

Filling Up What is Lacking in the Sufferings of Christ

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Col. 1:24

I. What this phrase, “filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ,” DOESN’T mean

- A. This phrase absolutely doesn’t mean that Jesus’ sufferings at Calvary were _____ to pay for the sins of the whole world
Jn. 19:30 – *tetelestai*: “It is finished”
- B. This phrase absolutely doesn’t mean that we have to make _____ of our good works into the Heavenly Treasury of Merits to augment Christ’s work so that we can get out of purgatory quicker and into heaven
- C. This phrase absolutely doesn’t mean that Christ is now in heaven holding up a cup of some kind called _____, and as more and more sufferings here on earth are added to that cup, it’s getting fuller and fuller. And once it’s full to the brim, then Christ will know that it’s time for Him to return to earth in what we call the Second Coming

II. What this phrase, “filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ,” DEFINITELY means

- A. This phrase means that since Jesus Christ indwells us as His children, then any persecution against us is actually a persecution against _____ and is adding to His sufferings
Ac. 9:4 – “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”
- B. This phrase means that any suffering incurred by a missionary taking the good News of Jesus Christ to the Gentile world is _____ what Christ started at Calvary
Col. 1:24 – context: “Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh...”
- C. This phrase means that any time we forgive others like Christ forgave us at Calvary, we are actually _____ Calvary to others and thus filling up what is lacking in Christ’s sufferings
Lk. 23:34 – “Father, forgive them for they don’t know what they’re doing”

Discussion Questions

1. In the past, how have you understood this phrase, “filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ”?
2. Explain how the word, *tetelestai* (“it is finished”) absolutely shows that Christ’s sufferings were more than adequate to pay for the sins of the whole world.
3. Dr. John Calvin taught that the phrase, “filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ,” had to do with believers being *persecuted* because they were followers of Christ. Relate a story (if true!) of how you have been shunned, had a door slam in your face, or been cursed at simply because you are a Christian.
4. Dr. John Piper taught that Christ did Part A of salvation (i.e. paying the penalty for sin at Calvary) while we are to do Part B of salvation (i.e. take that Good News to the lost so they can accept Part A). If we suffer in any way doing Part B, then we are helping to fill up what is lacking in Christ’s sufferings. Tell a story of any suffering you may have experienced while participating in Part B.
5. Trevor’s friend, Bob, believes that forgiving others—even when they haven’t asked for forgiveness—models Calvary and Christ to them and others. Tell a story of how you yourself have modeled Christ in this way by becoming The Innocent Party which suffered the consequences for The Sinning Party.
6. Is there anyone you need to forgive? If this is really difficult for you to do, ask your small group to rally around you so you’ll do the right thing.