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Jesus the Messiah accepted suffering according to His Father’s will, and calls His disciples to follow Him

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Ex.3.1-12

Ps.109.21-31

2 Cor.11.21-31

Mark.8.27-35

The Suffering Messiah and the Call to Follow Him

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, may the peace of our Lord be with you. As we gather on this 5th Sunday before Easter, we find ourselves in the midst of the Lenten season, a time of reflection, repentance, and preparation for the profound sacrifice of our Lord. Today’s theme centers around the acceptance of suffering by Jesus, the Messiah, in accordance with His Father’s will. Moreover, He extends a call to His disciples, urging them to follow in His footsteps. Let us explore the Scriptures in Exodus 3.1-12, Psalm 109.21-31, 2 Corinthians 11.21-31, and Mark 8.27-35 to delve into this vital aspect of our faith.

Exodus 3.1-12 – The Call of Moses at the Burning Bush

In the encounter between God and Moses at the burning bush, we witness the call of Moses to liberate the Israelites from their suffering in Egypt. God calls him to lead His people, and despite the challenges and suffering that lie ahead, Moses responds in obedience. Consider a bush ablaze with fire but not consumed. In that moment, Moses encounters the Divine, and God’s call echoes through the ages. The burning bush reminds us that God’s call often leads us through challenging paths, marked by suffering.

Psalm 109.21-31 – A Prayer for Deliverance from Suffering

Psalm 109 reflects the anguish of the psalmist, who, despite facing betrayal and false accusations, turns to God for deliverance. This psalm illustrates the reality of suffering and the trust we place in God during times of distress.Imagine standing in a storm, winds howling, and waves crashing around. The psalmist’s cry is our own plea in the midst of life’s storms, seeking God’s refuge when suffering threatens to overwhelm.

2 Corinthians 11.21-31 – The Apostle Paul’s Endurance in Suffering

In 2 Corinthians, Paul provides a powerful testimony of his own suffering for the sake of the Gospel. He endured hardships, persecution, and physical trials, all for the sake of proclaiming the good news

of Jesus Christ.Think of a marathon runner enduring the race despite exhaustion and pain. Similarly, Paul's endurance in suffering reflects the strength and perseverance that come from a deep commitment to Christ's mission.

Mark 8.27-35 – Jesus' Prediction of His Suffering and the Call to Discipleship

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus reveals to His disciples that He must suffer, be rejected, and killed. He underscores the cost of discipleship, emphasizing the need to take up one's cross and follow Him.Imagine a leader standing before their team, revealing the challenges that lie ahead. Jesus' disclosure is a call to commitment, an invitation to follow Him even when the road leads through suffering.

Theologically, the acceptance of suffering by Jesus is intertwined with the concept of redemptive suffering. Through His willing sacrifice, Jesus not only exemplifies the depths of God's love but also opens the way for humanity's redemption. The call to discipleship, with its embrace of suffering, reflects the transformative power of following Christ.

As we ponder the suffering embraced by Jesus, the Messiah, and His call to discipleship, let us remember that our own journeys may lead through valleys of suffering. However, in those valleys, we discover the profound truth that God is with us, sustaining and transforming us through every trial. The path of discipleship is not devoid of suffering, but it is illuminated by the hope and glory of the resurrected Christ.

Prayer:

Gracious God, we stand before You, acknowledging the suffering embraced by Jesus according to Your will. As we navigate the Lenten season, may His example be a guiding light in our lives. Strengthen us, Lord, to take up our crosses and follow Him, even when the road leads through suffering.In times of distress, be our refuge. In moments of doubt, strengthen our faith. As we leave this place, may the call of discipleship resonate in our hearts, encouraging us to follow Jesus, our Messiah, in both joy and suffering.

May the peace that surpasses all understanding guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. In His holy name, we pray.

Amen.