THE CROSS AND SUFFERING
Secret Church

O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.

Habakkuk 1:2-4

“The fact of suffering undoubtedly constitutes the single greatest challenge to the Christian faith, and has been in every generation.”

John Stott

The World Around Us...

• Suffering is a global reality.
  o We live in a world full of _______ natural _______ evil.
    ▪ Diseases
      • Almost 50,000 people contracted HIV last week; approximately 40,000 others died of AIDS in that same week.
      • In the next year, over 1.5 million people will be diagnosed with cancer; over 500,000 people will die of cancer. Based on current trends, almost _______ _______% of men and women born today will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lifetime.
    ▪ Disasters
      • Hundreds of thousands of people died instantly in recent earthquakes in Haiti and China, in a cyclone in Myanmar, and in a tsunami in Southeast Asia.
      • Over _______ _______ million people are currently suffering amid famine and food shortages in the Horn of Africa; hundreds of thousands are on the brink of starvation.
    ▪ Death
      • Approximately 25,000 children under the age of five die every day due to poverty. That’s over 9 million children every year dying because of poverty. Almost 40% of those children die during the first month of their lives.
      • Over _______ _______ people die every day in the world. That’s over 60 million people who will die this year.

“One hundred [people] are dying each minute. If you could hear them all, you’d hear so many screams you’d go insane. Only God can hear them all and not go insane. God parcels out our awareness in small amounts lest we go under. How can you live in a world like that as a loving person and rejoice in the Lord?”

John Piper

  o We live in a world full of moral evil.
    ▪ Slavery and _______ abortion _______.
    ▪ Beatings and murders.
    ▪ Robberies and riots.
    ▪ Torture and rape.
    ▪ Discrimination and _______ persecution _______.
    ▪ War and terrorism.
    ▪ Violence and genocide.

• Suffering is a universal experience.
All people experience suffering.
All Christians undergo suffering.
- Satan intends every type of suffering to sabotage us.
- God intends every type of suffering to sanctify us.

Suffering is a personal struggle.
- Physical pain.
- Emotional hurt.
- Intellectual questions:
  - Why do evil and suffering exist?
  - Where is God in the middle of suffering?
  - How can I suffer well?
  - When will my suffering end?
  - How can God be good and allow so much evil in the world?
  - How can God be gracious and ordain such suffering in my life?

Insufficient answers...
- Atheism: God and evil do NOT exist.
- Christian Science: Evil is illusory.
- New Age: Evil is the result of ignorance.
- Dualism: Good and evil are two forces, equal in power and opposite in purpose.
- Fatalism: Blind fate determines the depth of evil in our lives and in the world.
- Process Theism: God’s power is always evolving; He is limited in His ability to prevent evil.
- Open Theism: God’s knowledge is always increasing; because He has limited information, He sometimes makes errors in judgment.

"None can account for the tremendous amount of suffering in a world in which an allegedly omnipotent, omniscient and wholly good God reigns... The conclusion to which we are drawn, therefore, is that the existence of such a God is implausible."

Andrew Weisberger

"Not many years ago when I was an atheist, if anyone had asked me, ‘Why do you not believe in God?’ my reply would have run something like this: ‘Look at the universe we live in.’...History is largely a record of crime, war, disease, and terror... But all civilizations pass away and, even while they remain, inflict peculiar sufferings of their own... Every race that comes into being in any part of the universe is doomed; for the universe, they tell us, is running down... All stories will come to nothing: all life will turn out in the end to have been a transitory and senseless contortion upon the idiotic face of infinite matter. If you ask me to believe that this is the work of a benevolent and omnipotent spirit, I reply that all the evidence points in the opposite direction. Either there is no spirit behind the universe, or else a spirit indifferent to good and evil, or else an evil spirit."

C.S. Lewis (Referencing his life before he became a Christian)

"It is too difficult even for God to keep cruelty and chaos from claiming their innocent victims."

Rabbi Harold Kushner, "When Bad Things Happen to Good People"

"Decisions not yet made do not exist anywhere to be known even by God. They are potential—yet to be realized but not yet actual. God can predict a great deal of what we will choose to do, but not all of it, because some of it remains hidden in the mystery of human freedom...The God of the Bible displays an openness to the future that the traditional view of omniscience simply cannot accommodate."

Clark Pinnock

Intense longing...
We don’t want thoughts from men.  
We want _________ truth _________ from God.

The Word Before Us...

• The Bible addresses suffering honestly.

Psalm 6:2-3; Psalm 13:1; Psalm 44:23-24

• The Bible addresses suffering _________ effectively _________.

Psalm 119:92

“What did this book mean to me during the long and weary years of solitary confinement and then for the last four years at Dachau? The Word of God was simply everything to me—comfort and strength, guidance and hope, master of my days and companion of my nights, the bread which kept me from starvation and the water of life that refreshed my soul.”

Martin Niemoller, German pastor who spent years in a Nazi concentration camp

• The Bible addresses suffering theologically.

“Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot; or he can, but does not want to; or he cannot and does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, and does not want to, he is wicked. But, if God both can and wants to abolish evil, then how comes evil in the world?”

Epicurus, Fourth Century philosopher

  o Does God exist?
  o How _________ good _________ is God?
    ▪ Is He loving?
    ▪ Is He malicious?
  o How _________ great _________ is God?
    ▪ Is He all-knowing?
    ▪ Is He all-powerful?

• The Bible addresses suffering mysteriously.

Deuteronomy 29:29

“Because all Christian doctrines relate to God who is ultimately beyond our comprehension, there will inevitably be some element of mystery, or transcendence, that cannot be reduced to human understanding. Nonetheless, within these limits the theological effort must be carried on.”

J. Rodman Williams

1 Corinthians 4:1-2

  o Contradiction: A condition in which at least two things are truly contrary to each other.
  o Paradox: A correlation that appears to be a contradiction or even absurd, but when closely examined, it proves to be true.
  o Antinomy: A combination of two thoughts or principles, each of which is true in its own right but which we cannot harmonize.
  o Mystery: An assumed truth which the human mind cannot comprehend, but which we accept by faith.

“Man with all his shrewdness is as stupid about understanding by himself the mysteries of God, as [a donkey] is incapable of understanding musical harmony.”

John Calvin
The Journey Ahead Of Us...

• We want to explore suffering in all of Scripture.
  o Covering 75 key texts.
    ▪ Old Testament
      • Pentateuch
      • Historical Books
      • Psalms and Wisdom Literature
      • Prophets
    ▪ New Testament
      • Gospels
      • Acts
      • Pauline Letters
      • General Letters
  o Drawing 5 foundational conclusions.
• We want to exalt Christ in all of Scripture.
  o The __________ cross __________ of Christ is the center of all Scripture (and all history!).

   Luke 24:25-27; 1 Peter 1:10-11

  o The cross of Christ is the key to understanding all suffering.

   Romans 5:3-8; Hebrews 12:1-3

    ▪ If we want to discover the mystery of suffering, we must behold the majesty of the cross.
    ▪ Everything in all history, including suffering...
      • Was planned for __________ Good Friday __________.

   Ephesians 1:3-10

    • Ultimately points to Good Friday.
      o Everything before the cross points forward to it.
      o Everything since the cross points back to it.
      o Everything that will last was purchased on it.
      o Everything that matters hinges on it.

• We want to examine our hearts.
  o Have I been __________ saved __________?

   2 Thessalonians 1:5-9; Revelation 20:11-15

  "A nominal Christian often discovers in suffering that his faith has been in his church, denomination, or family tradition, but not Christ. As he faces evil and suffering, he may lose his faith. But that's actually a good thing. I have sympathy for people who lose their faith, but any faith lost in suffering wasn't a faith worth keeping."

   Randy Alcorn

   Colossians 1:21-23; Hebrews 3:14

  o Am I prepared to __________ suffer __________?

   Philippians 4:10-13
“We do not give the subject of evil and suffering the thought it deserves until we ourselves are confronted with tragedy. If by that point our belief—not well thought out but deeply ingrained—are largely out of step with the God who has disclosed himself in the Bible and supremely in Jesus, then the pain from the personal tragedy may be multiplied many times over as we begin to question the very foundations of our faith.”

D.A. Carson

“Weimpy worldviews make wimpy Christians. And wimpy Christians won’t survive the days ahead.”

John Piper

Am I ready to _________ die _________?

Philippians 1:21

“Whatever the church does, it should prepare its members to face death and meet God.”

D.A. Carson

• We want to equip one another.

Acts 14:21-22

To stand firm on the Word.

Philippians 1:27-30

“Just as the small fire is extinguished by the storm whereas a large fire is enhanced by it, likewise a weak faith is weakened by predicaments and catastrophes whereas a strong faith is strengthened by them.”

Viktor Frankl, Auschwitz survivor

• We want to embrace suffering in our lives, our families, and our churches.

To experience the sufficiency of Christ in our weakness.

To _________ share _________ the sufferings of Christ on this earth.

Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:24
To show the supremacy of Christ to all nations.

Matthew 24:9-14

“Believing that further delay would be sinful, some of God’s insignificants and nobodies in particular,
but trusting in our Omnipotent God, have decided on certain simple lines, according to the Book of
God, to make a definite attempt to render the evangelization of the world an accomplished fact...
Too long have we been waiting for one another to begin! The time for waiting is past! The hour of God
has struck! In God’s holy name let us arise and build! We will not build on the sand, but on the
bedrock sayings of Christ, and the gates and minions of hell shall not prevail against us. Should such
men as we fear? Before the whole world, aye, before the sleepy, lukewarm, faithless, namby-pamby
Christian world, we will dare to trust our God, we will venture our all for Him, we will live and we
will die for Him, and we will do it with His joy unspeakable singing aloud in our hearts. We will a
thousand times sooner die trusting only in our God than live trusting in man. And when we come to
this position the battle is already won, and the end of the glorious campaign in sight. We will have the
real Holiness of God, not the sickly stuff of talk and dainty words and pretty thoughts; we will have a
Masculine Holiness,

one of daring faith and works for Jesus Christ.”

C.T. Studd

To experience the satisfaction of Christ for all eternity.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Romans 8:18-39 (NIV)
SEVENTY-FIVE KEY TEXTS
A Biblical Theology of Evil and Suffering

The Pentateuch

1. Genesis 1-11: Essential Foundations

   Genesis 1:27

   The Nature of God
   • He is the supreme ___ Creator ___.
     
     In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
     Genesis 1:1

   • He is the sovereign King.
     Genesis 1:30

   • He is the righteous Judge.
     Genesis 2:16-17

   • He is the merciful ___ Savior ___.
     Genesis 3:21

   The Nature of Creation
   • Fashioned by the ___ Word ___ of God.
     Genesis 1:3; Genesis 1:6; Genesis 1:9; Genesis 1:11; Genesis 1:14; Genesis 1:20; Genesis 1:24; Genesis 1:26

   • Sustained by the power of God.
     Colossians 1:15-17

   • Evidence of the ___ goodness ___ of God.
     Genesis 1:12; Genesis 1:18; Genesis 1:21; Genesis 1:25; Genesis 1:31

   The Nature of Man
   • Created in the ___ image ___ of God...
     Genesis 1:26

     o We are a unique reflection of God.
     o We are utterly reliant upon God.
     o We are ultimately responsible to God.

   • Created for the ___ purpose ___ of God...
     Genesis 1:28

     o To enjoy a relationship with God.
To rule over all creation.
To reproduce God’s glory to the ends of the earth.

The Nature of Satan

Isaiah 14:13-15; Revelation 12:9

• Significant truths...
  o God is Creator; Satan is creature.
  o God is sovereign; Satan is subordinate.
  o This is not dualism; this is domination!

• Significant characteristics...
  o Satan can speak and he is smart.

  Genesis 3:1

  o Satan is a malicious liar and an evil murderer.

Genesis 3:4; John 8:44

The Nature of Sin

Romans 5:12

• The core of sin...
  o Rejecting God’s Word.
  o Spurning God’s authority.
  o Denying God’s character

• The conflict brought about by sin...
  o Conflict between man and God.
    ▪ Guilt.

  Genesis 3:7

  ▪ Shame.

  Genesis 2:24-25; Genesis 3:8

  ▪ Fear.

  Genesis 3:9-10

  o Conflict between man and woman.

  Genesis 3:16

  o Conflict between man and creation.

  Genesis 3:17-19

• The consequences of sin...
  o Immediate spiritual death.

  Genesis 3:22-24
Secret Church - The Cross and Suffering
David Platt

- Murder.
  
  *Genesis 4:8*

- Evil hearts.
  
  *Genesis 8:21*

- Corrupt minds.
  
  *Genesis 6:5*

- Violence.
  
  *Genesis 6:13*

- Division.
  
  *Genesis 11:8-9*

- Curse.
  
  *Genesis 12:1-3*
  
  - Eventual ________ physical__________ death.
    
    *Genesis 5:5; Genesis 6:3*

The Need for Redemption...
- Genesis 1-11 gives us glimpses of grace...
  
  - The promise of ________Christ______.
    
    *Genesis 3:14-15*
    
    - Satan will be trampled.
    - Christ will triumph.
    - The presence of a ________covenant__________.
      
      *Genesis 6:17-18*

- Genesis 1-11 leaves us holding onto _______hope_________
  
  - That Satan will be defeated.
  - That sin will be destroyed.
  - That God’s creation will be restored.
  - That God’s people will be rescued.
  - That God’s name will be praised.
- Genesis 1-11 points us to the centrality of Christ...
  
  - The Bible is a story of redemption that spans from creation to re-creation.
  - Redemption is only possible through a ________Redeemer__________.

2. Genesis 37-50: Pain and Providence

  *Genesis 37:3-11*

The Portraits of Joseph...
• The favorite son.
• The despised ____________ brother__________.
• The slave in a foreign land.
  
  Genesis 37:25-28

• The ____________ pure ____________ servant.
  
  Genesis 39:6-15

• The slandered prisoner.
  
  Genesis 39:19-20

• The ____________ leader__________ over all the land.
  
  Genesis 41:42-43

• The restorative brother.
  
  Genesis 42:1-3; Genesis 43:8-10; Genesis 44:14-17; Genesis 45:4-9

• The reunited ____________ son ____________.
  
  Genesis 46:28-30; Genesis 49:33-50:1; Genesis 50:15-21

The Providence of God...
• He is the ever- ____________ present ____________ Lord.
  
  Genesis 39:2-3; Genesis 39:20-23

• He is the ever- ____________ subtle ____________ King.
  
  Genesis 45:4-9

  o Unexplainable friends...
    - Divine sovereignty.

  Psalm 105:16-17

    - Human ____________ responsibility ____________.
  o The ultimate conclusion...
    - The responsibility of man cannot be ignored.
    - The will of God cannot be thwarted.
  • He is the ever- ____________ faithful ____________ Savior.
    o God keeps His promises.

  Genesis 15:13-16

    o God preserves His people.

  Genesis 46:27; Deuteronomy 32:8

The Point for Us...
• We have a Lord who is _______ with _______ us.
  o God is with you in your exaltation.
  o God is with you in your humiliation.
• We have a King who is _______ guiding _______ us.
  o God does not overlook some of the details in your life.
  o God orchestrates _______ all _______ of the details of your life.
    ▪ He is orchestrating a variety of circumstances...
    ▪ ...in a variety of people...
    ▪ ...for a variety of goals.
  o God’s providence is the only foundation for embracing life’s _______ pain _______.
    ▪ God takes evil and turns it into good.
    ▪ God takes suffering and turns it into _______ satisfaction _______.

