

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

by Dr. A.E. Wilder-Smith

God allows suffering because it is a means of doing an eternal work, and it is necessary for our growth and development.

Duration: 49:00

Topics: "Suffering"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the question of why God allows illness to exist in the world. He starts by emphasizing that humans are God's species and that we are considered gods according to Jesus. Understanding God's ways, like Moses did, is crucial in dealing with the problems we face. The speaker then connects this understanding to the Easter message of Jesus suffering and redeeming a lost world. He acknowledges that it can be challenging to explain this to non-Christians, especially those who are suffering physically. The speaker shares a personal story of a man named Frank who was a cripple and discusses the complexity of the human body. The sermon ends with the speaker reflecting on his visit to Germany after World War II and his experience in a damaged cathedral.

Transcript

Well now, my good friends here, I've just got off the plane, as it were, and we had 26 hours sitting in those rigid planes, well, they're very useful planes, but when things go too long, you know, then they're too long. 26 hours is long enough, and I still don't know whether I'm coming or going. I hope that I'm coming.

Now, the subject is for a person suffering from jet lag and high blood pressure and all the rest of it, is a hard one, and I swirled when I heard that I was to speak to you on that subject tonight. But you're nice, gracious people, I've just heard you sing, and I hope you'll bear with me when I try and do it properly, in the English sense of the word. Now, I'd like to read to you just one verse before we start, so that we get the biblical cut on this very important subject.

You see, it's very easy to sing about the Lord being king, and I know that God reigns. I've seen him reign in my life. But I also know that his reign does not cut out suffering.

Ask yourself this one question, while I'm reading the word of God to you. Why was Jesus crowned king? He who for the suffering of death, yea, the death on the cross, was exalted above all things. So kingship and sovereignty, the rule of God, is usually associated with suffering.

Jesus, when he reigns on high, will reign on high, in the heavens, with his pierced hands, on high. And he will show his pierced side, and he will bear forever the witness of manhood in him, the witness of the cross. And that suffering, when you see Jesus in glory, he's in glory because he's suffering.

I had a very, very painful time of life, when I was a young man. And one of the things that I thank God for, in my Christian life, and that is the things that we suffer. Now, I went to a very good brother, a very good friend of mine, G.H. Leng it was.

And I talked about all these things, things that were bothering me and worrying me during the war, the Second World War. And he said, nothing at all. The old man had a nice good beard, you know, and he was a real brother.

And he said, no, no, not a word. So I thought, what's the use of pouring all that into that old man's ears to get some advice out of him? And he said to me, at the end, you know, brother, he said, I'm really happy. I've been pouring out a tale of woe.

I'm really happy, he said. I thought he was being facetious, you know, sometimes English people are facetious, occasionally. Has been known to happen, my wife says.

So he said to me, yes, I'm happy. I can see that God is taking care of your education for us, to get you exalted one of these days. As you know, I'd never forgotten that.

Now let me read this word. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time. Now there's not a person here who doesn't know what that means, in one way or another.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed in us. What was the secret of the coming glory of the crucified Lord? We celebrate today, Easter. The secret was the past suffering.

The secret of coming glory is bound up in past suffering. Now that may not sound a very nice notion, but believe me, it is. And I'm going to try and talk to you about that as best I can, tonight.

Just a word of prayer. I ask thee, Lord Jesus, to give me wise lips and useful thoughts. The thoughts of thine own word, that we may all be blessed by our few minutes together around these things.

Amen. Now, why does God allow it? Why all the sufferings? Why does God bring us to glory through many sufferings? Why was God himself, in the Lord Jesus, crowned with glory and honor, because he suffered? Now, if he is omnipotent, and I believe he's omnipotent, why doesn't he stop it? Did he make the world evil? Did he make things like they are now? I don't think so. I think that God made the world very, very good.

He says of us, he made us, the work of his hands, very good. Why did he make us good? How did he do it? Well, the reason is, of course, that he made us. Are you listening to me? I want you to watch very carefully and listen to me.

