

Keys of the Kingdom: The Key of Suffering

Part 2

Introduction:

In her keynote message at the Aglow Worldwide Conference, Jane spoke to us about the key of suffering. Many have been in a season of suffering. We've seen disasters in the earth that have caused untold suffering for hundreds of thousands of people: Hurricane Katrina, the tsunami in Asia, devastating tornadoes, earthquakes and floods in several parts of the world. The global economic crisis has impacted most of us on a daily basis. As living, breathing human beings, we experience suffering in any number of ways: in our physical bodies, illnesses that seem unrelenting; in our hearts, disappointment, loss, brokenness; materially, financial lack and needs.

Our Study

During the conference Jane stated:

There are some doors that can only be opened with the key of suffering. There are things that have been locked up until this specific time in history, and for those who are willing to embrace heartbrokenness, physical [suffering], or whatever the suffering has been...in the midst of that suffering, something has been building. I believe these are keys that unlock the future plans of God. Plans and purposes that can only come with the key of suffering.

The Scripture: *Isaiah 46:10*

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'

“Things that are not yet done” refers to unfolding revelation as we move towards the fullness of time.

Part of that unfolding revelation is the role that the key of suffering plays in bringing forth the kingdom. Jesus, our example, spoke to His disciples of his own suffering.

The Scripture: *Luke 24:44-46*

*These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. And **He opened their understanding**, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and **thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer** and to rise from the dead the third day..."*

Jesus opened their understanding so they would grasp that it was necessary for Him to suffer.

Prior to His resurrection, the disciples could not fully comprehend the reality of His crucifixion. Peter even rebuked Jesus when He spoke of suffering, dying, and being raised on the third day (Matt 16:23). After He arose, He was able to interpret those teachings for them in the light of their fulfillment.

Purchased Through Suffering

Jesus' suffering purchased something for us.

In Luke 4, we read that Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. For forty days He endured suffering. Each time the devil came to Him, He was tempted to prove Himself:

The Scripture: Luke 4:3

If you are who you say you are, then command the stones to become bread... worship me... throw Yourself down from the temple...

But Jesus did not succumb to the instant gratification of proving who He was. Rather, He suffered, knowing that His suffering was producing something far greater. He was determined to accomplish complete victory and to buy back the authority that was lost in the Fall.

When we are led of the Holy Spirit into the wilderness of suffering, we, too, are buying back authority: authority to act as His "regents" in the earth. *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.* We are bringing forth His kingdom and His purposes when we embrace the suffering. "Embracing the suffering" does not mean we have an unhealthy, unbalanced mentality toward suffering. Rather, we are trusting that God is at work in the situation and we are participating with Him in the process of bringing forth His purpose.

Jesus' suffering bought back for us the dominion and power that He had purposed from the beginning when He told Adam and Eve to *Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion...* (Gen 1:28).

Power was released in the earth through what Jesus suffered.

And so it is with us.

... when we embrace the suffering, a power is released in the earth... God has put in our hands an ancient key, the key of suffering, that is going into an ancient lock to unfold the ancient purposes of God, as established from the beginning of time. Things that have not yet been revealed; things that have not yet come to pass; things that He is unfolding as we move towards our destiny... Jane Hansen Hoyt

Our willingness to stand in the face of suffering, to endure with faith, is buying authority in the spiritual realm. As we persevere, waiting and believing for the things God has promised us, we are growing stronger and, as Jane said, *There are unshakable truths planted in our hearts that only come out of hardship.* Embracing the key of suffering moves us that much closer to God's purpose and destiny for our lives. We cannot get there any other way.

Strengthened Through Suffering

The Scripture: 1 Peter 5:10

*But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, **perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.***

According to this scripture, God uses suffering in our lives to mature us.

- **Perfect:** Greek, *katartizoo*: to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be.

The word also means to prepare and to restore. Suffering is a key that can unlock the future God has for us. He uses it to shape us into what He sees we will need to be in order to fulfill His destiny for our lives.

- **Establish:** *sterizo*: to set fast, to turn resolutely in a certain direction, or to confirm; to make stable, place firmly, fix.

It is the same word used in Luke 9:51 when Jesus “steadfastly set” His face to go to Jerusalem and fulfill His purpose through the Cross. Through suffering, our faith is tested as is our commitment to believe His promises for our life. Unlike the enemy’s temptation which is designed to weaken our faith, God’s testing validates and establishes our faith.

