

The Problem of Pain- Part 2

Text: Romans 8

Introduction:

- Last week, we asked the question, “Why would a God of love allow pain?”
- To answer the question, we began by discovering the true origin of all pain in the universe - the curse of sin.
- We found that Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden of Eden brought three different kinds of corruptions:
 - Corruption of the human spirit (Genesis 1:7)
 - Corruption of the human body (Genesis 1:16)
 - Corruption of nature (Genesis 1:17-19)
- We found that a large majority of the pain and suffering we will experience in this life can be traced back to one of those three consequences of the curse of sin.
- We also discovered that the reason why God does not stop people from sinning and hurting others is because God desires to have a unique relationship with mankind that requires that humans have free will, the ability to make choices.
- We found that God is not up in heaven arbitrarily deciding to bring pain into one person’s life, while bringing blessing to the life of someone else.
 - For instance, God does not selectively choose which children will have handicaps, and which ones will not. Handicaps and disabilities are simply a part of this sin-cursed earth.
 - If you really think about it, we are all handicapped in some way. Many of us have impaired vision, others have lost hearing, others deal with the pain of arthritis, while others struggle deal with chronic pain.
 - Christ handicapped **Himself** by becoming a human being.
- So, if we have all come to grips with the fact that pain and suffering **are** going to be a part of this life, then the next important question that must be asked is...

How does the Christian deal with pain, sickness, and disability in this life?

By understanding that God has experienced our pain. (vs. 3, 31-32)

- When we experience suffering and pain in this life, it can be easy to think that only an unfair and unrighteous God would sit up in the glories of heaven, absent of pain, suffering, and sickness, and watch as His creation is overwhelmed by pain on the earth.
- Many through the years have cried out against God and said, “God doesn’t understand my pain. He has no idea what I’m going through.”
- And if it wasn’t for what happened 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem, then claims like that

would be difficult to answer. But you see, instead of staying in heaven where he rightfully belonged, God's Son, Jesus Christ, came down to this earth, and experienced first-hand the suffering and pain of human life. (Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 12:2-3)

- Not only did Christ clothe Himself in human flesh and experience the daily struggles of life on the earth, but He experienced the greatest suffering that any man has ever experienced through His death on the cross.
- The answer to suffering is not an answer at all. It's the Answerer. It's Jesus Himself.
 - It's not a bunch of words. It's The Word.
 - It's not an argument. It's a Person.
 - The answer must be Someone, not something. Jesus is that answer.
- God is not unfair or unrighteous for allowing His children to experience pain and suffering. He does not allow His children to endure any pain that He, Himself, has not endured.
- So when you pray to God, know that He truly feels your pain at the deepest of levels. He truly understands, and He is eager to provide the grace that we need in time of need.

By understanding that God wants to bring good out of our pain. (Romans 8:28)

- While God does not orchestrate all pain, he can work all painful circumstances together for good. (Read Romans 8:22-28.)
 - Notice, Paul did not say that all things **are** good, but just that all things “work together” for good.
 - And notice further, that he does not say that all things work together for good for everyone. No, he makes it clear that this is only possible for those who “love God.”
- Rather than allowing our painful circumstances to cause our light for Christ to become dim, God desires for our painful circumstances to purify and refine us and cause us to shine brighter than ever before.
 - 1 Peter 1:6-7 - *“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”*
 - 1 Peter 4:12-13 - *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”*
- When we choose faith in our trials, instead of anger and rebellion, there are eternal benefits. Again, however, we must remember that this is not the same as God bringing these problems into our life just to see if we will follow Him and earn rewards.

- James 1:13 - *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."*
- No matter what you are going through today, God wants you to grow closer to Him through it, and He wants spiritual victories to be won.

By understanding that nothing can take away your relationship with God. (vs. 35-39)

- Satan and this sin-cursed earth can take away a lot from us - our health, our loved ones, our jobs - but there is one thing in your life that is "untouchable," and that is your relationship with God.
- Nothing and **no one** can separate you from God's love.
- No matter what you are going through or will go through in this life, you can guarantee that God's love for you will never change and never fail.
- We oftentimes can undervalue the great blessing of having God Himself dwell inside our hearts, but Paul valued it above all else. In his life, he knew that he could endure anything, just as long as he knew that nothing could separate him from his relationship with God.

By understanding that our future glory far outweighs our present pain. (vs. 17-18)

- If this life was all there is, then there would be no hope throughout our pain. But this life on the earth is only a vapor compared to our life in eternity. (James 4:14)
- Because of the promise of heaven, we have hope of a life to come that is free of pain, sickness, and handicaps.
 - 2 Corinthians 4:17 - *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."*
- All throughout church history, those who have been persecuted the most have been the ones who have made the most lasting impact for Christ. Why were these people able to continue serving God despite their pain? Because they were looking forward to the life that is to come.
- Through the promise of eternal life, nothing can overcome the believer in Christ. Even death itself has lost the power to bring fear to those who have trusted in Jesus.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 - *"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"*

Conclusion:

- In conclusion, in times of pain, we have two choices. We can allow pain to draw us **away** from God, or it can draw us **closer** to Him. I hope these four principles that we have explored today will help you draw closer to the Lord through the storms of life.