

SUFFERING

Here is a short, yet powerful statement by Mrs. Charles Cowman from her *Streams in the Desert* devotional: **The disciples found it easier to obey than to suffer.** A Christian who falls for fleshly efforts would rather have a list of do's and don't's rather than to suffer. This self-centeredness and self-protection is completely contrary to a Christian's nature. Flesh can be deceptively preyed upon to attract multitudes through a prosperity gospel devoid of suffering, as I believe a huge church in Houston is doing.

However, we are called to suffer. It is actually a wonderful privilege that is foolishness to the world. But what does it mean to suffer? I never suffer like our courageous men and women in the military. I never suffer like Christians in other countries. I may never physically suffer as my wife Joy has.

To understand suffering in a personal way, we must not look to others for our own standard of suffering; we must only look to Christ for understanding. Philippians 2:5-8 reveals that the mind of Christ is a suffering servant attitude. Below is a Power Point slide I prepared on Philippians 2:5-8, 3:10, and how Christ's nature and mind in us leads us to suffer with Him. It is only through suffering that Christ's resurrection glory is manifested (Philippians 2:9-11).

Fellowship of His Sufferings

Mind of Christ	Your mind
He emptied Himself	Willing to lose control
He humbled Himself	Willing to be humbled
He did not defend Himself	Surrenders popularity
He was rejected	Willing to be misunderstood
He was weakened	Willing to be physically and emotionally weakened
He lost possessions	Surrenders need for things
He was shamed	Willing to be open before God and others
He rejected rescue	Sees God's love and sovereignty in all things
He gave up all of His rights	Yearns to be free from the bitterness of having rights.
He was unloved	Willing to love while being unloved.
He chose to forgive	Heart is to forgive self and others

On October 4th, I helped teach a Grace Life Conference at Brevard (NC) Community Church to 15 people. The church could not get my Power Point presentation with all my notes to work, nor was there a white board to use. I was led to be humbled, to empty myself of any dependence on teaching aids and notes, and to surrender my abilities and rescue to Christ. So, for 2-1/2 hours, I spoke from an open heart and an open Bible. A precious time.



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**In John 6:63 Jesus said to His disciples,
"It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing."**

It is with great joy and thanksgiving that I announce: Starting in 2008, I will be devoting all my time in ministry where God has planted me in South Carolina. After 7 years of ministering to many precious people through discipleship counseling every Thursday with Christ Life Ministries (CLM) in North Carolina, I will now be devoting that time for further establishing a ministry in South Carolina. This decision is with the blessings of CLM.

Ministry opportunities are increasing in South Carolina. The ministry I have received in my heart is writing, teaching, and counseling for the sole purpose of encouraging and equipping others to also "take heed to the ministry to which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it" (Colossians 4:17). Ministry is not achieved, but is the very life of Christ received and then given through your unique personality to others.

I feel as if CLM Hendersonville has been to me what Arabia was to Paul. After Christ was revealed in Paul, Paul did not immediately embark on his missionary journeys. Instead, Paul spent several years in Arabia being nurtured by and in Christ. Then Paul returned home to Jerusalem. I will always be grateful for my pilgrimage through CLM Hendersonville. Below is a photo I will always cherish.

This is not an isolated decision, but is a continuation of my relationship with my Lord Jesus. The flesh (human effort) seeks to make *right* decisions subtly separate from the Spirit of Christ. Grace (the life of Christ in me) seeks to make *loving* decisions. I simply desire to be obedient to Him who gives me the desires of my heart. As you read this newsletter, I hope you are encouraged by the light of Christ exposing the subtle lies of the flesh. Gregg



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TRUE LIFE

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5).

In 1988, Joy and I attended a "Mind of Christ" lecture by a precious gentleman T.W. Hunt...a man who has devoted his life to intercessory prayer. This was a landmark event for me, and for the first time I began to dare pondering the thoughts of Christ who indwells me. In 1995, T.W.'s book "The Mind of Christ – The Transforming Power of Thinking His Thoughts" was published.

Following are two revealing tables from this book. The first columns describe the true nature of a Christian, a nature that is united with Christ. The second columns represent how a Christian can be tempted to live according to his own human abilities separate from Christ and be deceived into living a counterfeit form of who he really is. Notice how the truths expose the lies of the flesh!

CHRISTLY MIND (James 3:17)	FLESHLY COUNTERFEIT
Pure	Puritanical
Peaceable	Compromising
Gentle	Unkind restraint
Entreatable	Yes-man
Merciful	Indulgent
Fruitful	Fruit-obsessed
Steadfast	Inflexible
Honest	Brutal

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (Galatians 5:22-23)	FLESHLY COUNTERFEIT
Love	Possessive or Permissive
Joy	Frenzy
Peace	Neutral
Longsuffering	Lenience
Gentleness	Soft
Goodness	Finicky nice
Faith	Presumption
Meekness	Weakness
Temperance	Self-effort

TRUE LIFE

We have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Following are truths that I believe the mind of Christ is revealing to me. I sense the heartbeat of God through the biblical authors. Notice how each fleshly deception has a grain of truth to hook us. And notice how the fleshly deceptions often place faith in feelings, rather than in Truth.

TRUTH	FLESHLY DECEPTION
My identity is a product of what Christ has done in the cross and resurrection. <i>If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (2 Corin 5:17).</i>	My identity is a product of what I have done in the past.
I am complete. <i>For in Christ dwells all the fullness of God, and <u>you are complete</u> in Him (Colossians 2:9-10).</i>	I need to become a better person.
I am a saint. <i>By God's will, <u>we have been sanctified</u> through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:10).</i>	I am just a sinner saved by grace.
I am God's child. <i>God is not served by man's hands as though He needed anything (Acts 17:25).</i>	I was saved to serve God.
I have been given the righteousness of Christ. <i>Those who receive the gift of righteousness will reign in life through Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17).</i>	I need to get right with God.
Faith in the indwelling victorious Christ is the victory. <i>Our faith is the victory that has overcome the world (1 John 5:4).</i>	Successful living is victory (e.g., no debt, good health, fruit from good works, etc).
Christ's love in me is the source of my desires and initiatives. <i>For the love of Christ compels us (2 Corinthians 5:14).</i>	My gratitude to God, or my guilty conscience, is what moves me to do things.
Christ is my goal. <i>I count all things rubbish that I may know Christ (Philippians 3:8, 10).</i>	Prosperity is my goal now, heaven is my goal later.
The Spirit of Christ leads me 24/7. <i>For all who <u>are being</u> led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Romans 8:14).</i>	I seek the Spirit's leading for big decisions.
Christ accomplishes His work through me. <i>For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me (Romans 15:18).</i>	I work for God and I can please Him with faithful service and good works.