

What Is Lacking In Christ's Afflictions By Mark Hatfield

Col 1:24

“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.”

Did Christ's afflictions lack anything? Paul seemed to think so.

What could this possibly mean?

What impact does it have on our lives?

Consider that Jesus was rejected by His own people; He was often plotted against with attempted assassination; He never had a place to truly call home with a bed to lay His head upon; He often grew weary and tired from the work that He was doing for our heavenly Father; He experienced many scenes of hardship and loss that moved Him to compassion as He began to weep; He was disowned by family (his brothers) and eventually deserted by His closest friends (his disciples); He was falsely accused of breaking laws that He did not break; He was arrested for doing no wrong; He was placed on trial and was humiliated, beaten and questioned; He was spat upon, slapped and treated cruelly; He was sent before a crowd three times as they cried out, “crucify him” while releasing a real rebel in Barabbas; Jesus was scourged and laid bare and then had to carry his cross through the streets of shame; He was eventually nailed to a cross and hoisted into the air to become a public spectacle; When He was thirsty they gave Him sour wine or vinegar to drink; They mocked and cursed Jesus while he suffered and yet only blessings and prayers came from His mouth; He was made to be sin on our behalf so that we could become the righteousness of God in Him; Having been in eternal fellowship with His Father, He cried out at one point on the cross, “My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?” He suffered alone; He was run through with a spear where blood and water came forth; He died for you and me. What did Christ's afflictions lack?

Paul's point here is not that what Jesus did failed to fulfill the requirement to save mankind or meet the need for a pure sacrificial death; Paul is simply saying that now that we are the body of Christ on earth, there will be things that we will have to suffer in order to further the gospel message and work in the Lord's church. Paul was stating that He took pleasure in being able to suffer for the cause of Christ. Paul was doing His part in the body of Christ. If we are ambassadors for Christ as though God were speaking through us, we need to use this time to remember our commitment to the Lord and make sure that we are willing to suffer for what is right and good. It is clear through the memorial of these emblems that Christ had to suffer for our sins.

Let it be evident that you are willing to be persecuted for righteousness sake. Jesus even warned us that this was going to happen. Most people fold under the pressure when things get tough in their service to the Lord. The Lord has called us to remain faithful to Him even unto death. Let us all have the attitude of being willing to be poured out in service to the Lord like the apostle Paul.

On one occasion saints received a letter stating that they had not resisted evil unto the point of bloodshed. This means that even though they took an initial stand against sin, they were unwilling to resist wickedness unto the point of death. Will you fill up on your part that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ? He is no longer here to do the work that is left to do? Let us remember Jesus in partaking of the Supper.