

“Jesus is the Christ: The Suffering of the Son” Colossians 2:13-14, Sermon Notes
Pastor Marc Wragg
Saving Grace Bible Church
December 17th, 2017
Morning Worship Service

“And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us *and* which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (Colossians 2:13-14 NAS)

Isa 53

Rom 5

Introduction

Ministry life, and for that matter, the Christian life, can be filled with great misery

- I am often struck by the incongruity of life. In any given day, I can be taken to heights of joy and excitement over the amazing grace of God poured out upon me and God’s people and in the same day head into the depths of despair and uncertainty as I watch sin and unbelief ravage the heart of someone

If we learn something in this life it is this, we will suffer

- Maybe our parents, or our parent’s parents helped to try to remove that suffering from us, but the reality we are learning is that we cannot avoid suffering

I know a generation of people coming out of a series of world wars and economic collapse did not want their kids to face the same kind of suffering they did

- I know we as Americans try to do everything we can to avoid suffering
- We live in insulated and secured housing
- Every year auto makers come out with new security features. I mean look, our cars drive on their own and they stop on their own. Soon they are going to take the risk out of the equation and remove us. One-day insurance will cost more for us to drive cars than to be passengers in self driving cars
- We have insurance. And in some cases, insurance for our insurance
- We seek to protect our economic future

But no matter how hard we try, we still cannot avoid suffering in this world

- In some cases, for some, it feels as if they are born to suffer

And no matter how aware we are, that suffering is real, and we will face it in our life time, we are not prepared for it

- People hate God because they cannot understand how suffering can be part of God's will or a part of God's plan
- You will hear people say, "I cannot believe in a God who would allow this to happen."
 - Death of a friend in a war
 - Murder of innocent victims
 - Violation of personal innocence
 - What kind of God allows Rape? What kind of God allows evil to exist?
 - So many senseless acts occur regularly every day
 - There was a young college aged girl murdered by rejected suitor
 - A father goes on a murderous rampage kills wife and kids them himself

In fact, more people hate the doctrines this Church stands to defend because of the problem of evil and suffering in this world

- The Church is the Pillar and Support of the Truth
- The Church is to defend sound doctrine and the teaching of the Scriptures

So then, what is the Church to do when defending the doctrine of Scripture goes against our own natural inclinations?

I know the challenges of suffering. In the last two weeks, dear friends of mine were told their spouses have cancer

- One mentor of mine and Pastor in California found that his wife has cancer which spread through her whole body from her lungs into her brain
- The other a college roommate, missionary to South Africa and author, found his wife has breast cancer
- Both head into the Christmas season and the new year not knowing what 2018 has in store for them

We cannot avoid suffering in this world

- Nobody can avoid suffering
- When it comes upon us we will be shaped by it in some way

There are different reasons for suffering:

1. There is the suffering which comes from persecution. Peter speaks of this. People who oppose the way of righteousness cause suffering to fall upon God's people - Persecution
2. There is the suffering which comes from a dark providence. Naomi experienced this when a famine drove her from her native land, then her husband died, and finally her two sons leaving her alone in a strange land -
 - a. Hurricanes
 - b. Fires
 - c. Famine
 - d. Earthquakes
 - e. Snow Storms Providence
 - f. Windstorms
 - g. Accidents

h. illness

3. There is the suffering which comes from people sinning against us. The emotional pain and turmoil which leaves us in turmoil and distress because of sin
- People
4. There is also the suffering which comes from our own sin. The natural and normal consequences of disobedience to God. As Peter talks about suffering in the flesh 1 Pet 4:1 – Passions

So there is plenty of reason for each and every one of us to face suffering

- The question is, will we be prepared for it?
- Do you have the kind of faith that can endure suffering when the heavy hand of God comes upon you?

For many people suffering is indefensible

- They cannot accept a God who would allow suffering to exist
- He cannot be good and allow evil
- Or He cannot be all powerful and allow evil
- So He is either all powerful and sovereign, but not good thus evil and suffering exists
- Or He is good and not all powerful and sovereign, thus evil exists
- BUT He cannot be, so they say, good, sovereign, and all powerful and yet allow evil and suffering to exist
- This is the problem of evil, or by the theological term: Theodicy

God uses our suffering for our good

“It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Thy statutes.” (Psalm 119:71 NAS)

“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials” (1 Peter 1:6 NAS)

Why Rejoice?

“that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;” (1 Peter 1:7 NAS)

“All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.” (Psalm 25:10 NAS)

- All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth
- You remember what Joseph said to his brothers after he was sold into slavery by his brothers?
 - “And as for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.” (Genesis 50:20 NAS)
- What About King Manasseh? He went from King to being locked up.

