

CHURCH OF CHRIST

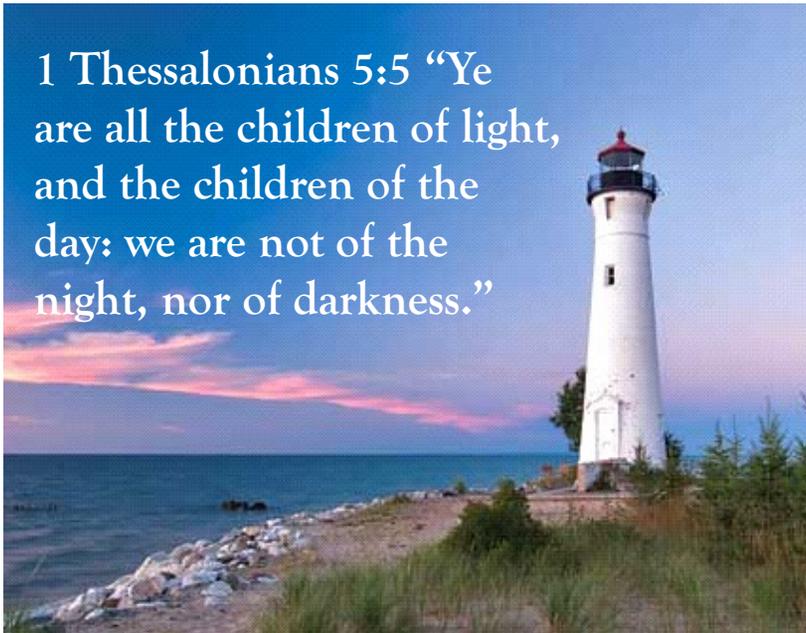
of Genesee County

5284 Fenton Road, Flint, Michigan 48507

Schedule of Services

Worship...	Sunday	11:00 a.m.
	Sunday	6:00 p.m.
Bible Study...	Sunday	10:00 a.m.
	Wednesday	6:00 p.m.

July 26, 2020



1 Thessalonians 5:5 “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

Website: www.coc-gc.org

Marty and Joyce Stearns.

Gracie, Tracy and Austin Clark.

Cindy Dobbs—heroine in the fight against COVID-19 as a healthcare worker. Pray for her often.

P Joan’s brother Hurley—is doing better and Opal, sister Christena Apostolico in Ohio—health, and Donna

R Bill Alldaffer—encouragement

A Cindy Atkinson—health. (knee), Cindy’s friends-Ireland

Y Family, Wayne Hamilton, Kathy, Jody Rynca-cancer, Mitchell Larson and Walt and Ilene Davenport—health, Marie Hall—health. Friend Jackie is in need of prayers.

E Betty requests prayers for Earlene Currier-health-Betty’s Aunt, Betty’s daughters: Donna, Carrie, Susan Wills, Debra and Lauren Weidner-grand-daughter, Joyce Harrison—Betty’s cousin

Jeff Stevens—health

Chere’ - request prayers for Priya and Daniel

L John and Linda Schafer-wife Linda is in need of prayer

I Rachel Hall—health problems

Dale and Sue Gregory—health

Pat Crain—hospital with pneumonia and liver problems

Emily Galantis –need of prayers

Charley and Cherry Brewer—lost grand-son (16 years old)

Michael and Vivian Golwitzer—health (that Mike receives a kidney transplant)

Marilyn Moffitt—health and family

Food closet: Pasta

SERMONS

AM: A God Who Delights In Mercy

PM: Jesus Christ Expectations for His Church

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO SUFFER— FAITHFULLY—(Matt. 5:10-12)

There are many reasons why men suffer. Lack of space here prevents a detailed discussion of those causes. At times, men suffer because of their own sins, while, at other times, they suffer because of the sins of others. (I Peter 4:14-16.) Jesus taught that suffering because one faithfully stands for Him and His word (because of love for Him) is a source of great blessing. (Matt. 5:10-12; cf.: I Peter 1:6-9; I Peter 4:12-13.) Suffering may be either beneficial or destructive to the one who suffers. The consequences of suffering depends upon how the sufferer reacts to it. Suffering drives some men away from the Lord into discouragement and even despair. But, it is also possible for suffering to cause the sufferer to turn to God. Suffering is much like a hot poker: it will be helpful or destructive, depending upon whether one grasps it by the cool or the hot end. If one does not react properly, suffering can result in terrible spiritual and psychological scars. But, if one does react properly, suffering can be the source of wonderful blessing? Let us now consider some of the blessings which may come to the sufferer when he reacts to suffering as God would have him to react.

