

Pain a Sign of Life

by Reuben Walter

Pain is a necessary criterion for life, and it helps us grow, mature, and become more like Christ.

Duration: 51:48

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:1

Topics: "Pain"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Job and how God spoke to him after he remained silent. The speaker highlights verse 14 of chapter 33, which states that God speaks to man in dreams and visions. The speaker emphasizes that God uses pain and suffering to redirect man from his own desires and to humble him. The sermon also addresses the topic of suffering and encourages believers to rejoice in their trials, as they are partakers of Christ's suffering. The speaker also cautions against letting emotions control one's actions, as it can lead to unnecessary pain and advises young people to practice restraint.

Transcript

Talk of those things that edify ourselves, build us up, that cause us to also seek for answers, cause us to search out His Word, search God's heart, what He's saying to us, and how He's saying it, and how He's talking to us, because we are people, and human beings are subject to everything on this earth. That's pain, rejection, suffering. We are subject to the elements, we're subject to the forces of nature, we're subject to dying.

As soon as we start living, a battle between life and death begins. And this week the Lord has been pressing upon my heart this very topic, on two occasions. One of them was in school, and we were doing a science lesson, and the Lord spoke to me concerning this one word, pain.

Pain, a sign of life. That's a topic the Lord gave me this week. Pain, a sign of life.

Or, in other words, we could say, pain is one of the four criterion for life. That is, to be able to sense and respond to change in our surroundings. Cause in life's trials, its sorrows, and its pain, it gives us tremendous insights, and applications about how God deals with us in the spiritual world.

The physical often gives us many good life lessons of the spiritual. And of course there is nobody that really wants to talk about pain. Pain is a very unwanted sensation in a human life.

Pain is a sensation that we are constantly trying to avoid. It's a sensation that causes us to react towards it and against it. But as we'll see today, Lord willing, it is the most necessary, one of the most necessary criterion for our spiritual life and even our physical life.

Just the fact that we are alive, just the fact that we live, is evidence that this one criteria for life is working. Because if we could not sense and respond to change, we would most certainly be in very grave danger before we know it. So before we turn to the word this morning, let us bow our heads.

Holy Father, we come before you this morning. We ask, Lord, that your holy presence would be here. We ask you, Lord, that your word would open itself up, that your spirit would give utterance, that you would anoint your word, Lord, to give us the necessary tools, Lord, to edify, to build up, to challenge and to lead each other on to a walk that is in conformity with your Son, Jesus, and with the Holy Spirit.

Dear God, we cannot do this ourselves. We turn to you and depend on you and trust that you will supply as a faithful Father who has never forsaken those who put their trust in him. We thank you in Jesus' name.

Amen. The message is intended as an encouragement, not as a guilt trip, not as someone to try and examine ourselves, but to open up the reason why it is that there is pain in our lives sometimes. And it's for those who do suffer more than some of us do.

It's for those who are going through afflictions. It's for those also, for those of us who may feel no pain, also as a challenge, that pain is very necessary. And feeling pain should not be something to be avoided at all costs.

1 Peter chapter 4. We'll read several passages out of the chapter. We're not going to read the whole chapter here. 1 Peter chapter 4. We'll start with verses 1 and 2. If we turn over to verse 12.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of God, glory and of God rested upon you. In their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. Last verse, verse 19.

Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator. May God bless his word. It shows here from this passage that pain and suffering is integral.

And most of us know it. Anybody who's been alive for any period of time has felt physical pain. And any Christian who's walked with God for any number of years has felt spiritual pain and physical pain coupled together.

And we look at the children and we see there is no way that they want to feel pain. They do not want to suffer. We look at parents, we look at older people.

Suffering is something we try to avoid at all costs. As I said before, it is the most unwanted sensation. That we have, that the human life experiences.

But if we go back right to the garden, we see that God said to Adam and Eve, First, in painful toil, you're going to eat your bread. And with the thorns and thistles, and to the woman he gave the same word. That with pain and suffering, you will bear forth new life.

And this provoked a message because there are several aspects to suffering and to pain. It's not just one thing, it's three. I've come up from my own experience, there's three reasons why the human soul needs

pain.

One, simply because we're sinful and we're living in a sinful world. Number two, it is to purify us and make us meat for the Master's use. And number three, for the testimony of Jesus.

Those points are what we will talk about today. But first, physically speaking. Our bodies are built with pain receptors all over.

Every square millimeter, there are receptors. And our skin is one of the biggest defense tools against infections, against diseases, against attacks, from any kind of pathogen or disease. We have a defense and it's our skin.