- “Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze *chains*, and took him to Babylon. ¹² And when he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.” (2 Chronicles 33:11-12 NAS)
- Paul was blinded before his conversion Acts 9:6

Thomas Watson said, “As the hard frosts in the winter bring on the flowers in the spring, and as the night ushers in the morning-star, so the evils of affliction produce much good to those that love God.” Pg 27 All things for Good

If God is at work in all things, then even when affliction and suffering comes upon us, God is working

To address the problem of evil and suffering I want to put it in the context of the Lord Jesus Christ

- If there ever was someone who deserved to avoid all suffering, it was the Lord Jesus Christ

As God of the universe, He does not deserve to suffer

- As preeminent over creation He does not deserve, nor should He suffer
- For all that we have learned so far about the glory and superiority of Christ, suffering seems to be incongruous

For the Christian, understanding evil and suffering should always be done in the context of Jesus Christ. We do not look at evil in this world and the presence of suffering apart from the context of Jesus Christ

He faced suffering through providence:

- Lazarus death
- Storms
- The temptation in the wilderness
- Lived in poverty
- Lived under authority of a corrupt government system

He faced suffering through persecution:

- Chased out of the temple
- Attacked by religious leaders

He faced Suffering through People:

- He was mistreated by people
- He was falsely accused
- He was slandered
- He was ridiculed and mocked
- He suffered loss
- He faced the anger of man
- He was murdered

The only suffering He did not experience was that which would have been caused by His own sin

There are two grand lessons I want us to walk away with today

Suffering is part of God's perfect plan

Suffering should be embraced with sobriety and dependent faith

1. Suffering is part of God's Perfect Plan

God has a perfect sovereign plan

- I do not say that simply because I have a form of doctrine which teaches the meticulous sovereignty of God
- I say it because this is what the Scriptures teach

God is sovereign in salvation and directs all things to the good of His people:

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." (Romans 8:28 NAS)

"*This was* in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Ephesians 3:11 NAS)

God directs all matters in human history and accomplishes His perfect purposes:

"Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me,¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'" (Isaiah 46:9-10 NAS)

Even man finds himself under the constant direction of God:

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD, it will stand." (Proverbs 19:21 NAS)

"The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation." (Psalm 33:11 NAS)

The Scriptures teach of God's meticulous sovereignty

- This doctrine brings comfort to us because of what we know about God
- God is too good to harm us. No suffering will bring us harm
- God is too wise to allow us to suffering we cannot handle
- God is too powerful to allow the suffering to go too far
- God is too careful to allow it to last one moment longer than it should

God delivers His people

Peter said at the proper time God will lift you up 1 Pet 5

God uses suffering to accomplish His grand and marvelous purposes:

God in His perfect redemptive plan ordained for the Messiah to come and for the Messiah to suffer

- It is clear that the Messiah was to come and reign
- It is also clear that the Messiah was to suffer
- What was missed was that before He was to reign He was first to suffer
- Now through Christ we see the perfect eternal plan of God unfolded for us

Using the Language of Eph 3:11 "in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord"

- God has a redemptive plan which is described as His Eternal purpose
- This purpose is mediated through Jesus Christ

There are at least 120 prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Christ. These range from His birth, to His life, death, and resurrection

- He was to come through the seed of the woman
 - "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." (Genesis 3:15 NAS)
 - Talking the serpent God judges the serpent and says the seed of the woman would crush his head
 - Indeed, as Christ entered this world He came through the seed of Mary
 - "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law." (Galatians 4:4 NAS)
- When He would be tried He would be accused by false witnesses
 - "Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries; For false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence." (Psalm 27:12 NAS)
 - "Malicious witnesses rise up; They ask me of things that I do not know." (Psalm 35:11 NAS)
 - "Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that they might put Him to death;⁶⁰ and they did not find *any*, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward,⁶¹ and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" (Matthew 26:59-61 NAS)

I suppose for me one of the greatest prophecies anticipating the person and Christ is Isa 53:1-12

"Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?² For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no *stately* form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.³ He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,

Smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. ⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. ⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living, For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke *was due*? ⁹ His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. ¹⁰ But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief; If He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering, He will see *His* offspring, He will prolong *His* days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. ¹¹ As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it* and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:1-12 NAS)

Isaiah had anticipated the Suffering Servant

- There is nothing significant about His stature or makeup
- He was not overly attractive or majestic in form
- He suffered sorrows and was filled with grief
- Despised and not esteemed

vs 4 He has being stricken and we thought God was punishing Him

AND vs 7 – As He was suffering, He went through the suffering silently

- This is exactly what happened with Christ
- Matt 26:63-66

"But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, "You have said it *yourself*; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; ⁶⁶ what do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death!" (Matthew 26:63-66 NAS)

- They believed they were crucifying Christ because He was blaspheming God

vs 5 "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed."

- He received the wrath we deserved
- He is crushed because of our iniquities

vs 9 He was buried next to the rich in His death

- Crucified alongside criminals while He did no wrong

His life and death were declared in the Old Testament and carried out exactly as the Prophets had declared

Now listen, we are looking to Christ because He brings certainty and clarity to our spiritual lives

- Christ is the One who gives us stability and strength
- He should because He is the Messiah

Everything that happened to Christ happened according to the eternal plan of God. Nothing was outside of what He had determined to come about

The question is, who murdered Jesus?

