

A Fellow Sufferer

"Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'"

Matthew 26:39 (NIV)

I recall in the winter of 1989-1990 I was getting use to the notion that I was a cancer patient. It was October 1989 that I got my first diagnosis. A wonderful Christian lady in a northern Ontario town wrote me a letter telling me about her journey with cancer that had begun 20 years earlier. I treasured that letter for the inspiration and hope it gave me.

She had survived 20 years so far with the dreaded disease. That was encouraging. Then she spoke of the emotions that had fought for the victory in her mind and heart. Fear, anger—and so on—were the very same emotions that I felt as I began my own journey with this disease.

The help I received from that lady's letter did me a great deal of good as I tried to come to terms with my mortality and the alternatives that might face me in the future. We all need to find someone who has already faced our dilemma. These people can provide us with the voice of experience and give us wise counsel to help us come to terms with the situation.

Seeking to understand a little

of what Jesus suffered the night of the betrayal can make a great difference in our own lives as we seek Him in prayer. Hebrews 4:15 (NIV) reads, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin."

Jesus felt all the challenges we do in life and therefore He can understand our fears, heartache, all of our suffering because He has already experienced the same Himself. His own family did not understand His mission and one time thought He was beside Himself. His own followers sought to use Him for personal advantage. When He needed the apostles the most they all forsook Him and fled. Jesus was so poor that He did not have even his own bed to lay down His head. So when you tell him your sorrow He remembers His and He weeps with you.

The agonies Jesus suffered at the time of His betrayal, trials and crucifixion were far beyond what anyone in history has ever endured.

We may not know, we cannot tell, What pains He had to bear; But we believe it was for us He hung and suffered there. - Cecil F. Alexander (1847)

Not only did our Lord suffer in a manner that defies description—His suffering was not for personal sin but for the sins of others. 1 Peter 3:18 (NIV) "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

As you seek to endure your sorrows, spend much time talking to Jesus and telling Him of your suffering. It may seem that He is not listening—but He certainly is. He loves to hear you pray and His attention is not diverted by anything. Seek Him today and ask for what you need. He will be gracious and generous in supplying your need. Philippians 4:19 (NIV) "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

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