  41:50-52

• We have a Savior who will _______ redeem _______ us.
  o Don’t miss the parallels...
    ▪ God uses a dreadful sin to preserve His people in Genesis.
    ▪ God will use a dreadful sin to _______ save _______ His people for all eternity.
    ▪ In both stories, God takes the sins of the destroyers and makes them the means of their deliverance.
  o Don’t miss the promise...

  Genesis 49:8-10
  ▪ God will take the Lion of _______ Judah _______ and make him the Lamb who was slain.

  Revelation 5:5-6
  ▪ Don’t miss the point...
    ▪ Joseph points us to _______ Jesus _______.
    ▪ In this grand story of redemption, the One who has saved us from our sins will one day glorify us with Him.

3. Exodus 3: The Lord Who Sees Our Suffering

“It is not a cheerful thought that millions of us who live in a land of Bibles, who belong to churches and labor to promote the Christian religion, may yet pass our whole life on this earth without once having thought or tried to think seriously about the being of God. Few of us have let our hearts gaze in wonder at the I AM, the self-existent Self back of which no creature can think. Such thoughts are too painful for us. We prefer to think where it will do more good - about how to build a better mousetrap, for instance, or how to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. And for this we are now paying a too heavy price in the secularization of our religion and the decay of our inner lives.”

A.W. Tozer

God’s Revelation Amidst Suffering...
• I am _______ holy _______.

  Exodus 3:1-6
  ▪ He is perfectly unique.
o He is completely separate.
o He is absolutely pure.
• I ammerciful.

Exodus 3:7-10

o He sees our affliction.
o He hears our cries.
o He knows our sufferings.
o He remembers His covenant.

Genesis 15:13-16

• I am ever-present.

Exodus 3:11-12

• I am all-powerful.

Isaiah 40:28

• I am self-existent.
o God has no origin.

Exodus 3:13-14

• I am self-sufficient.
o God has no needs.

Psalm 50:7-15

"Were all human beings suddenly to become blind, still the sun would shine by day and the stars by night, for these owe nothing to the millions who benefit from their light. So, were every man on earth to become an atheist, it could not affect God in any way. He is what He is in Himself without regard to any other. To believe in Him adds nothing to His perfections; to doubt Him takes nothing away."

A.W. Tozer

• I am eternal.

Psalm 90:1-2

o His glory never dims.
o His beauty never fades.

“When we enjoy God, we enjoy him in his eternity without any flux...After many ages, the joys will be as savory and satisfying as if they had been but that moment first tasted by our hungry appetites. When the glory of the Lord shall rise upon you, it shall be so far from ever setting, that after millions of years are expired, as numerous as the sands on the seashore, the sun, in the light of whose countenance you shall live, shall be as bright as at the first appearance; he will be so far from ceasing to flow, that he will flow as strong, as full, as at the first communication of himself in glory to the creature. God is always vigorous and flourishing; a pure act of life, sparkling new and fresh rays of life and light to the creature, flourishing with a perpetual spring, and contenting the most capacious desire; forming your interest, pleasure, and satisfaction; with an infinite variety, without any change
or succession; he will have variety to increase delights, and eternity to perpetuate them; this will be the fruit of the enjoyment of an infinite and eternal God.”

Stephen Charnock

- I am immutable.

  Malachi 3:6

  o His perfections never change.

- I am faithful.

  Exodus 6:2-8

  o He promises liberation.
  o He promises redemption.
  o He promises adoption.
  o He promises possession.

- I am sovereign.

  Exodus 3:19-20

- I am just.

  o Be careful not to evaluate God’s justice in the short-term.
  o God will assert His justice ultimately and completely in His perfect time.

- I am God.

  Exodus 20:1-3

Our Response Amidst Suffering...

- Put your faith and hope in God.

  Deuteronomy 6:4-5

  o The steadfast confession of the Old Testament: God is Lord.

  John 8:48-59

  o The stunning realization of the New Testament: Jesus is Lord.

- Find your rest and refuge in God.

  Psalm 46:1

  o Do not focus on the circumstances that are difficult around you.

  Exodus 5:22-23

  o Put your focus on the character of the One who called you.

  Exodus 6:2

4. Exodus 12-24: Blood That Saves From Suffering And Sin

God delivers His children from suffering through blood.
Exodus 12:1-13

- The portrait of the Lord in Egypt...
  - He is the holy Judge.
    - Man deserves destruction.

Exodus 12:23

- He is the loving Savior.
  - God gives grace.

Exodus 12:25-27

- The provision from the Lord in Egypt...
  - The blood of a spotless lamb.
    - By grace, this sacrifice is acceptable to God.
    - Through faith, this sacrifice is applied to man.

Exodus 12:28-32

God guarantees His children His love through blood.

Exodus 24:1-11

- See the significance of God’s law.

Exodus 20:1-17

- See the beauty of God’s mercy.
  - God’s people are forgiven by the blood of a sacrifice.
  - God’s people are covered by the blood of a sacrifice.
    - They gaze upon His glory.
    - They celebrate in His presence.

God saves His children from sin through blood.

Genesis 22:9-14; Hebrews 9:22; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 13:12; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7

- The blood of the Lamb of God will satisfy the wrath of God.

Romans 3:23-25

- The blood of the Lamb of God will save the children of God.

John 1:29

- By grace, His sacrifice is acceptable to God.
- Through faith, His sacrifice is applied to us.
- We now gaze upon His glory.
- We now celebrate in His presence.

Matthew 26:26-29
5. Leviticus and Numbers: The Law, the Land, and Suffering

God is holy.

*Leviticus 11:44*

- We cannot be ____________ casual ________ with God.

  *Leviticus 10:1-3; Leviticus 16:1-3*

- We must be contrite before God.

  *Leviticus 16:29-31*

Sin is deadly.

*Leviticus 24:10-16*

- The propensity to sin is strong.

  *Numbers 13:25-33; Numbers 14:1-4*

  - God’s people disregarded His goodness.
  - God’s people doubted His _______ greatness _________.
    - They magnified potential problems.
    - They minimized powerful promises.

  *Genesis 13:14-18; Genesis 15:13-16*

  - God’s people disobeyed His Word.

  *Numbers 14:4*

  - God’s people ____________ disqualified ________ themselves from His blessing.

  *Numbers 14:35*

- The punishment for sin is _______ severe _________.

“The awareness of sin, a deep awareness of disobedience, and painful confession of sin used to be our shadow. Christians hated sin. They feared it, they fled from it, they grieved over it. Some of our [forefathers] agonized over their sins. A man who lost his temper might wonder if he could still go to holy communion. A woman who for years envied her more attractive and intelligent sister might wonder if this sin threatened her very salvation…. That shadow has dimmed. Nowadays the accusation, ‘You have sinned,’ is often said with a grin and with a tone that signals an inside joke. At one time this accusation still had the power to jolt people.”

-Cornelius Plantinga

Sacrifice is necessary.

*Leviticus 17:11*

- The provision in the Old Testament: An annual sacrifice on the Day of _______ Atonement ________.
The elements…

- A priest entering an earthly sanctuary.
  
  *Leviticus 16:3-10*

- The blood of a spotless animal.
  
  *Leviticus 16:11-17*

  - God saw the sins of Israel.
  - God was satisfied by the sacrifice of a substitute.

  *Leviticus 16:20-22*

- A sacrifice that would need repeating.
  
  *Leviticus 16:34*

The effect…

- A reminder of all our sin.
  
  *Hebrews 10:1-4*


  *Hebrews 10:10*

Jesus is worthy.

- He is the High Priest who will continually represent us.
  
  *Hebrews 7:23-25*
He is the Sacrificial Lamb who will eternally reign over us.

Revelation 5:5-10

6. Deuteronomy: The God Who Afflicts His People

Old Testament: Blessings and Curses

- God promises blessings for obedience.

Deuteronomy 28:1-6

- God pronounces curses for disobedience.

Deuteronomy 28:58-63

New Testament: The Cross and the Curse

Galatians 3:10-14

- We are under the curse of God’s law.
- Christ came under the curse of God’s judgment.

Deuteronomy 21:23

“Our most merciful Father, seeing us to be oppressed and overwhelmed with the curse of the law [so that] we could never be delivered from it by our own power, sent his only Son in the world and laid upon him all the sins of all men, saying: Be thou Peter that denier; Paul that persecutor, blasphemer and cruel oppressor; David that adulterer; that sinner which did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and briefly, be thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men; see therefore that thou pay and satisfy for them [all].”

Martin Luther

- We stand within the grasp of God’s grace.
  o We can ignore the curse.
  o We can work to overcome the curse.
  o We can embrace the curse and run to the cross.
Historical Books

7. Joshua and Judges: Fear and Judgment

Exhortation amidst Fear...

Joshua 1:1-9

• Trust divine promises.

Deuteronomy 11:24-25

○ God had given them the land.
○ God had guaranteed them the land.
• Follow divine commands.
  ○ God’s Word must be on our minds.
  ○ God’s Word must be in our mouths.
• Depend on divine presence.
  ○ From the perspective of the world, Joshua should be scared to death.
  ○ With the presence of God, Joshua could be sure of victory.
• Live for divine glory.

Joshua 24:14-15

○ God orchestrates the events of His people for the display of His glory.

Demonstration of Judgment...

• God judges individuals...

Joshua 6:18-19; Joshua 7:1

○ One individual’s sin harms the entire people of God.

Joshua 7:2-13

○ One individual’s sin forfeits the favorable presence of God.

Deuteronomy 31:23; Joshua 1:17; Joshua 3:7; Joshua 6:27; Joshua 7:12

○ One individual’s sin brings dishonor on the glory of God.

Joshua 7:9

○ One individual’s sin warrants the swift and just wrath of God.

Joshua 7:22-26

• God judges pagan nations.

Deuteronomy 20:16-18

○ For some time, God demonstrates His patience toward undeserving sinners.
In due time, God doles out His judgment on deserving sinners.  

God judges His people.  

The pattern...  
- Relapse.  
- Ruin.  
- Repentance.  
- Restoration.  
- Rest.  

The problem...  
- They illustrated man’s depravity.  
  - The core of their sin: blatant idolatry.  
- The consequence of their sin: rampant immorality.  

They needed God’s deliverance.  

They needed someone to rescue them from divine judgment.  
They needed someone to show them divine mercy.  

Ruth: The Sovereign Mystery of Surprising Mercy  

The Setting...  
- Two places:  

A land of promise.  
A land of compromise.  

“No people ever rise higher than their idea of God, and conversely, a loss of the sense of God’s high and awesome character always involves a loss of a people’s moral values and even what we commonly call humanity.”  

James Montgomery Boice  

They needed someone to show them divine mercy.
• Two people:
  o A woman with honest _______ hurt _______.  
    *Ruth 1:19-21*
  o A woman with humble devotion.  
    *Ruth 1:16-17*

• Two points of need:
  *Ruth 1:22*
  o They were in need of food.  
  o They were in need of _______ family _______.

• Two pictures of God:
  *Ruth 1:21*
  o He is great.  
  o He is _______ good _______.  
    *Ruth 1:6*

• One promise:
  o In God’s sovereign design, He ordains sorrowful tragedy to set the stage for surprising _______ triumph _______.  
    *We think that God is _______ far _______ from us…*
    o When we are surrounded by famine.  
    o When everything seems foreign.  
    o When death strikes.  
    o When despair sinks in.  
    o Amidst loneliness.  
    o Amidst barrenness.  
    o In our grief.  
    o In our shame.  
    *But God will show Himself _______ faithful _______ to us.*  
    *Ruth 1:22*

The Redeemer…

• The portrait of a kinsman-redeemer…
  o He _______ seeks _______ the outcast as his family.  
    *Ruth 2:11*
  o He shelters the weak under his wings.  
    *Ruth 2:12-13*
  o He _______ serves _______ the hungry at his table.  
    *Ruth 2:14*
He showers the needy with his grace.

*Ruth 2:15-18*

- The price of a kinsman-redeemer...

*Ruth 2:20*

- He must have the right to redeem.
- He must have the resources to redeem.
- He must have the resolve to redeem.

*Ruth 4:9-10*

The Resolution...
- Obed in redemptive history...

*Ruth 4:13-22*

- God brings His people from death to ___________ life__________.
- God brings His people from curse to blessing.
- God brings His people from bitterness to happiness.
- God brings His people from emptiness to fullness.
- God brings His people from despair to ___________ hope__________.

*Matthew 1:1-6; Matthew 1:16*

- Jesus in redemptive history...
  - He alone is able to pay the price for our salvation.
  - He alone is able to guarantee the promise of our ___________ restoration__________.

*Ephesians 1:7*

The Conclusion...
- God is committed to sovereignly providing for His people.
  - He is sovereign over every ___________ setback__________.
  - He is sovereign over all suffering.
- Even when we cannot understand His manner, we can always trust His ___________ mercy__________.
  - His path to our joy is not always smooth.
  - His path to our joy is not always straight.
  - His path to our joy is always ___________ satisfying__________.

*God moves in a mysterious way*  
*His wonders to perform;*  
*He plants his footsteps in the sea,*  
*And rides upon the storm.*  

*Deep in unfathomable mines*  
*Of never failing skill,*  
*He treasures up his bright designs*  
*And works his sovereign will.*

*Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,*  
*The clouds ye so much dread*
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purpose will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain:
God is his own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

William Cowper

9. 1 Samuel 17: Our Champion in Battle

1 Samuel 17:1-4

Three Facets of this Story...
• An invincible character.
  1 Samuel 17:5-7
• An ___________ impossible ___________ challenge.
  1 Samuel 17:8-11
• An ___________ improbable ___________ champion.
  1 Samuel 17:12-15
  o He was passionate for the glory of God.
    1 Samuel 17:26
  o He was confident in the ___________ power ___________ of God.
    1 Samuel 17:37; 1 Samuel 17:41-51

Three Levels to this Story...
• ___________ Individual ___________ History...
  o The character: Goliath
  o The challenge: Defeat the giant.
  o The champion: David the soon-to-be king
    1 Samuel 16:12-13
• ___________ National ___________ History...
  o The character: Surrounding nations
The challenge: Deliver God’s people.
- The champion: David the shepherd king

- Redemptive History...
  - The character: Satan
  - The challenge: Destroy sin.
  - The champion: Jesus the Savior King

Three Takeaways from this Story...
- We must live with passion for God’s glory...
  - In every __________ problem __________ we face.
  - In every place we go.
- We can live with confidence in His _______ power ________.
  
  Colossians 2:13-15

  - We do not fight for victory.
  - We fight __________ from __________ victory.
  
  1 John 4:4

- We will look to Jesus as our __________ champion __________...  
  - In every temptation and sin we encounter.
  - In every trial and struggle we experience.

10. Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles: Sin and Suffering

The Seriousness of Sin in the Kings of Israel...
- Sin’s anatomy:
  
  2 Samuel 11:2-5; 2 Samuel 11:26-27

  - It appears so __________ subtly ________.
  - It harms so deeply.
  - It controls so quickly.
  - It devastates so __________ painfully ________.

- Sin’s tragedy:
  - The defiance of God.
  
  Psalm 51:3-5

  - The distress of men.

The History of Suffering in the People of Israel...
  
