



OPENING PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

What is pain/suffering?

What are some sources of pain/suffering?

How do we classify pain/suffering?

To what do we owe the origin of pain/suffering and of what is it an undeniable evidence?

ACHES AND PAINS

1.) Give some Biblical and/or personal examples of believers enduring suffering.

2.) By God's grace and blessing many of us enjoy many pleasant days. What, however, should we normally expect?

Genesis 3:16-19 To the woman [the LORD God] said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. ...To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Job 7:1 "Does not man have hard service on earth? Are not his days like those of a hired man?"

Job 5:7 "Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward."

Romans 8:20, 22-23 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it... We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Luke 9:23 Then [Jesus] said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Matthew 6:13 "Deliver us from the evil one."

2.) How do the devil/sinful flesh/world intend to use our suffering or pain?

Psalms 73:3-5 I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.

Job 6:8-12 "Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant what I hope for, that God would be willing to crush me, to let loose his hand and cut me off! Then I would still have this consolation—my joy in unrelenting pain—that I had not denied the words of the Holy One. What strength do I have, that I should still hope? What prospects, that I should be patient? Do I have the strength of stone? Is my flesh bronze?"

Job 2:4-5 Satan replied[,] "A man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."

RESILIENT IN OUR REDEEMER - *Even as we suffer what promises do we have from God?*

Promise #1:

Psalms 106:1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Psalms 103:13-14 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

Matthew 14:14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Promise #2:

Ecclesiastes 7:14 When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other.

Isaiah 45:7 "I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things."

Job 2:6 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

Mark 14:36 “*Abba, Father,*” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

Promise #3:

Isaiah 43:2-3 “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”

Romans 3:35, 37-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship...? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that ...[nothing] ...in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:13 God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Promise #4:

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Lamentations 3:31-33 31 For men are not cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.

Hebrews 12:7-11 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. ...God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

1 Peter 5:10-11 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. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Promise #5:

Luke 16:22, 25 The time came when the beggar [Lazarus] died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. “...Now he is comforted here.”

Revelation 21:4 “[God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Revelation 22:3 “No longer will there be any curse.”

1.) What good can God bring out of our suffering?

Isaiah 64:8b We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

Romans 5:3-4 We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Romans 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 To keep me from becoming conceited ...there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 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. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Psalms 118:5 In my anguish I cried to the LORD, and he answered by setting me free.

John 9:1-3 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.”

Psalms 30:3, 11-12 O LORD, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit. ...You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever.

2.) In response to suffering it’s often said, “One day you’ll look back and know why this happened.” While well-intentioned why might this be a phrase we would do best to avoid? What comfort can we give in its place?

3.) Any other pain/suffering questions?

NEXT TIME (Dec. 31st): Resilient Among Enemies