

The Problem of Suffering

Why Does God Allow It?

TEXT: Job 5:6-7; Psa. 88:9

INTRODUCTION:

- A. AGE-OLD QUESTION: WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING?
- B. CONSIDER THE SUFFERING OF FAITHFUL JOB(**Job 14:1-2**).
- C. SUFFERING WE HAVE WITNESSED SEEMS SO UNFAIR.
- D. GOD'S ANSWER IN HIS WORD A SOURCE OF GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT.

I. TO REMIND THIS WORLD IS NOT OUR HOME.

- A. WE ARE "PILGRIMS" AND "SOJOURNERS" ON THE EARTH.
 - 1. God has prepared something better for us(**Phil. 3:20-21**).
 - 2. (**1 Pet. 2:11; Heb. 13:14; 2 Cor. 5:1, 5**).
- B. IF THERE WAS NO SUFFERING NO ONE WOULD WANT TO LEAVE.
- C. NO ONE WOULD DESIRE THE BETTER ETERNAL HOME.
- D. THIS LIFE IS SO ORDERED THAT THE WORLD LOSES ITS ATTRACTION.

II. SUFFERING CAN BRING OUT OUR BEST.

- A. THE CHARACTER OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS SEEN IN SUFFERING
 - 1. In comfort and sympathy, in the preparation of food, in the financial support.
 - 2. **Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:25-26; Heb. 10:32-34.**
 - 3. In times of natural disaster, illness, in the loss of a house to fire, tornado, etc.
- C. OUR CHARACTER IS REFINED AND STRENGTHENED IN TRIAL.
 - 1. Suffering can be like fire purifying gold(**1 Pet. 1:6-7**).
 - 2. Maturity can be developed through trials(**James 1:2-5**).
 - 3. **Rom. 5:3-4.** The steadfastness of trial gives the assurance of hope.

III. SUFFERING GIVES AN OCCASION TO SILENCE THE ENEMIES OF GOD.

- A. REMEMBER THE STORY OF JOB?
 - 1. Satan wanted to prove God wrong about Job(**Job 1:8-11; 2:3-10**).
 - 2. But Job's patience under suffering silenced Satan!
- B. LIKEWISE, GOD DESIRES THAT WE SILENCE "FOOLISH MEN."
 - 1. The devil and his servants are accusers of the brethren(**Rev. 12:10**).
 - 2. Our patience is impressive(**Titus 2:7-8; 1 Pet. 2:15, 18-20**).
- C. THE VIRTUES OF GODLINESS ARE APPARENT IN SUFFERING.
 - 1. In the faith that sustains us and in the love we have for others.
 - 2. **Matt. 5:13-16.**

IV. SUFFERING MAKES US APPRECIATIVE.

- A. WE ALL RECEIVE SO MANY GOOD THINGS IN THIS LIFE(**Jas. 1:17**).
 - 1. It is easy for us to become prone to take them for granted.
 - 2. Give thanks(**Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6-7; Col. 3:15, 17**).
- B. SUFFERING CAN HELP US APPRECIATE MORE FULLY.
 - 1. Good health, good friends, and a loving family.
 - 2. A good example one who saw blessings more clearly in suffering is the apostle Paul when he was in prison(**Phil. 4:10-13**).
- C. IF YOU ARE ABLE TO BE HERE AND ENJOY THIS LESSON,

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS.

V. SUFFERING MAKES US MORE DEPENDENT UPON GOD.

- A. TOO OFTEN, WE THINK OURSELVES SELF-SUFFICIENT(**1 Cor. 10:12**).
- B. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN GOD IS THE ONLY HOPE(**Matt. 19:26**).
- C. **Acts 17:28; James 5:16.**

VII. SUFFERING MAKES US SYMPATHETIC.

- A. PAUL WROTE OF THIS VALUE OF AFFLICTION(**2 Cor. 1:3-4**).
- B. UNTIL WE HAVE BEEN THERE, WE DON'T UNDERSTAND.
 - 1. We can sympathize(**1 Pet. 3:8**).
 - 2. Experiencing trial enables us to "weep with those who weep"(**Rom. 12:15**).

VIII. SUFFERING TEACHES US HOW TO PRAY.

- A. BIBLE PEOPLE TRUSTED IN GOD(**Psa. 118:5; 4:1; 31:3; 38:15**).
 - 1. They didn't hesitate to call on him(**Psa. 71:18; 86:6-7; 109:21-27**).
 - 2. They acknowledged his deliverance(**Lam. 3:56-59; Psa. 5:1-3**).
- A. WE ALL MAY BE A PRAYING PEOPLE. WE PRAY. WE KNOW HOW.
- B. IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING WE LEARN HOW TO REALLY PRAY.

CONCLUSION:

- A. FROM MAN'S POINT OF VIEW, WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY A RIGHTEOUS AND MERCIFUL GOD WOULD ALLOW SUFFERING.
- B. THERE IS GOD'S WISDOM IN WHAT GOD DOES(**Isa. 55:8-9**).
 - 1. The final outcome is where God places importance(**Rom. 8:28-30**).
 - 2. **Rom. 8:31-39.**