

Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-19

*“If they do these things in the green tree,
what will be done in the dry wood?” (Lk 23:31)*

“Jesus suffered for us so we need not suffer!”—This is one of the most popular sayings shouted from modern pulpits. The Biblical illiterates from pews respond to this with shouts of “Hallelujah!” How much Satan has deceived us! How far he has taken us from divine predictions and revelations! Televangelism literally thrives on this stuff. By the time the listeners and viewers realize the fallacy of this teaching and that they are disillusioned, it’s already too late. God, have mercy on us, this generation, as we try to find alternate routes for the way of the Cross!

All Christians are called to suffer with and for Christ (2 Tim 2:11,12; Phil 1:29). Suffering is in the eternal plan of God. In history Christ died 2000 years ago. But according to God’s calendar, Christ was slain even before the creation of the world. This event of eternity past will be the song of eternity future (Rev 13:8). According to Jesus, Christian life will be one of suffering from commencement to consummation. That’s why He spoke about “daily cross” with reference to discipleship (Lk 9:23).

The “green tree vs. dry wood” analogy refers to the ill-treatment we will receive from men. The Jews once said to Jesus, “You have a demon!” (Jn 8:52a). What did they mean when they told Him, “We were not born out of wedlock”? (v 41). Were they indirectly hitting at how He was conceived before His mother got married? His own brothers and sisters once commented, “He is out of His mind” (Mk 3:21). If folks could say such things about the Son of God who committed no sin in thought, word or deed, why are we upset at the mildest verbal abuse? Most of Christ’s sayings were misunderstood, though He was wisdom personified and He spoke not a single word more or less than what was necessary. Can we then escape the cross of misunderstanding?

Nothing is more hurting than when a man’s own family folks become his foes. But sometimes we cannot escape this also (Mt 10:36). “Wounds from friends” are another tragedy (Zech 13:6). How would you feel if someone like Judas whom you trusted with money betrayed you for money? How would you feel if someone like Peter whom you promoted to cabinet rank denied and cursed you? How would you feel when someone like John whom you loved most deserted you when you needed him most?

MAY 25

PRAYER

Subject: Suffering

Reading: 1 Pet 4:12-19

Memorising: Lk 23:31

Father God,

We worship You as the Designer of our life. We worship You as the Orchestrator of our life. We worship You as the Superintendent of our life. We worship You as the Author and Perfector of our life. We thank You because we are absolutely safe in Your hands. Nothing can happen to us without Your knowledge and permission. We praise You because we are perfectly assured that nothing would You allow in our lives which will not ultimately work for our good.

We do confess, O Lord, our hearts get filled with questions of doubt and despair when suffering hits our door. We do confess that we always try to escape suffering instead of enlisting in it. Though we are called not only to believe on You but also to suffer for You, we often forget it. We confess that we yield to carnal methods to handle suffering instead of looking to You to understand why You let us walk through the valley of tears. Be patient with us, Lord! Be gracious unto us, Lord! Be merciful to us, Lord!

Thank You, Father, for presenting before us Your Son as the perfect Model for handling suffering. If He the green tree had to undergo so much of ill-treatment in the hands of men, how can we the dry wood escape insult, injury and injustice? Teach us, O Lord, to instantly turn to You in all adverse circumstances. Teach us, O Lord, to wait patiently for Your salvation. Teach us, O Lord, to quieten our hearts before You acknowledging Your sovereignty over us. Teach us, O Lord, to run into the tower of Your name for safety when the enemy chases us.

Father God, we confess our inability to handle problems when they are caused by our friends and those close to us. These shattering experiences turn us bitter. Help us, O Lord, to overcome such disappointments. Give us, O Father, the love Jesus had for His close disciples even though they denied Him and deserted Him when He needed them most.

Dear Lord, we need You to help us carry the cross of misunderstanding. Our intentions are misunderstood and our words are twisted in this world of envy and falsehood. Help us, O Lord, not to rush into defending ourselves, but leave the matter into Your hands because You are the Righteous Judge. Strengthen us, O God, as we grow weak due to prolonged suffering.

In the Name of Jesus our Comforter, we pray, Amen!

*(Heb 12:1,2; Jn 10:28,29; Rom 8:28; Phil 1:29; Psa 41:9; 84:6; Lk 23:31;
Lam 3:26; Prov 18:10; Mt 26:50; 1 Pet 2:23)*