrying the cross and suffering for God's sake is a gift that not everybody deserves!! Because it is a sharing with Christ in His pains and suffering. "for to you it has been *granted* for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29) "if we suffer with Him, we will share Him in His glory"

2. Jesus makes blessings out of suffering

In the Old Testament, the righteous people knew the value of suffering, its blessings, and its power to purify the soul, like fire as it refines metal. David said to God: "For You O God; have tested us; you have refined us as silver is refined" (Psalm 66:10). Other righteous people look at suffering in the same way.

The Lord speaks by the Prophet Jeremiah and says, "Through deceit they refuse to know Me", says the Lord. "Behold, I will refine them and try them" (Jeremiah 9:6, 7). The righteous people know the value of suffering and consider it a chastening of

God, “You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you “(Deuteronomy 8:5))

The Wise Solomon said, “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; For whom the lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights” (Proverbs 3:11,12). He saw that the speedy discipline from the divine love has its required effect on man. See also (2 Meccabees 6:12-17; 7:31-38). Job discovered that people learn the amazing purpose of God from their suffering. “Job answered the Lord and said: “I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. Listen, please, and let me speak; you said, I will question you, and you shall answer Me. I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:1-6)

Joseph witnessed to his brothers and said, “but as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20). Solomon expressed the same meaning “ Men will see the wise man’s end, without understanding what the Lord had purposed for him and why He took him into a safe keeping”(Wisdom of Solomon 4:17).

We even read in some of the books of the Old Testament that suffering which results from God’s discipline is considered as a kind of sacrifice for people’s sins. In this, the Prophet Isaiah says: “Comfort, yes, comfort My people! “Says your God. Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (Isaiah 40:1, 2).

Jesus Christ, a man of sorrow Who was acquainted with grief is very responsive to the suffering of mankind. He can not see a suffering person without going to him and having compassion upon him with divine mercy.

Martha and Mary the sisters of Lazarus told Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” (John 11:21, 32). Immediately Jesus showed His compassion to His Disciples when He said, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up” (John 11:11, 14).

Jesus Overcame Suffering: In healing the sick and raising the dead Jesus Christ overcame suffering: No doubt that these miracles were the beginning of His final and decisive victory on the cross.

Again when His Disciples performed miracles, the Lord Jesus saw the defeat of the devil and He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Jesus fulfilled the prophesy of Isaiah, “Surely He has borne our grieves and carried our sorrows” (Isaiah 53:4; Mark 8:17) by healing every infirmity. He did not reserve the power of healing of Himself, rather He gave His Disciples the power to heal in His name (Mark 16:17), such as the healing of the lame at the temple’s gate, the beautiful.

### Prayer

We thank you our Lord God who beget blessings out of suffering, You Yourself went through this road from Bethlehem to Golgotha, You Who are above suffering.

You endured suffering in the body which You took from the Blessed virgin Mary.

All that was for our sake.

It is amazing what Your servant and Apostle Paul said,  
“We see Jesus, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to

make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted”  
(Hebrews 2:9, 10, 18).

Prepare us our Lord to imitate You in Your suffering, in order to share in Your glory. Strengthen us to endure different sufferings, fortify our weaknesses and support us, in order to be like Your saints and be worthy of Your glory.

Rid us from the love of the world and worldly things.

Hence we figure that shame for Your sake is better than the treasures of the world. Remember the world which is burning by the fire of desires and pour on it the dew of Your mercy.

Show Yourself to those who do not know You and those who did not deal with You yet. Then they will know that there is no salvation except by You. There is no name under the sun by which mankind can be saved. To You be glory, honour and power, You Who endured suffering for us.