

Suffering

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Date: 01 December 2019

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 22, verses 39 to 53. Let me read it out loud for us.

And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, pray that you may not enter into temptation.

And he withdrew from the stone's throw and knelt down and prayed, saying, Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow. And he said to them, why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

[1 : 21] While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said to him, Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?

And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and coughed his right ear.

But Jesus said, no more of this. And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come out against him, have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs?

When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

In our tireless effort to put together a good life, we fill our schedules with activities to enhance our quality of life, improve the prospects of our children.

[2 : 36] We plan meticulously for emergencies and also come up with contingency plans, take every precaution to ensure a healthy and wealthy family, successful career, and a carefully curated group of friends.

But something or someone without fail interferes with our plans. This is the nature of living in a fallen world full of unpredictable events and sinful people.

Suffering is inextricably woven into the very fabric of life. But the prevailing worldview tells us that suffering is essentially meaningless and unnecessary.

That it's an interruption to life as usual and to be avoided at all costs. It teaches us that a life full of suffering is not worth living.

That we should devote all of our human creativity and ingenuity to alleviate suffering, to eliminate suffering at all levels.

[3 : 47] But that approach does nothing to help us make sense of and deal with the suffering that is there. The Bible takes a different view.

Instead of emptying suffering of meaning and seeking to uproot it altogether, it imbues suffering with meaning.

Helps us to endure it. That's what this passage is about. It particularly teaches us that in the midst of our suffering, we can entrust ourselves to the strengthening, sovereign, and sin-bearing God.

And that's the outline I will follow as we go through this passage. First, let's talk about how God calls us to entrust ourselves to Him in the midst of our suffering. It says in verse 39 that Jesus came out and went, as was His custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed Him.

He has just concluded, as we saw last week, His last supper with His disciples, His last Passover. With them. And now they go out to the Mount of Olives with the intention to pray.

[4 : 57] And Luke tells us that this was something that Jesus did habitually. He says that it was His custom to do this. Luke, more than any of the other authors of the Gospel, emphasized Jesus' constant prayer and communion with God.

And then they come to the place, which we know is called Gethsemane from the other Gospels. And here Jesus tells His disciples, pray that you may not enter into temptation.

But what temptation or trial is Jesus speaking of here? And that reference is likely to what we spoke of last week from Luke 22, verse 31, where Jesus warns Peter, Simon Peter, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat.

I noted last week that the word, the pronoun you, in verse 31, is not singular, referring to Simon Peter alone, but it's actually plural, referring to all the apostles.

And so even though Simon is singled out as the leader and representative among the apostles, Satan intends to test all the apostles to see if they would abandon Jesus.

[6 : 03] Jesus, he's sifting them to see if he can filter them out like debris, than to pick them out and discard them, expose them as fraud, unfaithful disciples.

Jesus himself faces an even greater trial, so he withdraws a stone's length, stone's throw, from the disciples in order to pray himself. There's a touch of emotion in the word withdrew, in verse 41, because he's literally pulling away from the disciples to engage in this prayer struggle by himself.

He knows that this is a trial he must face alone, that his disciples cannot suffer with him or for him. And then it tells us that he knelt down to pray.

This is also striking because Jews typically pray standing up. We saw this earlier in Luke chapter 18, verses 9 to 14, where the Pharisee and the tax collector are compared to praying to God side by side, and they're both praying, standing up and looking up, standing up to God, standing up before God.

But the fact that Jesus kneels here expresses his desperation. He's desperate. He's crying out to God. He's humbling himself before his Father. And this is typically reserved for cases of desperate pleas.

[7 : 22] For example, in Acts 7, verse 60, which is also written by Luke, Stephen falls to his knee to pray while being stoned to death as the first Christian martyr.

So you could sense the kind of desperation that's characterizing Jesus' prayer here. And then he prays in verse 42, Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. This prayer really shows us the reality of Jesus' incarnation, that he took on human flesh.

Because he was fully God, but he was also fully man. And every fiber of his humanity resists, militates against this impending death, his suffering.

