SUFFERING FROM GOD?

Reflections on I Peter 4:13–29 For Christians

Ludwig Beethoven Jones Noya,¹ Bobby Kurnia Putrawan²
Vanderbilt University, Tennessse, USA¹
Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Moriah, Tangerang, Indonesia²
Email: ludwignoya@vanderbilt.edu¹

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Abstract

Suffering is an integral part of the status of a believer because the condition of following Christ is the Cross and leaving something, so suffering is the most important part of Christian teaching. Suffering is a fact that exists in every life in life without limits both believers and non-believers, but suffering for believers has a different meaning. In this study, the author examines and analyzes suffering for believers in terms of the theological meaning of suffering by exposing the text of I Peter 4: 13-27. The method used in this paper is a theological method with biblical theology studies. In I Peter 4: 13-29 the meaning of suffering for believers is explained, namely: first, as a test of faith to develop perseverance in the believer so that faith becomes stronger after going through purification and producing perseverance and the maturity of faith. Second, suffering for believers aims to glorify God, because through suffering and how to respond by staying grateful and joyful the Spirit of glory is in the believer. Third, suffering is God's will, because God is sovereign over all things and sustains all things with His powerful Word.

Keywords: suffering, god, purity, peter, christians

Abstrak

Penderitaan merupakan bagian integral dari status umat Kristen karena syarat mengikut Kristus adalah salib dan meninggalkan sesuatu, maka penderitaan adalah bagian terpenting dari ajaran Kristen.


Ketiga, penderitaan adalah kehendak Tuhan, karena Tuhan berdaulat atas segala sesuatu dan menopang segala sesuatu dengan Firman-Nya yang penuh kuasa.

Kata Kunci: penderitaan, allah, pemurnian, petrus, umat kristen
INTRODUCTION

Suffering is an important part of the doctrine of Christology and has been an issue of debate throughout the ages, because suffering is a fact that is very close to human life and touches all people without boundaries. because basically humans tend to only see a hope that is promised by God without wanting to experience any suffering. It is recognized that suffering is never separated from everyone's life as Oscar Wilde said, "I can resist anything, except temptation."\(^1\) So suffering is a serious problem but it is not the only ending of this life, because it happens there must be a purpose and impact on the lives of believers. The Bible teaches that suffering is an integral part of being a Christian, the conditions for following Christ Jesus are the cross (Matt. 16:24-26) and forsaking something (Matt. 19:21).\(^2\)

There are emerging and different views about the meaning of suffering, not even a few people think this is the result of sin, a curse faced by a person as a result of his disobedience and more confused with the emergence of theology that emphasizes living rich, blessed and abundant.\(^3\) This is what makes believers wrong in understanding the meaning of suffering. This teaching is indeed interesting because it offers humans an invitation to worship God and keep loving wealth, this teaching is very popular practically among Christians today and has existed since the 20\(^{th}\) century, there is almost no Christianity that is not influenced by this teaching\(^4\) even though on the other hand we still see so many believers are still living below the poverty line, God's servants in the interior are experiencing difficulties in their lives and ministry and there are still so many believers who are struggling with sickness and life difficulties.

If these teachings are not handled properly, humans will become God for themselves and blame God when faced with life's difficulties. So this theme is very important for Christians to know, especially in facing this skeptical world, because indeed suffering is not a pleasant thing, it is often painful, the impact of which can cause a person's spiritual death instantly if they do not realize their spiritual relationship before God and those things affect eternity.

1 Peter 4:13-29 is a text that shows how followers of Christ experience suffering. A question arises, what is suffering from God? Merril C. Tenney makes it clear in his book Survey of the New Testament that Christians suffer not only some believers but all

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Christians in the world suffer the same fate. This statement is very supportive as a manifestation that suffering is part of a believer's life that has been outlined by God because believers are called to it as good soldiers from Christ (Comp. I Tim. 2:3 and Lat. 3:37, 38) who are ready to endure everything for the sake of that calling which shows that God wants to use His people for His sake.