- **Strengthen:** *sthenoo*: to strengthen, (figuratively) confirm (in spiritual knowledge and power).

There is spiritual power, knowledge, discernment, and understanding that only comes through suffering. We come to know the character of God in ways we would not understand if we had not endured hardship. Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered (Heb 5:8). How much truer is for us.

- **Settle:** *themelioo*: to lay a basis for, (literally) erect, to lay a foundation.

This word is translated “grounded” in Eph 3:17 where it states that Christ *may dwell in your hearts through faith...being rooted and **grounded** in love...to know the love of Christ...*

It is in the midst of suffering that our trust in God and His love for us is most severely tested. Yet, if we endure, the foundation on which we stand is immovable and unshakable. To know – by experience (*ginosko*) – the love of Christ is the basis for our confidence in Him.

To paraphrase 1 Peter 5:10, when we experience suffering, we are being prepared for our future, resolutely committed to God’s purposes, strengthened in our relationship and understanding of God, and laying a firm foundation from which we will not be moved!

Glory From Suffering

Paul, as one who was deeply acquainted with suffering, tells us:

The Scripture: Romans 8:17-18

And if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

One of the “ancient doors” that the key of suffering unlocks is a revelation of God’s glory – to us and in us. **To us**, in that we see God in a deeper, more intimate way than we did before we went through the trial. We come to know His comfort, His strength, His care for us in a way that only suffering can unlock.

The Scripture: Job 42:5

*I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But NOW [after going through suffering] my eyes see You.*

On the other side of the trial, Job saw God’s glory.

His glory will be revealed **in us**. Have you ever known someone who has endured much suffering? There is a light that seems to radiate through them. From deep within comes strength and authority that is tempered by humility. It is the glory of the Lord revealed in that person. Suffering unlocks God's glory within you...a glory that has been there from before you were born.

“God endowed you with a glory when he created you...A glory unique to you, just as your fingerprints are unique to you, just as the way you laugh is unique to you...”¹

We gain a proper perspective on our suffering if we take Paul's advice in Rom 8:18. The word “consider” means to calculate, compute, evaluate, or weigh. Paul is saying that if you place suffering on one scale and glory on the other, the glory side far outweighs the suffering. It is a weight that is exceedingly great and eternal.

The Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Travail Through Suffering

Think about a loved one who is not walking with the Lord. No doubt you have labored in prayer for that one's salvation. There is suffering in watching someone you love make wrong choices. It breaks your heart. The tears and the prayers soften your heart so you can sense God's heart for your loved one. You intercede and travail and carry a burden for that person in your heart. It's not easy, it hurts, it involves suffering. Still, you carry it in your spirit like a woman carrying a child in her womb. Just as a birth in the natural realm is not without pain, so it is with a spiritual birthing.

God has a burden in His heart for His loved ones – the people of Israel. He longs for the day when they are birthed into His kingdom.

Listen to what He says about the Jewish people:

The Scripture: Deuteronomy 7:6-7

"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples..."

The Scripture: Isaiah 49:14-16

*But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
And my Lord has forgotten me."
"Can a woman forget her nursing child,
And not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
Yet I will not forget you.*

¹ Eldridge, John. Waking the Dead. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003.

*See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands;
Your walls are continually before Me.*

The Scripture: Psalm 103:13-14

*The LORD is like a father to his children,
tender and compassionate to those who fear him.
For he understands how weak we are;
he knows we are only dust. NLT*

Jesus grieved over Jerusalem.

The Scripture: Matthew 23:37

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

God's Heart for Israel

The tenderness of God's heart toward Israel is expressed throughout Scripture. His covenant with them is an everlasting one and is not nullified because they have rejected Jesus. He is still longing to draw them into relationship with Him. And He is looking for those who are willing to carry the burden of His heart in prayer and intercession.

In her conference message, Jane shared from Jeremiah 9:1 that the "weeping prophet" travailed and suffered over the condition of his own people. They had turned from God.

The Scripture: Jeremiah 9:1

Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! NKJV

Paul too, carried the burden of God's heart for his people:

The Scripture: Romans 9:2-4

My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed — cut off from Christ! — if that would save them. They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's special children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave his law to them...NLT

In 2001, God spoke sovereignly and prophetically to the ministry of Aglow by imparting the burden of His heart to our leader, Jane. This call, this burden, has not come without suffering. But there are prophetic purposes — "ancient doors" — that God wants to unlock concerning His people and His land. He has entrusted us with a key of authority: to stand in the gap, to proclaim His purposes, to weep for His people, and to carry the burden of His heart for those who are the apple of His eye. Will we embrace the key of suffering and cry out for the veil to be lifted?

