

Message Notes

God and Suffering - Part II

This week's Message:
God and Suffering Part II

Walking with God through Suffering

1. Starting Points
 - The curse is evil
 - God is a suffering, loving God
 - God doesn't waste suffering
2. Preparing to walk through suffering
 - Perspective is everything:
 - The great security and great danger of the Christian Life
 - The choice before us
3. Walking through the darkness
 - Acknowledge the darkness
 - Know your Shepherd
 1. Psalm 23
 2. Hebrews 2:18; 4:15
 3. Hebrews 2:14-15
 - Stop digging in your heels
 - Walk
 1. Trust: Matthew 7:7-11
 2. Humility: 1 Peter 5:5b-11
 3. Thankfulness: Colossians 2:6-7; 3:15
4. Walking with others through suffering
 - Be present/enter the awkwardness
 - Don't assume you have the answers
 - Don't define others by their suffering
 - Be ready to listen
 - Be ready for a long journey
 - Be ready to learn
5. Hope - Romans 5:1-5, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

Scripture Passages

Matthew 7:7-11 (NIV)

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

1 Peter 5:5b-11 (NIV)

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Colossians 2:6-7; 3:15 (NIV)

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Romans 5:1-5 (NIV)

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

RENOVATION PROJECT

HOW THE GOSPEL CHANGES US



RENOVATION PROJECT

HOW THE GOSPEL CHANGES US
THROUGH SUFFERING



I love inside jokes.
I'd love to be a part
of one someday.

-Michael Scott



Starting Points:

#1 – Suffering is evil

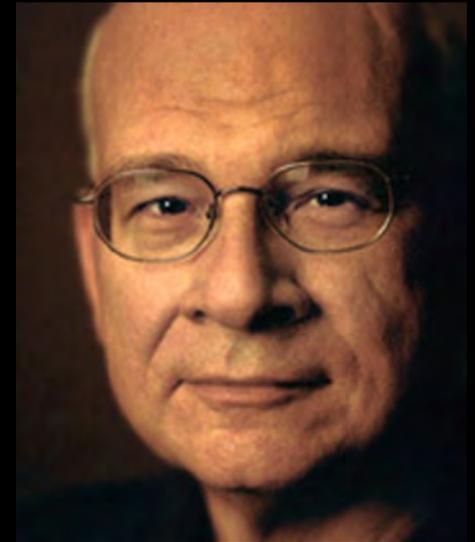
Starting Points:

#1 – Suffering is evil

#2 – God is a suffering, loving God

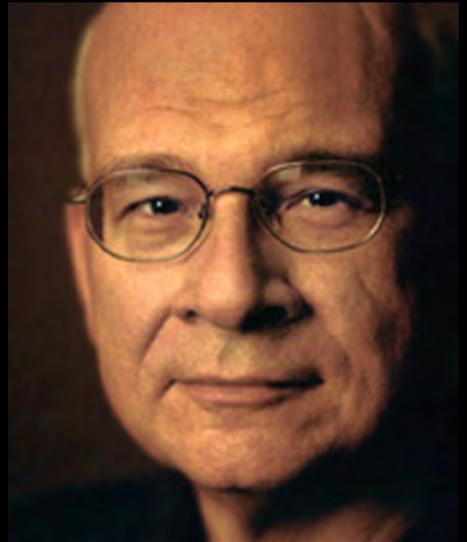
The Sovereign God himself has come down into this world and has experienced its darkness. He has personally drunk the cup of its suffering down to the dregs. And he did it not to justify himself but to justify *us*, that is, to bear the suffering, death, and curse for sin that we have earned. He takes the punishment upon himself so that someday he can return and end all evil without having to condemn and punish us.

Tim Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*



Yes, we do not know the reason God allows evil and suffering to continue...but now at least we know what the reason is not. It cannot be that he does not love us. It cannot be that he does not care. He is so committed to our ultimate happiness that he was willing to plunge into the greatest depths of suffering himself. He understands us, he has been there, and he assures us that he has a plan to eventually wipe away every tear.

Tim Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*



Starting Points:

#1 – Suffering is evil

#2 – God is a suffering, loving God

#3 – God doesn't waste suffering

Perspective is Everything...



Perspective is Everything...

“God, you are more concerned with us and who we are becoming as a church through this process, than you are with the actual building being finished on time and on budget.”