- You might say Pilate? He ordered Jesus to be crucified. This is true but not the right answer
- You could say the Jewish leaders and people. They rejected Christ and turned him over and rejected him when His freedom was offered. This would be true but is not the right answer
- You could say the Roman guards. They took their orders and executed them. They beat Christ and then crucified Him. They carried out the physical blows against the Messiah. This again is partly true but is not the right answer

Acts 2:22-36

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- ²³ this *Man*, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. ²⁴ "And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. ²⁵ "For David says of Him, 'I was always beholding the Lord in my presence; For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. ²⁶ "Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; Moreover my flesh also will abide in hope; ²⁷ Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, Nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. ²⁸ "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou wilt make me full of gladness with Thy presence.' ²⁹ "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ "And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat *one* of his descendants upon his throne, ³¹ he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. ³² "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. ³³ "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. ³⁴ "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.'" ³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:22-36 NAS)

God used the suffering of Christ to bring about our salvation:

Col 2:14

“having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us *and* which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (Colossians 2:14 NAS)

- There is no way the Lord Jesus gets to the cross to bring glory to the Father and redemption to us, apart from embracing suffering

When everyone seems to want to abandon the faith to avoid suffering or embrace a faith which promises no suffering, we must learn to embrace a faith which will lead us through suffering

- Jesus did not come into this world for a better life for Himself
- Jesus did not come here to demonstrate more power, He actually demonstrated less
- Jesus did not come into this world to receive more praise than what He had

Jesus came submitting Himself under the will of God to bring about the perfect and good will of the Father

We must embrace the truth that at the ultimate source of our suffering is a good and gracious God who cares for us, grants mercy and grace to us to help us in the time of need

- The doctrine of sovereignty is a comfort to those who suffer because they see their suffering is never in vain
- We are not fatalists believing random chance just came upon us
- We are not idolaters thinking some other power stronger than God is at work
- We are not blasphemers denying the character of God and making God like us

We are believers in God and we believe His word. By that we know nothing happens apart from His good hand being involved to carry out His perfect will

No matter what afflictions and sufferings you face right now, they have not come upon you apart from the gracious and loving supply of God. And they are for your good

- God uses suffering for good
- Look at the Lord Jesus Christ
 - He is the perfect example
 - Not deserving suffer and yet learned through it
 - Glorified God through it
 - Brought salvation to us through it

When He cried out in agony, “Father take this cup from me, though not my will be done but yours.” He was suffering

- We cannot have salvation apart from the suffering of Christ over sin

The perfect plan of God will use our suffering for good for all the ways of God are lovingkindness
Christ then is our perfect example:

2. Suffering should be embraced with sobriety and dependent faith

Whatever God calls us to, we should be prepared to embrace

How did Jesus respond the suffering He faced?

"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.'" (John 4:34 NAS)

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." (John 5:30 NAS)

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.³⁹ "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day." (John 6:38-39 NAS)

"For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised." (Hebrews 10:36 NAS)

"saying, 'Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.'" (Luke 22:42 NAS)

- Obedience and faith are the keys to get us through suffering
- Obedience to the will of God
- Faith in God that He is at work and will accomplish His perfect plan through our suffering

There are many things suffering can teach us:

- Suffering can teach us that our will is not the most important
- Suffering can reveal idols in our heart – are we willing to sin against God for our peace, or comfort, or pleasure?
- Suffering can reveal fears keeping us from following God. "I can't make it!" "The way is too hard!"
- Suffering can make us more dependent upon heavenly treasures
- Suffering can teach us to value the important things in life and hold loosely to those things which don't matter
- Suffering makes us more thankful for God's mercy and grace
- Suffering shows us our weakness and dependence upon God
- Suffering reminds us that there is a price to sin
- Suffering reveals how strong our faith is. The greater the suffering the greater the faith we need to endure through it
- Suffering can reveal our faith 1 Pet 1:7
- Suffering can reveal the power of God in us
- Suffering can reveal our immaturity of Godliness
- Suffering can prepare us to receive God's rewards
- Suffering can put the glory of God on display
- Suffering teaches us we are not in control and thus teaches us to be humble
- Suffering crushes pride
- Suffering softens the heart for faith

- Suffering makes for a dependent person ready to receive the grace and mercy of God

Conclusion

Sin brings suffering, and in the midst of suffering, grace and mercy are realized

- It is in the context of suffering where the beauty of grace is revealed and the comfort of mercy is experienced

Let us suffer for the right reasons. If we are going to suffer in this world there are good things to suffer for and bad things to suffer for

- We can suffer for doing evil. Let us avoid this
- We can suffer for doing good. Let us embrace this. Sometimes we avoid doing the good we should do because we are afraid to suffer

“For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.” (2 Corinthians 4:17 NAS)

- Seeing our affliction and suffering in light of what God is accomplishing gives us the proper perspective to navigate through life’s difficulties
- “For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.” (1 Peter 2:20 NAS)
- “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled.” (1 Peter 3:14 NAS)
- “For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.” (1 Peter 3:17 NAS)

“fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2 NAS)

Let us learn to embrace the suffering we face. If Christ suffered, though He was perfect, God, preeminent, and yet glorified God in His suffering. Then should we not follow His same example?

- Too many professing Christians are abandoning God because they are suffering in same way!
- They need to answer this question: Why would suffering cause you to abandon God when Christ’s suffering did not cause Him to abandon you?