

Do you agree or disagree?

- ✓ Christians who follow Christ will suffer in this world.
- ✓ Christians should trust God to deliver them from worldly suffering through faith, prayer, piety, and wisdom.
- ✓ Mature Christians should never feel alone, fearful, or abandoned.
- ✓ While other Christians might suffer for foolishness, sin, and misfortune, we need not share their plight.

2 Corinthians 11:22-29

Four misconceptions of Christians and suffering

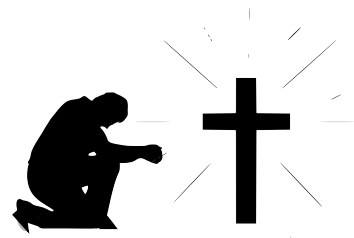
2 Corinthians 11

“²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶ I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷ I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?”

2 Corinthians 11

“²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so;”

*Paul is speaking of
Servants of Christ*



2 Corinthians 11

“ . . . in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. ²⁴ Five times I received **from the Jews** thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned,

*Misconception #1
Servants of Christ*

1) will be popular.



John 15:20

“A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;”

Two paths to a cultural crucifixion

Standing for
the Gospel with love,
sensitivity & humility



Standing against
anything you don't
understand, or like

2 Corinthians 11

“. . . three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶ I have been on frequent journeys, in **dangers** from rivers, **dangers** from robbers, **dangers** from my countrymen, **dangers** from the Gentiles, **dangers** in the city, **dangers** in the wilderness, **dangers** on the sea, **dangers** among false brethren;

Misconception #2 Servants of Christ

1) *will be popular.*

2) *will be free from
trouble.*



Isaiah 53:3

“He was despised and
forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows and
acquainted with grief;”

Two types of trouble

**From living in
a fallen world**



**From contributing to
the fallenness of
the world**

2 Corinthians 11

“²⁷ I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often **without** food, in cold and exposure.”

Misconception #3 Servants of Christ

1) *will be popular.*

2) *will be free from trouble.*

3) *will be rescued.*



1 Corinthians 10:13

“No **temptation** has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, . . . , but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to **endure** it.”

Hebrews 2:18

“For since He Himself was **tempted in that which He has suffered**, He is able to come to the **aid** of those who are tempted.”

Two types of rescue

From spiritual failure -
endurance **through**
circumstances



From pain -
escape **from**
circumstances

2 Corinthians 11

“²⁸ Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of **concern for all the churches**. ²⁹ Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?”

Misconception #4 *Servants of Christ*

- 1) will be popular.
- 2) will be free from trouble.
- 3) will be rescued.



4) will be emotionally insulated
from the problems of others.

Two types of empathy

From a position of
health - ability to
respect boundaries



From a position of
neediness - inability
to say NO!

What should we learn from Paul's testimony?

- ✓ Spirituality does not insure escape from hardship in this life.
- ✓ Christian suffering can come in many forms.
- ✓ God may not deliver us from but more often through painful circumstances.
- ✓ God's plan is not our comfort and glory (NOW) so much as our sanctification and witness.

How to prepare for the windward side of the Christian life.

- ✓ **Get real.** Resist the tempting message of an easy, comfortable, life.
- ✓ **Get ready.** Prepare for hardship before it comes, not after it hits.
- ✓ **Get right.** Build your security in Christ, not in this world.

An Advent Message

A light has come into the world



and the darkness did not overcome it.