

# Wednesday's Wisdom

a weekly short note from Mike Minear

## Is There Value in Suffering?

What good is harvested from the fields of human suffering? We should not expect to understand everything about our present sufferings. But over time perhaps we can see more clearly their reason. We could look to Joseph who was the victim of cruel hate. He was sold by his brothers to be a slave (Genesis 37:18-28). He was bought as a slave by Potiphar in Egypt (Genesis 39:1). He was falsely accused and imprisoned (Genesis 39:19-20). Then on top of all of that he was betrayed by one whom he had helped and left in prison—forgotten (Genesis 40:23). That is one way of looking at his life. This is a tragic story if we only focus on the suffering and do not see the good that resulted. Being sold; transported him to Egypt (Genesis 39:1). Being a slave; brought him prominence in Potiphar's house (Genesis 39:2). Being falsely accused; brought him to know men from the courts of Pharaoh (Genesis 40:1-4). Then it was this relationship with Pharaoh's butler that brought Joseph to Pharaoh's presence (Genesis 41:9-14). Joseph was embraced by Pharaoh and became second in charge of the whole dominion (Genesis 41:37-45). This provided for the preservation of the sons of Jacob, his brothers, during the great famine (Genesis 42-47:12) and this established the Israelite nation and they multiplied greatly (Exodus 1:1-7). From a much later perspective we can see that ultimately, the **temporary sufferings** of Joseph provided for the salvation of mankind through the preservation of the lineage of Jesus (Matthew 1:1-16). The greatest benefit ever afforded us came through suffering. Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 27:27-50 speak of the occasion of the ultimate suffering and death of Jesus, from which came our ultimate relief—our relief from sin (Hebrews 10:22-28) and our spiritual separation from God (Romans 6:23).

I have yet to see the benefit with my bout with gout, although it has allowed me to meet some new people to discuss the gospel of Jesus Christ. When I have been down and felt sorry for my self, I have been reminded how Rich Willis never complained about each set back he suffered, but thanked God for the opportunities that were offered.

**Next Week.... Embracing Real Faith in Suffering**