And it's filled with receptors all over. And it senses whenever there is a bruise, whenever we hurt ourselves, we hit ourselves, we cut ourselves, we step into a nail or whatever. There are pain receptors there to tell us something is wrong.

And the sensation is instantaneous. It is immediate because it is the body's defense against a greater threat. You just touch something hot once and you'll know exactly what I'm talking about.

You have a child touch a hot object once, it's not going to do it a second time, not so easily anyway. Oh, there are some of us who want to make sure it really was a burning sensation, and we'll try it again. But the point is, those receptors on our bodies, they tell us there's a change been in our environment.

Whether the change is rapid, instantaneous, or whether it's gradual. When we go outside on a very cold day, and we're not dressed warm enough, our body's receptors tell us, get back in, get warm, otherwise you're going to be in trouble. You're going to freeze.

That's an example of kind of a gradual change. Hot or cold. And immediately our body responds to the change in the environment, and we back off.

We pull our hand away. Or when an arm gets cut or you step into a nail, the pain receptor tells us something is wrong. The rest of the body come to the aid to tend the wound and dress it, or whatever is necessary to keep the infection and the pain from getting worse, from spreading, or from destroying us.

Pain makes us take action. In not all cases that's the case. For example, if you have a toothache or a headache, incredible pain can be suffered.

Both of these cases. Both of the cases, again, it's our body telling us that we need to do something about this pain. And it certainly is great if we can have a painkiller at the time of an intense spurt of pain in the head, or a toothache, or any other suffering.

It is wonderful to have something there immediately, but it only supplies temporary relief. It does not take away the problem. Always remember that.

Then we either go to a dentist and get it fixed, or we find out what is causing our headaches. Headache is a result of organs in the body that do not have the pain receptors as our skin does, and our muscles, and our bones, and our joints. They have pain receptors there that tell us this is hurting, watch out.

A headache is a result of different organs in the body hurting that have no pain receptors, and so the pain is up in the head. It also tells us something is not right. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, and in the

battle between life and death, the sensing and needing to respond to changes in the environment is critical for a living organism to survive.

Sensing and responding to change. Most of us, when we watch wild animals, our first sense and response to change is their noses and their eyes when they see danger or when they smell danger. They respond to the change, don't they? Most of us who have been trying to catch a deer, you know what it's like, or a coyote.

They are not dumb, they don't walk into the trap. They have a built-in safety mechanism, and so do we. It makes us take action.

And flipping this over to the spiritual, we can see the similar reaction. Just as one criterion for life is there to give us the tools we need to respond to a change, God gave us also pain as Christians. As a reminder and as a defense and as a mechanism to help us stay alive in the battle between life and death.

God gave us receptors in our bodies, spiritually speaking, to fight against either what is coming against us or to pull away from a dreadful situation so that it does not hurt us more or destroy us. It makes us take action. God has deliberately put these pain receptors there.

Pain also makes us focus on what is hurting, makes us put our attention to what hurts us and makes us do something about it. You can't ignore a searing pain in your tooth. You can't ignore when you've badly hurt a limb, you've broken it or bruised it badly.

You can't ignore it. Your body is designed that you must pay attention to it. You must do something about it.

And this has also a very good spiritual application. In Psalm 119, 67, David said, Before I was afflicted, I went astray. But now I have kept thy word.

Spiritually speaking, God sometimes presses on ourselves something and he presses it and he presses it until we must do something about it. That's a wonderful thing. God's people, as God's people, we often avoid painful situations.

We want to avoid them as much as any child does. We want to run from them. We will not deliberately go and touch something that's going to burn us.

But if we don't, in our physical bodies, if we don't respond, we'll either freeze, disease or burn. And spiritually speaking, I think we can say the same thing. We'll either freeze to death, we'll become cold, lifeless, or diseases will eat in like a canker and eat away the spiritual life and destroy us or we're going to burn in eternity.

And so God has built us that way and it's a good thing he did. It's a good thing that we have pain receptors in our bodies to show us things when things go wrong and are wrong. Let us turn to... There's three books in the Bible that talk a lot about pain and I know for some of us we don't really like talking about it but it's a necessity for the child of God.

The book of Job, the book of Jeremiah, and the book of Psalms, those three books contain a lot about afflictions, about pain, about suffering. Probably the most common one to all of us is the book of Job. How does one man? Endured and suffered incredible discomfort, incredible suffering and pain and he did not

understand why.