  1 Kings 11:4-8

- Covenant chronology:
  - United Kingdom (1 Kings 1-11)
  - Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17)
  - Captive Kingdom (2 Kings 18-25)

- Covenant loyalty:
  - 0 of the 19 Northern kings followed the Lord.
  - 8 of the 20 Southern kings followed the Lord.
    - Asa, Jehosaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jothan, Hezekiah, Josiah
• Covenant catastrophe:
  o 970-931 - Division (1 Kings 12:16-24)
  o 931-841 - Slaughter (2 Kings 10:28-29)
  o 841-722 - Destruction of Samaria by Assyria (2 Kings 17:6)
  o 722-586 - Fall of Jerusalem to Babylon (2 Kings 25:1-11)

11. Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther: The God who Preserves His People

The Plot...

  *Ezra 1:1-4*

  • The return of the remnant to Jerusalem.

  *Ezra 2:1*

  • The rebuilding of the temple.

  *Ezra 6:14-16*

  • The rebuilding of the city walls.

  *Nehemiah 6:15-16*

The Structure...

• National restoration (Ezra 1-6)
• Spiritual reformation (Ezra 7-10)
• Physical repair (Nehemiah 1-6)
• Spiritual revival (Nehemiah 7-13)

The Point...

• God will ultimately and providentially preserve His people for His glory.

  *2 Chronicles 36:15-23; Nehemiah 2:8; Nehemiah 2:18; Nehemiah 2:20; Nehemiah 4:15
  Nehemiah 4:19-20; Nehemiah 6:15-16; Nehemiah 7:5*

  o Even when we cannot see God, He is still present.

  *Esther 3:8-11*

  ▪ Persian King Xerxes (mentioned by name 29 times)
  ▪ Haman (mentioned by name 48 times)
  ▪ Mordecai (mentioned by name 54 times)
  ▪ Esther (mentioned by name 48 times)
  ▪ God (never mentioned by name)

  *Esther 4:12-16*

  o Even (or especially) when we suffer, He is still worthy.

  *Esther 9:20-22; Nehemiah 12:43*
Psalms and Wisdom Literature

12. Job 1-2: God’s Sovereignty in Suffering

Job 1:20-22

The Suffering of Job...
• Suffering is often undeserved.
  Job 1:1; Job 1:8

• Suffering is often unexpected.
  Job 1:13-17

• Suffering is often unimaginable.
  Job 1:18-19

• Suffering is always painful.
  Job 2:7-8; Job 2:12; Job 3:24-25; Job 7:5; Job 9:18; Job 16:16; Job 19:17-20; Job 30:17; Job 30:27-31

The Sovereignty of God...

Job 1:6-12

• God is sovereign over angels.
• God is sovereign over demons.
• God is sovereign over nations.
  Job 12:23

• God is sovereign over nature.
  Job 37:6-13

• God is sovereign over disease.
• God is sovereign over death.
• God is sovereign over comfort.
• God is sovereign over calamity.
  Job 2:9-10

God’s Sovereignty in Our Suffering...
• God’s sovereign design for our lives on this earth includes suffering.
• The sovereignty of God is the only foundation for praise in the middle of pain.
  o His sovereignty assures us that God is in control.
    ▪ At every moment in our suffering, God is with us.
    ▪ At every moment in our suffering, God is for us.
  o His sovereignty reminds us that Satan has been conquered.
  o His sovereignty guarantees us that one day our suffering will conclude.
• Ultimately, our pain on earth can only be rightly understood from the sovereign perspective of heaven.
13. Job 3-31: God’s Sufficiency in Suffering

Three Friends...
- Eliphaz
- Bildad
- Zophar

Four Truths...

1. Job 3:1-11
   - When the pain of suffering persists, God is still present.

2. Job 3:23
   - We want an explanation.
   - God gives us revelation.

3. Job 42:4-6
   - When the gifts we enjoy are gone, God is still good.

4. Job 5:18
   - A false gospel...
     - Sees suffering as evidence of the displeasure of God.
   - The true gospel...
     - Sees suffering as a means to more deeply treasure God.

5. Job 28:12-28
   - The limited wisdom of man...
     - We lack knowledge.
     - We lack perspective.
     - We lack experience.
   - The unlimited wisdom of God...
     - He has perfect knowledge.
     - He has eternal perspective.
     - He has infinite experience.

“With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack?”

A.W. Tozer

   - In the depth of our despair, God is our hope.
     - He will heal our bodies.
     - We will see His face.

14. Job 32-37: God’s Purpose in Suffering
Significant Foundations...
• God has a ______ purpose _______.
  
  Job 36:5-7
• God’s purpose is sometimes _______ different _______.
  
  Job 37:11-13
• God’s purpose is always _______ good _______.
  
  Job 37:23-24

Various Purposes For Which God Uses Suffering...
• God uses suffering to ______ refine ______ our faith.
  
  Job 33:14-18; Job 33:30
• God uses suffering to ______ reveal ______ His glory.
  
  Job 33:12-13
  o How God reveals Himself...
    ▪ In ______ creation _______.
      
      Job 36:22-33
    ▪ Through His Word.
      
      Job 33:15-16
    ▪ In our ______ pain _______.
      
      Job 33:19-26

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”
  
  C.S. Lewis
  o What God reveals about Himself...
    ▪ He is _______ just _______.
      
      Job 34:10-12
    ▪ He is _______ merciful _______.
      
      Job 36:15-16
    ▪ He is _______ great _______.
      
      Job 37:22-24
  o As we wrestle with God’s revelation of Himself in suffering, we need to avoid these extremes:
    ▪ Declaring our _______ innocence _______.


Job 31:35-37; Job 33:8-13

- Distrusting His justice.
- Missing His mercy.
- Minimizing His greatness.

- God uses suffering to teach us to rely on Him.

Job 34:13-15

- God uses suffering to bring us to repent of and renounce all sin in our lives.

Job 36:17-21

- God uses suffering to lead us to our reward in Him.

Job 42:5

Possible Questions to Ask in the Middle of Suffering...

- What areas of my faith are being refined through this suffering?
- What is God revealing about Himself through this suffering?
- How can I rely on God more as a result of my suffering?
- What sin(s) do I need to repent of and renounce as a result of my suffering?
- How can this suffering drive me to find deeper reward in God?


Job 42:1-6

- What we want in our suffering...
  - An explanation from God.
- What we receive in our suffering...
  - A revelation of God.

"God, like a father, doesn’t just give advice. He gives himself. He becomes the husband to the grieving widow (Isaiah 54:5). He becomes the comforter to the barren woman (Isaiah 54:1). He becomes the father of the orphaned (Psalm 10:14). He becomes the bridegroom to the single person (Isaiah 62:5). He is the healer to the sick (Exodus 15:26). He is the wonderful counselor to the confused and depressed (Isaiah 9:6)."

Joni Erickson Tada and Steve Estes

The Revelation of God...

- His power is great.
  - He is our Creator.

Job 38:4-11; Job 38:34-38

- He is our Sustainer.

Job 38:39-41; Job 39:13-17; Job 38:25-27

- He is our Savior.
Job 40:8-14

- He is our ________ Friend ________.

Job 42:7-9

- His purpose is guaranteed.

Job 42:2

- Satan’s attempts to attack God’s people only serve to accomplish God’s ________ purpose ________.
- His knowledge is perfect.

Job 42:3

- He knows all things comprehensively.
- He knows each of us completely.
- His mercy is ________ personal ________.

Job 42:5-6

- Our initial reaction is awe.
  - We repent of our sin.
- Our eternal response is adoration.
  - We ________ rejoice ________ in our God.

16. Psalms: Songs Amidst Suffering

Lament Amidst Suffering...

Psalm 13

- A heartfelt cry.
- An ________ honest ________ complaint.
- A humble confession.

Confidence Amidst Suffering...

Psalm 27

- What David saw...
  - Devastation
  - Desertion ________
  - Danger
- What David prayed...
  - The shock of his prayer:
    - David doesn’t ask first for deliverance.
    - David asks first for ________ God ________.
  - The benefits of his request:
    - God is absolutely sovereign.
    - God is incomparably beautiful.
  - The relevance of his example...
• What is our one thing?
• Do we find God useful for our circumstances or do we find Him glorious ______ regardless ______ of circumstances?

• What David concluded...
  o Confidence is found in focus on _______ God _______ amidst our affliction.

Thanksgiving Amidst Suffering...

Psalm 119:65-72

• Suffering drives us to God’s _______ Word _______.
  o To learn it.
  o To believe it.
  o To obey it.
  o To _______ love _______ it.

“I never had in all my life so great an inlet into the Word of God as now [in prison]. The Scriptures that I saw nothing in before are made in this place to shine upon me. Jesus Christ also was never more real and apparent than now. Here I have seen him and felt him indeed....I have seen [such things] here that I am persuaded I shall never while in this world be able to express....Being very tender of me, [God] hath not suffered me to be molested, but would with one scripture and another strengthen me against all; insomuch that I have often said, were it lawful I could pray for greater trouble for the greater comfort’s sake.”

John Bunyan

• Suffering reminds us of God’s _______ goodness _______.
  o His character is good.
  o His Word is good.
  o His _______ ways _______ are good.

17. Proverbs: Suffering and Wisdom

Two important reminders...
• Wisdom is the fruit of the _______ fear _______ of God.

  Proverbs 9:10

• Proverbs are guidelines for living, not guarantees in life.

  Proverbs 3:2; Proverbs 15:1

Two general takeaways...
• Wisdom sometimes _______ keeps_______ us from suffering.

  Proverbs 10:4; Proverbs 19:15; Proverbs 13:20; Proverbs 22:3; Proverbs 7:6-27

• Wisdom always _______ sustains_______ us through suffering.

  Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 30:7-9

18. Ecclesiastes: Suffering and Worldliness

Understanding Ecclesiastes...
Ecclesiastes 1:2

- We need to hear two ______ voice ______ in the text:
  - The voice of the preacher.

Ecclesiastes 1:12

- The voice of the narrator.

Ecclesiastes 12:8

- We need to understand two key ______ ideas ______:
  - “Vanity”
    - “Vanity” refers to meaninglessness, futility, or pointlessness.
  - “Under the sun”...
    - “Under the sun” denotes life without reference to God.

Ecclesiastes 10:19

Hearing Ecclesiastes...
- In the Old Testament context:
  - The Preacher observes two problems:
    - What we see “under the sun” is ______ permanent ________.
  - What we see “under the sun” is ______ pointless ________.
    - Wisdom is pointless.

Ecclesiastes 1:13-14

- Pleasure is pointless.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

- Labor is pointless.

Ecclesiastes 2:18-23

- Life is pointless.

Ecclesiastes 9:5-7

- The narrator offers two conclusions:

Ecclesiastes 12:13

- Fear God.
- Keep His commandments.
• In the New Testament context:
  o All of us live under the _______ curse _______ of God.
    ▪ Our relationship with our Creator is destroyed.
    ▪ Our relationship with creation is distorted.
  o This curse is by divine design.
    ▪ The curse alerts us to the problem of _______ sin _______.
    ▪ The curse points us to Jesus.
  o Jesus _______ redeems _______ us from the curse of God.

  
  Galatians 3:13-14
  ▪ Suddenly, in Christ, there is something new “under the sun.”
  ▪ And, in Christ, no longer is anything _______ vanity _______.

Applying Ecclesiastes...
• Be warned about worldly pursuits.

  John 6:27

• Be _______ working _______ in the Lord.

  1 Corinthians 15:58

• Be longing for His return.

  Revelation 21:4-5
Prophets

19. Isaiah 53: Salvation through a Suffering Servant

The Setup in Isaiah...

Isaiah 6:1-8

- God is majestic.
  - The terrifying holiness of God...
    
    To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One
    Isaiah 40:25

    - He is without error.
    - He is without equal.
  - The total sovereignty of God...

    Isaiah 46:8-11

    - He is Creator of the world.
    - He is Ruler of history.
    - He is King of all nations.
    - He is Judge of all peoples.

    Isaiah 3:13

- Man is depraved.

    Isaiah 1:2-4

  - Painstaking sin...
    - They trusted in foreign kings.
    - They trusted in false gods.
    - They trusted in their things.

    Isaiah 2:6-8

    - They trusted in their leaders.
    - They trusted in themselves.

    Isaiah 2:22

  - Breathtaking grace...

    Isaiah 43:25

    - Their sins will be removed.
    - Their sins will never be remembered.

- Redemption is sure.
  - God sends His prophet.

    Isaiah 6:9

  - God will preserve His people.
God will restore all peoples.

*Isaiah 2:1-3*

- Look for a spectacular _______ sign ________.

*Isaiah 7:13-14*

- Look for a promised _________ son ________.

*Isaiah 9:6-7*

- Look for a suffering servant.

**The Servant in Isaiah...**

*Isaiah 42:1*

- He will _______ repulse ________, but He will redeem.

*Isaiah 52:13-15*

  - He is a human servant with an appalling nature.

*Isaiah 50:5-6*

  - He is a divine sovereign who will astound the nations.

- The Lord will reveal Him, but we will ________ reject ________ Him.

*Isaiah 53:1-3*

  - See His humiliation.
  - See our condemnation.

- He will be ________ slaughtered ________ so that we can be saved.

*Isaiah 53:4-6*

  - He will endure the penalty of sin.
  - He will take the place of sinners.
    - The essence of sin: Man substitutes himself for God.
    - The essence of salvation: God substitutes ________ Himself ________ for man.
  - He will suffer in sinless ________ silence ________.

*Isaiah 53:7-9*

- All will be ________ satisfied__________ in His substitution.

*Isaiah 53:10-12*

  - The Father will be satisfied...
    - He will display the full extent of His justice.
    - He will demonstrate the full expression of His love.
    - He will satisfy Himself and save sinners at the same time.
    - Before the cross is for anyone else’s sake, the cross is for ________ God’s ________ sake.
“If I would appreciate the blood of Christ I must accept God’s valuation of it, for the blood is not primarily for me but for God.”

Watchman Nee

- The Son will be satisfied...
  - He will rescue the children of God in His death.
  - He will show the power of God in His resurrection.
  - He will accomplish the will of God in His exaltation.
  - The suffering servant will become the sovereign Savior.

- We will be satisfied...
  - We will be vindicated before God the Father.
  - We will be victors with God the Son.

1 Peter 2:22-25

20. Jeremiah 31: Weep No More

A Weeping Prophet...

Jeremiah 8:18-9:1; Jeremiah 15:10; Jeremiah 20:1-2; Jeremiah 37:15

- Personal: God calls Jeremiah (1)
- National: Messages for Judah (2-33)
- Personal: Suffering for Jeremiah (34-45)
- International: Messages for the Nations (46-51)
- Personal/National/International: The Fall of Jerusalem (52)

A New Covenant...

- The problem in the old covenant...
  - The people of God were idolatrous.
    Jeremiah 2:11-13
  - The people of God were immoral.
    Jeremiah 7:30-31
  - The people of God were incapable of anything different.

- The promise of the new covenant...
  - We will receive a new covenant.
    - The law of God...
      - Old covenant: Written on stone tablets.
      - New covenant: Written on human hearts.
        - Our worst enemy: fleshly religion.
        - Our greatest need: spiritual regeneration.
        - Obedience to the law is not a condition for entering the new covenant.
        - Obedience to the law is a promise we experience in the new covenant.
“I think the difference here pointed out between these two covenants, lies plainly here, that in the old covenant God promised to be their God upon condition of hearty obedience; obedience was stipulated as a condition, but not promised. But in the new covenant, this hearty obedience is promised.”