This is a genuine request. It's not an abstracted request. It says, if you are willing, Father, remove this cup from me. Of course, Jesus knew with certainty that this was his Father's will.

[8 : 29] But his prayer, by articulating that he's expressing his inner turmoil, could there be any other way, Father? Is there any other way?

Father, remove this cup from me. It's a cry of desperation. I'll unpack in detail later why Jesus has such a hard time with this.

But it suffices to observe for now that he's in great distress. It's described in verse 4. He says, He prayed even more earnestly so that he was sweating profusely.

It doesn't say that he was literally sweating blood, which some people take this to mean. It says that his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

It's a simile that portrays Jesus' intense anguish. Blood is about four times as viscous as water. Some of you are interested in these kinds of things.

[9 : 35] I didn't. And so it doesn't flow. That means it doesn't flow as easily as water does. And so it drips much more heavily, right? So if you can picture it, Jesus was sweating so much, it's like collecting and accumulating on his body, and then it drips like thick blood, like congealed liquid.

That's how much he's sweating because he's praying so earnestly before the Father. And he recognizes that he's not praying to a powerless God, but to the all-powerful God.

So he doesn't say, if you can, Father. He says, if you are willing, remove this cup from me.

He also knows that he's praying not to a detached overlord, but to an intimate, loving Father. So Jesus doesn't bury his questions, his pain.

He expresses the fullness of emotions in complete transparency and honesty. And this is what it looks like to entrust ourselves to God, our Father. Prayer is the most tangible expression of that trust because in prayer, we do not, strictly speaking, do anything or get anything done, right?

[10 : 53] If you think about it, that's in fact precisely why sometimes we don't pray. We feel like we're not getting anything done. I could be using this time to be getting things done, doing things, solving my problems.

We consider prayer a perfunctory preamble to our activities, but prayer is not a preamble to something else we do. It's a relational conversation and a transaction between God and man.

It can bring the power of heaven down to earth. So before his greatest undertaking, when facing his most difficult trial yet, we find Jesus not busying about with activities, trying to get something done.

Rather, he's praying, agonizing in prayer, asking God to do something. That's what it means to entrust ourselves to God.

Now, God the Father does not grant his son's request, but he does answer his prayer by sending an angel from heaven to strengthen him, as it says in verse 43.

[12 : 11] This is an important point in this passage, although it's easy to overlook it in the midst of all these great verses. Verses 40 to 46 are structured symmetrically, if you look at it closely, so that each verse in the first half of those verses mirror the second half.

So in verse 40, Jesus tells his disciples to pray that they may not enter into temptation. And then in verse 46, he again tells his disciples to pray that they may not enter into temptation.

And in verse 41, Jesus pulls away from his disciples to kneel down and pray. And in verse 45, Jesus rises from prayer to return to his disciples. And then in both verse 42 and verse 44, Jesus is praying to God the Father.

It's the content of his prayer. And that leaves verse 43 alone in the middle, which by itself does not have a matching part in the symmetrical structure.

This kind of symmetrical structure is called a chiasm. And it's ancient literature often employs this rhetorical device.

[13 : 22] And the purpose of it is to bring focused attention to the element in the middle that alone doesn't have a matching element. And so the focal point is actually verse 43.

The Father does not deliver Jesus from his suffering, but he does strengthen him in his suffering. And this is why we can entrust ourselves to God in our suffering, because we know that he will strengthen us in our suffering.

When you pray to God for something and he answers you with a no, you pray earnestly for something, God, please take this, seek this from me, please give me a child, please save my family.

When he gives you all these things, when you don't get a yes for an answer, but instead get a no from God, don't assume that God, therefore, has abandoned you.

That God doesn't care for you. Because in the midst of your suffering, God is with you, in the midst of you, to strengthen you. Now, Jesus is receiving this strength from God the Father, but the disciples are a study in contrast.