He made us of his own, you ready, genus. It says in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 17, that we are the offspring of God. The offspring.

Now, that's an old English word, and one forgets what it means. It means the same species. Now, you see, my children are the same species as their dad and mom.

We can only bring forth, we humans, our own species, just as apes can only bring forth apes. Well, now, God made us of his own species. And if God himself, are you listening, was made perfect by suffering, don't you think you're going to be made perfect any other way? You're not, neither am I. That's definite.

Jesus himself was crowned with glory and honor by suffering. Now, I'm talking to you as Christians, because I don't expect many people who aren't Christians would stick it out very long with your worthy pastor and the congregation here, you know, singing praises of the Lord if you don't love him. But you can't talk to non-Christians like this.

It's easy to talk to you like that, because you've had the message talk to you, sit to you so many Sundays, so many, so long a time. But when you come to a non-Christian, he looks at the world and sees it's awful. And what are you going to say to him? I say as a Christian, you'll be crowned with glory, same as Jesus was, because he redeemed you by his own blood.

But what can you say? With a poor cripple who's been ravaged by poliomyelitis, and is a wreck of a person. I studied chemistry and physics with a man who also studied chemistry and physics. His name was Frank Lynch.

Now, Frank was ten years older than me, because he'd been ten years a cripple. And I used to talk to Frank about his sufferings. He was awful, you know.

It was a pain to be with him. He was always suffering. The left side was completely gone, paralyzed.

And he said to me, you know, Wilder, it's all very well for you to talk to me like you do, but I think this, if there is a God, he ought to have made a better job of me than I am. You don't think that I'm a good job, do you? Well, I told him I did. Oh, you see, that's only because you're a hypocrite.

You won't face up to the truth. But he said, I can't run, I hobble around, I can't do anything. I'm a cripple.

Well, I said, okay, if God made you like that, I'm satisfied. He said, I'm not. I am not.

What should you say to him? I think he said, too, if there is a God, I think he ought to have made the world a better place than it is. Why did he make those polio bugs that have made me like I am? We tried to fight them. You asked him to heal me, and you, with his help, can't.

You're both a pretty little omnipotent pair, aren't you? You are God and you. You can't do it. You'd like to.

Why don't you? Why can't you heal me? Why can't you put me right? Well, I talked to him about healing and all the other things you know. But he understood the gospel. And do you know what he said to me? He said, Wilder, I know the way very well.

You've made it perfectly clear to me that Jesus died for my sins. When I see the end coming, I'm going to be converted. I'm going to give my heart to the Lord, you see.

And then, I'll have enjoyed this world and the next two, and I'll laugh at you. You've gone through life like a Puritan. You haven't enjoyed all the things that we others do.

Although he was a cripple, he did. He drank a lot, if that's enjoyment. And that was it.

Do you know what happened? After I'd finished studying, done my doctor's degree and all the rest of it, I used to write to him. I went and stayed with him. And he used to write every Christmas.

And one Christmas, Christmas 1944, the end of the war. I wrote to him, the usual Christmas card, got no answer. No answer, Frank always wrote.

No, no answer. But about the middle of January, I had a little letter. And in those days, he used to put a little black rim around it, you know.

And it was in his wife's handwriting. And she said, on Christmas morning, Frank went into the bathroom to shave. And I didn't hear anything of him for a long time.

So I tried to open the door and couldn't. So I got the police. And there was Frank, died in a second, shaving himself with a massive cerebral hemorrhage.

I've often wondered, you know, if anybody plays with God like that. Whether God does give us time. He didn't give Frank any.

Not that I know of. Now, what can you say to things like that? I mean, these are real problems. I love singing hymns.

But you know, confronted with problems like that, to give an answer that's satisfying, and after all, God's given us a good brain, we should give satisfying answers with it. To give the usual sort of stuff, I can't. It's too serious.

I read in a German newspaper, oh, it must be ten, fifteen years ago now, the following. It was in Der Spiegel. Now, even Americans know what Der Spiegel is, don't you? It's a sort of a time magazine, but ten grades down or up, I'll leave to you.