So from the quote above we can see that suffering is something that cannot be separated from the life of a believer and it shows that there is a relationship between God in all events in this world or in other words, God has the right to His creation because He created and maintains it and sovereign over all things, so that the believer with the same attitude knows that he is not his own but belongs to God (1 Cor. 7:23). God's plan for mankind never fails because in suffering there is healing and there is a sure hope for those who remain steadfast in their faith in God. Today, it can also be seen that there are different views on the meaning of suffering, all of which are caused by a theologically wrong understanding or perception of the meaning of suffering from a biblical point of view. Seeing the above, this paper aims to explore the meaning of suffering based on 1 Peter 4:13-29 and its reflection for Christians today.

In this writing, the author uses descriptive qualitative research methods in theological. The definition of descriptive qualitative research is research that produces information in the form of notes and descriptive data in the text under study in theological perspective. Meanwhile, this type of research uses library research where the author writes and develops theoretical studies based on sources of books relevant to the topic of suffering for believers in 1 Peter 4:13-29.

In this writing, the author first discusses suffering in the Old and New Testaments. Then the writer explores the meaning of suffering in 1 Peter 4:13-29 by interpreting literal analysis by combining the meanings of related words from the Greek. From the results of this interpretation, the author reconstructs to find meaning and reflects on the suffering in 1 Peter 4:13-29.

DISCUSSION

The Word of God is the foundation and life force for God's people. As God's people, they learn and thirst for the truth. The thirst of God's people for God's word has recently been confused with various inappropriate interpretations, which has created a problem that never ends, one of the main factors is with the emergence of various theological interpretations that only promises blessings, abundant life, riches and so on, that living in God never lacks anything and suffers because we are children of the King. In this discussion,

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we will know the true meaning of suffering. In
terminology, the meaning of suffering
according to the general Indonesian dictionary
means something that is unpleasant.\(^7\)

Suffering is something that is not good,
so suffering is the opposite of pleasure. In
other dictionaries it is said that suffering is
physical pain, discomfort caused by illness,
accident, etc., mental illness that suffers or is
troublesome, annoyance, causes of pain,
injury, disturbance of distress with full of
pain.\(^8\)

**Suffering in the Old Testament**

Suffering according to the Old
Testament has the meaning of the word in
Hebrew, among others: first, the word yasar
which emphasizes the purpose of suffering,
namely for discipline (Hosea 10:10), teaching
(Psalm 2:10), to punish and chastise (Jer. 6:8 ).
Second, the word ana means committing
offences against others (Gen. 15:13),
humiliating others (Num. 24:24), being
miserable (Psalm 107:17,18) so that they
experience suffering. Third, suffering in the
word sarar the main meaning is binding,
pressing firmly, the meaning then develops
into suffering (Jer 10:18).\(^9\)

From this understanding we can
understand that the suffering that occurs in
humans does not show solely because of sin.

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\(^{7}\) WJS Poerwadarminta, *Kamus Umum Bahasa
Indonesia* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2007), 624.

\(^{8}\) Rudy Hartono, *Kamus Lengkap Inggris-
Indonesia* (Jombang: Pusat Peningkatan
Pendidikan Masyarakat Umum, 2018), 195.

\(^{9}\) Everett F. Harrison, *Dictionary of Theology*,
ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Michigan: Bakers Book
House, 1991), 505.

Job's suffering is an example that suffering is
not solely because of sin. Job was a good and
pious man, piety, care and concern for his
children, as a family priest, Job offered burnt
offerings for all of them (1:5) he trying to keep
her children holy.\(^10\) The suffering that
happened to Job confronts us with the
suffering that is common to all humans, the
war with the attack of the Shebaans (1:15);
poverty through loss of wealth (1:16-17),
humiliation due to changes in social status
from rich to poor and diseases that attacked his
body (2:7), Job also lost all his children (1:19),
Job's friends emphasized The sufferings
experienced by Job with the Traditional
Theological view "That the righteous will
prosper and the wicked will suffer" This view
is known as the "Principle of Retaliation" and
is generally emphasized in the Psalms and
Proverbs.\(^11\)

This view cannot be used as biblical
truth. Edgar Jones said that not all suffering is
the result of sin as was the case with Job.\(^12\)
Job's suffering was God's way of:

- God teaches or educates the believer to
  turn from error and the way is the
discipline of pain, continuous suffering is
described as “a constant pain in the bone”

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\(^{10}\) David Atkinson, *Ayub: Dalam Kasih Allah
Rahasia Penderitaan, Tujuan Dan Kekuatan nya
Ditemukan* (Jakarta: Yayayasan Komunikasi Bina

\(^{11}\) Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *Survey
Perjanjian Lama* (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2013),
433.