[14 : 37] After his prayer, Jesus finds the disciples sleeping for sorrow, he says, and he tells them, why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

He had told them to pray that they may not enter into temptation, so it's no wonder then that the disciples are unprepared for the events that follow. When Judas, the betrayer, comes with his arm bent to arrest Jesus.

They fumble about trying to figure out what to do, and one of them impulsively slices off the ear of the servant of the high priest. And Jesus, however, in contrast to the disciples, is poised and in total control because he had already risen from an intense spiritual struggle in prayer.

So then, this is intended to teach us that prayerful waiting and prayerful watching is a secret to not succumbing to trials and temptations.

I want to ask you, are you always falling to the same temptations in your life? Does it seem like you have the same trial that you never seem to be able to overcome?

[15 : 54] Find the strength to endure through. Then let me ask you, have you been prayerful and watchful? Ephesians 6, 18-19, which we referenced last week as well, teaches us we are to put on the full armor of God in our spiritual warfare by praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication, keeping alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

Prayer is the often enjoined but seldom employed key to victory in Christian life. Are you praying? Are you watchful?

of course, when overcome with great sorrow and encumbered by the relentless pace of our lives, it's easy to get lost.

It's really difficult in those situations to pray and consciously entrust ourselves to God and that's the same reason why the disciples fell asleep. It says that they were sleeping for sorrow.

verse 45, they were physically and emotionally exhausted from a hectic week in Jerusalem and a troubling day they had just spent speculating and discussing about which of the twelve apostles would betray their Lord and all the more in our wariness and grief, however, when we're particularly vulnerable, that's when most we should be leaning on God and entrusting ourselves to Him in prayer because when we do that, He strengthens us.

[17 : 41] So when you are struggling with severe depression, some of you struggle with seasonal depression as you approach winter. I guess winter is here.

Is it technically here? No, it's still not here. When you're struggling with severe depression or when you ask God to take it away and He doesn't, know with certainty that He is with you to strengthen you.

When you come down with the flu just before a big project or before your exams at school, midterms that are going on right now, pray to God to heal you and entrust yourself to Him.

But if He doesn't heal you, know with certainty that He is with you to strengthen you through it. when you have a long and stressful day at work and you're returning home, looking forward to finally getting some quiet, enjoying a restful evening, stretched out on the couch with your legs on the coffee table.

But then instead when you come home, you come home to a house in disarray with your children throwing tantrums and your spouse frazzled and seeking your help.

[18 : 59] Cry out to God for help. Know that God will be in the midst to strengthen you so that you can care for and strengthen and serve your family.

As Charles Spurgeon once said, the refiner is never very far from the mouth of the furnace when his gold is in the fire. In suffering, rather than giving us his good gifts to relieve us, God often gives us himself to sustain us.

That's what he did here. He does not take the cup of his God's wrath away from Jesus, but he sends an angel, his representative to be his presence for Jesus.

And it's only in our suffering at times when we feel that God is all we have. That's when we truly know that God is all we need. It makes suffering so much more bearable when you remember that God is with us.

That's the strengthening God. And this narrative ensues in verse 47. And let me read verses 47 to 53 just one more time to jog your memory.

[20 : 20] It says, While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus said to him, Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?

And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear, but Jesus said, no more of this, and he touched his ear and healed him.

And then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come out against him, have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me, but this is your hour and the power of darkness.

There's so much injustice and corruption in this account of Jesus' betrayal. First look at verse 47, it says, there came a crowd.

Generally in the Gospel of Luke, a crowd is depicted as being favorable toward Jesus. It's the crowds that just days earlier greeted Jesus as he was entering into Jerusalem and seated on a donkey, hailing him as king.

[21 : 36] But now Jesus was on top of the world just a few days ago. Now everything starts to turn on him. And first thing we see here is the crowd. The crowd has turned on him.

It's a crowd that has not come to enthrone him, but to arrest him, to kill him. And not only the crowd, Luke's, it says that Judas, whom Luke makes sure to know, was one of the twelve.