I personally, I wouldn't like to say up or down, because they might have me here for, well, doing things I want not to do. They had this as an obituary. You know what an obituary is, don't you? A notice of death.

And it was in very, very black ink, obituary. And I'm going to read it out to you. This is how people think there.

You live here in relative paradise, you know. About 84% of you people in America believe in God of some sort or another. In Europe, it isn't five.

Over 50% of people on the street do not believe in God, and do not go to church. It is not the habit of the European to go to church. It is here, I'm thankful to say.

This is what I read in this magazine. I'm going to read it to you verbatim, because it's important. Listen.

Notice of decease. After a long period of inactivity and illness, and then in very, very thick black lettering, God the Lord has died. As we hear from... This was the time of the Vietnam War.

As we hear from the war in Vietnam, you could put in Lebanon, you could put in Beirut today, it doesn't make any difference. Continues in all the ferocity. Napalm bombs fall on the civil population.

Hitler's disciple keys, supported by the USA. More soldiers die daily. More people die of starvation in India, China, Algiers.

Wheat rots in the western silos. And the churches make collections for a new coat of paint on their cemetery fences. We hear that in the kingdom of God on earth, more and more humans are being murdered, tortured, robbed of human rights, strangled, burnt to death, starved to death.

We believe that anybody who is intellectually honest can come to only one answer and one solution. God, who rules all things well, and whom my soul worships, and who leads me into green pastures and besides still waters, he is either absent, ill, has left town, or dead. A God who governed all things well in Auschwitz, Hitler's concentration camp, one of them, the Warsaw Ghetto, Vietnam, the New York Negro Quarters, they never forget that.

The New York Negro Quarters does not exist. He never did his work well. His job is now open.

He will have to be substituted for by us. The future is open. In very great sadness and distress, signed Ingbert Lindmann, Doctor of Theology.

Now my friends, you've got to talk to people like that. I'm only a person who has been exercising myself to do that all these years. So you must think of me as being a little bit deformed in my character when I try to talk to people who believe like that.

What are we going to do about it? I had my own professor, who was also an atheist, in Geneva. I was there 12 years as his assistant in the medical faculty in the University of Geneva. His father had been a theologian who from his heart believed as your worthy and good pastor believes.

He was an evangelical man. But the son, my professor, wasn't. He was an atheist.

And I said to him, you know, professor, you're a chain smoker and you have all the other races which go with it. What will happen to you is the following. I tried to talk massively because he knew the testimony.

His own father was a Christian. I said, you'll have the flu and it won't be the flu. You will die very suddenly.

I shouldn't think it will go a long time with you. He was that sort of a person you can have a good idea, you know. Not always, but sometimes you can.

I said, you'll have the flu and there will be towards the end of it, say three weeks or a month, there will be an eruption of blood into your lungs and you will drown in your own blood. Don't you think you ought to get right for eternity? And he laughed me to scorn. And he said, if I do, it's a quick way of going.

Only a month or so later, wife telephoned me to say that he was ill and he got the flu. Could I come and see him? No. OK.

So I didn't. Two days later, telephone, he drowned in his own blood. Now his wife was Christian.

The agony of that, she knew. So did his father. The agony of that.

Now those are the things that you've got to deal with. I had another case, excuse me putting these things here, but I think it necessary that we not only sing and dance to the Lord, but we also do some sincere thinking about what we're coming to. Because we can come to worse things than that in less time than it takes to say Jack Robinson today.

Only a push on the button, you know. And that's it. I had a case, I won't take any more then, then we'll go into the meat of the matter.

I had a case of a woman coming to our hospital. She was a young mother, it was a prima para, she was having her first child. And she was in about seven and a half to eighth month.

And she had a fulminating cancer of the breast. Now, that's awful to see. And I was only a young man.

And I'd never seen one before. Well, I had to do the blood samples. So I did the blood samples.

And I talked to this poor soul. Here she was, seven and a half months pregnant. And I told her, you know as carefully as you can, what was going to happen.

