

# What is a masochist?

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings...”

Philippians 3:10 (NIV)

I knew the man only slightly. I would see him from time to time walking the streets of the town in which I then lived. There was nothing remarkable about him with one very notable exception. He had a bulbous nose and it was always swollen, red and enflamed. It didn't take long to figure out what the problem was.

The gentleman in question was a masochist. He derived pleasure from pain and that was the reason he was constantly cutting his nose. Now, over 40 years later, I still do not understand the mental torment that caused him to do this to himself. Certainly I was saddened by his preoccupation with pain, but I was unable to fathom his mind set.

Our verse today has a startling comment along with an exciting one. Paul tells us that his passion in life is to get to know more and more about the Lord Jesus. Now that in and of itself sounds fine. Jesus is indeed the most remarkable person in history and there is no end of things to discover about Him and His work.

I have a book by a psychiatrist who did an analysis of Jesus' words and works. The

psychiatrist pronounced Jesus a sane person in spite of Jesus calling Himself “God” many times. Had Jesus been delusional about His identity He would have slipped up in various other areas to demonstrate His insanity. But He does not, so we are left with the puzzle of what to do with a sane person who claims to be God. This was a very interesting thing for me to learn about Jesus.

So simply learning about Jesus is remarkable indeed. Then Paul goes on to mention his desire to know the power of Jesus' resurrection. That would be phenomenal! Power is attractive to most of us. There certainly are times when we are swamped with pain and suffering and a little power to carry on would be wonderful.

However, imagine what kind of power it took to raise Jesus from the dead. That is well beyond anything humans have been able to duplicate. That is incredible power for sure.

The problem in our verse for today is the idea of suffering with Jesus. What is that all about? Is Paul insane? Is he a masochist? Not at all. Paul mentions how much he has

suffered for the sake of Jesus in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. The list there is incredible. Paul's sufferings are both physical and emotional. Because of his devotion to Jesus he has suffered beyond any other person he knew.

Paul is telling us that we must know death in order to participate in the resurrection of Christ. We must die to our own ambitions and goals in life as Jesus died to His own privileges and rights in order to save us. It is the puzzle of Christianity that in order to live we must die.

The true Christian says to their Lord, “Here is my life, do with it what you will. Not my will but yours be done.” Can you trust Jesus that much with your life? Are you willing to let Him do with you as He will as long as He walks with you? Paul says any suffering is worth it, even suffering unto death, that we might experience the glory of Jesus in our lives. May you have grace today to offer yourself without reserve to this wonderful Saviour.

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