

“Staring into the Face of Suffering” **Matthew 26:36-46**

FCF: How can we endure? What will get us through the disappointment, the pain, the despair? How will we continue on when our pillow at night is more wet than dry having been soaked in the pool of our tears? Answer. A huge vision of Christ and a theology big enough to handle the nastiest bouts with suffering.

The Point: Because of Jesus, Christians can endure suffering to the glory God.

I. Endure suffering by running to your heavenly Father (26:36-41).

- “Jesus came to be with the Father for an interlude before his betrayal, but found hell rather than heaven opened before him, and he staggered.” - Bill Lane
- What is the cup Jesus is referring to in verse 39? “The cup refers not only to suffering and death but . . . also to God’s wrath.” (Carson)
 - “Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord *the cup of his wrath*, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering.” Isaiah 51:17,
 - Propitiation refers to “a sacrifice that bears God’s wrath to the end and in so doing changes God’s wrath toward us into favor.” – Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 575.
 - The true weight of the cross is the weight of the cup of God’s just wrath. Have you received the wrath-absorbing, life-giving work of Christ through his death on the cross?
- “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).

II. Endure suffering by submitting to the purposes of God (26:42-44).

- “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).
- Charles Spurgeon said, “When you cannot trace God’s hand, you can trust his heart.”
- “God Moves in a Mysterious Way” -- “God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform; He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm. Deep in his dark and hidden mines, Of never failing skill, He treasures up His bright designs, And works His sovereign will. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; The clouds that you now dread. Are big with mercy and shall break, In blessings on your head. Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for His grace; Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.” Hymn by William Cowper
- “Tucked away within the assertion that the world is filled with pointless evil is a hidden premise, namely, that if evil appears pointless to me, then it must *be* pointless.” – Tim Keller
- “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

III. Endure suffering by finding the solution in Jesus (26:45-46).

Jesus is the answer to our suffering.

1. Jesus understands and can identify with all of our suffering.
2. In Christ’s suffering, we see the sovereign power of God to work good from evil.
3. The death and resurrection of Jesus provides hope for the restoration of all things.
 - “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

The Power of Christian Hope: Jesus, as our suffering Savior, provides the resources for us to endure suffering and live with hope.