Jonathan Edwards

- The knowledge of God...
  - Old covenant: We relate to God through flawed men.
    - Limited admission to the presence of God.
    - Distant encounter of the glory of God.
  - New covenant: We are reconciled to God through a flawless man.
    - Unlimited access to the presence of God.
    - Direct experience of the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

- We will comprise a new community.
- We will anticipate a new city.
  - For them: In light of the words of Jeremiah, look forward to the restoration of Jerusalem.
    
    Jeremiah 31:38-39
  - For us: In light of the words of Jesus, long for the re-creation of a new Jerusalem.
    1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Revelation 21:1-3

21. Lamentations: Steadfast The Mercies of God in the Sufferings of Men

The Crisis in Lamentations...
- Sin brought about suffering that was...
  - Tragic.

Lamentations 1:1

- Just.

Lamentations 1:8; Lamentations 1:18

- God-given.

Lamentations 3:37-38

- Severe.

Lamentations 4:4-6

- Suffering brought about questions that were...
  - Profoundly intense - “Are we forsaken?”
  - Eternally significant - “Can we be forgiven?”

The Comfort in Lamentations...
• The writer found comfort in...
  o The fresh __________ mercies __________ of God.
• Rooted in...
  o The unfailing love of God.
  o The unceasing __________ faithfulness __________ of God.
• Which gave rise to...
  o A settled hope in the provision of God.
  o A deep __________ confidence __________ in the character of God.

\textit{Lamentations 3:19-24}

- An urgent desire to __________ repent __________ before God.

\textit{Lamentations 3:25-33}

The Christ of Lamentations...
• Christ has endured the __________ penalty __________ of sin in the place of His people.

\textit{Romans 5:6-8}

- Christ has ensured the __________ mercies __________ of God for the sake of His people.

\textit{Ephesians 1:3; Ephesians 1:7}

The Challenge from Lamentations...
• Trust in the character of God.
• Confess the depth of your sins.
• Bank on the __________ mercies __________ of Christ.

\textit{“None are fitter for comfort than those that think themselves furthest off.” Richard Sibbes}

22. Ezekiel: God-Centered Suffering

Three Observations...
• God judges all peoples for His __________ glory __________.

\textit{Ezekiel 25:11; Ezekiel 25:17; Ezekiel 30:10}

- God disciplines His people for His glory.

\textit{Ezekiel 36:16-23}

- They had exchanged the splendor of the true God for the senselessness of false gods.
- They had exchanged the protecting presence of God for the __________ punishing __________ presence of God.
• God saves His people for His glory.

\textit{Ezekiel 34:23-24}

- He will anoint a new __________ king __________.
  - The servant of God.
• The shepherd of men.
  o He will inaugurate a new _______ covenant ________.

  Ezekiel 37:24-28

• The old covenant: perpetual promises.
• The new covenant: permanent _________ peace ________.
  o He will form a new people.

  Ezekiel 36:25-27

• Forgiven of their sin.
• Filled with His _________ Spirit ________.
  o He will bring them to a new place.

  Ezekiel 36:28

• For them...
  • They looked forward to the city of Jerusalem.
  • In that city, they would rebuild the _______ temple ________.
• For us...
  • We look backward to the cross of Jesus.

  Mark 15:37-39

• In Christ, we have become the temple.

  1 Corinthians 6:19-20

One Conclusion...
• We need a radically ________ God ________-centered perspective of our suffering.

  1 Corinthians 10:31

23. Daniel: God-Centered Suffering (Part 2)

In the midst of suffering, look up...
• See the ________ sovereignty ________ of God.
  o He is the God of heaven.

  Daniel 2:19-23

  o He is the God of gods.

  Daniel 2:46-47

  o He is the _________ Lord _________ of kings.
  o He is the revealer of mysteries.
  o He is the Most High God.

  Daniel 4:2; Daniel 4:24-25

  o He is the King of heaven.
Daniel 4:34-37

- He is the God of Daniel.

Daniel 6:26

- He is the living God.
- He is the Ancient of Days.

Daniel 7:13-14

- Seek the ______ face _______ of God.

Daniel 6:10

- Pray consistently.
- Pray with courage.

Daniel 6:16-17

- Pray contritely.

Daniel 9:1-5

- Pray with confidence.

Daniel 10:12-21

- We are in a __________ battle ________.
- God will win the war.
- Trust the __________ promises _________ of God.

In the midst of suffering, look forward...

- God will redeem His people.

Daniel 9:24-27

- God will _______ resurrect ___________ His people.

Daniel 12:1-3

- God will reign over all peoples.

Daniel 7:13-14

- The coming king...
  - He is human.
  - He is ________ divine ________.

Mark 14:61-62

- The coming kingdom...
  - Universal: For all nations.
Matthew 28:18-20

- Eternal: For all ________ time ________.

24. Hosea: Unfaithful People and an Unreasonable God

Hosea 1:2-3

Hosea is a story of an ________ unfaithful ________ people.

Hosea 2:2-13

- She was adulterous.
- She was idolatrous.
- She was hypocritical.
- She was forgetful.

Deuteronomy 8:10-14; Deuteronomy 8:17-20

Hosea is a story of an ________ unreasonable ________ God.

Hosea 2:14-23

- I will allure her.
- I will lead her.
- I will speak tenderly to her.
- I will give to her.
- I will restore her.
- I will protect her.
- I will betroth her.
- I will respond to her.
- I will establish her.
- I will ________ pay ________ the price for her.

Hosea 3:1-3

- On the cross, Jesus will be ________ condemned ________ like the harlot’s children.
  - Like Jezreel, He will be the place of bloodshed.

Hosea 1:4-5

- Like No Mercy, He will be given no relief.

Hosea 1:6-7

- Like Not My People, He will be cut off from the Father.

Hosea 1:8-9

- On the cross, Jesus will be ________ regarded ________ as the unfaithful wife.

“When we see this love at work through the heart of Hosea we may wonder if God is really like that. But everything in the Word and in experience shows us that He is. He will give man the trees of the forest and the iron in the ground. Then He will give to man the brains to make an axe from the iron to
cut down a tree and fashion it into a cross. He will give man the ability to make a hammer and nails, and when man has the cross and the hammer and the nails, the Lord will allow man to take hold of Him and bring Him to that cross, and in so doing will take the sins of man upon Himself and make it possible for those who have despised and rejected Him to come unto Him and know the joy of sins removed and forgiven, to know the assurance of pardon and eternal life, and to enter in the prospect of the hope of glory with Him forever. This is even our God, and there is none like unto Him.”

Donald Grey Barnhouse

25. Joel

• The day of the Lord will be a day of destruction for the ________ resistant__________.
  
  Joel 1:15

  • Judgment upon God’s people.
  • Judgment upon all peoples.

  Joel 2:10-11

• The day of the Lord will be a day of salvation for the ________ repentant__________.

  Joel 2:31-32

  • We repent.

  Joel 2:12-13

  • God ______________ relents ________.

26. Amos

• Amidst great social injustice, God demands _______ justice __________ from His people.

  Amos 5:21-24

• Amidst great social injustice, God brings justice to all peoples.

  Amos 3:1-2

  • Sin will ultimately never be __________ excused __________.
  • Our sin against God is grave.

  • Judgment will inevitably never be __________ escaped __________.
  • Our need for Christ is great.

27. Obadiah

• Overall structure:
  • The coming doom of Edom (1-16)
  • The coming restoration of Israel (17-21)

• Overall point:
God will ultimately assert His ________ victory_______ over all earthly powers.

*Obadiah 20-21*

**28. Jonah**
- God possesses sovereign control...
  - Over ________ nature_______.
    *Jonah 1:4; Jonah 1:17; Jonah 2:10; Jonah 4:6; Jonah 4:7; Jonah 4:8*
  - Over nations.
    - God’s people cannot outrun God’s _______ pursuit ________.
- God expresses merciful compassion...
  *Jonah 3:10*
  - Toward sinful pagans.
  - Toward selfish prophets.

*Jonah 2:1*
- God’s capacity to _______ forgive ________ is greater than our capacity to sin.

*Jonah 4:10-11*

**29. Micah**
- In Israel, we see the ravages of our sin.
  *Micah 3:1-4*
  - Sin is ________ disorienting ________.
    - We approve the bad and condemn the good.
  - Sin is ________ deceiving ________.
    *Micah 3:11*
    - We act as if God will never judge.
  *Micah 2:1-4*
  - Sin is ________ destructive ________.
    *Micah 3:12*
    - We ask disaster into our lives.
- In ________ Christ_______, we see the reign of our Shepherd.
  *Micah 5:2-5*
  - He rescues His sheep.
  *Micah 4:6-7*
  - He forgives His sheep.
Micah 7:18-20
- He purifies His sheep.

Micah 5:10-14
- He _______ protects ________ His sheep.

Micah 5:4-5

30. Nahum
• God is our _______ warrior ________.
  - He is jealous.
    Nahum 1:2
  - He is just.
    Nahum 1:3
  - He is good.
    Nahum 1:7
  - He is _______ sovereign ________.
    ▪ Nineveh’s power was unrivaled in Nahum’s day.
      Nahum 1:12
    ▪ God’s power is unparalleled in any age.
      Nahum 2:6
  - He is judge.
    ▪ His judgment is _______ terrifying ________ for the enemies of God.
      Nahum 2:13
    ▪ His judgment is _______ liberating ________ for the people of God.
      Nahum 1:15
• We are at _______ war ________.
  Ephesians 6:12
  - All of creation lies in the power of the Evil One.
    1 John 5:19
  - All of God’s children _______ overcome ________ the power of the Evil One.
    1 John 4:4
- Jesus triumphed over all enemies through His suffering.

*Colossians 2:13-15*

- Jesus extends His kingdom even now through His church.
- Jesus will reign on the earth upon His return.

*Revelation 19:11-16*

31. Habakkuk: Questioning God

The Hard Reality of Habakkuk...

God uses __________ painful _______ experiences to accomplish His sovereign purposes.

• The struggle of faith...

*Habakkuk 1:1-2*

  - Does God __________ hear __________?  
  - Does God care?  
  - Is God good?

*Habakkuk 1:3; Habakkuk 1:13*

  - Is God holy?  
  - Where is God’s power?

*Habakkuk 1:4*

  - Where is God’s Word?

*Habakkuk 1:17*

  - Will God show that He is just?  
  - Is God worthy of my __________ trust __________?

• The life of faith...

*Habakkuk 2:2-4*

  - Listen to the truth of God.  
  - Lean on the __________ timing _______ of God.  
  - Live with your trust in God.  

    - For your __________ salvation __________.

*Romans 1:16-17*

  - Amidst your suffering.

  - Look forward to the __________ triumph _______ of God.

*Habakkuk 2:12-14*

  - He will show His glory.  
  - We will stand in awe.

*Habakkuk 2:20*
The song of faith...

_Habakkuk 3:2_

- God is awesome.
- God is full of wrath.
- God is full of mercy.

_Habakkuk 3:3_

- God is present in all of creation.
- God is praised by all of creation.
- God has _______ power _______ over all things.

_Habakkuk 3:4-11_

- God is sovereign in all things.
- God is the _______ protector _______ of His people.

_Habakkuk 3:12-13_

- God is the deliverer of His people.

_Habakkuk 3:14-16_

- God is our _______ satisfaction _______.

_Habakkuk 3:17-19_

- God is our strength.
- God is our victory.

The Comforting Reality of the Cross:
God uses His Son’s _______ suffering _______ to accomplish His people’s salvation.

- His pain brings us peace.
- His death brings us life.
- Because of Christ’s death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, we know...
  - Our suffering is _______ temporary _______.
  - Our God is _______ trustworthy _______.

_When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,_
_When sorrows like sea billows roll;_
_Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,_
_It is well, it is well, with my soul._

_Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,_
_Let this blesst assurance control,_
_That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,_
_And hath shed His own blood for my soul._

_My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!_  
_My sin, not in part but the whole,_
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
   If Jordan above me shall roll,
   No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life
   Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
   Even so, it is well with my soul.

It is well, with my soul,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Horatio Spafford

32. Zephaniah
• Overall structure...
   o God will judge Judah (1:1-2:3).
   o God will judge the nations (2:4-3:7).
   o God will restore His people (3:8-20).
• Overall point...
   o One day God’s people will exchange their shame for His honor.

   Zephaniah 3:14-20

33. Haggai and Zechariah
• Repent of sin...

   Zechariah 1:2-3
   o In the fear of God.

   Haggai 1:12
   o By the Spirit of God.

   Zechariah 4:6
• Renew your strength...

   Haggai 2:6-9
   o For the glory of God.

   Zechariah 9:9; Zechariah 8:20-23
34. Malachi

- What the Old Testament has taught us about ourselves...
  - We are dead in our sin.
    - We are prone to defame God.
      *Malachi 2:2*
  - We are prone to dishonor one another.
    *Malachi 3:5*
  - Sin is too subtle in us.
  - Sin is too seductive to us.
  - Sin is too strong for us.

- We are desperate for a Savior.
  - The problem of evil and suffering in the world is ultimately a problem with people’s hearts.
  - Only Jesus can change the hearts of evil people.
  - Therefore, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus is the foremost, fundamental, necessary, non-negotiable way to address evil and suffering in the world.
  - To work against evil and suffering in the world apart from proclaiming the gospel of Jesus will ultimately be futile.

- What the Old Testament has taught us about God...
  - He is overwhelmingly gracious.
  - He is inexpressibly holy.
  - He is consistently faithful.
  - He is completely just.

  *Malachi 2:17*
  - He will demonstrate His righteousness.
  - He will demand our repentance.
  - He will display His wrath.

  *Malachi 3:2*
  - He is ultimately sovereign.

  *Malachi 3:6*
  - He is unquestionably supreme.

  *Malachi 1:11*
  - He is the only Savior.

  *Malachi 3:16*
  - He will preserve a remnant.
  - He will provide a Redeemer.
Gospels

35. Matthew 4: Temptation to Sin...The Root of Suffering

Two Pictures...
• Jesus is the new __________ man __________, stepping into the universal human story.

  Genesis 3:1

• Jesus is the true __________ son __________, suffering through the particular Israelite story.

  Exodus 4:22; Matthew 2:15; Matthew 3:17

Two Questions...
• Does God tempt us?

  Matthew 4:1; James 1:13

  o We are tempted by Satan (who is subordinate) for evil.
  o We are __________ tested __________ by God (who is sovereign) for good.

• Could Jesus have sinned?
  o Jesus is fully man.
  o Jesus was __________ fully __________ tempted.

  Hebrews 4:15-16; 1 Corinthians 10:13

  o Jesus is fully God.
  o God __________ cannot __________ be tempted.

  James 1:13

Three Temptations...
• The first temptation: self-________ gratification __________.

  Matthew 4:2-4

  o We are tempted to fulfill our wants apart from God’s will.

  Deuteronomy 8:2-3

  o Jesus trusted the all-satisfying, all-sufficient goodness of the Father.

• The second temptation: self-________ protection __________.

  Matthew 4:5-7

  o We are tempted to question God’s presence and manipulate God’s promises.