- Suzanne Dube

Perspective is Everything...

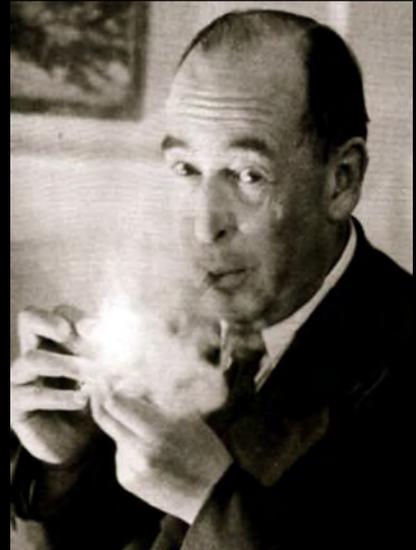
“We prayed to God for a building, and
he gave us this trial.”

- Bart Carey

WHY?

Over a sketch made idly to amuse a child, an artist may not take much trouble: he may be content to let it go even though it is not exactly as he meant it to be. But over the great picture of his life—the work which he loves, though in a different fashion, as intensely as a man loves a woman or a mother a child—he will take endless trouble—and would, doubtless, thereby give endless trouble to the picture if it were sentient.

C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*



“One can imagine a sentient picture, after being rubbed and scraped and recommenced for the tenth time, wishing that it were only a thumbnail sketch whose making was over in a minute. In the same way, it is natural for us to wish that God had designed for us a less glorious and less arduous destiny; but then we are wishing not for more love but for less.

C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*



The Security of the Christian life

1 Peter 1:3-9

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

The Danger of the Christian life

1 Peter 1:3-7

⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

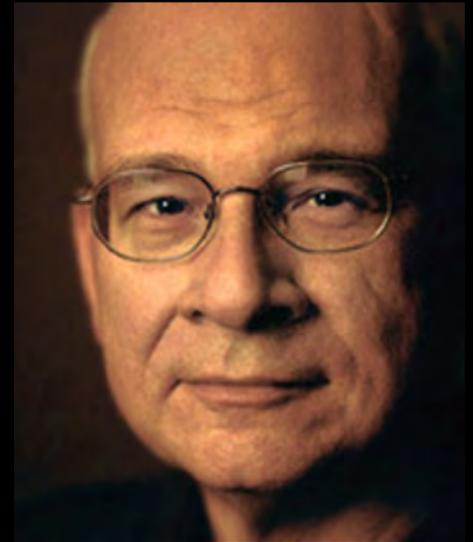
The Danger of the Christian life

1 Peter 4:12-13

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

Suffering is at the very heart of the Christian faith. It is not only the way Christ became like and redeemed us, but it is one of the main ways we become like him and experience his redemption. And that means that our suffering, despite its painfulness, is also filled with purpose and usefulness.

Tim Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*



The choice before us...



Walking through the darkness



Walking through the darkness

#1 - Acknowledge the darkness

Acknowledge the darkness

Job 3:24–26

²⁴ For sighing has become my daily food;
my groans pour out like water.

²⁵ What I feared has come upon me;
what I dreaded has happened to me.

²⁶ I have no peace, no quietness;
I have no rest, but only turmoil.

Acknowledge the darkness

Job 30:20–21

²⁰ I cry to you for help and you do not answer me;
I stand, and you only look at me.

²¹ You have turned cruel to me;
with the might of your hand you persecute me.

Walking through the darkness

#1 - Acknowledge the darkness

#2 - Know your Shepherd

Know Your Shepherd

Psalm 23:1-4

¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

³ He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

Know Your Shepherd

Psalm 23:1-4

⁴ Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

Know Your Shepherd

Hebrews 2:18

¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 4:15

¹⁵ We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet he did not sin.

Know Your Shepherd

Hebrews 2:14–15

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death...

