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# advance in discipleship – what to believe when you suffer – 03/25/19

**What to Believe When You Suffer**

The title says, *when* you suffer because you *will* suffer in this life. Jesus tells His disciples directly, in this world you will have tribulation, you will have suffering (John 16:33).

In the Exodus of the Israelites from Pharaoh and the land of Egypt, God’s people are saved out of bondage. They then cross the Red Sea and the Song of Moses springs forth and then the ladies celebrate with song as well (Miriam in Ex. 15). But did you ever notice the first stop on this journey is “Marah”. A place of bitterness? Did you ever notice that God directly led them to a place of bitterness and suffering from thirst?

Of course, the people grumbled. We often refer to that continual flaw as they travel. However, did you ever notice God showed Moses a “tree” and had Moses throw it in the place of bitterness and what was bitter became sweet?

The story tells us plainly that God tested them. It tells us plainly that the name of God in these situations is **The LORD your Healer**. The cross of Jesus can make your time of bitterness, sweet.

Then the pillar of cloud must have moved and the people followed because their next stop is Elim. A place of twelve springs and seventy palm trees. Almost a paradise oasis. It seems God directs His people to suffering and to blessing both!

Briefly, from this short passage we can discern some Biblical principles for discipleship we can teach others as they travel through suffering. It instructs us as to what we are to believe.

* **I Believe God Led Me Here!** (it is clear in *this* instance God led them to a place of suffering.)
* **I Believe God Will Provide for Me Here**. I don’t have to wait until I get out of suffering and then God will provide. Teach your disciples that He will provide *in* and *through* the bitter place.
* **I Believe God Will Carry Me Away from Here**. Suffering is not your home. Don’t unpack your bags and settle in. It is for a season not forever. Your bitterness and suffering, is not to define you.
* **I Believe God Wants to Use This Experience in My Life to be a Blessing and Encouragement to Others**. Your time of suffering is not wasted. It is not meaningless. God will test you in the bitter place. God is going to grow you through the bitter place. Yet, the point to for you to help others through what you have learned in your own experience with God.

(For more on this idea listen to a sermon series by Stan Key of the Francis Asbury Society on *The Truth About Suffering*)