  Exodus 17:7

  o Jesus rested in the shelter of the Father’s unshakeable security.

• The third temptation: self-________ exaltation __________.

  Matthew 4:8-11
We are tempted to assert ourselves in the world while we rob God of His worship. 
Jesus refused to exchange the end-time exaltation by the Father for a right-now exaltation of a snake.

One Conclusion...
- Jesus has done what no one else has ever done or will ever do: He has resisted temptation fully and conquered sin completely.

John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5


Luke 4:16-21

Jesus reverses our status.

Luke 5:12-13

- From dirty to clean.
  - To all who feel helpless, He will restore you.

Luke 7:37-50

- From rejected to accepted.
  - To all who are hurting, He will receive you.


- From lost to found.
  - To all who feel hopeless, He will rescue you.

Luke 16:19-25

- From poor to rich.
  - To all who are humble, He will reward you.

Luke 18:35-43

- From blind to seeing.
  - To all who need healing, He will reveal Himself to you.

John 9:1-7; John 9:24-39

- We may not be certain of the cause of our suffering, but we can always be confident in the purpose of our suffering.

Jesus redeems our souls.

Luke 4:18-19; Leviticus 25:8-10

- From cross to resurrection.
  - To all who are held captive by sin, He will set you free.
37. Mark 4-5: Good News for the Weak

Mark 4:35-41

- Jesus has power over nature.
  - See the ______ presence ________ of God.

Psalm 89:8-9
  - “You are not alone.”

Mark 5:2-15

- Jesus has power over demons.
  - See the ______ peace ________ of God.
  - “You are safe in me.”

Mark 5:24-34

- Jesus has power over disease.
  - See the ______ healing ________ of God.
  - “I care for you.”

Mark 5:21-23, 35-43

- Jesus has power over death.
  - See the ______ hope ________ of God.
  - “You will live forever.”


Two Disasters...
- Moral Evil...
  - Ambush at the temple.
- Natural Evil...
  - Fall of a tower.

Four Reminders...
- Natural disasters remind us that death is ______ unpredictable ________.
  - Death is often sudden.
  - Death is often surprising.
  - Death is always sure.

“Resolved, to think much, on all occasions, of my own dying, and of the common circumstances which attend death.”
Jonathan Edwards

- Natural disasters remind us of the penalty of ______ sin ________ which plagues all of us.
  - Our sin is universal.
  - Our suffering is ______ inevitable _________.
“Resolved, to act, in all respects, both speaking and doing, as if nobody had been so vile as I, and as if I had committed the same sins, or had the same infirmities or failings as others; and that I will let the knowledge of their failings promote nothing but shame in myself, and prove only an occasion of my confessing my own sins and misery to God.”

Jonathan Edwards

- Natural disasters remind us to repent and be __________ reconciled __________ to God.

“Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.”

Jonathan Edwards

- Natural disasters remind us of the __________ urgency __________ of our mission.

Luke 12:35-40

  o  Life is fleeting.
  o  People are perishing.
  o  Eternity is __________ coming __________.

“Resolved, never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.

Resolved, to live with all my might, while I do live.”

Jonathan Edwards


Where to go...
- Go to great __________ need __________.

Matthew 10:5-8

  o  Go to the diseased.
  o  Go to the dying.
  o  Go to the despised.
  o  Go to the dirty.
- Go to great __________ danger __________.

Matthew 10:16-18

  o  Be as foolish as sheep.
  o  Be as smart as snakes.
  o  Be as pure as doves.

What will happen...
- You will be __________ betrayed __________.

Matthew 10:21

- You will be hated.

Matthew 10:22

- You will be __________ persecuted __________.
**Matthew 10:23-25**

- The reality we must face...
  - The danger of our lives increases in proportion to the depth of our relationship with Christ.
- The question we must ask...
  - Do we really want to be like Jesus?
- Fear will tempt you.

**Matthew 10:26-28**

- See with an eternal perspective.
- Speak with a holy boldness.
- Sacrifice with reckless abandonment.
- The Father will take care of you.

**Matthew 10:29-31**

- He rules you sovereignly.
- He knows you completely.
- He loves you deeply.

**What you do...**
- Confess Him publicly.

**Matthew 10:32-33**

- Love Him supremely.

**Matthew 10:34-37**

- Take the ultimate risk.

**Matthew 10:38-39**

- Find the ultimate reward.

40. Selected Texts: Christians’ Response to Suffering

Christians’ response to those who cause suffering...
- Bless them.

**Luke 6:27-29**

- Love them.

**Luke 6:35**

- Pray for them.

**Matthew 5:44**

- Forgive them.

- Do not seek __________ revenge ______ against them.

Matthew 5:38-42

Christians’ response to those who are suffering...

- Feed the _______ hungry______.

Matthew 25:34-35

- Give water to the thirsty.

Matthew 10:42

- Reflect the grace of God.

Matthew 18:35

- Demonstrate the _______ mercy______ of God.


- Express the love of God.

John 13:34-35

41. Selected Texts: The Prediction of Christ’s Sufferings

Jesus suffered _______ willingly__________.
- This was the sovereign grace of God.

Mark 14:32-36; John 10:16-18

Jesus suffered _______ necessarily__________.
- This was the sovereign plan of God.


42. Selected Texts: The Purpose of Christ’s Sufferings

Why did Jesus suffer?
- To _______ obey__________ the Father’s will and fulfill the Father’s Word.

John 17:4-5

- To ransom people from slavery to sin.

Mark 10:45

- To give all who believe unhindered access to the Father.

Matthew 27:51
• To deliver people from the Evil One.

  *John 12:31*

• To deliver people from the __________ wrath ________ of God.

  *Matthew 27:46*

• To proclaim the message of salvation for the nations.

  *Luke 24:46-47*

• To bring sheep into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

  *John 10:11-18*

• To establish a new, eternal __________ covenant __________ with the people of God.

  *Matthew 26:28*

• To demonstrate God’s supreme love for sinners by giving eternal life to all who believe.

  *John 3:14-16*

• To ________ glorify ________ the Father.

  *John 12:27-28*

43. John 3:16: Everlasting Life and Everlasting Suffering

  *John 3:16*

The Unpopular Reality: We are all __________ perishing __________.

“If there is any truth in Scripture at all, this is true—that those who stubbornly refuse to submit to the Gospel, and to love and obey Jesus Christ incur at the Last Advent an infinite and irreparable loss. They pass into a night on which no morning dawns.”

*James Denney*

• Our condemnation is personal.

  *John 3:18*

• Our condemnation is total.

  *John 3:36*

• Our condemnation is __________ eternal __________.

  *Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 14:11*
“Thus it is in Hell; they would die, but they cannot. The wicked shall be always dying but never dead; the smoke of the furnace ascends forever and ever. Oh! Who can endure thus to be ever upon the rack? This word ‘ever’ breaks the heart.”

Thomas Watson

• In hell...
  o We will realize how serious sin really is.
  o We will realize how just God really is.
  o We will realize how __________ endless _______ suffering really is.

Consider “the torment of burning like a livid coal, not for an instant or for a day, but for millions and millions of ages, at the end of which souls will realize that they are no closer to the end than when they first begun, and they will never, ever be delivered from that place.”

George Whitfield

The Unprecedented Rescue: God is all-___________ pursuing ___________.

• His salvation is personal.

  John 6:44

• His salvation is __________ total ___________.

  John 10:10

• His salvation is eternal.

  John 11:25-26

• In heaven...
  o We will realize how glorious grace really is.
  o We will realize how merciful God really is.
  o We will realize how endless __________ satisfaction ___________ really is.

44. Selected Texts: The Suffering of the Son of God

  Mark 15:37

The Timeline...

• Saturday
  o The Anointing of Jesus

  John 12:1-3

• Sunday
  o The Arrival of Jesus

  Mark 11:9-11

• Monday
  o The Anger of Jesus

  Mark 11:15-18

• Tuesday
Secret Church - The Cross and Suffering
David Platt

- The Authority of Jesus
  - His authority is challenged.

  *Mark 11:27-28*
  - His authority is asserted.

  *Mark 13:26-27*

- Tuesday/Wednesday
  - The Betrayal of Jesus

  *Mark 14:10-11*

- Thursday
  - The Last Supper

  *Mark 14:12; Mark 14:16*
  - The humility of Christ: He washes His disciples’ feet.

  *John 13:1-5*
  - The prophecy of Christ: He predicts Peter’s denial.

  *Mark 14:27-31*
  - The comfort of Christ: He promises the Holy Spirit.

  *John 14:25-27*
  - The prayer of Christ: He intercedes for His disciples.

  *John 17:9; John 17:20*

- The Garden of Gethsemane
  - Three agonizing prayers

  *Mark 14:32-36*
  - Three tired disciples

  *Mark 14:41-42*

- The Arrest of Jesus

  *Mark 14:43-46*

- Friday
  - The Trials of Jesus
    - Before the Jewish Authorities
      - Preliminary hearing before Annas

  *John 18:12-14; John 11:49-53*
• Hearing before Caiphas

Mark 14:53-56

• Trial before the Council

Mark 15:1

- Before the Roman Authorities
  - First hearing before Pilate

Mark 15:2-5

• Hearing before Herod


• Last hearing before Pilate

Mark 15:12-15

  o The Torture of Jesus

Mark 15:16-19

  o The Crucifixion of Jesus
    - First three hours...

Mark 15:25-30

  • The prayer for his persecutors.

Luke 23:34

  • The promise to the criminal.


  • The provision for his mother.

John 19:25-27

- Last three hours...

Mark 15:33-37

  • The cry of dereliction.

Mark 15:34

  • Acknowledgement of thirst.
John 19:28

- The cry of triumph.

John 19:30

- The cry of resignation.

Luke 23:46

45. John 19: The Resurrection of the Son of God

John 19:38-20:10

Possible Explanations...

- Jesus didn’t die on the cross.
- Jesus’ tomb was not empty.
- The disciples stole the body of Jesus.
- The disciples were delusional when they claimed to see Jesus.

“The early Christians did not invent the empty tomb and the meetings or sightings of the risen Jesus. Nobody was expecting this kind of thing. No kind of conversion experience would have invented it. To suggest otherwise is to stop doing history and enter into a fantasy world of our own.”

N.T. Wright

- Jesus died on the cross and actually rose from the grave.

Startling Implications...

- Jesus is Lord over life and death.

John 10:18

- Jesus is Lord over sin, suffering, and Satan.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57

- Jesus is Lord over you and me.

Romans 10:9-10
Acts


Acts 4:23-31

- The church prays to...
  - The One who is in control of the ______ world _______.
    
    *The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein...*
    
    *Psalm 24:1*

  - The One who is always faithful to His ______ Word _______.
    
    *John 14:12-14; John 15:7-8*

- The church prays for...
  - The honor of Christ.
  - The ______ boldness _______ of Christians.
  - The advancement of the kingdom.


Acts 4:32-37

“We must have hearts that are harder than iron if we are not moved by the reading of this narrative.”

*John Calvin*

- The church gives ______ humbly _______ to help sufferers.

*Deuteronomy 15:4*

- The church gives ______ sacrificially _________ to address suffering.

48. Acts 5-7: Joy Amidst Persecution

- The church’s suffering is ______ inevitable _________.


- The church’s mission is ______ unstoppable _________.

  *Acts 8:1-4; Acts 11:19-21*

  - Satan’s strategies to stop the church ultimately serve to ______ spread _______ the church.

49. Acts 8: Boldness in Proclamation

- The Spirit ______ leads _______ the church.

*Acts 8:4-5*

- The Spirit empowers the church.
Acts 8:25

- The Spirit uses the church...

Acts 8:39-40

  - To advance the gospel of God.
  - To show the __________ greatness _________ of God.

“Nothing can defeat them—not the beatings of swaggering tyrants, not the cunning of embittered religious rulers, not the internal struggles of discontented members—but like a mighty army with banners, they move out to disciple the nations in the Name of their risen and reigning Lord.”

Robert Coleman

50. Acts 9: God’s Sovereignty over Disease and Death

- The healing of Aeneas

  Acts 9:32-35

- The resurrection of Dorcas

  Acts 9:36-43

  - See the __________ presence _________ of Christ at work in His people.

    John 5:8-9; Mark 5:40-42

  - See the __________ kingdom _________ of Christ advancing through His people.

51. Acts 9: Converted by Christ to Suffer

- See the identification of Christ with His church.

  Acts 9:3-5

  - See the association of Paul’s __________ salvation _________ with Paul’s __________ suffering _________.

  Acts 9:13-19

52. Acts 12: God’s Sovereignty over Persecuted Disciples

- James: __________ Beheaded _________ as a follower of Christ.

  About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword...

  Acts 12:1-2

- Peter: __________ Rescued _________ as a follower of Christ.

  Acts 12:5-17

- God holds world leaders in His hands.

  Acts 12:20-24
God holds our lives in His hands.

53. Acts 13-14: Paul’s First Missionary Journey
   • They were sent by God’s Spirit.
     
     Acts 13:4
   • They were confident in God’s Word.
     
     Acts 13:5
   • They experienced victory in spiritual warfare.
     
     Acts 13:9-12
   • They experienced success in gospel witness.
     
     Acts 13:48-49
   • They experienced slander.
     
     Acts 13:50
   • They endured stoning.
     
     Acts 14:19
   • They remained steadfast.
     
     Acts 14:20-22

   • By His grace, God overcomes conflict we create inside the church.
     
     Acts 15:37-39
   • For His glory, God ordains persecution we face outside the church.
     
     Acts 16:1-5
   • They followed the Spirit of God.
     
     Acts 16:6-10
   • They celebrated the grace of God.
     o In the conversion of sinners.
     
     Acts 16:14; Acts 16:18; Acts 16:30-32
     o In the center of prison.
     
     Acts 16:25-26
   • They proclaimed the truth of God.
Acts 17:2-6

• They exalted the ________ glory _________ of God.

Acts 17:22-23

  o He is the Creator of the universe.

Acts 17:24

  o He is the Sustainer of life.

Acts 17:25

  o He is the Ruler of the nations.

Acts 17:26

  o He is the Savior of the needy.

Acts 17:27

  o He is the Father of each of us.

Acts 17:28

  o He is the King over all of us.

Acts 17:29

  o He is the Judge of the world.

Acts 17:30-31

• They believed in the __________ power _________ of the gospel of God.

Acts 18:9-11

  o We are not afraid.
  o We are not alone.
  o We will not be silent.
  o We will not be __________ stopped _______.

Acts 18:12-17


• Proclamation of the gospel will always be ________ challenged _________ in this world.

Acts 19:23

• Proclamation of the gospel will always be ________ costly _________ in your life.

Acts 20:22-24
Are you willing to go wherever He leads?
- Are you willing to give whatever He asks?
- Are you willing to sacrifice everything to finish the assignment He gives?

Acts 21:10-14

- Proclamation of the gospel will always necessitate [confidence] in God’s sovereignty.

Acts 28:24-28

- We don’t despair over gospel rejection.
- We persist faithfully in gospel proclamation.

Acts 28:30-31
Pauline Letters

56. Romans 5: Hope in Suffering (Part 1)

- Our great hope: the __________ glory _______ of God.

Romans 5:1-2

- The path to our great hope: the __________ sufferings _________ of this world.

Romans 5:3-5

  o Our suffering produces endurance.
  o Our endurance produces character.
  o Our character produces hope.