\(^{12}\) Edgar Jones, *The Triumph Of Job*, (London:
SCM Press, 1953), 33.

\(^{13}\) John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job (The New
International Commentary on The Old Testament)*
(Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans
the pain prevents him from the possibility of enjoying a joy.

- Godly and honest people may suffer for no apparent reason, but the result of suffering is greater fellowship with God.

- Seeing the suffering described in the book of Job is not just a result of sin, but rather in a broader context, if it is analyzed that the suffering is already a serious problem, but the problem we can see here is how one can faithfully believe in God despite suffering. The essence of this problem is the question of purity of faith, which is the essence of the book of Job.

The problem of purity of faith and obedience is also seen in Abraham's life, God educated and taught Abraham through several events in his life, heavy struggles as a promise owner. In the book of Genesis God remembers the covenant with Abraham and from Abraham's descendants there will be a covenant nation. God commanded Abraham to leave his land and leave his father's family to go to the land of Canaan. God promised to make Abraham a great nation and bless him abundantly. "through you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (12:3). The first blessing on humans given by God will be conveyed through Abraham, and through Abraham's family it will bring blessings to other nations and this is where there will be spiritual blessings that will come through Abraham's descendants, namely Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 3:25-26). Paul refers to the promise to Abraham as "preaching the gospel to Abraham first” (cf. Gal. 3:8).

Abraham believed in God, so believers who believe in Jesus Christ are blessed with Abraham (Gal. 3:9). Abraham the owner of the promise several times faces obstacles, various obstacles appear in the form of a successor heir or various situations that threaten the main characters.  

The first threat arose when Abraham and Sarai went to the Egypt to save themselves from the famine in Canaan. The threat came from Pharaoh who would take Sarai to be his concubine, and as a result the child born was not Abraham's descendant. But with God's help this threat can be overcome. Then another threat was the presence of Lot, Abraham's nephew, because Abraham and Sarai had no children so it seemed that Lot would be the heir but this can also be overcome, the story continues in chapter 15 by introducing a successor heir namely Eliezer, Abraham's servant. But God declared Abraham's heir to be his own son, the end of chapter 15 tells of the ratification of the covenant between God and Abraham. Once again the agreement was reaffirmed.

Abraham experienced trials with such a long waiting period and Sarai's condition, which was getting older and even had menopause, so Sarai advised Abraham to take Hagar, Sarai's slave girl, to continue the

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14 Herbert Wolf, Pengenalan Pentateukh (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2018), 146.
descent by becoming a surrogate wife according to the custom prevailing at that time. Again the threat and obstruction of the covenant occurred with the birth of Ishmael, the son of Hagar. In the end when Isaac was born this Covenant promise would be fulfilled, but once again Abraham faced a test to prove the purity of his faith and obedience to God where God asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham's faith was severely tested and the whole covenant seemed to be in jeopardy. But Abraham showed how he loved God more than Isaac and was willing to offer up his only beloved son. When God saw Abraham's commitment, he stepped in to save Isaac's life and then renewed his promise to multiply Abraham's descendants (Gen. 22:16-18).

Suffering in the New Testament

According to A.S. Peake suffering, the new Indonesian translation translates many words which mean pain, sorrow, misfortune and torment. First, this word in Greek is peirasmous which has the meaning of what is happening to someone or is experiencing something that is not good. This word in the book of I Peter 4:12 means a flame from torment to trial as a test that occurs for believers.

The word *Peirasmous* comes from the root peira, peras in the accusative plural form where this word means test, temple or exam. So here peirasmous means testing or testing by inserting it into the fire. The sufferings of the believers who were in Pentus, Galatia, Cappadocia, in Asia Minor and Bithania (I Pet. 2:1) they were thousands upon thousands and scattered during the exile by the Kings of Assyria and Babylon. Among them are God's children who were chosen according to God's Plan as well as being a blessing there, clearly they are non-Jews. The conditions that occurred at that time they were in a state of depression both mentally and morally because they were Christians. The great suffering they endured during the dispersal was so appalling that it is a common theme in the book of Peter.