And the thing was whether it was a race that we could keep her alive until she bore the child, or the child was buried with her. It was a race which was going to happen first. So she asked me, she said, do you think, do you think, doctor, that I'll stand it? Well, what can you say? I said, you want my private opinion? She said, yes.

So I said, the answer is no. You've got to be careful, you know. So she said, would you do me then one favor? You've talked to me about the matters of God, and I'm grateful that you've done so.

Your medicaments aren't helping me anymore, and I can see you as winning the race. Would you go to the professor and ask him to do a caesarean section? So I said, yes, I will, madam. I talked to her a lot about salvation.

So I went to my professor and said, look, patient, number so and so has asked me, what do you think? Well, he said, Wilder, what do you think? So I said, yes, I would. So he took this poor woman and did a caesarean on her, and saved the baby, but he didn't save the woman. She was dead within 24 hours.

But the joy of her seeing that baby alive in her arms. Now, if you go there with a cheap sort of a gospel, you know, you do more damage than good. You've got to go there really in the wisdom and depth and love and mercy and righteousness of God to deal with a case like that.

And the joy of seeing that, that she'd seen her baby, and she said, no, I can die. And she died. Well, she was in pain, but she died quite happily.

Now, when you get things like that, you know, a cheap gospel is cheap. What was God doing to that woman? What's God doing to the baby? Well, the next thing after she'd gone was the father with a motherless baby. Now, you think of a father having lost the wife, bringing his first and only child to the world and losing under that.

You think of the wisdom required to talk to a father like that. All I could tell the poor man was this, look, I'm sorry, Mr. So-and-so, but I will give you one word that may help you. If you pray about it, it might.

And that is, hereafter you will understand. I can't offer you any understanding now. He went away satisfied.

Now, you think what that means. What was God doing to them? God was doing in the suffering of the present time, he was doing an eternal work. Now, if you look at suffering as a means of doing an eternal work, then you look at it a bit differently.

Otherwise, we want to shun and avoid suffering. Don't we? I do. I don't like suffering.

And I don't like to see it. But I can only stand up to it if I understand it. Now, look, if I go to a dentist, my daughter is just qualified as a dentist, so I know firsthand.

If the dentist comes to me and he says, look, I've got a new drill that works at 200,000 revolutions a minute. Would you mind if I just tried it out on one or two of your good teeth? They're nice and hard. Do you think that I could have it right down to the bottom? If he were doing a job like that with me, I couldn't.

I wouldn't either. I wouldn't sit there not one minute. But if I got a root treatment, you know, and a lot of pus on the bottom of my tooth, I'd be very thankful for that drill.

Now, the pain would be the same. But if I knew the pain was curative, was healing, then I'd put up with it. And you see, if you can't rationalize pain and suffering in some way or another, you can't bear it.

How do you think Jesus bore the suffering of Good Friday? Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, even the death of the cross, for the redemption of the world, he could do it. But if it was a senseless thing, he couldn't. Now, there you get the necessity of using the instrument that God's given you.

It's one of the biggest instruments in the body, and certainly the most complicated instrument in the whole universe. If you understand the ways of the Lord, such as Moses did, he understood what God was doing in the wilderness. Therefore, he carried it through.

But if you don't understand, in understanding the man, says the Holy Scripture, you'll never hope to get ready, you'll never hope to be able to deal with the problems that we shall get, and which we do get. Now that is the preliminary cantor for what I've got to talk to you about tonight. And yet I think it's so necessary, because it's the basis of the Easter joy, isn't it? The basis of Easter Sunday is the Lord suffered the sufferings of death to redeem a world totally lost and absolutely lost in sin.

And the Lord went through with it, right to the end. And the result is, he's been crowned with glory and joy by God himself, the Father. As a result of that awful symptom, that instrument of death, known as the cross.

Okay? That's how I look at it. And that's what I say to you Christians. Difficult to talk to non-Christians like this, because they don't have the basis for it.

But you have the basis, so I've tried. Now, you think of this. Take the case of this poor woman who died of cancer.