He argued with God until the end. And the thing is it was not because he was bad. It's because God was just simply trying to work out his perfect will in his life and purify him and bring forth the true goodness in him.

There are several passages here I'd like to discuss. Pain makes us take action. Job 23.

Now this one here is what Job said. This passage. Here after his three good friends had given him lots of counsel he answered, even today, Job 23, even today is my complaint bitter.

My stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat. I would order my cause before him and fill my mouth with arguments.

I would know, Lord, the words which he would answer me and understand what he would say to me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No, but he would put strength in me. There, and he says it, there the righteous might dispute with him, so should I be delivered from ever forever from my judge.

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there. I go backward, I cannot perceive him. On the left hand, where does he work? I cannot behold him.

He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. But he knows the way that I take. When he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

My foot has held his steps, his ways have I kept and not declined, neither have I gone back from the commandments of his lips. I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. Job comes to the realization here that there is a purpose for his suffering.

He comes to the realization that his pain was for his purification. That's a point I want to make. When we suffer, when God afflicts, when there's pain in our bodies, physically speaking, it's because God is trying to draw, it's because our bodies are trying to defend themselves against a disease or against an infection.

Spiritually speaking, when there's pain in our lives, it's because God is trying to safeguard our walk with him so that we don't lose the way. And he works on our hearts and if it's painful, we should not begrudge or become bitter or become calloused. We need to see that God is doing it for eternal blessedness and for our eternal good.

Pain also makes another part in Job here in chapter 33. These are the words here that the young Elihu said after all the others had said and to his words, none of them said anything. Job said nothing to his words and his three friends said nothing to his words.

He first gave them good counsel and said, I was listening to you guys all along how you were bickering back and forth. I was just hearing because I thought wisdom comes with age. Since I was the youngest one, I was quiet.

And finally, when nobody had anything to say, he started speaking. And when he was done, Job never said one word. When he was done, God immediately came on the scene and started talking with Job.

And there are some interesting verses there in verse 14. Chapter 33 and verse 14. We need to go through the whole book to really get the whole message but there are some good verses there.

Verse 14. For God speaks once, yea, twice, yet man perceives it not in a dream, in a vision, in the night, when deep sleep falls upon men and slumbering upon their beds. Then he opens the ears of men and seals their instructions that he may withdraw men from his purpose and hide the pride from men.

He keeps back his soul from the pit and his life from the perishing by the sword. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed and the multitude of bones with strong pain. So that his life he abhors bread and his soul dainty meat.

His flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen and his bones that were not even not sticking out. Yea, his soul draws near to the grave and his life to the destroyers. And if he goes down to verse 26 to 29.

He shall pray unto God and he will be favourable unto him. He will see his face with joy for he will render unto man his righteousness. He looketh upon men and if any say I have sinned and perverted that which was right and it profited me not.

He will deliver his soul from going into the pit and his life shall see the light. Lo, these things worketh God often times with man. Those of us who've been Christians any number of years I know from my own experience that God has not done not caused affliction in my life because I was bad or I was sinning.

He was doing it because we are sinful I mean we don't we can't excuse that because he was purifying us and drawing us closer to himself. He was bringing me he was breaking strongholds in my heart to make me see things from a different viewpoint and believe it or not mankind is more often than not tunnel vision. We sense and we see a way and we think this is the way and sometimes for God to break those those strongholds we need to.

There needs to be affliction in our lives and when we look at it from Job's perspective from Jeremiah's perspective when we look at it from the saint's perspective as Peter said we see even our savior had to be perfected through suffering. It says in Hebrews chapter 5 in verse 8 He was made perfect through suffering we just read it this past week and so Peter again Peter says for as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh that's our text arm yourselves likewise with the same mind for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. This word is so true.

We talk when we see a person who's suffering who's in pain and we've all seen them some among us now there's no desire for going after the lust of the flesh.

