



Suffering and the Sovereignty of God

Truths I've learned and been reminded of through suffering

1. We can trust God in his sovereignty, goodness, wisdom and love.

Psalm 119:68 - "You are good and what you do is good."

Psalm 115:3 - "Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him."

1 John 4:16 "We know and rely on the love the Lord has for us." (to Believe the love)

Psalm 9:9-10 - "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble."

Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you."

2. We must view our suffering in light of His suffering.

Hebrews 2:10 - "In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering."

Hebrews 5:7-9 - "During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him."

3. My sufferings are achieving something for me. Nothing is wasted in the life of a Christian.

2 Cor. 4:16-18 - "Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

4. God is absolutely trustworthy and faithful when we are faithless.

Lam 3:22-23. “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

5. God is not afraid of my questions.

Jesus, in his humanity, said “My God, my God why have you forsaken me? Which was straight from Ps 22:1.

Ps 13:1-2 “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever” How long will you hide your face from me? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?”

6. Christ and Christ alone must be our source of hope and joy. Our joy can’t be in our circumstances or the hope that things are going to get better, or in anything else. Only through Christ can you be “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” as the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Cor 6:10. Who is your source?

7. Our response matters. Your faith matters to God. His glory is at stake in our lives.

Heb. 11: 6 states, “Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that he is a rewarder of those who earnestly seek Him.”

8. God uses broken things. He can take our brokenness and turn it into something beautiful.

9. Ultimately, God is using our suffering to make us more like Christ.

Application

Two Questions we need to ask ourselves when facing a difficult trial:

1. What is God trying to work in me? (He’s after something in my life.)
2. How can I glorify Him in it? (What does faith look like in my life?)

Is my suffering pushing me to the Savior or away from Him? Heat can have two effects – it can harden or melt.

Quotes to Ponder:

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain; it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” CS Lewis

“The deepest things I have learned in my own life have come from the deepest suffering. And out of the deepest waters and the hottest fires have come the deepest things that I know about God.” Elizabeth Elliot

From the booklet “Behind a Frowning Providence”

“I walked a mile with pleasure, she chatted all the way,
But left me none the wiser for all she had to say.
I walked a mile with sorrow and ne’er a word said she,
But oh the things I learned from her, when sorrow walked with me.”

“God in His love always wills what is best for us. In His wisdom He always knows what is best, and in His sovereignty He has the power to bring it about.” Jerry Bridges

“I may not understand God’s Hand but I can trust His heart. Joni Eareckson

“When my plans crumble and God takes me away from my dreams, I must trust in God’s infinite wisdom. When my cup of suffering seems too much to bear, I need to rest in His immeasurable love. When my life spins out of control, I need to remember God’s absolute sovereignty.” Vaneetha Risner

“When Paul is hurting, he fixes his eyes not on how heavy the hurt is, but on how heavy the glory will be because of the hurt.” John Piper

“Lament is the heart’s honest cry of a hurting heart wrestling with the paradox of pain and the promise of God’s goodness.” Mark Vroegop

“Part of really living is being willing to face sadness. Not wallowing in my pain and refusing to be comforted, but honestly and openly telling God where I am and asking Him to show me truth. Letting Him, the God of all comfort, comfort me. Letting Him, the God of hope, fill me with hope. And letting Him, the man of sorrows acquainted with grief, bear my sorrows for me.” Vaneetha Risner

“I can show the surpassing worth of Christ when I suffer well – when I joyfully accept circumstances that are less than perfect, when I give up my need to control. Willingly relinquishing my need to have things exactly as I want is an act of worship.” Vaneetha Risner

“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.” C.H. Spurgeon

“If my life is broken when given to Jesus, it may be because pieces will feed a multitude when a loaf would only satisfy a little boy.” Anonymous

“What is noteworthy in this drama is that God never directly answers Job’s questions. He doesn’t say “Job, the reason you have suffered is for this or that.” Rather, what God does in the mystery of the iniquity of such profound suffering is that He answers Job with Himself. This is the wisdom that answers the question of suffering. Not the answer to why I have to suffer in a particular way, in a particular time, and in a particular circumstance, but wherein does my hope rest in the midst of suffering.” RC Sproul