

“Suffer, Rise, and Light”

By Arman George

Sunday, April 30th, 2017

I feel like I'm on the conference; there's just so much going on. And, actually, the message has already been preached. As Parrish mentioned, there's three messages today, and I'd like to have a prayer for all three messages today. Please bow your heads for prayer.

Lord Jesus, Father, in the name of Jesus, allow Your Spirit to walk through these aisles this morning, God. Fill, overflow this room with Your Spirit, Lord Jesus. Lord, You said that if You don't go away, Your Comforter will never come. God, allow the understanding to sit on each chair this morning; allow Your knowledge to bring to this chair this morning, Your presence. God, bless the message; God, put away the messengers, God. Put us out of the way, so that the message will come through on each one of us, in our hearts, God, and flow through the hearts of many, Jesus. God, bless this room like You blessed in the Book of Acts. Let the Spirit of Yours be overflowing. God, give us this, I pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

This morning, I was asked to share the Book of Acts, chapter twenty-six, verse twenty-three, and it reads like this:

Acts 26:23 *That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.*

If you read the whole chapter, twenty-six, of Acts, you would know that the Jews were trying to punish Apostle Paul to death for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And, in the process, King Agrippa, well, he mentioned this particular Scripture, the apostle mentioned this particular Scripture because he was sharing his testimony in front of King Agrippa. And, in the process, King Agrippa almost believed the Gospel. And, I read, somewhere, it says that King Agrippa's wisdom and judgment were convinced, but his heart would never change. But, there's three words in these Scriptures that, kind of, sum up these Scriptures for me, as a matter of fact, my whole walk with God, that mentions: Suffer, rise, and light.

Well, what does that mean for me today? Well, suffer means persecution, rise means resurrection, light means application, Bible application to life. Persecution, resurrection, application by light. A long time ago, before I met the church, before I was even baptized in Jesus' name, I used to work at EKCO, you've probably heard of that. There's a lot of brothers that used to work there, too, as well. And, I've got to tell you, a lot of those brothers experienced a lot of persecution there. And I didn't know that, at the time, because I didn't know them; I used to work at night, and I never met them. And, the reason I know that, is because I used to work with this guy named Randy; he was my boss at the time. And, he would come to me every morning; he would go, chewing tobacco, “How you doing, Pal?” You know, he would always do like that to me, and I don't know, and he says, “Do you know these queer guys that get dropped off in a van, you know, always talking about Jesus, you know, and they're always in that little room, that little side room...” He was always talking, but I didn't know who those people were, you know, because I always worked nights, and I never seen them. And he was like, “Yeah, those guys, you know, they always ask people if they will come to church,” and sometimes, they would put these fliers on the bulletin board in the front, you know, activity at the church, you know. And some of the guys would really make fun of them, because, they would go over there, and they would do something on that flier, and they would sneak out, and go like this (furtively looking to his left and his right), and they would put something nasty and stuff like that. And, by the way, you know, I don't know, why would people, when they do this, when they want to do something really bad, you know, and they

look right, and to the left, and nobody's watching, but, they don't look up, because God is watching. You know what I mean? But, in Galatians two twenty, it says:

Galatians 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

I spent my first eighteen years in the Philippines. I grew up there; seen a lot of things. Every Holy Week, because that's a big thing over there, every Good Friday, they do a lot of re-enactment of the crucifixion. And, sometimes, they get really into it, and, I've seen people really on the cross, I mean, they put that nail in there (pointing to his hand), into the wood, and some people died, I've heard. And, anyway, when I was eleven years old, Good Friday morning, I, you know, I was outside, and, there was a man that lived down the street from me; his name was Greg. And, he stepped out of his house, sits on the stairs, and he took his shirt off, and he had a guy right behind him, and he had a blade, you know, one of those razor blades, and he sat down right behind him, and he started, you know, cutting his back, like this (making nicking motions with his hand, as though making small cuts with a razor blade), all the way, until all his back was like that. And I thought, "I've got to go ask," and I said, "Why do you do that?" and he said, "Well, this is the way I crucify myself. I've done so many things in my life, and this is the way that I can feel God in me, that He forgives me, you know?" And now I'm kind of scared, because I'm thinking, "When I'm older, I'm going to do this when I get older." But, you know, when I was baptized, when I came to know the truth, "God, thank You that You showed me the Truth! I don't have to do that thing." I was like, "God, thank You!" But, you know, God's spoke to my heart, He said, "You're not out of the woods, yet, son." He said, "As long as you live in this flesh, there is suffering and persecution." And, church, you know, as soon as you walk out of that door, today, there's the devil, right outside, waiting, holding the blade, waiting for me and you, to cut our back. And, we have a lot of kids, here, young people, "How is the devil going to cut your back like that?" Well, he's going to cut your back with backbitings, with stress, with bullying, you know? Is this world making you do things that you don't want to do? Is this world, is the decoration of this world enticing to you? You know, if it's not, then it's not going to work out there, you know? But, that's—do you know what? Do you know what? God has His answer in it. God has His answer. Do you want to know what the answer is? Here it is:

Revelation 20:6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

He said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection..." Are you part of that first resurrection? Do you want to skip the second death? Do you want these Scriptures to be alive in you, today? We have ministers, right after this, church, we have ministers all over this place. Even if you want to dedicate yourself, talk to one of the ministers, and they will be glad to do it. Thank you, and God bless you.