Think about the horror of that. He spent years with Jesus. He's seen Jesus' life. He has benefited from his teaching.

He has served alongside him. He has been Jesus' most trusted of companions. one of the twelve. He ate with Jesus.

And it is he, one of the twelve, that betrays Jesus. It gets worse. It says that he draws near. He drew near to Jesus.

[22 : 42] The phrase draw near used in other parts of Luke's gospel convey a posture of longing and receptivity toward Jesus. You know who always draws near to Jesus throughout the gospel of Luke?

It's the tax collectors and sinners. They're always described as drawing near to Jesus. Luke 15. 1. Blind beggar draws near to Jesus for healing. Luke 18. Verse 40. But here someone once again draws near, but not for healing, not to be ministered to by Jesus, but to betray Jesus.

With the gesture of friendship, a kiss, that phrase with a kiss is fronted in the Greek for emphasis. With a kiss, Judas, do you betray the Son of Man?

And the same word for love. It's a sign of love. It's a sign of strong affection among family members and close friends. And what shamelessness for Judas to betray his teacher with this intimate gesture.

And then Jesus disciples finally recognizing what's happening asks, Lord, shall we strike with the sword, but an impulsive one, we know that this is, you could guess it's Peter, we know that it's Peter from John's gospel, chapter 18, verse 10.

[24 : 05] Jesus to actually answer the question, and then he just cuts off the right ear of the servant of the high priest, which could have been really bad.

But Jesus stops them saying, no more of this, and then he heals the injured man, even at this critical, desperate hour, when he could have, he of all people had the right to say, well, I don't have the time, I don't have the emotional energy, I don't have the strength to deal with somebody else's problems right now, about to go to the cross to die, but in the midst of that, Jesus has compassion, he heals even this man who has come to arrest him, and consider the iron of this, his apprehenders have come with swords and clubs, fully prepared to use violent force, they're treating Jesus like a robber, but they're the ones that are acting like robbers, so Jesus tells them, do you like robbers have you come with swords and clubs, and let's look at what this crowd consists of further in verse 52,

Luke specifies that they were the chief priests and officers of the temple, and elders that have come out against Jesus, this means Jewish religious authorities, their military authority, and their civil authorities, all of them have come out in concert to address Jesus, in other words, the crowd has turned on Jesus, and the entire Jewish people have turned on Jesus, the people, the chosen people of God, that God has set his name upon, they have all turned against Jesus, and not only them, one of his own, not just the larger group of disciples, but one of the twelve has turned against Jesus, and Jesus exposes their treachery in verse 53, when I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me, Jesus ministered out in the open with total transparency and integrity, if he had really done something wrong that warranted arrest, then they could have done it right there, but of course, they're scheming, they're seeking to do something that is unlawful, they knew

Jesus was innocent, yet they have come in the cover of night with swords and clubs to carry out their lawless deed, and that leaves only one conclusion, Jesus says, this is your hour, and the power of darkness, referring to spiritual evil authority, power that Judas and Jewish leaders are serving, have become agents of, so note how Jesus, everything has turned against Jesus, he was just a few days ago at the top of the world, but now all have turned, and even though everything seems to be going awry for Jesus, surprisingly, he's the one that appears to be in charge of this entire narrative, in fact, neither Judas nor the Jewish leaders say a single word in this entire passage, look at it again, it's Jesus who highlights the hypocrisy of Judas, it's Jesus who restrains his disciples saying no more of this, it's Jesus who exposes the treachery of the Jewish leaders, all of this is there to show us that even in the midst of his crisis,

Jesus is in total control of his situation as we have seen over and over again throughout the gospel of Luke, this is the hour and power of darkness, yet, in this moment of seeming triumph of the devil, Jesus is not succumbing to the power of darkness, he is in control, he's submitting to his father's will, this reminds me of Acts 2, 23 to 24, where Peter charges the Jewish people, this Jesus handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men, God raised him up, losing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it, Jesus, though it seems like the devil's triumphing, though it seems like evildoers are getting the best of him, Jesus was handed over not by hands of men, but according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, this is helpful for us because even in the midst of the cruelest injustices and the most gut wrenching betrayal, even something as tragic as the death of the Messiah, the perfect sinless son of