God could stop it, couldn't he? Otherwise he wouldn't be omnipotent. God could stop it, but he doesn't. Now, if I'm working with God, presumably, I could stop it.

But I can't. I'd love to. Of course, I'd pray about the ability to do that.

But you know, I can't. Why does God let it go through? Now, let's look at the, why does he, he did when he was on earth do it, but why doesn't he do it, oh more, oh I'd like to see him do more. Yet in his wisdom he doesn't.

Why? Now, think of the answers that are possible. Either, are you ready with me now? Are you listening? Either he's impotent and can't. The world says that.

Okay, you Christians, okay, you've got an omnipotent God, he doesn't do it. Why? Why not? He can't. Well, that can't be an answer for us, can it? He can.

Well, the other answer is this. Maybe he doesn't care. Well, if he doesn't care, oh boys, that puts the whole question of the love of God in, that puts that into the question right from the start, doesn't it? We couldn't accept that one, that he doesn't.

Well, why doesn't he do it? Surely he doesn't agree with that. Well, the world says this. I said I'd try and tell you how to treat people who don't believe as we do.

The world says this. He existed once. Jesus showed that.

Some of them will even admit that. But now he's dead. For practical purposes.

He doesn't do it anymore. His practical purposes. He's dead.

Well, okay, if God's dead, can I accept that from a point of view of my intelligence? Well, obviously I can't. I can't accept that. Because if I look at a cell under a microscope and see the way a cell works, it's a miracle that we take the next breath, you know.

An absolute miracle. Any man who knows his way about biochemistry will tell you that. So if he's dead, how can he maintain us? So I said, okay, it can't be that he's not omnipotent.

It can't be that he doesn't care. It can't be that he's dead because we're maintained. It must mean that he has another purpose in not doing the job that we'd like him to do.

Now, let's look at this in a picture manner, a manner of picture. If you look at the world, say, as my job is as a pharmacologist, to look at cells. Say you look at a cell which is developing its oncogenes and turning over to cancer in two or three steps.

What does it look like? It looks like a mechanism. This is a scientific point of view. It looks like a mechanism, a cell that's going wrong, a mechanism that's falling to pieces.

It looks as though it was at one time, as though it were at one time. Perfect. And now it's going downhill.

I like to look at it like this. When I went to Germany the first time before the thousand years' kingdom of Hitler turned up, that was in 1933, one of the things I used to go and like to look at was the cathedral at Cologne. Now, some of you have seen the cathedral at Cologne, haven't you? It's marvellous.

It really is good. And I used to look at this huge organ, you know, and lovely windows and the flying buttresses all built in the Gothic style. I doubt you get people to build like that today as they did then.

And I used to go as a kid, you see, and look at this and wonder how wonderful it was. And then, of course, Hitler and his gang got going and the British got going too. The Yanks got going as well.

And they altered that cathedral quite a bit. It's in the station yard, you know. And the station is a place, the railway line, is a place in war.

It's like the arteries of a body. That's what you bust up if you can. So they bust up the railways, but they also bust up, of course, the cathedral at the same time.

Now, that cathedral is a very good picture of what the universe, the universe, the world is like today. It's well built. And the best place that you can see that it's well built is when it's bust up.

Do you know that? The best way to look at a cell is to take it to pieces. And when you take it to pieces, you bust it up. And not all the king's horses and all the king's men can put it together again.

So complicated it is. Now, when it's been busted up, I went there to see. I went to Germany in 1946.

And I remember coming in in a military car from England, from Krefeld, and then motoring right up to the station. You could hardly get near the place because it was so busted. Oh, dear, oh, dear.

The holes in the road. The people starving on the streets. People coming in big and wanted to take your luggage from you and steal and all the rest of it.

But what interested me most was to go into this cathedral again. So I went in. You go in at the risk of your life.

The roof was bombed. The organ, huge organ, was bombed. All the steps and the floor were away.

You couldn't get in for heaps of rubbish. And on the two towers, you know, those two towers at the end, those beautiful towers, two bombs had struck those towers, glancing blows. And those glancing blows had knocked out at one blow hundreds of tons of masonry.