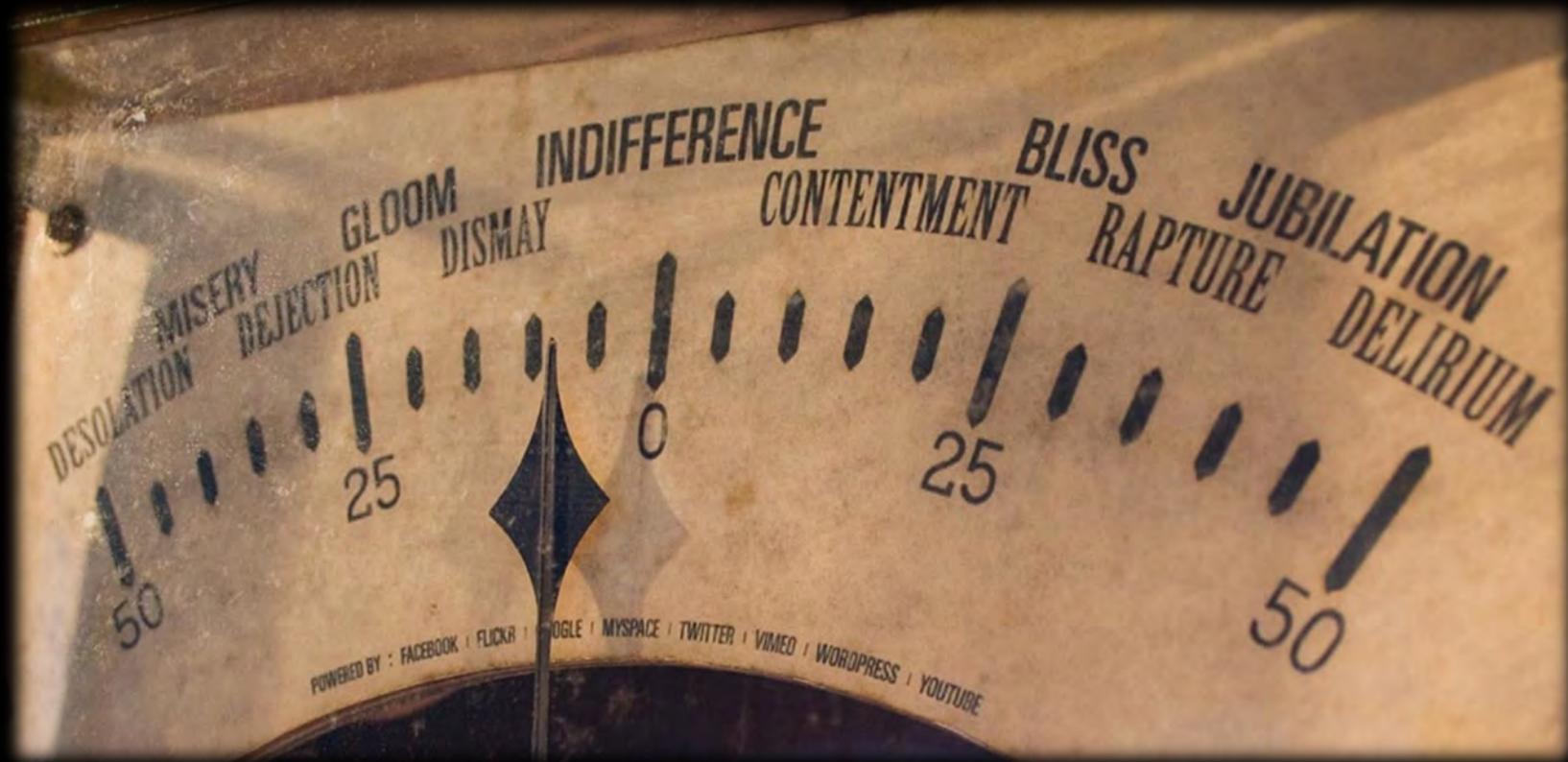
Walking through the darkness

#1 – Acknowledge the darkness

#2 – Know your Shepherd

#3 – Stop digging in your heels

Stop digging in your heels



Walking through the darkness

#1 – Acknowledge the darkness

#2 – Know your Shepherd

#3 – Stop digging in your heels

#4 – Walk

Trust

Matthew 7:7-11

⁷ “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹ Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Humility

1 Peter 5:5b-11

⁵ All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. ⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Humility

1 Peter 5:5b-11

⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. ¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. ¹¹ To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Thankfulness

Colossians 2:6-7; 3:15

⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.
And be thankful.





