



'The Sufferings of Christ Are Abundant In Us': A Narrative Dynamics Investigation of Paul's Sufferings in 2 Corinthians (The Library of New Testament Studies)

Kar Yong Lim

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This study investigates why Paul makes the theme of suffering so central to his argument in 2 Corinthians. It is pursued through an exegetical analysis of passages where Paul's suffering is described, namely 1:3-11; 2:14-116; 4:7-12; 6:1-10 and 11:23-12:10.

By employing a narrative approach, this study argues that Paul's apostolic suffering is grounded in the story of Jesus. There are several implications arising from this approach. First, Paul understands his suffering as necessary and integral to his apostolic mission. Second, Paul claims that his suffering has positive missiological benefits, resulting in giving birth to the Christ-believing community in Corinth. Third, for Paul, the story of Jesus does not end at the event of the cross, and so he extends the invitation to the Corinthians to participate in the story of Jesus. Fourth, Paul's understanding of his suffering also finds its roots in the Hebrew Scriptures as seen in the allusion to and citations of Isaiah and Jeremiah/1 Kingdoms. Finally, Paul expresses his deep concern for the Corinthians in this letter.

In essence, Paul sees his own suffering as a reflection of his embodying the ongoing story of Jesus - a story of suffering and death leading to life - and calls the Corinthians also to this cruciform pattern of living. Taking all the above implications together, it is suggested that 2 Corinthians should be read as primarily paraenetic in nature and that Paul's apology for his apostleship only plays a secondary role.

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