“The Ministry of Suffering”
Outlined by Ralph Arnold, Pastor

**TEXT: Rev. 21:1-4** The ultimate reality is that all suffering on planet earth will be abolished when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, but until then, all believers must understand the ministry of suffering in this present life. This is crucial to the development of the Christian life.

1. **Christ’s suffering / death on the cross completely paid for all sin for all people for all time.** This is what makes the ultimate reality in the new heavens & the new earth possible. (Hebrews 2:9, 10:10-14; 1 Peter 3:18)

2. **Human suffering may be due to:** (Before you blame it all on God, look at the other possibilities)
   - A. Adam’s sin (the curse)
   - B. individual sin (the consequences)
   - C. Satanic attack (1Peter 5:8-9)
   - D. the hatred of the world toward Christ (John 15:18-16:6)
   - E. God’s known, or unexplained purposes (Romans 8:28-29, Book of Job)

3. **Suffering for Christ can be expected in a Godly life** (Phil. 1:29, 2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 10:32; 1 Peter 4:1-16)

4. **Human affliction can cause believers:**
   - A. to learn God’s Word (Psa. 119:67)
   - B. to learn to trust and obey the Lord (Psa. 119:71)
   - C. to learn patience (Romans 5:3-4)
   - D. to prevent spiritual pride (2 Cor. 12:7-11)
   - E. to give us a true scale of values (James 1:2-12; 1 Peter 1:6-9)

5. **Trust the Lord through suffering,** prepares you to help others find the comfort of God in their own suffering. (2 Cor. 1:3-10)

6. **Enduring suffering for Christ** can bring believers future rewards in heaven (2 Cor. 4:17; James 1:12)

7. **Suffering for Christ is worth it NOW**
   - A. due to the Glory of God (1 Peter 4:16)
   - B. due to the salvation of others (2 Tim. 2:8-10)
   - C. due to the ministry to believers (Col. 1:24)
   - D. due to your own spiritual growth (Phil 3:10)
   - E. and **LATER** (Matthew 5:11-12; Rev. 2:10)