

God Uses Pain - Part 1

by William Fitch

God uses pain to teach us and bring us closer to him, and he promises to be with us through every trial.

Duration: 15:47

Scripture: Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 43:2, Isaiah 63:9, Matthew 10:29-31, John 16:33, Hebrews 2:10, Hebrews 13:5

Topics: "Suffering And Pain", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the theme of God's presence and care in the midst of pain and suffering. He emphasizes that God does not promise exemption from pain, but rather assures his children of his presence and support. The preacher references Isaiah, highlighting how God was with his people in their afflictions and provided redemption and comfort. He also mentions the story of Reverend David Craig, who experienced God's deliverance and received a promise of protection even in the face of imminent execution. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God uses pain to draw his children closer to him and to demonstrate his tender care and sovereignty.

Transcript

Providence that never fails. He will never take us into battle without guaranteeing to us victory at the last. He will never ask us to pass through the valley of the shadow without assuring us of his presence.

He will never lead us through the deep waters without himself guaranteeing, I will be with thee. And this is his promise, the promise of the Lord of life and glory, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Has he not said, speaking of the sparrows on the rooftops, and did not this come very vividly again to those of us who heard the Reverend David Craig a week past on Wednesday night, tell the story of how God gave to him a very special word of promise.

For twenty-five different days he was slated for execution, and yet out of them all the Lord delivered him. And God gave to him this promise, not one of them shall fall on the ground without your father, not one of them is forgotten before God, even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows.

And what an insight this gives us into the heart of God. How wonderfully we see God's tender and sovereign care. He sees every sparrow fall.

He knows the pain of the animals of his creation. He knows the pain man can create for God's creatures, and he knows the pain they inflict upon themselves. He knows it all.

But every lesson is taught us in order that we might the more firmly believe that he cares for his children, cares and watches through them, and that he will bear them through the wilderness wandering, that he will company with them, and that he will keep them, and that he will guard them, and that he will bring them safe at last to their desired haven through all their suffering and through all their grief. There will be a father to whom they can turn and a God in whom they can trust. And all that man to the Lord would give praise for his goodness then and for his works of wonder done unto the sons of men.

God uses pain. Let me say one or two things very specifically concerning this this morning. And first of all let me remind you that God has not promised us exemption from pain.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. This is the word that Paul uses as he speaks of God, the God who had led him into pain. God hadn't promised him exemption from it.

He never does. The apostle suffers, and all the saints suffer. Herod kills James with a sword, and he casts Peter into prison.

The early church rejoiced inasmuch as they were counted worthy to suffer for the sake of the name of Jesus Christ. The prophets suffer. The saints of the old dispensation suffered with cruel mockings and scourgings, with bonds, and with imprisonment.

They were stoned, says the writer to the Hebrews. They were sawn asunder. They were tempted.

They were slain with a sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Job suffered, and yet he was a good man who feared God and turned from evil.

Jeremiah is the weeping prophet, sorrowing over the sins of his people, and yet cast into a vile and rotting prison because he dared to tell them the truth. Our Lord suffered. Indeed, as we have noted so frequently from this pulpit, our Lord was perfected through suffering.

Had it not been for the suffering that God sent to him, he would not have been the captain of our salvation. And he very plainly told his servants that they too would never be exempt from trial. And this being so, this being so, we must take our stand upon this issue.

Any suggestion that should pain come? We are failing in our faith, failing to possess God's best for us. Any suggestion that in suffering pain we have given place to Satan? Any suggestion that in suffering pain we are doing so as a judgment upon us? Any suggestion that the pain we suffer is without meaning and may not be a means of blessing? This we must absolutely and categorically deny. And we've got to do so.

Let me quote from three books that take the opposite view. Let me read from F. L. Wyman, Healing Through Christ. He says, It is hard to understand how converted Christian people can accept sickness as part of God's will for them.