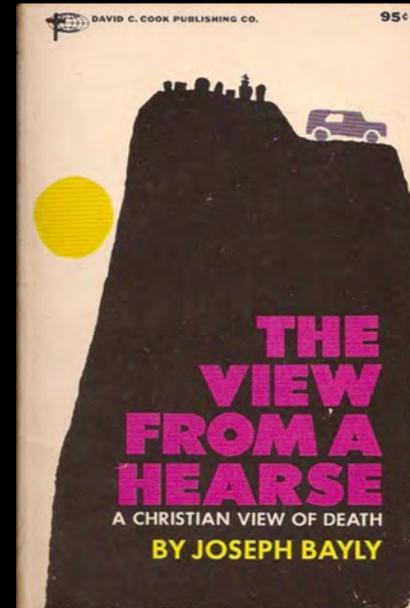


Walking with others

- Be present/enter the awkwardness

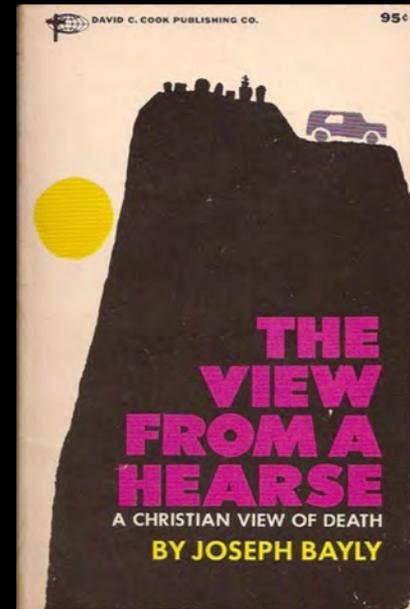
I was sitting, torn by grief. Someone came and talked to me of God's dealings, of why it happened, of hope beyond the grave. He talked constantly, he said things I knew were true. I was unmoved, except to wish he'd go away. He finally did.

Joseph Bayly, *The View from a Hearse*



Another came and sat beside me. He didn't talk. He didn't ask leading questions. He just sat beside me for an hour or more, listened when I said something, answered briefly, prayed simply, left. I was moved. I was comforted. I hated to see him go.

Joseph Bayly, *The View from a Hearse*



Walking with others

- Be present/enter the awkwardness
- Don't assume you have the answers

There is a way of using theology and theological arguments that wounds rather than heals. This is not the fault of theology and theological arguments; it is the fault of the “miserable comforter” who fastens on an inappropriate fragment of truth, or whose timing is off, or whose attitude is condescending, or whose application is insensitive, or whose true theology is couched in such culture-laden clichés that they grate rather than comfort.

D. A. Carson, *For the Love of God*



Walking with others

- Be present/enter the awkwardness
- Don't assume you have the answers
- Don't define others by their suffering

Walking with others

- Be present/enter the awkwardness
- Don't assume you have the answers
- Don't define others by their suffering
- Be ready to listen

Walking with others

- Be present/enter the awkwardness
- Don't assume you have the answers
- Don't define others by their suffering
- Be ready to listen
- Be ready for a long journey

To say the patient is getting over it after an operation for appendicitis is one thing; after he's had his leg off it is quite another. After that operation either the wounded stump heals or the man dies. If it heals, the fierce, continuous pain will stop. Presently he'll get back his strength and be able to stump about on his wooden leg. He has 'got over it.' But he will probably have recurrent pains in the stump all his life, and perhaps pretty bad ones;

C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*



and he will always be a one-legged man. There will be hardly any moment when he forgets it...His whole way of life will be changed. All sorts of pleasures and activities that he once took for granted will have to be simply written off. Duties too. At present I am learning to get about on crutches. Perhaps I shall presently be given a wooden leg. But I shall never be a biped again.

C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*



Walking with others

- Be present/enter the awkwardness
- Don't assume you have the answers
- Don't define others by their suffering
- Be ready to listen
- Be ready for a long journey
- Be ready to learn

Continuing the Dialogue:

smallgroups@hopecc.com

restoringhope@hopecc.com

Suffering dialogue – Oct 25th

Small Group Leaders Roundtable – Nov 1st

stories@hopecc.com

Walking through the darkness

Trust

Humility

Thankfulness

Hope



Hope

Romans 5:2-5

...We boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Suffering...

Perseverance...

Character...

HOPE

Hope doesn't depend on us

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

⁷ Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

God is calling us to be a people,
willing to suffer with Him,
willing to journey with others

1. Will you *walk*?

2. Will you walk *with others*?