

How to Bear Suffering So as to Preserve Our Peace.

by Francois Fenelon

To bear suffering and preserve peace, one must let go of self-love and seek simplicity, charity, and a spirit of non-resistance.

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, Romans 8:6, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Philipians 4:7, Colossians 3:3

Topics: "Suffering And Peace", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Francois Fenelon preaches on how to bear suffering in order to preserve our peace, emphasizing the importance of simplicity, dropping self-centered reflections, and embracing a life of non-resistance to God's will. He highlights that true peace comes from being dead to self and alive in Christ, allowing us to bear sufferings with equanimity and comfort. Fenelon warns against resisting the crosses imposed by God, as this resistance within is harder to bear than the suffering itself, and encourages cheerful and absolute abandonment to God's will for true peace and spiritual growth.

Transcript

LETTER II.

How to bear suffering so as to preserve our peace.

As to our friend, I pray God to bestow upon him a simplicity that shall give him peace. When we are faithful in instantly dropping all superfluous and restless reflections, which arise from a self-love as different as possible from charity, we shall be set in a large place even in the midst of the strait and narrow path. We shall be in the pure liberty and innocent peace of the children of God, without being found wanting either towards God or man.

I apply to myself the same counsel that I give to others, and am well persuaded that I must seek my own peace in the same direction. My heart is now suffering; but it is the life of self that causes us pain; that which is dead does not suffer. If we were dead, and our life were hid with Christ in God, (Col. iii. 3,) we should no longer perceive those pains in spirit that now afflict us. We should not only bear bodily sufferings with equanimity, but spiritual affliction also, that is to say, trouble sent upon the soul without its own immediate act. But the disturbances of a restless activity, in which the soul adds to the cross imposed by the hand of God, the burden of an agitated resistance, and an unwillingness to suffer, are only

experienced in consequence of the remaining life of self.

A cross which comes purely from God, and is cordially welcomed without any self-reflective acts, is at once painful and peaceful; but one unwillingly received and repelled by the life of nature, is doubly severe; the resistance within is harder to bear than the cross itself. If we recognize the hand of God, and make no opposition in the will, we have comfort in our affliction. Happy indeed are they who can bear their sufferings in the enjoyment of this simple peace and perfect acquiescence in the will of God! Nothing so shortens and soothes our pains as this spirit of non-resistance.

But we are generally desirous of bargaining with God; we would like at least to impose the limits and see the end of our sufferings. That same obstinate and hidden hold of life, which renders the cross necessary, causes us to reject it in part, and by a secret resistance, which impairs its virtue. We have thus to go over the same ground again and again; we suffer greatly, but to very little purpose. The Lord deliver us from falling into that state of soul in which crosses are of no benefit to us! God loves a cheerful giver, according to St. Paul (2 Cor. ix. 7); ah! what must be his love to those who, in a cheerful and absolute abandonment, resign themselves to the entire extent of his crucifying will!

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