- So we __________ joyfully _______ embrace suffering as the means by which our hope in the glory of God (which is infinitely greater than everything else in the world that we could imagine) grows.

57. Romans 8: Hope in Suffering (Part 2)

Romans 8:28-30

- We have been saved to __________ love _______ Him.
  o We have no condemnation before Him.

Romans 8:1-2

  o We are children of God.

Romans 8:14-17

- We have been saved to __________ become like _______ Him.
  o God ordains suffering to conform us into the image of Christ.

Romans 8:18-21

  • Now we suffer with him.

Romans 8:16-17

  • Then we will be __________ glorified _________ with him.
  o God ordains suffering to tether us to the hope of Christ.

Romans 8:22-25

  o God ordains suffering to press us to the __________ Spirit _________ of Christ.

Romans 8:26-27

- We have been saved to glorify Him.

Colossians 1:15; Colossians 1:18

  o We celebrate His __________ power ________.
*Romans 8:31*

- We trust His provision.

*Romans 8:32-34*

- We rest in His ever-present, always-persevering love.

*Romans 8:35-39*

58. 2 Corinthians 1, 4, and 12: Suffering for God’s Sake

*2 Corinthians 1:3-11*

**We experience suffering in God.**
- He is sovereign over all suffering.
- He is familiar with all suffering.
- He is the source of all compassion.
- He is sufficient for all comfort.

*2 Corinthians 12:7-10*

**We extend comfort from God.**
- We are comforted for each other’s sake.

*2 Corinthians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 8:2*

- So that we might care for each other’s hurts.

*2 Corinthians 7:6-7*

- So that we might carry each other’s burdens.

*Galatians 6:2*

- We are a fellowship of the broken.

*1 Corinthians 12:24-26*

**We exult in the glory of God.**
- He is our victory.

*2 Corinthians 4:7-11*

- He is our deliverer.

*2 Corinthians 1:10*

- He is our hope.
  - Suffering comes full circle...
    - God uses suffering for our sake.
    - God uses suffering for others’ sake.
    - God uses suffering for His sake.
  - Suffering becomes well worth it...
2 Corinthians 4:16-18

- All affliction for the Christian is light and temporary.
- Coming glory for the Christian is vast and eternal.

59. Galatians 6: Boasting in the Suffering of Christ

Galatians 6:11-18

We boast in the cross because it confronts us with the reality of our sin.
- We were once dead in sin.
- Now, in the cross, we are alive in Christ.

We boast in the cross because it comforts us with the provision of our Savior.
- Christianity is not about human achievement.
  - Christianity is all about divine accomplishment.
- We no longer live for the applause of men.
  - We now live with the pleasure of God!

We boast in the cross because it reminds us that our safety is not found in this world.

2 Corinthians 11:23-30

- We do not fear suffering.
- We are now free to suffer.

We boast in the cross because it keeps us from wasting our lives in this world.
- This world has nothing for us.
- Christ is everything to us.

We boast in the cross because it supplies us with every good thing we have.
- We have been re-created by His Spirit.
- We will always be recipients of His grace.

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the death of Christ, my God,
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down,
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet or thorns compose so rich a crown?

His dying crimson, like a robe, spreads o’er His body on the tree,
Then I am dead to all the world and all the world is dead to me.

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.
60. Philippians 1 and 3: Suffering and the Life that Counts

\[ \text{Philippians 3:10-11} \]

The life that counts _______ treasures _________ Christ above everything this world has to offer.

\[ \text{Philippians 3:5-6} \]

- The many treasures of the wasted life:
  - Family heritage.
  - Social status.
  - Biblical knowledge.
  - Religious activity.
  - A moral lifestyle.
- The only treasure of the life that counts: Christ.

\[ \text{Philippians 3:7} \]

- We have found Someone worth losing _________ everything _________ for.
- We are free to embrace suffering once we realize death is a _________ reward.

\[ \text{Philippians 1:21} \]

"During an early interrogation I had told an officer who was threatening to kill me, 'Sir, let me explain how I see this issue. Your supreme weapon is killing. My supreme weapon is dying.'

'Here is how it works. You know that my sermons on tape have spread all over the country. If you kill me, those sermons will be sprinkled with my blood. Everyone will know I died for my preaching. And everyone who has a tape will pick it up and say, 'I'd better listen again to what this man preached, because he really meant it; he sealed it with his life.'

'So, sir, my sermons will speak ten times louder than before. I will actually rejoice in this supreme victory if you kill me.'

After I said this, the interrogator sent me home.

Another officer who was interrogating a pastor friend of mine told him, 'We know that Mr. Tson would love to be a martyr, but we are not that foolish to fulfill his wish.' I stopped to consider the meaning of that statement. I remembered how for many years, I had been afraid of dying. I had kept a low profile. Because I wanted badly to live, I had wasted my life in inactivity. But now that I had placed my life on the altar and decided I was ready to die for the Gospel, they were telling me they would not kill me! I could go wherever I wanted in the country and preach whatever I wanted, knowing I was safe. As long as I tried to save my life, I was losing it. Now that I was willing to lose it, I found it.'

Josef Tson

The life that counts _________ trusts _________ in Christ to provide everything we could never need.

\[ \text{Philippians 3:7-11} \]
His righteousness covers our sin.
His power guarantees our resurrection.
His satisfaction transcends our suffering.
  - Knowing Christ involves the joy of becoming like Christ, even in His sufferings. *Philippians 1:29*
  - Suffering becomes a gift when identification with Christ is your goal.

61. Colossians 1: Filling Up Christ’s Afflictions

**Colossians 1:24-29**

“CHRIST” - The empowered life...
- He is the image of God.

  *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*
  *Colossians 1:15*

- He is the author of creation. *Colossians 1:16-17*
- He is the head of the church. *Colossians 1:18*
- He is the Savior of the world. *Colossians 1:19-21*

“IN” - The transformed life...
- Jesus died for you so that He might live in you. *Galatians 2:20*
- Christianity is nothing less than the outliving of the indwelling Christ.

“YOU” - The exchanged life...
- Jesus has exchanged His life with us. *2 Corinthians 5:17-21*
  - To fulfill His mission through us. *Colossians 1:24-25*
    - Christ suffered to accomplish salvation.
    - We suffer to spread salvation.

  *“Christ’s cross was for propitiation; ours is for propagation.”* 
  *Josef Tson*
In this way, God ordains our lives to complete the sufferings of Christ.

2 Timothy 1:8-12

God’s strategy for redeeming the world to Himself has always been a suffering servant; that strategy has not changed.

Philippians 1:29

So we gladly embrace the cross of Christ so that others might eternally enjoy the Christ of the cross.

“I remember one Monday when two officers were interrogating me. About midday, a general came into the room. He signaled with his hand for them to leave. He began to curse me and hit me, slapping my face and hitting my head with his fist, finally knocking my head against the wall. I screamed intentionally. I shouted so the other detainees in nearby rooms would hear me. What the general was doing was clearly illegal. That, of course, was why he had ordered the two officers out of the room. He wanted no witnesses at my trial. He kept on for a while, and then left without another word. The two officers came back and resumed the interrogation as if nothing had happened.

On Thursday afternoon, the general returned. Again he motioned with his hand for the two to leave. I braced myself for a second round of beating. But the man sat down behind the desk and said, ‘Don’t worry. This time I am calm. I have come to talk to you.’ Now the Lord has promised that when His people are questioned, the Holy Spirit within them will do the talking. I can testify to this truth. I myself was surprised as I said, ‘Mr. General, because you came to talk to me, I want first of all to apologize for what happened Monday.’ He was very surprised. ‘Let me explain what I mean,’ I said. ‘On Tuesday, I was kept here the whole day without being interrogated. I had plenty of time to think. All of a sudden it dawned on me that this is Holy Week. And sir, for a Christian, nothing is more beautiful than to suffer during the time his Savior and Lord suffered. When you beat me, you did me a great honor. I am sorry for shouting at you. I should have thanked you for the most beautiful gift you could ever have given me. Since Tuesday I have been praying for you and your family.’

I saw the man choking. He tried hard to swallow. Then, somehow, he said, ‘Well, I shouldn’t have done it. I am sorry – let’s talk.’ We talked many days after that. Eventually he said, ‘Would you put on paper all you have said to me? I want the president of the country to read it.’ From this I learned that no one – not even a Communist - is beyond the reach of Calvary love. These are savable people, redeemable people like anyone else. They desperately needed to see Christ in me.”

Josef Tson

“THE HOPE OF GLORY” - The secured life...
• Christ is in you.
• You are in Christ.
• Christ is in God.

Colossians 3:3

62. 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12: Reminders Amid Affliction
• God has a sanctifying purpose in persecution.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-5

• God will administer punishment to persecutors.
2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

• The church prays...
  o For steadfast faith among those who are persecuted.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

  o For saving faith among those who are persecuting.

  Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.
  Romans 12:14

63. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: Responding to Death

• Our response to death is distinct from the _______ despair_______ of this world.

  1 Thessalonians 4:13

    o The people of God should be different.
    o We do not grieve as those without hope.

  Acts 1:11

• Our response to death is rooted in the story of the _______ gospel_______.

  1 Thessalonians 4:14

    o Jesus’ resurrection is both...
      ▪ Proof that God can raise the dead.
    o And a...
      ▪ __________ Promise_______ that He will raise the dead.

  1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 1 Corinthians 15:49

• Our response to death is strengthened by the certain __________ return_________ of the Lord.

  1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

    o His return will be personal.
    o His return will be public.

  Revelation 1:7

    o His return will be powerful.
      ▪ The dead will come from their tombs!
      ▪ The living will come to their King!
      ▪ The Lord will come to His throne!
    o His return will be _______ permanent_________.

• Our confidence in the face of death is celebrated and confessed for the sake of one another.

  1 Thessalonians 4:18
General Letters

64. Hebrews 10:32-39: Our Hope Amidst Suffering

Hebrews 10:32-39

• The barriers to our hope...
  o We will face __________ trials__________.
  o We will face temptations.

Hebrews 11:1

• The basis of our hope...
  o The __________ faithfulness __________ of God to His promises.

Hebrews 6:13-20

  o The return of Christ for His people.

Hebrews 9:27-28

65. Hebrews 11:23-26: The Reward of Suffering

Hebrews 11:23-26

• He chose suffering instead of __________ sin __________.
• He chose reproach because he was looking to his __________ reward __________.


Hebrews 11:29-40

• God is __________ sovereign __________ over our struggles.
  o See His sovereign power.
  o See His sovereign plans.
  o See His sovereign grace.
• God is hope in our suffering.
  o Faith conquers in struggles.
  o Faith __________ continues __________ in suffering.
• God is faithful for our salvation.

1 Peter 1:10-11

  o We are not home __________ yet __________.

67. Hebrews 12:1-3: The Suffering Savior

Hebrews 12:1-2

• Lay __________ aside __________...
  o The weights in this world.
  o Our sin and ourselves.
• Look __________ ahead __________...
  o To the One who saved us.
To the One who is saving us.
To the One who shows us how to suffer for joy.
To the One who sits at the Father’s right hand.

68. Hebrews 12:3-11: The Suffering Child of God

Hebrews 12:3-11

• Receive the Father’s discipline.
• Rejoice in the Father’s love.
• His discipline is hard, but helpful.
• His discipline is painful, yet _______ good _______.

69. Hebrews 13:11-14: Suffering with Jesus Outside the Camp

Hebrews 13:11-14

• Will we die in our religion or die in our _______ devotion _______?
  o Two problems:
    ▪ They were driven by formalism.
    ▪ They were paralyzed by fear.
  o Two options:
    ▪ Retreat from the mission.
    ▪ Risk _______ everything for the mission.

Numbers 13:31-14:4; Numbers 14:20-23; Numbers 14:32-35

• Will we embrace our _______ comforts _______ or will we embrace the cross?
  o Let’s go with Jesus to the...
    ▪ Dirty places.

Leviticus 16:27-28

▪ _______ Despised _______ places.

Leviticus 13:45-46

▪ Dangerous places.

Leviticus 23:13-14

o Do we really want to be where Jesus is?
o Mission without suffering is Christianity without a cross.
  o Suffering is not a consequence of our mission; it’s a _______ central _______ strategy for achieving our mission.
• Will we live for pleasure in this world or _______ paradise _______ in the world to come?
  o The best earthly security is ultimately insecure.
  o The bottom line: it’s _______ worth _______ it!

70. James 1: Faith that Perseveres (Part 1)

• God is sovereign over our _______ trials _______.

James 1:2-3
We learn to  grow in His likeness.

*James 1:4*

We learn to trust in His wisdom.

*James 1:5-8*

We learn to rely on His resources.

*James 1:9-11*

We learn to live for His reward.

*James 1:12*

• We are responsible in our temptations.
  o The origin of sin...

  *James 1:13*

  - God is perfectly sinless.
  - We are utterly sinful.

  o The anatomy of sin...

  *James 1:14-15*

  - Step One: Deception.
  - Step Two: Desire.
  - Step Three: Disobedience.
  - Step Four: Death.

• God is faithful for our salvation.

  *James 1:16-18*

  - His goodness is unchanging.
  - His goodness is undeserved.
  - His goodness is unending.
    - He has saved us from our sin.
    - He will see us through our sorrow.

71. *James 4-5: Faith that Perseveres* (Part 2)

• Faith that perseveres is humble before the sovereignty of God.

  *James 4:13-16*

  - We can become so consumed with the material realm...
    - That we become blind to spiritual realities.
  - God is sovereign over our life and our death...
    - And over our activities and our accomplishments.
  - Faith that perseveres is obedient to the will of God.

  *James 4:17*

  - Sins of commission: doing what God has said not to do.
o Sins of omission: disregarding what God has said to do.
  • Faith that perseveres is _________ confident _________ in the justice of God.

  James 5:1-6

  o He is coming to judge the sinful.
    ▪ For hoarding wealth...
      • Their treasures on earth would bring about their torment in eternity.
    ▪ For cheating workers...
      • Their possessions were accumulating while people were dying.
    ▪ For living in self-indulgence...
      • They were overfed and unconcerned.
    ▪ For condemning men...
      • Their oppression of others would lead to their own damnation.
  
  o He is coming to deliver the faithful.
  • Faith that perseveres is _________ patient _________ in suffering.

  James 5:7-11

  o Like a farmer...waiting for the harvest.
    ▪ Trusting in God with what you cannot control.
    ▪ Honoring God with what you can control.
  o Like a prophet...speaking the truth.
  o Like Job...hoping in God’s purpose.
  • Faith that perseveres is trustworthy in speech.

  James 5:12

  • Faith that perseveres is _________ prayerful _________ in sorrow.

  James 5:13-18

  o Pray when you are hurting.
  o Pray when you are happy.
  o Pray with the elders.
  o Pray with the church.
  o Confess your sins to each other.
    ▪ Sin directly causes _________ some_________ sickness.

  1 Corinthians 11:30

    ▪ Sin indirectly causes _________ all_________ sickness.
  o Intercede on behalf of each other.
  • Faith that perseveres is _________ loving _________ toward sinners.

  James 5:19-20

  o Earthly restoration...
    ▪ Saves souls.
    ▪ Covers sins.
  o Eternal security...
    ▪ Is always a certainty.
    ▪ Is accomplished through community.
72. 1 Peter: Suffering in Christ and the Christian

On Christ’s Suffering...
• He bears our sins.

