

First, Paul's Suffering (24)

- 1) **(24)** God Sovereignly Started **Good Work** In Your Life → Not Just **Doing** Out There But **In Church**
 - a) **Suffering** Significant Part of It → Grow More In Suffering == **Why** Can Lean Into → Pull Away
 - b) **Why** Paul Can **Rejoice** == In Prison → **"For You"** == Sees His Suffering For Growth of Church
 - c) Want Us To Think About → How Our **Struggles**—Even Suffering In Life of Church == Growth
- 2) Take Minute → Think of All Ways Paul Suffered → As **Minister of Gospel** → **Servant of the Church**
 - a) **Imprisoned** → Beaten—Whipped—Driven Out → **Suffered** Privation → Hungry—Cold—Shipwrecked
 - b) **All Gave Up** == Time—Resources & Comforts == **Income**—House—SUV—ATV—Jet Skis
- 3) **Think** of the Non-Physical Ways Suffered For Church == Ways Paul **Sacrificed**
 - a) **Loneliness** → Paul Often Felt Isolated → Some **Books** On Leadership == **Sections** on Loneliness
 - i) 2 Tim. 1:15—"You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me"
 - ii) 2 Tim. 4:11—"Luke alone is with me" → Sometimes **Feel Like** Odd Man Out == Everyone @ Me
 - b) **Criticism & Slander** → His Authority—Abilities—Motives == **All Came Under** **Attack**
 - i) 2 Cor. 10:10—"For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account." → Who Say This? == People In Church == Critical of Ministry
 - ii) Church From **Inception** == Place Of Struggle → Center of Conflict → God Sanctifying People
- 4) At Various Times → Physically Suffered & Sacrificed → At Others == Lonely—Criticized—Unappreciated
- 5) All These Things == **You & I** May Feel At Some Point → When Doing Ministry In Church
 - a) **Why?** Bec/ == **We Are At War** → **Enemy At Work** == **Sanctification** == Battle == **Iron Sharpens Iron**
 - b) 2 Tim. 4:5—"As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." → Writing To Local Church == **Endure Suffering** == **Fulfill Your Ministry** == Same
 - c) At Times Ministry == Frustrating—Hard—Painful == **Endure Suffering** == **Fulfill Ministry**
- 6) 3 Encouragements **To Give** Meaning & Purpose **To Suffering** → Enable Us Not Only Endure == **Find Joy**

Second, Who We Suffer For (24)

- 1) **First Encouragement & Support Paul Gives In Our Suffering** == Remind Us Who Suffer For
 - a) **(24) For Your Sake** → Ones Named "Saints" In His Greeting → **Holy Ones** == God's People
 - i) In 3:12 → Calls Them **God's Chosen Ones—Holy—Dearly Loved** == **This Church Ultimate Identity**
 - ii) Sounds Grand → To Gladly Suffer For Elect & Holy Saints == **Body of Jesus Xp**
 - iii) Till Realize == **Annoying Person Down Row** → **Person Who Hurt Feelings** → At Odds With
 - iv) This Why In 3:12 ff == You Have to Put on Jesus Christ == Humility—Meekness
 - v) Bear W/ Each Other → **Forgive Each Other** → **Die To Selves** == **Relentlessly Move Towards**
 - vi) **Suffer For Each Other** == How Can Sinners Do Ministry & Grow Together == **Unless Suffering**
 - b) **(24) For Christ's Sake** == "*Filling Up What is Lacking in Christ's Afflictions*" → For Sake of Body—Church
 - i) Not Talking @ Substitutionary & Redemptive Suffering On Cross == **Once For All—It Is Finished**
 - ii) Other **Kinds of Suffering** == Still Much Suffering As Church Marches Toward Glory
- 2) **(18) Head Of His Body—Church** == We Are His Body == Share In His Suffering == As Made Holy
 - a) Phil. 3:10—"I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may **share** his sufferings"
 - b) 2 Tim. 2:3—"Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." == Sustained Me In Ministry == You
 - c) Good Soldier == **Battle Hardened** → Stands Ground Not Run → Takes Wounds == Fights Good Fight
 - d) Bears With—Forgives—Presses In → Instead of Running Away → Suffers For Body of Jesus
- 3) Takes **Spiritual Discernment & Grace & Deliberate Abiding In Xp In Moment** of Suffering
 - a) **Realize** == Not Your Enemy → Weak & Sinful Saints == Jesus' Blood-Bought Holy Ones
 - b) **Worth Our Blood—Sweat—Tears** == Paul Rejoices To Suffer For Church → Shares Suffering of Jesus

Third, Indwelling of Christ (25-27)