Huge holes in those towers. I stood underneath those and looked. The flying buttress is all gone.

The window's gone. Everything's finished. Now, I'm going to ask you this one thing.

Don't be shocked. Do you think that I would ever say... Are you listening? Do you think I'd ever say that those architects that built that cathedral must have been fools to have built it like that? Do you think that would ever occur to me? If I'd asked myself, well, look here, those fellows that built that place that I saw 15 years, 10 years ago, were nuts to have built that place, a ruin, well, you'd take me to the nearest psychiatric couch and lay me down on it, wouldn't you? And say, look here, boys. There's something gone wrong with that computer machinery up top that he's thinking of things like that.

Obviously, when I looked at the ruins there, what did I think of? Well, I'll tell you what I think of. The very fact that that was ruined showed me how well they'd built it. There weren't any sham walls.

And between the walls, you know, there wasn't any rubbish thrown in that builders like to get rid of and put between walls. It was all built solid, right from the bottom to the top. It was ruined.

But even in its ruining, you could see how well it was built. Now, if you look at nature, if you look at yourself, look at how you develop cancer. There's a ruination process, if you like.

But you know, right in the opening up of the ruination process, you can see that was built. And do you know what? It was built for eternity. That cathedral was almost built for eternity.

But the cell is so built that it's capable of reproducing itself and repairing itself. If you lose a bit of information on your genetic code, you're so built that if everything else is functioning right, that you can

repair and recover that lost bit of information. Such as people needed to repair this cathedral, they needed a means of recovering the lost bits of information which bombs had made holes in the walls and things like that.

Now, when I looked at that cathedral, the last thing that occurred to me was the architects must have built it badly. The last thing. If you were to say to me, look here, this ruined cathedral shows that there's no architect.

Again, you would go around to the nearest psychiatric couch and lay me down well and truly upon it. And you're right. But that is exactly the position.

I learned this the hard way. I had a professor. He was a professor of physical chemistry.

And he forbade me to speak one more word of the gospel in his lab on the grounds that this world is so badly made and so badly ruined that there couldn't be an architect. Understand me? Have you got me? You can't say that because a Rolls Royce, oh, I'm sorry, a Cadillac for you people. You can't say that because a Cadillac is smashed up on the freeway that those people that built it were nuts.

Or that there was nobody that built it. And yet that is the atheistic argument that's put up. Because this world looks like the cathedral in Cologne, therefore nobody built it.

That's the atheistic argument. Have you ever heard what the scripture says so truly? That he who says there is no God is a fool. You can't argue like that.

The very fact that in the ruination you see that it was well built. The very slightest bit of order that's left in one of those flying buttresses, even though there's only half a flying buttress left, shows that the architects built the flying buttress well and good. And we're just the same in our body.

You can say, okay, the oncogenes are going wrong and there are viruses got in, there's a bit of extra information got in and some got lost, and you're going into cancer and therefore there's no architect. You couldn't argue with more folly than argue that way. Okay, now what's the grand question? And I'm going to solve it now.

The grand question is this. Why did God allow the cathedral to be bombed? Why did God allow his universe to be ruined? That's the great problem. It isn't that you can't say because there's a ruin, therefore there's no architect.

It's baloney that, I'm sorry. It's Bosch. It's, what do you call it, nonsense to talk like that.

The very fact that in the real nation you see the order there is, shows you can't get away with an argument like that. And you have the Marxists in front of you, such as I have them regularly in Germany. I go to the Marxist universities, they're specialties of mine, and they love to ask me to come.

Because they say, you can argue with the man. And oh, it's hard argument, but boys, when you get around, we've already got a group in one Marxist university there, where there were three years ago two, two solitary students who were Christians. And now we've got a group 15 to 20 strong already working in that university.

And just simply attacking problems like this. The great problem is, why did God allow the place to be bombed? The bombing of it shows how well he made it. But the great problem is, why did he allow illness

to come into the world? Shall I give you that? I have to do it short.

