

# Why do we suffer?

## Causes

Exploring the problem - suffering's origin

In seasons of great pain and loss we often charge God with blame. But is He really the cause? The Scriptures give us a singular reason for the sorrow each of us experience personally and as humanity collectively.

### SIN

The mistrust of God in worshipping self and creation over Him, which leads to all suffering and death in 3 ways:

#### Our Own Sin

Our misplaced desires, thoughts, and actions have hurt us, stolen joy, and caused wreckage around us. (addictions, anxiety, pride, sexual brokenness, greed, anger, idols, etc.)

#### Others' Sin Against Us

When others violate God's good commands it wounds us, too. (abuse, neglect, murder, stealing, slander, anger, injustice, hatred, racism, suppression, war, envy, selfishness, etc.)

#### Fallen World

The sin of Gen. 3 fractured creation too, bringing all kinds of curses to the world. (disease, weather events, infertility, animals, sickness, death, etc.)

### Spiritual War

Satan compounds all 3 with lies and attacks, inciting temptation & amplifying sin

### TRUTHS TO REMEMBER

#### The Enemy = Sin in Me

Rather than casting blame, see your suffering connected to your sin. Then rest in the shame-covering grace of the gospel.

#### Entrust Justice to God, Find Healing in God

Rather than vengeance, bitterness, victimization or coping, cling to our just judge and sympathetic high priest who sees and knows your suffering.

#### All Things New

Rather than despair, let your hope anchor and swell with the future promise of Christ restoring all that is broken, even creation.

### HOW TO RESPOND

Repent and Believe the Gospel, Pursue grace-driven change

Forgive, Seek Unity, Reconcile if Possible, Receive God's healing

Lament, Trust, Work for Change, Hope

## Effects

Exploring the purposes - suffering's outcome

These are the beautiful by-products that can be worked in us and through us by suffering. Though we rarely see and feel them in full, and sometimes not at all, we can trust by the Scriptures & history God is accomplishing them.

**Person of Jesus** - We get more of Jesus, forging a deeper closeness by sharing in His sufferings. (Phil. 3:10)

**Preparation of Ministry** - We become equipped by Jesus, having compassion, comfort, and wisdom worked in us to offer to others. (2 Cor. 1:3-7)

**Picture of Cross** - We show the love of Jesus, tangibly to others displaying the suffering servant's blood-bought grace offered to them. (2 Cor. 4:11-12)

**Progress of Gospel** - We see the movement of Jesus, as the seed of the unstoppable gospel scatters wide and lands deep. (Acts 8:1-8, Phil. 1:12-14)

**Product of Maturity** - We grow more like Jesus, having godly character, peace, and deeper dependence on God purified in us through the fire. (Jam. 1:2-4, Rom. 5:3-5, 2 Cor. 1:9)

**Prize of Future** - We store joy with Jesus, having our hope and heart anchored upward, longing and looking to our heavenly citizenship all the more. (Matt. 5:12, 25:21, Rom. 8:18, 2 Cor. 4)

**Platform of Truth** - We share the message of Jesus, leveraging the unique opportunities and audiences to showcase in our losses the gain that is Christ. (Dan. 3:1-30, Acts, Phil. 3:7-11)

**Providence of God** - Each of these purposes occurs through the providential hand of an all sovereign God, who although He doesn't cause suffering, He does *control* it, working all things for His glory and the good of His people, as seen most evident in the cross of Christ. **God will allow what He hates in order to accomplish what He loves.** (Gen. 50:20, Job 1, Is. 53:10, Jn. 11:1-53, Acts 4:24-28, Rom. 8:28, 2 Cor. 4:7-18)