- 1) Such High Calling My Friends == **Sounds Nice** == But **I'm Hurt—Mad—Tired—Frustrated** == **How?**
- 2) **(25-27) Listen To Paul** → **Beyond Theology** → To **Spiritual Reality** = **Transforms Even Our Suffering**

- a) Presence & Power of Indwelling Christ == Creative Power of Universe Lives Inside == Glory!
- 3) **(25) Minister of Church** == Diakonos → Literally Servant == Not Just of Jesus == Servant of Church
- a) Service & Ministry Given → Word of God Fully Known → Mystery Hidden → Now Revealed
- b) Rich Glorious Mystery of Ages == Revelation of Indwelling Christ == Savior Living In the Soul
- 4) Mystery == Church In OT Waiting For Messiah—Xp → Moses or David == Deliver From Oppression
- a) God Sent His Own Son → To Deliver Us From Sin → Dwell In Our Souls → Transform Us In Image
- b) Hope of Glory → Not A Man → But God Self → Immanuel == God With Us == God In Us
- 5) Our Hope As Believers—As Church == Not Selves → Or Broken People Around Us == But Xp In Us
- a) Can Suffer For Xp Church → bec/ Christ Self Dwells In Us == As Abide In Him—Rely—Trust
- b) MacArthur—“A Christian who has lost the joy of the ministry does not have bad circumstances, but bad connections. You do not lose the joy of serving Christ unless your communion with Him breaks down.”
- c) Only Presence & Power of Indwelling Christ == Enable Experience Joy == Difficult Circumstances

Fourth, Goal of Suffering (28)

- 1) **(28)** 3rd Encouragement To Support In Suffering == For Whom—Indwelling Xp == Goal of Suffering
- a) Can Lean Into → Even Rejoice When Our Suffering == Meaning & Purpose == God Doing Something
- b) James 1:2-3—“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, **for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness**” → When Know Goal == Christlikeness == Lean In
- 2) Lean In == Not Only When @ My Personal Growth == Paul Rejoices In Suffering For Others Sake
- a) Goal == See God’s Broken—Weak—Sinful People == Growing Toward Maturity In Jesus Christ
- 3) **(28)** To Present Everyone Mature In Xp → Must Proclaim Truth To Each → Warn == Admonish
- a) Why? == Bec/ All Broken—Messy People → Mess Up—Let Down—Hurt Feelings—Sin—Sinned Against
- b) None Fully Mature == Blind Spots—Lingering Sin & Brokenness == All Struggling Forward
- c) Going To Be Messy == Require Truth Telling & Admonishing == Working Together == Maturity

- 4) Iron Sharpens Iron → Loud—Sparks Fly—Heat Generated == But If Don't Abandon Process = **Grow!**
- 5) Messy—Painful—Joyful—Difficult—Meaningful Process of Community **Sanctification**

Finally, Power To Power On (29)

- 1) **(29) To This End** == Toil == Labor == **Work To Point of Exhaustion** == Hard & Exhausting Work
- 2) **Struggling** → Greek == Agonizomai == **Agonizing** == Pushed To Utter Limits == Maddening
- 3) Paul How Did You Do It? → Sticking Power == Rejoice In Agonizing Hard Work For Church?
- a) Toil & Agonize == W/ All His Energy == **I Can Do All Things Through Christ Who Strengthens Me**
- b) God Powerfully At Work Within Me == Eph. 6 == **Strong In Lord In Strength of His Might**
- c) 1 Cor 15:10—"*I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me*"
- d) 2 Cor. 12:9—"*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*" *Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*"
- 4) Premarital Counseling → One Goal == Pop Bubble of Idealism == **Ruin Marriage** → Same In Church
- a) Bonhoeffer—One Biggest Threats To Genuine **Messy Christian Community** == **Naïve Idealism**
- b) If Naïve @ How Painful & Messy Church Life Can Be == We'll Constantly Judging & Criticizing It
- c) If Think → Shouldn't Be Hard → Shouldn't Hurt → Shouldn't Have To Put Up W/ It
- d) Never Be Happy—Content → **Always Pick it Apart** == Complaining & Criticizing
- e) We'll Miss Power & Beauty of **Messy—Agonizing But Real—Rich Fellowship That Is the Church**
- f) This **Glorious Broken—Messy—Rich Fellowship of Struggling Sinners In Midst of Imperfect Sanct**
- 5) Martin Luther == Simul Justus Et Peccator → Simultaneously == At Same Time == Justified & Sinful
- a) Simultaneously == God's Elect—Holy—Beloved People == & Broken—Imperfect—Struggling Sinners
- b) Able To Rejoice & Lean Into Struggle Together == **Agonize** W/ Energy & Power of Indwelling Savior
- c) Fill Out In Own Experience Very Suffering of Christ → Out of Love for Sinful Saints