The social situation at the time the Book of Peter was written, some people were rich and some were poor after they were in their distribution period, were more suppressed because they were immigrants from every area so that they had no rights at all except in matters of worship as long as it did not disturb the comfort and convenience of the people situation in the surrounding environment. The religious situation of the Romans worshiped many gods, besides the development of

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19 Chapman, 142–43.
congregations in various places had experienced various obstacles from unbelievers because they were Christians, so that started from here the dispute occurred until great suffering beyond humanity was experienced by Christians. Christianity was disliked because they did not want to be involved in the worship activities of the pagans.

Various false accusations were brought against them by the emperors as the highest government holders which led to severe persecution.²⁰ Peter's purpose in writing this letter is to strengthen Christians who are experiencing this persecution (I Pet. 9:12), joyful hope by providing practical guidance to them so that they are strong to face the suffering of severe persecution as Christians in gentile society.²¹

In this case Peter was afraid that the believers would arouse displeasure with the government so he was advised to follow Christ's example in suffering innocently, righteously and sublimely. Believers are reminded that they have a noble calling and heavenly inheritance in Jesus Christ, their faith and love are tested and purified so that it will lead to praise, honor, joy at His coming. The message that Peter emphasized the most relates to obedience and suffering for the sake of righteousness for Christ and according to Christ's example. Peter believes that if you suffer because of the truth, God will please

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God, so that in the context of the teaching "Suffering for Christ" Peter emphasizes salvation, hope, joy, obedience, surrender, prayer, and submission.²²

In his letter Peter warns that something new will happen, namely the coming of a “torment fire” with real persecution. This situation puts great pressure on the believers and they are told how they can gain victory over temptation for the glory of God.²³ In the life of a believer, God longs for a believer to depend completely only on God as a true hope. This is where the distinctive feature of Christianity lies, as a moral standard as a touchstone for a believer's authenticity.²⁴ According to Peter H. Davids in the book of difficult sayings in the New Testament, Peter sees persecution in 3 ways, namely: first, persecution is a bait of faith and shows whether commitments and people who profess to be Christians are sincere or not (I Pet. 4:12). Second, persecution makes Christians one with the sufferings of Christ, because persecution will not only produce glory in the future, but will also cause the Spirit of Glory to descend upon those who are persecuted today (1 Pet. 4:13-14).²⁵ Third, persecution is a

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²³ Warren W. Wiersbe, Pengharapan Di Dalam Kristus (Bandung: Yayasan Kalam Hidup, 2002), 166.
discipline or judgment that shows that they are God’s family.

However that judgment will not end in condemnation for His people, for they are His family and will be saved and sanctified. So the suffering that occurs in the life of a believer is a gift from God, through which the glory of God becomes more evident, making suffering a happiness in the future.

Suffering in Greek also uses the word *Thlipsis* cognate with the verb *Thlibein* which means to urge or to oppress. This term appears most frequently in the New Testament and has the broadest meaning. We find it in the Old Testament (Greek translation) in connection with the sufferings of the Israelites. The main words in Romans 5:3a which use the word *thlipsis* are misery from the background of the old testament in the book of Psalms, many find this word distress because of being lost in the desert (Ps. 107:19), because of imprisonment (Ps. 107:13), because of illness (Ps. 107:19), which is in tribulation is the nation of Israel, the tribulation is God’s punishment for unfaithfulness, but also God’s way of preparing for Himself an obedient people.

Passion comes from God (Psalm 66:11; 71:20), but God also saves the righteous from it. The New Testament deals with the sufferings that the Church, especially the Apostles, had to suffer (I Thess. 3:2; John 16:33; 2 Cor. 1:5) the sufferings they endured to fulfill the sufferings of Christ (Col. 1:24).

The Christian’s suffering threatens his life, and because it is a test, by which his willingness to follow Christ is tested while denying himself and giving up his life (I Thess. 3:3; Matt. 16:24; cf. Luke 8:13) so that suffering must be borne with fortitude, based on hope of the eventual deliverance that will come from the Lord.

