

Suffering has Value

- Meaningless — Everything is meaningless... So Fear (be in reverent awe of his power, majesty and love) God and keep his commandments (walk with God)
- Scripture does not talk about those who have found God but those who walk with God. (Rachel Held Evans)

- Suffering
 - Monistic view—deny it
 - Stoic—endure it
 - Dualism—forgive God for it—(battle good and evil)
 - Existentialism—defies it—(world cruel but I will be good—problem how know justice and compassion)
 - Hedonist—avoid it—live for pleasure
 - Romanist—good begets good lives—bad bad lives—-so live good and great rewarded
 - Political-Blame it
 - Masochistic—welcome it—unless suffer not worthwhile
- Problem—all deny God

- Problem— all deny God—
 - God is all powerful judge of history
 - wise loving weaver of history
 - —we cannot see the beginning or the end—suffering tests us, refines us, strengthens us (Tim Keller)

- Job (looks at issue from different sides)
 - Pain comes as a direct attack of a hostile force whose design is to coerce man to rebellion against God
 - Friends argue—
 - Punishment for sin
 - Disciplinary with potential to leading us closer to God
 - Yahweh argues that suffering is a mystery—but not beyond God’s sovereign rule nor does it mar the wonders of God’s creation
 - Nothing is beyond God’s authority and he cares for all
 - Final scene Job discovers that the annoyance of suffering dissolves in the affirming warmth of the divine presence

- Purpose of the poem is to challenge mankind to endure its lot with an unadulterated confidence in God, for in doing so humanity attains the noblest qualities inherent in its character
- Each person's victory over suffering offers solace to others and gains for him the privilege of interceding for others
- Confidence in God and the justice of his ways
- Confidence in his privilege to approach God and struggle with God—the verbalization is actually part of the process of growth
- Job's deep-seated reverence for God inspires the conviction that God will become his Advocate or Redeemer (*go el*)—and thus his complete vindication
- Job focuses on God and thus endures, preserves and comes through
- (The International Stand Bible Encyclopedia article on Job)

- N.T. Wright: The chaos and misery of this present world is...the raw material out of which the loving, wise, and just God is making his new creation
- Instead of looking for someone to blame, we need to look at afflictions as opportunities for God to work
- Jesus calls his Church to continue his ministry of relieving people's afflictions.

(Tim Peck)

- Called to incarnation lifestyle—
 - Wow—called to be like Jesus—
 - Which means we are called to suffer—to take up our cross and follow him
 - What does that look like in your situation to give up heaven (Phil 2) to be with, for, and give yourself for others
 - Issue—we are completing the work of Jesus to restore what was lost
 - Happens—when we die—there is fruit

- C.S. Lewis
 - Universe is running down—all higher forms of life are afflicted by pain
 - Issue of free will—and yet still in control—(problem—wood is for giving warmth via a fire or it can be used to kill someone by hitting them over the head)—so arguing for universe without pain is beyond our scope of understanding
 - The issue is that God is Good
 - Pain hurts—it is also a megaphone—so know something is wrong (it unmasks sin) and leads us to God—making us dependent on God
 - So issue is not why pain—but finding hope in God
 - Suffering not good in and of itself
 - We will not be able to remove it from the earth via science or social means
 - The security and happiness we crave will never be obtained in this life and can end up keeping us from God—God does give moments of refreshment
 - We need not be concerned about bearing the suffering of the world, the max we will suffer is our own suffering (in contrast to Jesus)
 - Pain is the only evil that does not tend to spread, recur, or reproduce itself. Its effect on normal observers is to arouse, not further error, sin or pride but pity. Pain is a unique kind of evil.

- How to Cope
 - Don't try and explain away or present that it is good or does not exist
 - At times we just need to go through
 - Not called to like it
 - Expectations Matter: Grand Hotel or Prison
 - At times it is for our benefit—but seldom see
 - Questions and anxieties are not sin
 - At times it is our sharing in the passion of Christ
 - The question is not why do we suffer, but why not
 - Great Divorce: I never said it would not hurt you, I said it would not kill you—it transforms us
 - Ultimately heaven is the answer—Romans 8:18—present suffering not worthy to be compared to future glory

All he could offer his readers was his conviction that when pain is to be borne, a little courage helps more than much knowledge, a little human sympathy more than much courage, and the least tincture of the love of God more than all

- Suffering—no growth without trouble
 - produces glory
 - pruning—so see reflection of God
 - develop heart of God—heart for world, grieve over sin
 - Learn God's lessons—God what do you want me to learn
 - Trust God's time—he has a schedule
 - Be Obedient

- John 9
- Suffering is governed by God's will so that...
- All suffering is there to further the redemptive work of God (never senseless)
- God is in control and able to work all things to his good
- Suffering is always a way for God's work to go on in your life
- With trouble—see things that are binding me—so issue is not why but what—what is God wanting to grow or do in me—
- Obey in the dark

- Suffering comes from sin in general but never sin in particular
- God doesn't punish us—He punishes Jesus

- Glory—weight, substance, depth—Velveteen Rabbit—become real
- Presence—not problem to be solved—it’s a mystery we’re in—Jesus loves us—he became involved in our suffering (Daniel—4 men in the furnace)
- Resurrection-Death is swallowed up in victory—Heaven will come to earth and renew everything—keep eyes on the hope
- (Tim Keller)

- Everything is necessary that he sends. Nothing can be necessary that he withholds
- You don't learn who you are without suffering—shows you your faults, flaws
- It's only for a little while
- Make sure you go back to the doctrine and rejoice
- Remember He's a Father—he has appointed these things that you grow
- They purify—see his image reflected back
- They purify—create separation—good and bad
- Suffering reveals where we are placing our trust—where we seek security and hope
- Don't be surprised—and commit yourself to God
- (Tim Keller)

- You will handle life's difficulties depending on your focus
- You will deal with your troubles as long as you understand Jesus' work—no condemnation, he is there with you fighting along side you
- You should discern his model—trust in God—Jesus endured because of the joy set before him
- Obey

- Inevitability of suffering
- Pattern of suffering—it's the way the gospel works—death leads to resurrection—weakness leads to triumphant exaltation
- The future of suffering—glory
- New priority, new identity (Christ vs. world), new mercy—sign of a disciple is gentleness comes from journey with Jesus

- JOhn Stott
- Only right attitude towards suffering is worship or humble self-surrender—acknowledging the limits of our finite ends
- Let God be God—and be content to be mere man (realize his power and love)—we have a larger revelation than Job—he only knew the god of nature we know the God of grace
- The cross is the pledge of God's love
- Essential of perspective—Climb hill of Calvary and from that vantage-ground survey all life's tragedies—since God has demonstrated his holy love and justice in a historical event—no other historical event can override it or disprove it—he controls future-Lamb in Revelation
- suffering is path to holiness and maturity—people who suffer have a fragrance others lack—this being so I wonder if the real test of our hunger for holiness is our willingness to experience any degree of suffering if only thereby God will make us holy
- God suffered and still suffers—why are you persecuting me?
- Feel what Jesus felt—so compassion for worldwide suffering so we take action
- place of suffering in service and of passion in mission not taught today—greatest single secret of evangelistic effectiveness is the willingness to suffer and die—