1 Peter 2:23

• He heals our wounds.

1 Peter 2:24

• He restores our relationship with God.

1 Peter 2:25

On the Christian’s Suffering...
• Suffering is often necessary for the Christian.

1 Peter 1:6

• Suffering is a proving ground for your faith that results in glory for God.

1 Peter 1:7

• Suffering is given to you by God for your inexpressible joy.

1 Peter 1:8-9

• Suffering leads you to find your security and confidence in Christ alone.

1 Peter 3:13

• Suffering spurs you on toward Christlike belief and behavior.

1 Peter 3:15-17

• Suffering leads you away from sinful lusts.

1 Peter 4:1-3

• Suffering believers trust in the judgment of God.

1 Peter 4:5

• Suffering is a part of the good plan and sovereign purpose of God.

1 Peter 4:12

• Suffering unites you intimately with Christ himself.

1 Peter 4:13; 1 Peter 4:17-19

• Suffering is a reminder that the Spirit and glory of God are resting on you.
1 Peter 4:14

• Suffering is an opportunity to glorify God.

1 Peter 4:16

• Suffering involves entrusting your soul to the care of your Creator.

1 Peter 4:19

• Suffering is spiritual warfare.

1 Peter 5:8-9

• Suffering is a temporary stop on a path that leads to eternal glory.

1 Peter 5:10

73. 1 John: His Work and Our Wait

1 John 2:28-3:10

His Work of Destruction...

• The reality of sin...
  o Sin’s scope: universal.
  o Sin’s nature: lawlessness.
  o Sin’s origin: the devil.

• The reason Christ came...
  o His essence: without sin.
  o His mission: destroy sin.

1 John 2:1-2

• The result for Christians...

1 John 1:8-10

  o Our belief in Christ makes sin inconceivable.

1 John 2:1

  o Our new birth in Christ makes persistent sin impossible.

Our Waiting in Anticipation...

• When He comes back...
  o We will see Him.
  o We will be like Him.

• While we wait...
  o We fix our eyes on Him.
  o We purify our lives before Him.

74. Revelation 2: The Suffering Church

• Suffering in Ephesus
Revelation 2:2-3

- Suffering in Smyrna

Revelation 2:9-10

- Suffering in Pergamum

Revelation 2:13

- Suffering in Thyatira

Revelation 2:19

75. Revelation 5: The Conquering Lamb

- Jesus has identified the ultimate problem.

Revelation 5:1

  - We stand before a holy God hopeless.
  - We stand before a holy God helpless.

- Jesus has paid the ultimate ______ price ________.

Revelation 5:5-6

  - He is a conquering Lion.
  - He is a suffering Lamb.

- Jesus has fulfilled the ultimate purpose.

Revelation 5:7

- Jesus now deserves the ultimate ______ praise ________.

Revelation 5:8-14

  - Our song will be ______ new ________.
  - Our song will be never-ending.
CONCLUSIONS

1. A high view of God—His sovereignty, His wisdom, His goodness, and His glory—is essential for understanding suffering in your life and in this world.

God exists.

Psalm 14:1

- Look at creation.

  Genesis 1:1

  o “Ex nihilo nihilo fit” - out of nothing, nothing comes.
  o Threefold progression:
    ▪ Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
    ▪ The universe began to exist.
    ▪ Therefore, the universe has a cause.

“The details differ, but the essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are the same...This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always believed the word of the Bible. But we scientists did not expect to find evidence for an abrupt beginning because we have had, until recently, such extraordinary success in tracing the chain of cause and effect backward in time...At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”

Robert Zastrow
One-time Director of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies

- Look at design.

  Romans 1:18-20

  “Through my scientific work I have come to believe more and more strongly that the physical universe is put together with an ingenuity so astonishing that I cannot accept it merely as a brute fact.”

One-time Agnostic Paul Davies

- Look at morality.

  Romans 2:15

  o If God does not exist, then good and evil do not exist.

  “If we are purely material beings, then we should no more object to mass murder than a river objects to drying up in a drought....Our ability to distinguish between good and evil, and to recognize these as real, means that there is a moral standard in the universe that provides the basis for this distinction. And what is the source of that moral standard if not God?”

Dinesh D’Souza

- An atheistic worldview provides no objective basis for distinguishing between good and evil.
“The position of the modern evolutionist is that...morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate that when somebody says ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself,’ they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction... and any deeper meaning is illusory.”

Michael Ruse (Noted Agnostic Philosopher of Science)

“We have not been able to show that reason requires the moral point of view, or that all really rational persons should not be individual egoists or classical amoralists. Reason doesn’t decide here. The picture I have painted for you is not a pleasant one. Reflection on it depresses me....Pure practical reason, even with a good knowledge of the facts, will not take you to morality.”

Kai Nielsen (Atheist Ethicist at the University of Calgary)

- Atheism is left with...
  - Hopeless subjectivity.
  - Changing ________society________.
- The implications are frightening.

“In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won’t find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no other good. Nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.”

Richard Dawkins

God is ________sovereign________ over all evil and suffering.

- God is sovereign over evil nations and rulers.
  
  Daniel 2:20-21

- God is sovereign over demons and evil spirits.
  
  Mark 5:6-10

- God is sovereign over temptations we face.
  

- God is sovereign over suffering and persecution.
  
  1 Peter 5:8-9

- God is sovereign over natural disasters.
  
  Job 37:10-14

- God is sovereign over sickness and disease.
  
  Acts 10:38

- God is sovereign over death itself.
Deuteronomy 32:39

- Any attempt to minimize God’s sovereign power and authority...
  - Denies the testimony of Scripture.
  - Destroys the hope of sufferers.
    - A God who cannot deliver us from suffering cannot deliver us ______ through ______ suffering.
  - Defames the glory of God.

1 Chronicles 29:11-13

God is ______ wise ______ in the midst of all evil and suffering.
- God has all knowledge and all wisdom at all times.

Job 37:16; 1 John 3:20

- God possesses all knowledge.
  - He knows Himself perfectly.
  - He knows all things perfectly.
    - All things actual.

Hebrews 4:13

- All things possible.

Isaiah 46:9-10

- God knows everything at every ______ moment _________.
  - God never learns.
  - God never discovers.
  - God never forgets.

Isaiah 43:25

- God never ponders.
- God is never surprised or amazed.
- God simply knows.
- The humbling, terrifying, glorious truth: God knows us completely.

Psalm 139:1-6

“That God knows each person through and through can be a cause of shaking fear to the man that has something to hide - some unforsaken sin, some secret crime committed against man or God....[But] to us who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us in the Gospel, how unutterably sweet is the knowledge that our Heavenly Father knows us completely. No talebearer can inform on us, no enemy can make an accusation stick; no forgotten skeleton can come tumbling out of some hidden closet to abash us and expose our past; no unsuspected weakness in our characters can come to light to turn God away from us, since He knew us utterly before we knew Him and called us to Himself in the full knowledge of everything that was against us.”

A.W. Tozer

- Because God is wise, He ______ always ______ accomplishes the best purposes through the best means.
“To believe actively that our Heavenly Father constantly spreads around us providential circumstances that work for our present good and our everlasting well-being brings to the soul a veritable benediction. Most of us go through life praying a little, planning a little, jockeying for position, hoping but never being quite certain of anything, and always secretly afraid that we will miss the way. This is a tragic waste of truth and never gives rest to the heart. There is a better way. It is to repudiate our own wisdom and take instead the infinite wisdom of God. Our insistence upon seeing ahead is natural enough, but it is a real hindrance to our spiritual progress. God has charged himself with full responsibility for our eternal happiness and stands ready to take over the management of our lives the moment we turn in faith to him.”

A.W. Tozer

- Any attempt to minimize God’s knowledge and/or wisdom...
  - Contradicts the testimony of Scripture.
  - Creates a god in the image of __________ man __________.

“In one correspondence my father asked me why God would allow Adolf Hitler to be born if he foreknew that this man would massacre millions of Jews. It was a very good question. The only response I could offer then, and the only response I continue to offer now, is that this was not foreknown as a certainty at the time God created Hitler.”

Gregory Boyd

God is ________ good _________ in the midst of all evil and suffering.

Lamentations 3:32-33

- God relates to sin variably.
  - He prevents sin.

Genesis 20:6; Psalm 19:13

- He _______ permits _______ sin.

Psalm 81:11-12; Romans 1:24-28

- He directs sin.

Genesis 50:19-20; Acts 2:36

- He limits sin.

Job 1:12; 1 Corinthians 10:13

- He never ________ directly _________ causes sin.

James 1:13-15

- God never sins in Scripture.
- God is never blamed for sin in Scripture.

- God relates to good and evil asymmetrically (in ________ different __________ ways).
  - God behind good...
    - All that is good is under His sovereignty.
Psalm 107:1; 1 John 1:5

- All that is good is morally chargeable to Him.

Deuteronomy 32:4; James 1:17; Psalm 16:11

“God is the highest good of the reasonable creature, and the enjoyment of him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows. But the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean.”

Jonathan Edwards

- God behind evil...
  - All that is evil is under His sovereignty.

Lamentations 3:34-38; Exodus 4:21-23; Joshua 11:20; 1 Samuel 2:25; Job 1:20-22; Isaiah 45:7

- All that is evil is not morally chargeable to Him.

Isaiah 66:3-4; Romans 9:19-21

- Remember the mystery of God’s will...
  - God is sovereign.
  - We are responsible.
  - God is in control.
    - We make choices.

Genesis 50:19-20; Acts 2:22-24

God is worthy of all glory in a world of evil and suffering.
- Our ultimate aim in suffering is not to analyze and evaluate the character of God.
- Our ultimate aim in suffering is to adore and exalt the glory of God.

Psalm 107:1-8

- He is with you in your suffering.

Psalm 46:1-7

- He is for you in your suffering.

Psalm 46:8-11

- Yet the starting point for understanding suffering is realizing that God is the center of the universe...not you.
  - You have been created to know and enjoy His glory.

Psalm 63:1-8

- You have been commissioned to show and exclaim His glory.

Isaiah 43:1-7
• So ________ trust _________ in the sovereign wisdom and goodness of God.

“Should you pray for a miracle? Well, you’re free to do that, of course. My general impression is that the God who is able to do miracles—and he certainly can—is also able to keep you from getting the problem in the first place. So although miracles do happen, they’re rare by definition. A miracle has to be an unusual thing. Above all, I would say pray for the glory of God. If you think of God glorifying himself in history and you say, where in all of history has God most glorified himself? He did it at the cross of Jesus Christ, and it wasn’t by delivering Jesus from the cross, though he could have. Jesus said, ‘Don’t you think I could call down from my Father ten legions of angels for my defense?’ But he didn’t do that. And yet that’s where God is most glorified. God is in charge. When things like this come into our lives, they are not accidental. It’s not as if God somehow forgot what was going on, and something bad slipped by. God is not only the one who is in charge; God is also good. Everything he does is good. If God does something in your life, would you change it? If you’d change it, you’d make it worse. It wouldn’t be as good.”

James Montgomery Boice
(Diagnosed with liver cancer and died 8 weeks after sharing this with his congregation)

• And ____________ live ____________ to know, enjoy, and declare the sovereign glory of God.

“People will often express their care and concern by inquiring about your health. That’s good, but the conversation easily gets stuck there. So tell them openly about your sickness, seeking their prayers and counsel, but then change the direction of the conversation by telling them what your God is faithfully doing to sustain you with ten thousand mercies. Robert Murray McCheyne wisely said, ‘For every one look at your sins, take ten looks at Christ.’ ...For every one sentence you say to others about your cancer, say ten sentences about your God, and your hope, and what he is teaching you, and the small blessings of each day. For every hour you spend researching or discussing your cancer, spend ten hours researching and discussing and serving your Lord.”

David Powlison

A high view of God—His sovereignty, His wisdom, His goodness, and His glory—is essential for understanding suffering in your life and in this world.

2. A humble view of ________ man _________—his sinful depravity and small perspective—is essential for understanding suffering in your life and in this world.

“The subject of sin is vital knowledge. To say that our first need in life is to learn about sin may sound strange, but in the sense intended it is profoundly true. If you have not learned about sin, you cannot understand yourself, or your fellow-men, or the world you live in, or the Christian faith. And you will not be able to make head or tail of the Bible. For the Bible is an exposition of God’s answer to the problem of human sin and unless you have that problem clearly before you, you will keep missing the point of what it says.”

J.I. Packer

We have a dangerous tendency to __________ overestimate __________ our wisdom.

* Isaiah 55:8-9

• Our ways are not God’s ways.
• Our thoughts are not God’s thoughts.

* Job 38:1-18
• Our timing is not God’s timing.

2 Peter 3:9

“There is nothing which shows our ignorance so much as our impatience under trouble. We forget that every cross is a message from God, and intended to do us good in the end. Trials are intended to make us think—to wean us from the world—to send us to the Bible—to drive us to our knees. Health is a good thing but sickness is far better if it leads us to God. Prosperity is a great mercy; but adversity is a greater one if it brings us to Christ. Anything, anything is better than living in carelessness and dying in sin.”

J.C. Ryle

• Our ability to _________ comprehend _________ is infinitely smaller than God’s ability to communicate.

“Can a mortal ask questions which God finds unanswerable? Quite easily, I should think. All nonsense questions are unanswerable. How many hours are there in a mile? Is yellow square or round? Probably half the questions we ask—half our great theological and metaphysical problems—are like that.”

C.S. Lewis

“Providence is wonderfully intricate. Ah! You want always to see through Providence, do you not? You never will, I assure you. You have not eyes good enough. You want to see what good that affliction was to you; you must believe it. You want to see how it can bring good to the soul; you may be enabled in a little time; but you cannot see it now; you must believe it. Honor God by trusting him.”

Charles Spurgeon

We have a damning tendency to _________ underestimate _________ our wickedness.

• We see evil and suffering, and we think it’s _________ unfair _________.

• We have denounced His sovereignty.

Genesis 3:6-7

• We have dishonored His holiness.

Ezekiel 36:22-23

• We have despised His righteousness.

Romans 3:10-12

• We have disregarded His wrath.

Ephesians 2:1-4

• We have denied His love.

Romans 2:4

• Our minds are blinded.

Romans 1:28-32; 2 Corinthians 4:4

• Our emotions are disordered.
Romans 1:26-27; 1 Peter 2:11

• Our bodies are defiled.

Romans 3:13-18

• Our wills are distorted.

Romans 8:7

• Our relationships are broken.
  o With God.

James 4:4

  o With one another.

Titus 3:3

• We are slaves to sin.

John 8:34

• We are dominated by Satan.

2 Timothy 2:26

• We are lovers of darkness.

John 3:20; Ephesians 4:18

• We are children of wrath.

Ephesians 2:3

• We are perishing.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10

• We are morally evil.

Genesis 8:21

• We are sinfully sick.

Matthew 9:12

• We are spiritually dead.

Ephesians 2:1

• We have denounced God’s sovereignty, dishonored God’s holiness, despised God’s righteousness, disregarded God’s wrath, and denied His love. Our minds are blinded, our emotions are disordered,
our bodies are defiled, and our relationships are broken. We are slaves to sin, dominated by Satan, lovers of darkness, children of wrath, morally evil, sinfully sick, and spiritually dead...

- And we want what’s fair?

“Do you really want nothing but totally effective, instantaneous justice?
Then go to hell.”