Martus is a derivative of the word martyr, which means to go to the witness. So suffering is the foundation of the Christian life (I Pet. 4:12–19, I Pet. 1:6–7). The believer’s suffering is also a fellowship with Christ, as Paul experienced. Suffering is at the center of Paul’s struggle “every day I face death (1 Cor. 15:31, II Cor. 11:23–29), although the suffering is very personal, but relational, through this suffering Paul came to know the suffering of Christ (2 Cor. 4:10a). Paul hoped the suffering endured to gain fellowship in the sufferings of Christ (Philippians 1:29). Paul identified himself with the crucified Christ. The sufferings that were experienced by scourges, stoning, various persecutions and other threats to his life are evidence that he is a servant of Christ, so that he has reason to rejoice in that suffering.

Suffering in Greek also uses the plural word *pathemata* (Rom. 8:18), this suffering is suffering with Christ, suffering covers the whole world. This is also emphasized by the addition of this present age, the era from the first coming of Christ until the second coming of Christ, a turbulent time that causes all to

experience suffering with believers. This upheaval is described by Christ himself in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Even this general suffering cannot be separated from the suffering of Christ.\(^{28}\) Because the cause is the same, namely the power of death and the power of the devil. But this suffering cannot be compared to glory. The hope of sure salvation and glory, is a source of power that encourages Christians to remain obedient to Jesus, live in hope, live in holiness and live in harmony. Believers are born to receive this glory that is preached to believers because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, believers are born again to a life full of hope and that hope includes the glory of God.

**Reflection on Suffering According to I Peter 4:13-29**

**Suffering as a Test of Faith**

The problem of theodicy arises when a believer claims that a righteous person experiences suffering because he is experiencing a test from God through his suffering. This heavy suffering can be inflicted by God himself directly on the believer or it can be by some other medium used by God to test him. Most of us think of a direct relationship between suffering and sin, between prosperity and obedience, that's what we can see in the book of Job how Job's friends relate Job's suffering to sin. But in the story of Job we clearly see that the bad things that happen to us don't have to be related to our sins, just as the good things that happen to us don't have to have anything to do with our righteousness (Isaiah 64:6).\(^{29}\)

In this point of view, suffering is seen as a “crater of candradimuka” into which a pious person is thrown to boil him into a formidable pious or holy person after he has passed the test and trial. In the book of Job, a narrative of theodicy depicts suffering as a test of one's piety. It is written that Job was a man who was “godly, upright, fearing the Lord and turning away from evil” (Job 1:1; 8; 2:3) and that there is no one on earth like him (Job 1:8b ; 2:3).\(^{30}\) Has the severe suffering that God allowed to inflict on Job by the devil has served as a candradimuka crater, which purifies and matures Job's piety to God?

Will every severe suffering as a test of faith from God will surely be able to be endured by believers within the limits of their strength? The apostle Paul said in the new testament that “the trials that you experience are ordinary trials that do not exceed human strength. For God is faithful and therefore he will not allow you to be tried beyond your strength” (1 Cor. 10:13).\(^{31}\) Seeing a suffering

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as a test of faith and piety that God imposes on every believer will make the believer become more mature through the difficulties experienced in his life. Suffering is inherent in life, as Victor Frankl\(^\text{32}\) wrote, that suffering gives meaning to our lives, makes us stronger in living life. Of course God created the world with suffering as a test for believers to have a specific purpose, but suffering is a way to get closer to Him. Suffering is a test of faith to develop perseverance in believers so that faith is stronger in difficulties and adversity, and trains believers to be more dependent on God. Some of the reasons God allows believers to experience suffering are:

**Maturity of Faith**

Patience and resilience in times of suffering make believers well-formed Christians. Endurance in times of trial is one of the ways of sanctification, as James wrote “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance, and let endurance bear fruit, ripe, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2-4). In the Greek term translated by Nasv with the word "perfect" has the meaning or meaning of "mature" so that suffering as a test experienced by believers matures their faith.

