

NO CROSS WITHOUT A QUESTION

Matthew 16:24-25 ²⁴Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

- Cultural expressions: Fredericton, Saint John, Mirimichi dictionaries
- Similar cultural expressions existed in New Testament times. For example, the word "**HUPAGO**" meant "to lead oneself under; to withdraw, sinking out of sight." Our nearest modern equivalent would be "take a long walk off a short pier!"
- Jesus uses this word three times in the gospel Matthew as a stern negative rebuke toward the powers of darkness.

WHAT THREE THINGS BOTHERED JESUS THIS MUCH?

1. WHEN SATAN WANTED TO ROB GOD OF WORSHIP

- **Matthew 4:10** Then saith Jesus unto him, **GET THEE HENCE**, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.
- Jesus doesn't seem nearly as disturbed by the other temptations.

2. WHEN SATAN TRIED TO KEEP MEN FROM TOUCHING JESUS

- **Matthew 8:32** And he said unto them, **GO**. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.
- The pigs took Jesus' statement literally!

3. WHEN SATAN WANTED TO REMOVE SUFFERING FROM JESUS

- **Matthew 16:23** But he turned, and said unto Peter, **GET THEE BEHIND ME**, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.
- This is the only time a disciple is addressed this way; the Greek suggests that Jesus literally "turned" His body away from Peter as He spoke to illustrate the point.

SUFFERING is a misunderstood concept in Christian living. We mistakenly believe that the Apostles were always victorious OVER everything instead of victorious THROUGH everything.

- Paul had a thorn in his flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- Timothy had stomach trouble (1 Timothy 5:23)
- Trophimus was left sick in Miletum by Paul (2 Timothy 4:20)
- Epaphroditus got so sick he almost died (Philippians 2:27)
- James was beheaded while Peter was set free from the same jail by an angel (Acts 12)
- Paul was beheaded and Peter was crucified upside down during Nero's violent persecution of the Christians
- John was boiled in oil and exiled to the Island of Patmos when he was over 90 years old

God's purpose is not to remove suffering, but to use it! **GOD NEVER WASTES A HURT!**

THERE IS NO CROSS WITHOUT A QUESTION!

(tell their story, then give their name and their question)

- **Abraham** - Why doesn't God show me where I'm going?
- **Jacob** - Why does it hurt so much to walk?
- **Joseph** - Why have I been in this dungeon so long?
- **Job** - Where is God in all of this?
- **David** - Why do I have trials I don't deserve? (**Psalm 34** written in the cave of Adullam, hiding from Saul – see verses 1-4, 7-8, 18-19)
- **Jesus** - My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matt. 27:46)
- **John the Baptist** - When Jesus could set me free, why doesn't He?

John knew what the Messiah could do ...

Isaiah 35:4-6 ⁴Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. ⁶Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

But here's what the Messiah doesn't do ...

Matthew 11:4-6 ⁴Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: ⁵The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. **(JESUS DOESN'T FINISH THE PROPHECY!)** ⁶And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

- In all of his trials, Job refused to be offended at God, even though he didn't understand what God was doing.

Job 23:8-10 ⁸Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: ⁹On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: ¹⁰But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Job 19:25-27 ²⁵For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: ²⁶And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: ²⁷Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

- Paul asked God to remove his trial three times, but accepted it when God did not give him the answer he wanted.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ⁷And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. ⁸For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. ⁹And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

At the building of Solomon's Temple, all stones were cut in the Cotton Caves under the city:

1 Kings 6:7 And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

In the QUARRY, all the cutting, chiseling, sanding and polishing took place, so that in the TEMPLE, the flawless finished stones could slide perfectly into their place. THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TRIALS! We are living in a rock quarry called earth, but one day we will be His prepared temple!

Revelation 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Your trials are proof you are in - not out of - God's will!

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.