

Suffering Savior

Suffering. If we could remove suffering from this world, what would it be? You'd be dead. At least the faithful in Christ. You'd be with the Lord. This is such a complex subject because, on the one hand, we want our pain to go away. God's desire was not for man to suffer. On the other hand, there's no escaping it, and we grow and learn from it.

Here's another difficulty in discussing this topic: this sermon will probably only help temporarily because talking about pain doesn't make it disappear forever. I'm under no illusion that this sermon will help you much, much less have any permanent effect on you (especially depending on the degree of suffering you're experiencing). This lesson may be a vacation from your pain, but all vacations come to an end, don't they?

Another point before we dig into the word. Not all suffering is because of our own sin. People suffer in this world for many reasons. We are hurt because this world is full of sinners who impact us. Sometimes it's a ripple effect from a stranger. Sometimes it's a tsunami from someone you love. Sometimes it's the result of a dying world. This is a difficult place to live in due to natural disasters, illness, aging, and death. I think Paul had to encourage brethren to think about what was good and lovely because it's too easy to dwell on the difficult.

With that in mind, here are some thoughts to assist you during your times of trouble.

Admit it's a Struggle & Pray

- **Hebrews 5:7-10** In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.
 - This truth and beauty didn't change the fact that it was hard. Admit it!
 - **John 12:27** "Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour."
- **Luke 22:41-44** And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done." And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
 - Prayer: Get it out of your head. Don't allow your pain as an excuse to ignore God.
 - **James 5:13** Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.

Let Others Surround You

- **Mark 14:32-34** And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch."

- Some are gifted as encouragers. Some are gifted as comforters. Some are great listeners. Get your inner circle. Talk with them. Listen. Pray together. They are a gift from God.

Have His Word in Your Heart

- **Matthew 26:49-54** And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed Him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once send Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"
- It's good to have His word in your heart during intense times. Danger. Death. Betrayal.
- Many times the only way we can fight the suffering is by the sword of the Spirit.

Prepare with Worship

- **Luke 22:15** And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."
- **Matthew 26:30** And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
 - God has made beautiful promises to us all. He's shown His commitment to humanity.

Finally . . .

1 Peter 3:21-25 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

- One last reminder to those who have also suffered because of their own sins. Christ has not discarded you but instead suffered for you.
- No one can look at His suffering and walk away thinking He doesn't want you, correct?
- **Hebrews 4:14-16** Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- Why did Jesus come to us?
 - To save us by defeating the works of Satan and delivering us from the wrath of God through His death.
 - The world was gifted with the perfect example of love, obedience, and suffering.

I'm not saying that God had to do that. God expected Israel to follow Him without Him literally taking human form. So, it could be done. Look at us? We're still obeying God without

having God in the flesh. So no - I don't think that God had to do it. Nor do I believe that God needed to live as one of us so He could be loving, merciful, sympathetic, etc. One might conclude that God's judgment was off before Jesus' arrival if that were the case. One may think that God didn't understand what it's like to be one of us and lacked empathy. I believe God did all of this because of the principle of love. He did this for us.

So again, my aim is to remember that Jesus went through this for us. **He's not running from your suffering - He came to join you in suffering.**