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The Apostle Peter says in I Pet. 5:10 “And God, the source of all grace, who called you in Christ to his eternal glory, will complete, strengthen, strengthen and establish you, after you have suffered for a while.” Trials, sufferings and trials are part of the believer’s life to sanctify them. People who endure in it with patience will become more pious and holy people.

**Proof of Faith**

Strength and resilience in times of suffering is an affirmation of one’s faith in Christ. In I Peter 1:6-7, suffering can test a believer’s faith and when a believer perseveres in it it is a sure proof that they are worthy of the kingdom of God (2 Thess. 1:4-5).\(^{33}\) This is proof of faith that a person loves Christ, proof that he belongs to Christ and God will strengthen him to be patient and endure in the midst of suffering.

**Faith Testimony**

Believers who endure suffering will help other believers who are in distress, so that believers will realize that they are not alone through the valley of the shadow of death or suffering. The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica “if we suffer, it is for your

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comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, so that you may have strength to endure the same tribulations as we also suffer, and hope we are steadfast for you, because we know that as you share in our affliction, you also share in our comfort” (2 Cor. 1:6-7).

When we suffer patiently it is a good testimony to others in the church that believers are not suffering alone and it will help other believers to stay strong when facing suffering.

The Apostle Paul explains in 2 Cor. 1:4 “God who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we can comfort those in any kind of trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” The word comfort or strengthen in one translation is not mere solace, but it means God's transforming mercy, a perfect union of kindness and frankness. He speaks the truth in wise love so that we grow to do the same. Wisdom love is a skill that can be applied generally, so that what we learn from God in certain sufferings can be of great help to others in their suffering.

**Suffering and the God’s will**

The book of I Peter was written in the midst of a situation of slavery, the apostle Peter gave advice to slaves who suffered from being persecuted by their masters (I Pet. 2:18). The Apostle Peter advised the slaves who became members of the church and followed Christ to remain respectful, to be submissive and not to fight against their masters, whether they were friendly or generous, or cruel. Did the early Christian church deliberately support slavery, and not fight against a system of slavery that was so clearly inconsistent with the liberating message of the gospel of Jesus Christ? (I Pet. 2:19). The apostle Peter's advice is quite surprising, isn't it? Because the slaves who have lived so much as a result of being forced to work beyond the expectations and abilities and the inhuman chastisement of their masters are actually asked by the apostle Peter to live their suffering as the grace of God. The slaves in this context were asked by the apostle Peter to be willing to endure their suffering as part of God's will. Does this mean the status as slaves and the slavery system at that time was lived by the apostles and the early church as a form of part of God's will?

The apostle Peter's advice that believers who were slaves to live their sufferings as part of God's will and His grace was in no way intended to legitimize or justify the slavery system prevailing at that time. The main emphasis of I Petr. 2:18-25 is how they are in their situation, including in the status of

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a slave who suffers, they can still imitate the attitude of the Lord Jesus when He was treated cruelly and unfairly (I Pet. 2:21; 4:12-13). The primary nature of Christ was in His suffering (I Pet. 2:33). In the midst of His struggles, sufferings and death, Christ still displayed His perfect integrity. The sufferings experienced by the members of the congregation are faced with heart, care, prayer and love which are based on the teachings of the apostles. They never put up a fight physically and with force of arms. Physically they are looked down upon, abused and their physical bodies can be injured by the powers of this world; but in faith in Christ they acquire spiritual riches which enable them to rejoice.

This is the secret of the Christian life of faith, which is to be able to rejoice with a sincere heart even though they are being hit by various difficulties and very heavy suffering. From the standpoint of social status they were probably slaves who had lost their freedom and future. But from the point of view of faith, they are the servants of Christ who have been freed from the power of the world so that they are permitted by God to enjoy the riches of His love and blessings. Suffering itself is never separated from God's will, because God created everything, but God also rules and is sovereign over all the works of His hands. The Bible states that God is omnipotent, that His will is unchanging, that God has absolute sovereignty over every part of His territory.  

Everything is under His control and everything moves according to His eternal plan, and because all things will "work for good to those who love Him, to those who are called according to God's purpose". God never does evil, but He permits or moves others to do evil, because in the Bible it is explained that nothing arises, exists or takes place independently of God's will.  