Because I said, you know, sitting in an aircraft for 26 hours is very nice, but it's much too long. And a sermon might be very nice, but it can easily be too long. I wouldn't like that to be said of me tonight.

Listen to me, just do this one point as quick as I possibly can, and then my breath will run out. And that'll be the end of that. Look, God says, and I'm coming back now, I'm going to eat my tail, you see.

I'm coming back to where I started from. God says the secret of mankind is that he's God's species. We are God's.

Jesus said those to whom the word of God came are God's. Paul said we are the offspring, the children, the same species of God. Now the thing about a God is that God is free.

God is love. And you can't have love without a free will. If anybody tries to win a wife by force, that man's in for a great surprise.

If a woman tries by psychological terror, I'm sorry, they never try that, to get a man by force, she's in for the surprise of her life. There's only one way for me to win a wife, and I've won a wife 35 years now, and happy is the man who findeth a wife, who findeth a good thing. That's my testimony.

Now the great thing about winning, the great thing about winning, the great honor, the great glory of man is that he's a God. But he's a fallen God, he's fallen. He's got all the attributes of God, he's intelligent as God in his little way, but he's a devil.

Because instead of choosing in love the good, he chooses the evil. God didn't make evil. God made us good with the capability of choosing the good.

God did the same. He saw that the world needed redeeming, and that it would cost him his life to do it. And of his own free will he said, no man taketh my life from me, I give it.

And God himself regards you as more valuable. I've got to be careful there. More valuable than God, because he gave his life rather than lose you.

Now when God does that, it means this, it presupposes that we have the ability of choice, and we can choose the good, but Paul says, it's one of the most difficult things to do, for the good that I would, that I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do. Oh, who will save me from this body of my death? I thank God through Jesus Christ, my Lord. The great thing is this, we're made as gods, and we can choose to do God's will.

And God's will is perfect and good, and if we do, it's harmony. But we can also choose to turn our back upon him. And if I turn my back upon the good, I choose the evil, and thereby the chaos.

If I turn my back upon the source of all health, I choose illness. And what we've done as mankind, as a race of gods which have fallen, we've chosen evil rather than good. And the purpose of this short life that we have on earth, is to reverse a wrong choice.

God put in a time loop into eternity. Here's your eternity going on forever and ever, where everything is permanent. And God, in order, when we've made a wrong decision, a decision which has been made in eternity can't be unmade.

And so he took us out of eternity, and put us into time, 70 years. So that that decision which we made in paradise, in the eternity of paradise with Adam and Eve, can be reversed. And if suffering helps us to come to our senses, and reverse a wrong decision, we've done then an eternal good work in the name of Jesus.

Because he pays us the price of sin. You see, I've lived amongst Muslim, and I've lived amongst the post-Christians in the post-Christian era in Europe. And there's one thing that man, religious or irreligious, doesn't know how to do.

That's how to pay his debts. I don't mean only financially, although I'd include that. The great problem of the world today is that we incur debts that we can't pay.

And the great debt that we can't pay is the moral debt of sin. You go to the Muslim, and he says, I'll try to bring Allah to wink at my sin. Allah will know my sin, but he will act as though he didn't.

That is, he's going to deceive Allah. So they get round their question, the Muslim, by saying that Allah will wink his eye at sin. You ask him who's going to pay for it.

Allah asks. You ask the average man, who's going to pay for your sin. He doesn't know.

There is none other good enough to pay the price of sin but the man of Golgotha. So I'm happy on Easter Sunday to try to give you this little tiny interpretation of the problem of pain, the problem of suffering. Suffering helps us to think about these problems.

I don't like suffering. But if it helps us to resolve the eternal question, what shall I do about my sin? Then I will rejoice in suffering. Okay? I'll rejoice in suffering.

So will you. If you see that God does an eternal work in you by the blood of Jesus Christ, who suffered and died and rose again on Easter Sunday to prove that he paid the price of sin. Then what else can we do but rejoice in the sufferings of Christ to bring us to glory? Thank you for your patience with me.

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