When we see a person in need you feel helpless we know there's only prayer that can prevail we feel there's little we can do and sometimes we feel the prayers are totally hitting a brass ceiling they're not being heard and it makes a person wonder why does God afflict people so much because God is after us you see he cannot get use out of us if we're in the grave dead we cannot bring glory and sing praises to his name and we hardly ever sing praises to his name when things are going well in our lives we do for a short period and so God as it says in Hebrews chapter 12 allays upon us the rod of affliction so that he may comfort us in the end and lift us up so that he may bring forth the pure gold to which he is always what he is always longing for in a human life sometimes the result of

our pain sometimes our pain results from neglect in our bodies sometimes it results from abusing our bodies sometimes it's as a lack of self-control our diets our lifestyles reckless living injuries due to carelessness or thrill-seekers we suffer sometimes for it we know many people forsaken thrills seeking after a high have lost their lives or paralyzed themselves to the point where they are but then we also see

people who are genuinely doing something and by accident which seems senseless to us the person is badly injured even paralyzed and we can't help but wonder why God are you doing this when we see somebody living a reckless careless life and being injured we don't feel too sorry for it it looks like he was looking for it but that's not always the case we see people suffering which

we have no idea why they were not thrill-seekers they were not living careless and reckless lives in cases like that we have to say Lord, you know Lord, you know the end from the beginning and you know what you want from this precious life and you know what it takes to keep this life in the palm of your hand and we have to submit to that fact but I would like to give a word of exhortation especially to the young people that a lot of the stuff we do bring on ourselves a lot of the pain that we sometimes suffer we have brought it on because we let our emotions out of control we let them follow after we follow after our emotions and we do not practice restraint they can bring us emotional pain young people and it can bring us emotional pain that is not necessary often by listening to a

little bit of counsel we can say parents can tell you you touch this, you're gonna get burned you go there, it's gonna hurt if only we listen, right? but when we find it out once or twice I think it should be enough that the best safeguard you see, you don't have to tell a child I mean, it's best if he learns it by itself that something is hot but for instance you can teach a child that the electrical outlet is very dangerous he never experiences the pain until he hurts himself but you can, by much explaining you can show, you can tell him that it's a very bad sensation of touching an electrical outlet in a way so you ground yourself out we can do the same to our young generation in which you can safeguard yourself from many hurtful pains by listening to your parents' instructions and not

allowing your feelings to get the better of you not allowing your attitudes to get the better of you all it will bring you is hurt in the end and often when our attitudes are bad we're hurting ourselves more than anyone else and young people, you often don't realize it it's very important that you can safeguard or protect yourself from many unnecessary pain by listening to parental and your leadership's counsel because we've gone down that road we've felt all that pain already we've been burned many times and if we don't pass that on to the next generation they are not going to go one inch further than we did now to flip the coin over there's also the tragedy of feeling no pain and that's one of the lessons we learned this week in science we may think children sometimes think feeling no

pain is not a bad thing why do I have to hurt when I run into a wall? well, have you ever seen a leprous person? that's a pathetic sight a person with leprosy I've never seen one I've seen pictures of one and it is a dreadful and horrible disease that affects the receptors the pain receptors in the skin it's a skin disease but that's what it attacks first what happens is the person with leprosy loses his sense of touch he loses the sensation of feeling pain and then he can walk down the road he steps into nails he's not even aware of it he cuts himself he did not know what happened remember when the dentist freezes that tooth? so there's no pain there that's a good case but it looks like it drills around you hear it, but you don't feel it when a person has leprosy he doesn't even feel the

sensation of being poked in his feet being cut and that's the first place it happens in his walk leprosy affects the people in warm climates more than in cold climates but if they do not purposefully sit down and check over their feet or their arms or whatever else daily and twice daily and three times daily infections set in they cannot sense that there's been a cut and it needs to be cleaned they cannot sense when there's infection of tetanus when they step into a rusty nail and you see many lepers over in India that have their toes all cut off now either the toes got cut off because of an infection or they simply got

gangrene and did not feel the sensation and it can cause people to lose their feet it can cause people to lose their hands eventually causing them to die it's a dreadful

disease when there are no pain receptors it's a dreadful situation to be in when there are no pain receptors in a human body if we turn this to the spiritual we see the same thing happening Ephesians chapter 4 verse 17 what happens to a human being when he does not sense what is right and wrong anymore 17 this I say therefore and testify in the Lord that you henceforth not walk as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind having their understanding darkened being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of their blindness of their heart who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness and then he says but you have not so learned Christ you see what sin does to a person sin is leprosy and

it only happens to a Christian a non-Christian we're not talking about getting leprosy a non-Christian is a person that is in need of a savior leprosy happens to people who've been alive as I said at the beginning pain is a sign of life if you don't feel anymore pain we're dead and here Paul says these people have been have their feelings numbed out and they can no longer feel the sensation of pain so we can see on a spiritual scale that it is the most blessed thing a child of God can have it is able to snatch us away from the grips of the enemy as he tries to numb us when a disease sets in the enemy is trying to callous us and numb us to this sin to that unrighteousness to this liberty and on and on until we're so callous that we don't feel the pokes anymore I believe the enemy would