The writer of Hebrews says that “Christ sustains all things by His powerful Word” (Hebrews 1:3). God the Son divinely rules over all things by sustaining all things and events in the universe, while He brings them all to their predetermined end with His powerful Word. In Greek, to support is phero which means to carry, carry or produce or carry, in the context of this verse it means to actively and intentionally control something that is carried from one place to another. The word phero appears in this verse in the present participle form which indicates that Jesus continuously supports everything in this universe with His powerful word. So the son of God holds every aspect of creation including the evil aspect, suffering in His hands and always produces the desired effect by doing exactly what He wills.

The Bible clearly states that suffering as a Christian is part of God's will and is a testimony to believers so that God can see His

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glory in it, the Lord Jesus himself also experienced it as well as the Apostles who did ministry to unbelievers. Sastro Soedirdjo in his book says that Christians live as travelers, meaning as citizens of the Kingdom of God (I Pet. 2:12–17), as Servants (I Pet. 2:18–25) in relation to believers. (I Pet. 4:7–11). So that God may be glorified in all things because of Jesus Christ, even though in the life of Christians there are various kinds of suffering that are faced both through torture, the world’s refusal to glorify God, and witnessing that all of their faith is not in vain in general, God provides truth for those who believe in Him. So the above statement contains one truth in the context of service to others in terms of introducing Christ as the only God, believers must be willing to pay the price for Christ’s sake.

The understanding of the meaning and purpose of suffering must really be studied by the churches and believers so that they will be strong to endure difficulties and still rejoice in facing them because the spirit of glory is in them. Suffering itself is the basis that becomes the color of life and testimony of the Christian faith in accompanying the Lord (I Peter 4:1-6). Suffering is also the basis of the process of refining faith as a test of believers so that their faith will be tested through suffering (I Pet. 4:12). Suffering is also a process for believers as part of the suffering experienced by Jesus Christ, so that it is a joy for everyone because God changes it with glory in the future when it happens for the sake of God’s name (I Pet. 4:13) and suffering itself is a glorious honor if it occurs because through this experience of suffering fellowship with God is growing.

In addition, suffering is also a basic sign that brings glory to the life of a Christian, in fulfilling His plan, to form the Church in God's image and expand her testimony to be more complete in the world. God allows suffering both in groups and individually (I Pet. 1:6-7; Job 23:10; Psalm 119; 67-71) so let there be joy in it. This is also one of the beautiful tools used by God to purify one's faith so that it becomes more perfect in God and gives meaning to life with God which creates fortitude. Suffering is also a proof to the world that God is the most powerful, sovereign over this world and has the right to human life.

Indeed, God uses suffering for His glory to the extent that His people's piety towards God is proven by the words of the apostle Paul that suffering occurs so that God's truth and His work are manifest in this world. The suffering experienced by believers is a warning and consolation in preparation for an emergency that will soon come, therefore, be

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43 Currid, Mengapa Aku Menderita? Penderitaan Dan Kedaulatan Allah, 92.
patient, be patient and continue to rejoice in facing it, because everything happens according to God's providence, and brings its own blessings, as well as a guarantee to participate in the future glory of Christ (I Pet. 4:13). 46

CONCLUSION

Suffering is an integral part of the status of a believer because the condition for binding Christ is the Cross, and suffering is central to the doctrine of Christology. Suffering for believers is not the same as the suffering experienced by every human being, because its meaning and purpose is filled with the light of Christ. In several passages the Bible explains that suffering is not always the result of sin or curses. Suffering itself is the basis that becomes the color of life and the testimony of Christ's faith in accompanying God. In the book of Peter, it gives a meaning of suffering to believers, namely the basis of the process of purification through a test of faith that will prove their faith and maturity of faith. Suffering is also a basic sign of bringing glory to the lives of believers, in fulfilling His plan and for forming the Church in the Image of God and expanding the witness of believers.

Suffering is also inseparable from God's will, because He is sovereign over all things, everything is right under His control and moves according to His eternal plan. Christ sustains all things with His powerful Word. Jesus Christ holds every aspect of creation including the evil aspect, suffering in His hands.


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