God's Greater Agenda

We, as Gentiles, have been grafted into the kingdom because of the turning away of the Jewish people. We have been the recipients of great mercy as a result. It is our responsibility to now turn towards our Jewish brothers and sisters, can carry them in the womb of our spirit, pray and birth them

back into the kingdom that we may become the “one new man” Paul spoke of in Ephesians 2:14-18. The body of Messiah will never be complete until we see the return of the Jewish people and they are grafted in again (Romans 11:23).

Jane has said that we will never become corporately what we have not experienced personally. The suffering we endure in the circumstances of our personal lives tenderizes our hearts towards the Lord. Our personal suffering prepares us to embrace the corporate call on the ministry of Aglow so that we can fulfill God’s purpose and destiny for us.

God has given us many examples in Scripture of how to endure suffering: Joseph, Abraham and Sarah, King David, Hannah, Esther, Ruth, and of course, His own Son. How did they find grace to endure and come through victorious? They looked beyond the immediate circumstances and saw the hand of God at work on a greater agenda. From Abraham and Sarah’s suffering would come the nation of Israel (Gen 12:2-3); Joseph’s suffering resulted in many lives being saved (Gen 45:8-9); Esther’s suffering was the salvation of her people (Est 9:1); Jesus’ suffering bought our righteousness (2 Cor 5:21).

Jesus trusted His Father, confident of His Father’s love and sure of the larger purpose at work in the midst of His suffering (see 1 Peter 2:23).

Our Response to Suffering

The human response to suffering is universal: GET ME OUT OF HERE!

Even David, in the midst of sorrow and suffering, longingly cried out:

The Scripture: Psalm 55:4-6

*Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.*

But David always turned to the One who could comfort him, strengthen him, and give him hope.

The Scripture: Psalm 142:1-3 NLT

I cry out to the Lord; I plead for the Lord's mercy. I pour out my complaints before Him and tell Him all my troubles. When I am overwhelmed, You alone know the way I should turn...

The Scripture: Psalm 143:4-8 The Message

I sat there in despair, my spirit draining away, my heart heavy, like lead. I remembered the old days, went over all you've done, pondered the ways you've worked, stretched out my hands to you, as thirsty for You as a desert thirsty for rain. Hurry with Your answer, God! I'm nearly at the end of my rope. Don't turn away; don't ignore me! That would be certain death. If You wake me each morning with the sound of Your loving voice, I'll go to sleep each night trusting in You. Point out the road I must travel; I'm all ears, all eyes before You.

Turning to God should be our response to suffering too. He is the only One who sees the greater agenda and understands all He is working out in our lives. No matter what things look like on the surface, we can trust God. A good illustration is the way your computer runs Windows in the background behind whatever application you are running... Word, Excel, the Internet. Behind every program is the Windows Operating System, but you don’t see it running, you just see the application

that is open. Windows is working in the background. God is working in the background, too, on our behalf. You may not see Him clearly when you are hurting, but He is there.

Graham Cooke encourages us to ask the right questions when we are going through a difficult time. The wrong question to ask is “Why?”

The right questions are the ones the disciples asked at Pentecost:

What does this mean? (Acts 2:12) and *What shall we do?* (Acts 2:37)

Prayer

Help me, Lord, to see your hand in all the circumstances of my life and to trust that you are working out your purposes in the midst of my suffering. Take all my pain, confusion, doubt, and fear, and wrap them in your loving purposes for my life (Ps 138:7-8). I trust that this is only for a season and I know that all seasons are tied to purpose in You (Eccl 3:1-8). You are good, and your mercy endures forever (Ps 107:1)!

The Scripture: Psalm 138:7-8 NLT

Though I am surrounded by troubles, You will protect me from the anger of my enemies. You reach out Your hand, and the power of Your right hand saves me. The Lord will work out His plans for my life — for Your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever...

The Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1 NKJV

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven...

The Scripture: Psalm 107:1 NKJV

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

(also Psalm 108, 118, 136)

Personal Questions

1. What are the “ancient doors” that God wants to unlock in your personal life?
2. Have you received the key of suffering to open the dark places so His light can come in? Take time to pray and release resentment or bitterness concerning any situation that is causing you to suffer.
3. What might be the “greater agenda” God is working in the midst of your suffering?