

When Peace Like a River

Words: Horatio G. Spafford (1873); Music: Philip P. Bliss (1876)

Old Orchard Church

Sixth Sunday after Easter

May 9, 2010 — 10:15 to 11:45 a.m.

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

—Philippians 3:10-11

## Celebrating Jesus Christ as the Resurrection Community of Suffering

Raised from a corruptible body to an indestructible life,  
Jesus Christ now invites those who would be his followers  
to share not only in his resurrection power  
but also in his crucifixion weakness.

So far from finding it a surprise,  
the apostolic church counted it a great privilege  
to suffer on this side of the empty tomb,  
standing in solidarity with the Suffering Servant.

Afflicted but not crushed,  
Perplexed but not despairing,  
Persecuted but not broken,  
Struck down but not destroyed,  
We carry around in our bodies the dying of Jesus,  
so that his exquisite life may be seen  
to animate our broken bodies until he comes again.



**Dying, we live;  
Suffering, we worship.  
Alleluia!**

### Today's Scripture

**Old Testament Lesson:** Isaiah 53:7-12  
**New Testament Lesson:** 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

### Sermon

*"Concrete Hearts and Unearthly Powers"*

Romans 7 & 8

Ron Lutjens, Senior Pastor, preaching

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

## On Jesus' Resurrection and Our Suffering

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness -- the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. --Colossians 1 24-27

**And fill up what is still lacking in Christ's afflictions.** Paul assigns a reason why he is joyful in his sufferings: that he is in this matter a partner with Christ, and nothing happier can be desired than this partnership. He also brings forward a consolation common to all the godly, that in all tribulations, especially in so far as they suffer anything for the sake of the Gospel, they are partakers of the cross of Christ, so that they may enjoy fellowship with Him in the blessed resurrection.

More, he declares that there is thus filled up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. As he says in Romans 8:29, **"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."** Moreover, we know that there is so great a unity between the Head and the members that the name of Christ sometimes includes the whole body, as in 1 Corinthians 12:12. For while discoursing there on the Church, Paul concludes at length that in Christ the same thing holds as in the human body. As, therefore, Christ has suffered once in His own Person, so He suffers daily in His members, and in this way there are filled up those sufferings which the Father has by this decree appointed for His Body.

There is a second consideration which ought to bear up and comfort our minds in afflictions, that it is fixed and determined by the providence of God that we shall be conformed to Christ by bearing the cross, and that the fellowship that we have with Him extends to this also.

Paul adds also a third reason that his sufferings are fruitful, and that not only to a few, but to the whole Church. He had previously stated that he suffered for the sake of the Colossians, and he now declares further that the fruit extends to the whole Church...What could be clearer, less forced, or more simple, than the explanation that Paul is joyful in persecution because he considers (as he writes elsewhere) that we must carry about in our body the dying of Christ, so that His life may be manifested in us?

—John Calvin in *Commentary on Colossians* (1548)