Here is Richard Spread from a book called Stretching Forth Thy Hand to Heal. Disease never comes from God, is always contrary to God's will, and God always desires to heal. Here is Christopher Woodward from a book entitled A Doctor's Faith is Challenged.

He says, I believe implicitly that God means us all to be free from pain, from accidents, and from physical conflict. All right, let us set this kind of saying over against this kind of saying. Here is the apostle, and here is the apostle going through very great and very terrible testing.

And here is the apostle obviously suffering pain. He suffers, and pain is his lot. And God brings right into the very pathway of the apostle pain.

God has not promised skies always blue. God has not promised to his child that he will be exempt from pain. Let us be very balanced in this, and let us listen to the scripture, and let us listen to this word of promise that is so emphatic, that if we are to walk in the way and in the will of God, it may well be that for us he will ordain that there should be suffering and pain.

God has certainly never promised exemption from pain. So I say we must take our stand against that kind of suggestion. Let it be granted that pain, the evil of pain, is the result of sin in the beginning of man's history.

We don't question that. Let it be granted that had there been no sin, there would have been no suffering. Let's grant that.

Let's recognize also that Satan can direct suffering under the sovereignty of God, as happened in the case of Job, under God's permissive will. But above all, let us never forget that God has not promised his children exemption from pain. He's never promised it.

The saints are tested, and the saints suffer. They suffer grievously. Listen to Samuel Rutherford.

I hope you're not ignorant that if peace was left to you as part of Christ's testament, the other half of the testament was the legacy of suffering. Because he said, these things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace, but in the world you will have tribulation. By hand unseen, this soul was led into the place of pain.

So strange it seemed that this must be God's path to joy and gain. And yet I learned within the fire how precious he can be unto the soul that walks alone, and will not go out free. Let me underline a second thing.

God goes with his children as they undergo their pain. And what a wonderful experience this is. It is here that we really begin to learn what God is prepared to do.

Blessed be God, says the apostle. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. Think of that, the God of all comfort.

What a wonderful name for God, the God of all comfort. And Paul proceeds. He gives us comfort in all our trials.

And this has been true from the beginning of redemptive history. Isaiah saw it so clearly. Isaiah the great evangelical prophet.

Isaiah who himself was commanded to retire, and to go, and to suffer, and to see the flock getting less and less, and the people of God becoming diminished more and more. Isaiah, he saw it. Listen.

I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of my God, according to all that he, the Lord, has bestowed upon us, and the great goodness which he has toward the house of Israel, which he has bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses. Because he said, surely they are my people, children that will not lie. So he was their Savior.

And in all their afflictions, he was afflicted. And the angel of his presence saved them. In his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them.

He bore them, and he carried them all the days of old. God goes with his children into their pain. He promises to be with them.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee. And the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. This is how his people are upheld.

They're able to endure, because he comforts them, literally. He strengthens them. He upholds them.

He cares for them. How does he do it? The answer is, by the presence of his Holy Spirit. He gives the Holy Spirit, as the indwelling Spirit, within our hearts.

And the Paraclete, the Holy Paraclete, the Advocate, well the Father gives to us the Advocate within our hearts. And we have the Comforter with us, in all our troubles. The Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit indwelling, the life of the Christian.

He brings resurrection power, the very resurrection power of Jesus Christ to our aid. And so Paul is able to say, the burden was more than we could bear. In fact, we said to ourselves, this is the end.

And yet, God was so real. God was so very real. More real, perhaps, than he had ever been before.

God was real. God goes with his children, as they undergo pain, and into every hospital, ward, and across every battlefield, in every malaria-infested jungle, in every crisis of life. The Christian can look up and say, with me! You go with me.

And I read again in Samuel Rutherford, I quote, today, it's a long time since we have quoted, so we're just getting the balance right, really. Rutherford, when we shall come home, enter into the possession of our brother's fair kingdom, and when our head shall feel the weight of the eternal crown of glory, and when we shall look back to the pain and sufferings of time, then we shall see life and sorrow to be less than one step or step from prison to glory.

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