1. Suffering helps the sufferer to know himself. One of the most vital needs of man is to know himself. The Psalmist prayed in these words, Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psm. 139:23,24.) Before he actually was involved in the severe test (which he failed), Peter viewed himself as a tower of strength. (Matt. 26:31-25.)

But the actual testing "introduced Peter to himself." He found that rather than being strong, he was weak—he denied the Lord. (Matt. 26:69-74.) When men pray for divine aid in knowing themselves, it may be that God will answer their prayers by allowing them to be put into "the crucible of suffering."

2. Suffering helps the sufferer to attain a proper set of values. It is easier for a man in the midst of great suffering to see what is really important and what is not important. A man with good health may say to himself, "Wealth, popularity, position, and pleasure are the most important things in life. I must have these things. I will work long hours in order to have them." But to the man who realizes he may be dying, there is little appeal to wealth, popularity and such like.

3. Suffering helps the sufferer to be thankful for his blessings. Likely, most people take for granted the blessings they have and give little thought to such blessings as: a loving husband or wife, children, brethren in Christ, the various physical blessings of life, hearing and obeying the Gospel of Christ (John 3:16; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:36-38; Eph. 2:8,9) the privilege of prayer through Christ, the privilege of worship. But suffering can help one to appreciate these matters.

4. Properly reacted to, suffering helps the sufferer to avoid self-pity. This may seem to be paradoxical, but even from those in the midst of severe suffering it is usually not very far to others whose suffering is even more severe. Proper reaction to suffering leads one to spend time in praying for others. Being truly concerned for and praying for the welfare of others serves as a guard against pitying oneself. Both gratitude and self-pity cannot fill the same heart at the same time.

5. Suffering helps the sufferer to see the value of prayer. When one is enjoying good health and is prospering financially, it is easy to drift away from a feeling of dependence on God. It is hard for a rich man to sing with sincerity such songs as, "I Need Thee Every Hour." But adversity both helps the sufferer to see the value of prayer and to pray more intensely. Before his severe adversity, Manasseh, king of Judah, was very wicked (II Chron. 33:9,10), but his severe distress caused him to humble himself and to pray to God (II Chron. 33:11-13).

6. Suffering helps the sufferer to understand what a blessing it is not to be able to see what the future holds. It seems that some burdens of life would be more than one could bear if men had full knowledge of the future. But each person is given his own load of life one day at a time, and each one must learn to carry only the load of each day as it comes, trusting in the Lord not to allow us to have thrust upon us more than we can bear. (I Cor. 10:13; Matt. 6:33.)

7. Suffering helps the sufferer to better understand the fatherhood of God. The relationship of God to the saved is that of Father and children. Jesus Himself emphasized this relationship. (Matt. 7:7-11). He taught that if earthly fathers (who are subject to lust, greed, selfishness, and malice) know how to respond with beneficence to the requests of their own children, how much more should the children of the Heavenly Father expect Him to respond to their proper request.

8. Suffering helps the sufferer to better understand his own love for others. Most people love their wives (or husbands), children, friends, and brethren in Christ. But acute adversity,

and especially such suffering as leads the sufferer to face the possibility that through death he may have to leave those loved ones, helps the sufferer to understand his love for them better than he would have been able to understand it otherwise. (Study carefully I Cor. 13.)

9. Suffering helps the sufferer to overlook the faults and see the good in those whom he loves. Those whom the sufferer loves are only human and thus have faults, weaknesses, and shortcomings— just as the sufferer does. Suffering helps a person to see this fact better than it could be seen otherwise. Because of this, the one who suffers come to minimize those shortcomings and to emphasize and dwell upon the good in their hearts and lives. (I Cor. 13; Matt. 5:43-48; Rom. 12.)

10. Suffering helps one to better realize the value of a kind word. When thinking about one who is suffering, the average person is apt to say, "Why bother with saying a kind word to him? It will mean nothing to him." But when a person has gone down into "the valley of the shadow of death" in suffering, his own heart is made more tender, and he can better see the value of a kind word, a hand-clasp, and a comforting pat on the shoulder. With what tenderness and thanksgiving the sufferer remembers the person who spoke a kind word to him or who has prayed for him! (Psm. 23).