snatch us out of God's hands within a matter of months after being born again if there were no pain receptors in our lives if there were no spiritual pain receptors and so it is very important that a child of God does not try to avoid and push away pain but to embrace it actually and realize that it is God's ultimate purpose for his life in 2 Corinthians 7 verse 10 it says godly sorrow workers repentance to salvation that does not need to be repented of you do not need to repent of that stuff when God pokes us when the Holy Spirit pokes us about this and that embrace it otherwise if we don't if we don't pull away you know how those musicians what happens to their fingers when they become so callous they don't feel that pain anymore there but it's okay in that case but I'll tell you it's

not okay in every case once you get poked so and so often in a certain place the leprosy sets in or it gets calloused and you don't feel that pain anymore sin has a numbing effect on our lives and the dreadful thing is the person that gets infected with that leprosy does not is not aware of it at first the pain receptors become numbed out pain receptors are slowly dying off and they become calloused and we see if we've heard of Christians and we know of Christians who come to the point where they can even say well what's wrong with this what's wrong with that well if it makes this numbing has caused us to allow this into our lives allow that into our lives pretty soon we don't feel the sting anymore we can hear a swear word and it doesn't jolt us we can see a half naked woman and it

doesn't jolt us pretty soon we can hurt, hurtfully talk to a person knowing he was offended at me and it doesn't hurt us anymore pretty soon we can waste our precious time away doing nothing it doesn't hurt us anymore pretty soon we can sleep in as much as we like doesn't hurt us anymore calloused jump in a vehicle and go when we please doesn't hurt us anymore slowly become calloused insult a brother behind his back doesn't hurt us anymore this is what happens a numbing effect takes place and Paul warned Timothy of this very thing we do not have our conscience seared with a hot iron searing means it has been branded off and the pain receptors are are destroyed and we can't feel what we're doing affects us may affect others around us and we don't want that to happen this is one of the

reasons God has given us pain to draw us away to draw us back to himself and to purify us as it says that sorrow or that hurt is to bring forth a person bring out Christ in our lives if we display ourselves Christ goes down and is hidden that's what it's for and that's why we should never ever let it come to the point where we no longer feel those pokes so those two purposes are simply because we're sinful and we live in a sinful world purify us kind of mixed it in there and the third one for the testimony of Jesus 1 Peter 3.18 it's pretty well the same thing as we said up till now for Christ also had once suffered for sins the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit you see, Christ suffered to bring us life to bring us

to life do we think for a minute that we will ever bring anyone else to the life of Christ without suffering this is another aspect of the Christian suffering that if that is what it took to bring us to God it is no different for us where he says arm yourselves with the same mind believe it there is no different how we stand up in adversity in insults, in physical suffering in denying of ourselves is what is really the testimony of Jesus and just as a woman in travail does not bring forth a new life without suffering in travail so we as God's people will not cause anyone to come to Jesus unless we live a life unless we take pain graciously and live in self-denial take up our cross and follow Christ if Jesus had to suffer to this way to bring us we cannot expect to live at ease and cause

the world to see Jesus if we are a vessel to which we bring new life into this world we have to recognize that's another aspect of suffering it's gonna cost us it's gonna hurt and the hurting is to bring forth new life life in me and life for others Paul said death worked in me but life in you that's the threefold purpose of pain if we are going to win anyone to Christ we gotta walk in Christ's footsteps and that's the way of the cross it's not going to be a walk in the park to lead people to Jesus we will not do it at ease but God has promised a time to conclude here that there will be no more none of that stuff anymore you know that verse in Revelations chapter 21 verse 4 he said a time is coming that's another aspect of it by the way the fact that there is pain is the sign that we're

still not in the New Jerusalem the fact that there is pain in our lives is a sign that this world is still under the curse that's a fact in Revelations 21 verse 4 he said that time is coming though God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes there shall be no more death neither sorrow nor crying neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away so that time is yet to come brothers and sisters we can't avoid pain now in this life it's here it's part of it and it has a very good purpose it's not useless not senseless as a matter of effect in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 17 it says for our light afflictions which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory wouldn't that make it all worthwhile wouldn't every piece of

suffering and pain that we endure here make it seem like just a dream Paul wrote that he suffered more than anyone else and yet he said our light affliction he suffered more than all the other apostles he called it momentary just nothing so we should say the same thing they'll work for us a far more exceeding weight of glory God bless you to God be the glory

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