



STEADFAST *in* Hope

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF SUFFERING

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What is Suffering?

"To have what you do not want or to want what you do not have." - Elizabeth Elliott

When have you suffered?

1. Avoid these two inadequate responses to suffering.

A. Cynicism/skepticism - God is incompetent against suffering.

B. Moralism – My earthly status is a reflection of my status with God.

Job 1:1-5

"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually."

Job 1:6-12

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord."

2. Stop asking why.

God never provides Job with an explanation for his suffering (cf. Job 38).

Paul teaches us that God does not owe us an explanation (cf. Romans 9).

1. We're not guaranteed an explanation.
2. God knows the why questions don't lead us anywhere fruitful.

#3. Love God for who God is, not for what He gives you.

The only way we love God for who He is and not the benefits of knowing God is suffering.

Jesus prepared us for a road of suffering and asked us to count the cost (cf. Luke 14).

The cross, a symbol of suffering, became a symbol of hope. When we pick up our cross and follow him, we identify with his suffering but also with eternal hope.

Renewing your perspective of your sorrow: a prayer exercise.

1. Invite God into your suffering (past or present) and ask Him to reveal His presence in your pain.
2. Ask for forgiveness for any demands or attempts at manipulation you've made and surrender your right to know why.
3. Ask God to empower you to love Him for who He is, not for what He gives you. Repent if necessary.
4. Ask the Lord to give you an eternal perspective on your suffering.

2 Corinthians 4:8-10, 16-18

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body....Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

4. View your suffering from an eternal perspective.

- The Resurrected Savior has scars!
- His suffering was our pathway to eternal life, to eternal glory!
- Our suffering is meaningful, earning us eternal reward, pushing us to God the Father.



Four steps to enduring through suffering with hope.

1. Avoid two poor but popular responses to suffering.
2. Don't seek out the reason why.
3. Embrace God for who He is, not what He gives you.
4. View your suffering with an eternal perspective.

**DO NOT LOSE HEART.
REMAIN STEADFAST IN HOPE.**

Crisis Response Training



- Prayer is available at the front after service or in the prayer room.