D.A. Carson

- And we know how to instruct God on what’s good and evil?
  - God is not accountable to us.
  - We are accountable to Him.

- The startling realities...
  - Evil is not just outside of us; it’s inside of us.
    - What we do.
    - What we fail to do.
  - We are different from violent criminals in degree, not in kind.

- The common question...
  - “Why do bad things happen to good people?” is a bad question.

Romans 3:10-12

- What if God is actually restraining 99.99% of evil and suffering in the world right now?

Genesis 20:6; Psalm 19:13

- Let us not rail against God in self-righteousness.
- Let us repent of sin against God in heartfelt brokenness.

Psalm 51:1-17

- In order to see suffering for why it’s here,...
  - We must see sin for what it is.
  - We must see ourselves for who we are.

A humble view of man—his sinful depravity and small perspective—is essential for understanding suffering in your life and in this world.

3. The ultimate reason suffering exists is to exalt the glory of God’s grace through the suffering of God’s Son for the salvation of undeserving sinners.

To exalt the glory of God’s grace...
- God creates us for His glory.

Isaiah 43:1-7; 1 Corinthians 10:31

- God saves us by His grace.

Ephesians 2:4-10; Ephesians 1:3-14

Through the suffering of God’s Son...
- God planned the crucifixion of Jesus before the creation of the world.

Revelation 13:8; Acts 2:23

- God permitted sin and suffering in the world ultimately in order to make Good Friday a reality.
God permits sin to enter the world.

*Genesis 3:6-7*

God ordains suffering to enter the world.

*Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 8:20-23*

God sends His Son into the world to suffer for sinners.

*Galatians 4:4-5*

- This was not plan B.
- This was always plan A.
- God permitted murder in Genesis 4 so that His Son would be murdered according to Acts 4.

*Genesis 4:8; Acts 4:26-28*

For the salvation of undeserving sinners.
- [God permits sin to enter the world.]
- [God ordains suffering to enter the world.]
- [God sends His Son into the world to suffer for sinners.]
- God saves undeserving sinners for the glory of His grace.
  - He saves them by His grace.

*2 Timothy 1:8-10*

- He saves them through His Son’s suffering.
  - Jesus absorbed God’s wrath through suffering.

*Galatians 3:13*

- Jesus bore our sins through suffering.

*1 Peter 2:24*

- Jesus purchased our forgiveness through suffering.

*Isaiah 53:4-6*

- Jesus provided us righteousness through suffering.

*2 Corinthians 5:21*

- Jesus defeated death through suffering.

*Hebrews 2:14-15*

- Jesus disarmed Satan through suffering.

*Colossians 2:14-15*

- Jesus reconciled us to God through suffering.
**Romans 5:10-11**

- He saves them ________ for _________ His glory.

**Revelation 5:9-14**

- For all of eternity, the slaughtered Lamb who suffered on our behalf will be at the _______ center_______ of our worship.

**Revelation 15:3-4**

- Forever, we will _______ praise _______ Jesus for the glory of God’s grace.

4. God _________ ordains _______ suffering for the Christian in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes.

“Jesus, however, came to redeem us from Satan’s power and dominion over us….We are to reign as kings in life. That means that we have dominion over our lives. We are to dominate, not to be dominated. Circumstances are not to dominate you. Poverty is not to rule and reign over you. You are to rule and reign over poverty. Disease and sickness are not to rule and reign over you. You are to rule and reign over sickness. We are to reign as kings in life by Christ Jesus, in whom we have our redemption.”

Kenneth Hagin

The Definition of the “Prosperity Gospel”

- The “prosperity” gospel is a theology which believes that God’s aim is to make believers _______ healthy _______ and _______ wealthy _______ in this life.
  - We enjoy excesses.
  - We live like King’s kids.

The Deception of the “Prosperity Gospel”

- The consistent error...
  - Ripping texts from ______ contexts _________.

  **3 John 2**

- Does prayer guarantee health and wealth?

  **Mark 10:29-30**

- Have those who claimed the benefits paid the price?

  **Psalm 103:2-3**

- Is this general praise or a guaranteed promise?

  **James 5:10-18**

- Faith is patient in suffering.
- Faith is prayerful in sorrow.
The counter-examples...
  o The life and teachings of Jesus
    ▪ Not the “health and wealth gospel”
    ▪ More like the “homeless and wounded gospel”
    ▪ God may accomplish higher purposes in our _______ death _______ than in our life.

  John 12:23-26

  o The life and teachings of Paul
    ▪ Not the “prosperity gospel”
    ▪ More like the “adversity gospel”
    ▪ God may accomplish higher purposes in our _______ sickness _______ than in our health.

  2 Corinthians 12:7-10

“*When Paul was taken in chains from his filthy Roman dungeon and beheaded at the order of the opulent madman Nero, two representatives of humanity faced off, one of the best and one of the worst. One lived for prosperity on earth, the other didn’t. One now lives in prosperity in heaven, the other doesn’t. We remember both men for what they truly were, which is why we name our sons Paul and our dogs Nero.*”

Randy Alcorn

The Dangers of the “Prosperity Gospel”
• It overlooks the _______ design _______ of suffering.
  o Christians may suffer despite their righteousness.
  o Christians may suffer because of their righteousness.
• It fails to acknowledge the _______ necessity _______ of suffering.

God ordains suffering for the Christian...

  Romans 8:35-37; Philippians 1:29; Colossians 1:24; 1 Peter 4:12-14; 2 Timothy 3:12

God ordains suffering for the Christian in a variety of ways...
• The Christian may suffer with _______ sickness _______.

  Philippians 2:25-27

  “Maybe Alzheimer’s disease runs in your family genes, but don’t succumb to it. Instead, say every day, ‘My mind is alert. I have clarity of thought. I have a good memory. Every cell in my body is increasing and getting healthier.’ If you’ll rise up in your authority, you can be the one to put a stop to the negative things in your family line....Start boldly declaring, ‘God is restoring health unto me. I am getting better every day in every way.’”

  Joel Osteen

• The Christian may suffer from disaster.


• The Christian may suffer through various _______ struggles _______.
1 Timothy 5:23; 2 Corinthians 12:7

• The Christian may suffer in persecution.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28

• Regardless of what type of suffering the Christian experiences, the Christian suffers “____ with _______ Christ” or “for Christ” or “in Christ.”

Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 4:15-16

  ○ Satan intends every type of suffering to sabotage us.
  ○ God intends every type of suffering to sanctify us.

God ordains suffering for the Christian in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes.

• To ______ refine ______ our faith.

  Romans 5:3-4; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-8

• To ______ reveal ______ His glory.

  ○ To us.

  Acts 5:41; Galatians 6:17; Philippians 1:19-23; Philippians 3:7-10

  ○ To others.

  John 9:3; Luke 21:12-13; Acts 8:1; Acts 11:19-21; 2 Corinthians 1:5-6; 2 Corinthians 4:10-12; Philippians 1:12-14; Philippians 2:29-30; Colossians 1:24; 2 Timothy 2:9-10

• To teach us to ______ rely ______ on Him.

  2 Corinthians 1:8-9; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

“The devil will afflict you [and] will make a real doctor of you, and will teach you by his temptations to seek and to love God's Word. For I myself...owe my papists many thanks for so beating, pressing, and frightening me through the devil's raging that they have turned me into a fairly good theologian, driving me to a goal I should never have reached.”

Martin Luther

• To bring us to ______ repent ______ and renounce all sin in our lives.

  Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 11:27-32; Hebrews 12:3-11; Revelation 3:19

• To lead us to our ______ reward ______ in Him.

  Matthew 5:11-12; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

All of these purposes have one common end:

• ______ Joy ______ in Christ...

  Matthew 5:11-12; Acts 5:41; Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Colossians 1:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; James 1:2; 1 Peter 4:13; Philippians 3:7-11; Matthew 13:44
“I hope in some way I can take my wheelchair to heaven. With my new glorified body I will stand up on resurrected legs, and I will be next to the Lord Jesus. And I will feel those nail prints in his hands, and I will say, ‘Thank you, Jesus!’ He will know I mean it, because he will recognize me from the inner sanctum of sharing in the fellowship of his sufferings. He will see that I was one who identified with him in the sharing of his sufferings, so my gratitude will not be hollow. And then I will say, ‘Lord Jesus, do you see that wheelchair over there? Well, you were right. When you put me in it, it was a lot of trouble. But the weaker I was in that thing, the harder I leaned on you. And the harder I leaned on you, the stronger I discovered you to be. I do not think I would ever have known the glory of your grace were it not for the weakness of that wheelchair. So thank you, Lord Jesus, for that. Now, if you like, you can send that thing off to hell.”

Joni Erickson Tada

5. The completion of the Great Commission will include great suffering, but eternity will prove it was ________ worth ________ the price.

The completion of the Great Commission...

Matthew 24:14; Matthew 28:18-20

• The Great Commission...
  o Not a general assignment to make disciples among as many people as possible.
  o Instead, a ________ specific_______ assignment to make disciples among every people group on the planet.
    ▪ Number of people groups worldwide: __________ 11,535 _________.
    ▪ Number of people groups still unreached with the Gospel: ______ 6,628 _______.
    ▪ Number of people groups still unreached and unengaged with the Gospel: ______ 3,501 ________.
  • ...will one day be complete.

Revelation 7:9-10

“God alone knows the definition of terms. I cannot precisely define who all the nations are, but I do not need to know. I know only one thing: Christ has not yet returned; therefore, the task is not yet done. When it is done, Christ will come. Our responsibility is not to insist on defining the terms; our responsibility is to complete the task. So long as Christ does not return, our work is undone. Let us get busy and complete our mission.”

George Ladd

The completion of the Great Commission will include great suffering...

Matthew 24:9-14

• Jesus said it.

John 15:20; John 20:21

• The church in Acts _______ demonstrated _________ it.


• Paul spoke about it.
Colossians 1:24; 2 Timothy 3:12

- Early Christians ________ experienced ________ it.

1 Peter 4:12

“We [Christians] multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed.”
Tertullian

“The Church of Christ has been founded by shedding its own blood, not that of others; by enduring outrage, not by inflicting it. Persecutions have made it grow; martyrdoms have crowned it.”
St. Jerome

- Revelation ________ anticipates ________ it.

Revelation 6:9-11

- The more passionate we become about spreading the gospel to every people group in the world, the ________ more ________ we will suffer.
  - Satan is prolonging the end as long as he possibly can.
  - As you give your life to advancing the Gospel to the ends of the earth, you can expect to be met in ________ force ________ by the devil and all the demons of hell.

The completion of the Great Commission will include great suffering, but eternity will prove it was worth the price.

Revelation 12:7-12

- Christ will be honored as ________ King ________.
  - The salvation of God is here!
  - The power of God is here!
  - The kingdom of God is here!

- The devil will be cast down in ________ defeat ________.
  - The ancient serpent of the garden.
  - The great adversary (Satan).
  - The accuser of believers.

A mighty fortress is our God, A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and pow'r are great, And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His name, From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

And tho' this world, with devils filled, Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph thro' us.
The Prince of Darkness grim—We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.
Martin Luther

• The church will rise up in victory.
  ▪ By the blood of Christ shed on a cross.
  ▪ The accusations of the devil are empty.
  ▪ The peace of Christ is eternal.
  ▪ By the lives of Christians sacrificed in this cause.
    ▪ Believers who shared in Christ’s sufferings.
    ▪ Believers who participated in Satan’s defeat.
  • When Satan uses persecution to destroy the life of a believer, he ultimately participates in their eternal delight and his own eternal destruction.

“I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world? Whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life? Whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death? Can you consent to all this, for the sake of Him who left His heavenly home and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing, immortal souls; for the sake of Zion and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her Saviour from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?”
Adoniram Judson, Letter to Mr. Hasseltine

“Deeply appreciate your consolation. Sacrifice seems great, but not too great for Him who gave Himself for us. Experiencing God’s grace. Believe wholeheartedly Romans 8:28.”
Betty Stam’s Parents

“Shearest Daddy and Mother, you don’t need to hear me say how much we love you and are thinking of and praying for you in these days…I have such radiant pictures of Betty and John standing with their palms of victory before the Throne, singing a song of pure joy because they had given everything they had to their Master, that I cannot break loose and cry about it as people expect. Crying seems to be too petty for a thing that was so manifestly in God’s hands alone; but my heart is very, very sore for you.”
Betty Stam’s Sister

• So for all who reject the King...
  ▪ Hell will be a place of irreversible justice.

Revelation 20:11-15

• And for all who revere the King...
  ▪ Heaven will be a place of inexpressible joy.

Revelation 21:1-4

  ▪ We will be with Him!

Revelation 21:22-27

  ▪ Death will be replaced by life.
    • No more sin.
• No more sorrow.
• No more sickness.
• No more separation.
  ▪ Night will be replaced by light.
  ▪ Corruption will be replaced by purity.
  ▪ Curse will be replaced by blessing.

Revelation 22:1-3

○ We will see His ______________ face ____________.

Revelation 22:4

Some day the silver cord will break,
   And I no more as now shall sing,
 But, O, the joy when I awake,
   Within the palace of the King.
 And I shall see Him face to face,
   And tell the story saved by grace.

Some day my earthly house will fall,
   I cannot tell how soon 'twill be,
 But this I know, my All in All
 Has now a place in heaven for me.
 And I shall see Him face to face,
   And tell the story saved by grace.

Some day, when fades the golden sun
 Beneath the rosy-tinted West,
 My blessed Lord will say, "Well done!"
   And I shall enter into rest.
 And I shall see Him face to face,
   And tell the story saved by grace.

Some day— till then I'll watch and wait,
 My lamp all trimmed and burning bright,
 That when my Saviour opes the gate,
 My soul to Him may take its flight.
 And I shall see Him face to face,
   And tell the story saved by grace.

Fanny Crosby

• The claim of Christ...
  ▪ I am coming ______________ soon ____________!

Revelation 22:7; Revelation 22:12-13; Revelation 22:20

• The cry of the church...
  ▪ Amen, ___________Come____________, Lord Jesus!
If you are interested in exploring the cross and suffering or specific topics from this evening’s Secret Church further, the following resources are recommended. Many of these resources were foundational for the truths we explored in our study. Please note, however, that though these books are recommended, Dr. Platt does not necessarily agree with everything written in every one of them. We urge you to read and learn from these books, but at the same time, be wise in your reading to discern good teaching from men’s opinions.

- **On Suffering...**
  - Randy Alcorn, *If God Is Good: Faith in the Midst of Suffering and Evil*
  - John Piper and Justin Taylor, *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*
  - Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts*
  - C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* and *A Grief Observed*
  - Joni Erickson Tada, *A Place of Healing: Wrestling with the Mysteries of Suffering, Pain, and God’s Sovereignty*
  - John Piper, *Filling Up The Afflictions of Christ*
  - Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson, ed., *Suffering and the Goodness of God*
  - Larry Waters and Roy Zuck, ed., *Why, O God? Suffering and Disability in the Bible and the Church*

- **On the Cross...**
  - John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*
  - C.J. Mahaney, *The Cross-Centered Life*
  - Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced For Our Transgressions*
  - Leon Morris, *The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance*
  - John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*
  - J.I. Packer and Mark Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood*
  - Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*

- **On Theology...**
  - Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*
  - Danny Akin, ed., *Theology for the Church*
  - D.A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*