

## **VITALITY OF LIFE IN SUFFERING**

I chose the word Vitality because of its meaning. In English, it refers to the capacity to live and develop, and to have the power to endure. The life of Joseph certainly reflected this doctrinal principle of Vitality of Life in Suffering.

**This lesson will study four aspects of the Vitality of Life in Joseph's undeserved suffering.**

Our lesson text opens, "Then it came about after these things." (Gen.40:1a) [a review of why now in prison]

### **1. Like Joseph, Paul came to understand the same doctrinal principle of undeserved suffering (U/S), even though he lived in a different dispensation (Jewish Age vs. Church Age).**

Paul wrote that the secret to a vitality of life in undeserved suffering was "**Embracing GRACE**" as the capacity to live and develop and to have a power to endure it.

(2 Cor.12:8-10) "Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness, Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ dwell in me.' **Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with power, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.**"

### **2. There are six stages of God's Grace that are important to understanding the Christian way of life (CWL) and the experience of suffering (Phil.1:29).**

- Surpassing grace (1 Pet.1:3-9, 13; 2 Cor.5:6-8)
- Dying grace (Phil.1:20-23; 2 Tim.4:6-8)
- Suffering grace (2 Cor.12:8-10; Phil.1:7)
- Spiritual growth grace (2 Pet.3:18; Eph.4:13-16)
- Logistical grace (2 Cor.9:8-10; Heb.4:16)
- Saving grace (Eph.2:8-9; 2 Tim.1:9)

(2 Tim.2:1) "You therefore, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

### **3. The issue is will the spiritually advancing believer accept as suffering as GOOD from God (Phil.1:29).**

(Rom.8:28) "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

**Look for the word "know" in (Rom.8:26-28):**

- (Rom.8:26) (ouk oida) (perf.a.ind.1pl)
  - "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we **do not know** how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words;"
- (Rom.8:27) (oida) (perf.a.ind.3ps)
  - "and He who searches the hearts **knows** what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God.*"
- (Rom.8:28) (oida) (perf. a.ind 1pl)
  - And we **know** that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

New Man Divine Viewpoint thinking is found in (Rom.8:26-30) bringing a Relaxed Mental Attitude to Underserved Suffering and to the Faith Cycle resulting in the Vitality to Life in Suffering.

We see this doctrinal principle in the life of Joseph in Underserved Suffering. We saw it in the brother's pit and in Potiphar's home, and again in Pharaoh's prison. Joseph is walking in New Man Divine Viewpoint thinking amidst Underserved Suffering (2 Cor.5:7; 2 Tim.3:16-17; Rom.4:21).

(Eph.5:15-17) reminds us that Underserved Suffering never is a waste of time or loss in Christian Way of Life.

(James 1:3-4) "knowing" [ginosko] is the processing of Categorical Bible Doctrine to the situation.

(1 Pet.1:7-8) "**In this you greatly rejoice** (having a Relaxed Mental Attitude), even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the **proof of your faith**, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

#### 4. **One important blessing that comes from grace orientation in Underserved Suffering is the ministry of encouragement to others in suffering.**

(2 Cor.1:1-7) Introduction to The Father of mercies and God of all comfort.

(Pay attention to the word COMFORT as it is used 10 times).

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all **comfort**, who **comforts** us in all our affliction so that we will be able to **comfort** those who are in any affliction with the **comfort** with which we ourselves are **comforted** by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our **comfort** is abundant through Christ. But if we are afflicted, it is for your **comfort** and salvation; or if we are **comforted**, it is for your **comfort**, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are *sharers* of our **comfort.**"

Joseph taught us to not wait until we are out of our Underserved Suffering. Instead we are taught to minister in the midst of it - to others (chief jailor, prisoners).

(2 Tim.6:1) "All who are **under the yoke** as slaves are **to regard** their own masters as worthy of all honor **so that** the name of God and our doctrines will not be spoken against."

Joseph reminds us that **friends of the world need friends of God** to introduce them to **the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.**

We need to **pay attention** to the common ground of meeting (i.e. in the doctor's office or hospital) (James 4:4).

- The **Samaritan woman at Jacob's well** needed to meet a true friend of God. The disciples of Jesus passed her by, but the Suffering Messiah introduced her to HIS Father of mercies and the God of all comfort (John 4).
- For Joseph, it was in a time of slavery and places like prison in a foreign land, culture, and language (Jas.4:13-15).