

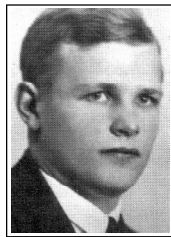
Reading: Job 13:1-16

"Though God slay me, I will hope in Him" (Job 13:15)

"Bless God when He blesses you; but curse Him when He crushes you!" This was the philosophy of Mrs. Job (Job 2:8-10). Sadly many Christians are ruled by this philosophy. We may not actually "curse" God, but what do we do when we don't praise Him? If we follow Jesus only "because of" the blessings we receive from Him, our relationship and religion are utilitarian. Following Him "in spite of" buffeting and brickbats is true service and pure worship.

What the three Hebrew young men spoke before King Nebuchadnezzar weakened his strategy. They politely but firmly said, "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. But even if He does not, your Majesty can be sure that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up!" (Dan 3:17,18). The early disciples had the same spirit. When they were flogged for their dauntless witness, they rejoiced that God had counted them worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name of Jesus (Acts 5:40,41).

As we approach the end of endtimes, our days of adversity seem to outnumber the days of prosperity. That will be no excuse for our murmuring and complaints. Because, in the very first instance we are called not only to believe on Christ but also to suffer for Him (Phil 1:29). The *New Living Translation* renders it as the "privilege of suffering!"



An active Christian earns the frown of the devil. The devil will attack him in all areas of his life—physical, mental, spiritual, financial and social. If Christ died for us, no suffering of ours will be too much, and no sacrifice too great! Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was a German pastor. His opposition to Hitlerism led to his arrest in 1943. He was executed when he was just 39. *"The Cost of Discipleship"* is one of his outstanding books. Are we ready to die for our faith?

"We can rejoice when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us — they help us learn patience. And patience develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation. And this expectation will not disappoint us!" (Rom 5:3-5b).

"For me to live is Christ; to die is gain!" (Missionary Paul)

NOVEMBER 23

PRAYER

Subject: Suffering

Reading: Job 13:1-16

Memorising: Job 13:15

Almighty God,

We worship You as the God of compassion. We worship You as the God of comfort. We worship You as the One who cares for us through and through. Your covenant with us is stronger than our commitment to You. Your grip on us is tighter than our trust on You. Your love for us is extraordinarily supreme compared to our devotion towards You. The advocatory prayers of Your Son and the intercessory prayers of Your Spirit are consummately effectual beyond our prayers. You never forget us even though we don't retain You constantly in our thoughts. You are always the Initiator and whatever we do is only our response. We praise You for all Your incomparable characteristics. You are unchanging and You cannot deny yourself even if we turn unfaithful.

Father God, we thank You for the good times You order in our lives. Help us not to murmur when You take us through grievous situations. Let us love You for who You are rather than for what You give us. Help us praise You when we understand Your ways and also when we don't understand them. Help us bow alike to Your rod of comfort as well as Your rod of correction. Thank You, Lord, for the valley of tears as well as the pool of blessing. Thank You, O God, for the times when You reveal Yourself and the times when You hide Yourself. Thank You for the quick answers to our prayers and delayed answers. Thank You, dear Lord, for the answered as well as unanswered prayers. Thank You, O God, for the prayers differently answered. Who can understand Your wisdom, dear Lord? Forgive us for daring to counsel You at times.

Father God, we pray for those who have lost their faith in You and are backslidden because of unsolved problems and unbearable suffering. Help us, Lord, to uplift them and restore them with words of comfort and encouragement from Your Word. Let us weep with those who weep and encourage them with Your promises. Help us work closely with them until the joy of Your Salvation is restored fully to them. Let there be a corresponding outflow from our life from the perpetual inflow we receive from Your abundance. Let us never forget that we are blessed just to bless others.

Dear Lord, save us from the peril of satisfaction. Let us study Your Word even more diligently. Let us spend time with You even more delightfully. Let us submit to Your authority even more devoutly. Let us sacrifice for Your work even more daringly. You are worthy of our all. Amen!

*(2 Cor 1:3; 1 Jn 2:1,2; Rom 8:26,27; 11:33-36; 12:15; 2 Tim 2:13; Isa 54:7,8; 55:8;
Psa 23:4; 51:12; 84:6; 119:97; Heb 3:12,13; 12:7-11; Job 11:7-9)*