11. Suffering helps one to see that the darkest hours may precede those which are brightest. Someone has well said that cowards die a thousand deaths before they

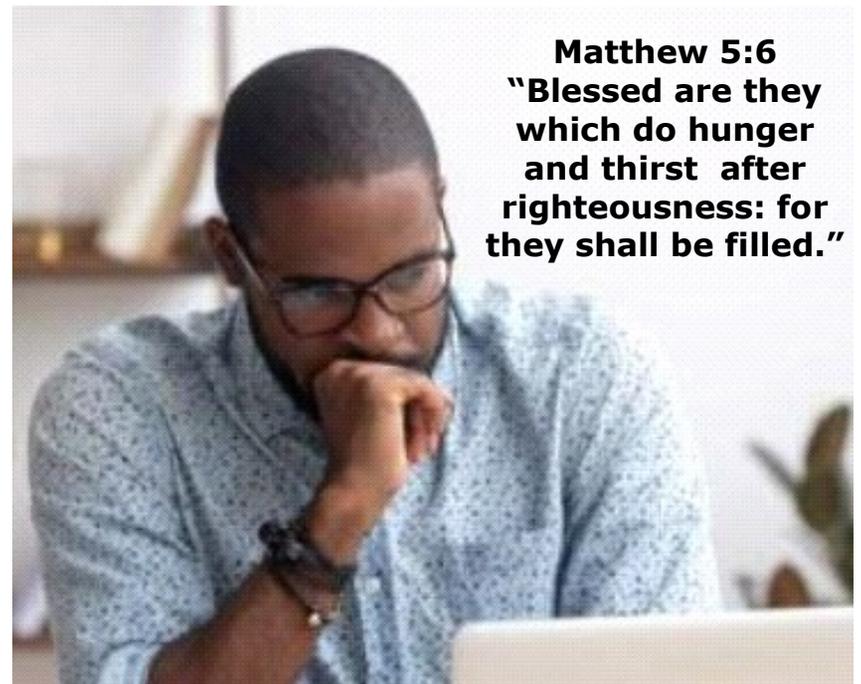
really die. Men of great faith and courage "die but once." While those of little faith and courage often give up in despair when, without their realizing it, they were on the verge of victory. Many people, in moments of utter despair, have taken their own lives, when, if they had had the faith to hold on a little longer, the darkness of despair would have vanished with the brightness of better things to come. The story is told of a man who, on an intensely cold, dark night during which a blizzard was howling through the country side, trudged wearily almost all night through deep drifts of snow and against a driving, bone-chilling north wind. Finally, after looking and looking for some kind of shelter, in despair and discouragement he sank to the snow-covered ground and drifted into sleep. The next morning a farmer opened his door and saw the man's outstretched fingers, now frozen in death, only a few feet from the door through which he would have found warmth, food, and continued life—if only he had traveled two feet farther! He gave up a few seconds too soon. (Study: Gal. 6:7-9; Rev. 2:10; Prov. 3:5-6.)

12. Suffering helps the sufferer to realize that some "mountain heights" can be reached only by going through the valley which is in front of the mountain. Paul taught that some spiritual heights are reached by way of the valley of affliction and tears. (II Cor. 4:17,18) Moses plainly taught the children of Israel that their afflictions would cause them to return to the Lord. (Deut. 4:40) Affliction causes many to desire intensely to know the word of God. It even helps one to learn what that word teaches. The Psalmist said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." (Psm. 119:71.)

CONCLUSION

The prayerful consideration of these matters usually brings forth conclusions which help those who suffer to realize that a number of changes should be made in their lives. Suffering provides the sufferer with an opportunity to "begin anew" the monumental task of building the kind of life God would have him to build. Instead of reacting in bitterness against God (as some men have done), each sufferer should recognize that (because of suffering) he and his family may be richly blessed. May God help it to be so in the life of each of us. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." (Job 13:15.)

By Thomas B. Warren, Ph.D. The Spiritual Sword April 1972



Matthew 5:6
"Blessed are they
which do hunger
and thirst after
righteousness: for
they shall be filled."