[29 : 15] God, even this is not outside of God's plan and power, he was sovereign through it all, God vindicates Jesus in the end by raising him from the dead, and that means we as God's people, we can submit ourselves and entrust ourselves to God in the midst of our suffering, because we know that God too is sovereign in the midst of our suffering.

when you lose a promotion, perhaps when you lose your job due to the cruelty of your colleagues or unfairness of your boss, when you suffer gross injustices and discrimination on the basis of your ethnicity, race, gender, when your spouse is killed in a car accident by a distracted and grossly negligent driver, when you incur great financial loss because of a dishonest neighbor.

In short, when things don't make any sense, God's sovereign through it all. That means no suffering that befalls you has ever escaped God's oversight and care for you.

Every loss, every sorrow, every disappointment is measured out by our all powerful and loving, sovereign God.

So then we don't have to, like the disciples try to do here, panic and try to seize control of the situation. We can simply entrust ourselves to God, pray to God that He might strengthen us through it, trusting that He sovereign.

[31 : 12] And maybe you're kind of like me and you've probably already done things to bumble your situation. You don't naturally entrust yourself to God.

Take heart in this fact too because obviously the disciples mess it up. Peter kind of messes up big time, right? He cuts off the guy's right ear, the servant's right ear. But even through it all, God's sovereign.

Even through your mistakes. Even through your faithless deeds. The often quoted verse Romans 8, 28 really is true for us. We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

For those who are called according to His purpose, what is this good that God does for us? It's definitely not earthly comfort. Since the only innocent and deserving man of this kind of comfort and peace, that was Jesus, and He suffered a lot.

The answer then lies in the following verses in Romans 8, 29 to 30. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

- [32 : 18] And those whom He predestined, He also called. And those whom He called, He also justified. And those whom He justified, He also glorified. The good that God guarantees for us is not earthly comforts, but it's the comfort of knowing that we will in the end be conformed to the image of His Son.

That we will in the end be saved and glorified with Jesus. It's coming when we will receive full vindication for all of our suffering, all the injustices we endure, and we will be restored to God, our Father, and all of our tears will be wiped away.

That's the good that God promises us, that all things will work out for our good. In a book entitled, *After Auschwitz*, Richard Rubenstein, a respected Jewish rabbi, reflects on the aftermath of the Holocaust.

He says this, We stand in a cold, silent, unfeeling cosmos, uneided by any purposeful power beyond our resources. After Auschwitz, what else can a Jew say about God?

Thomas Hobbes was right after all. In a world where there is no evidence that what is true and right would ultimately be vindicated, and what is false and wrong will ultimately be punished and eradicated.

- [33 : 42] In such a world, life is at best short, nasty, and brutish. church. But let me ask you, after Gethsemane, what else can a Christian say about God?

After Golgotha, the hill upon which Jesus bore the cross for us, what else can a Christian say about God? That even in the coldest and darkest corners of human history, that God is sovereign, that He is the God who brings justice, that He will vindicate, that He will save, that ultimately what is false and wrong will be punished, that ultimately what is true and good and right will prevail.

What else can we say after Gethsemane? So 2 Corinthians 4, 16 to 18 says this, so we do not lose heart.

Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day, for this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

that's the true reality for us in our suffering. And for my final point, sin-bearing God, return with me to verse 42 and revisit Jesus' prayer on the Mount of Olive.

- [35 : 23] I asked earlier why Jesus is so desperate and troubled. Why couldn't He, like some of the other martyrs, Christian martyrs in human history, just face His death with total peace?

Why was Jesus in such anguish? The cup that He asks the Father to remove from Him is an allusion to an Old Testament motif that represents God's wrath and judgment.

For example, in Isaiah chapter 51, verse 17, it says, Stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of His wrath.

who have drunk to the dregs, the bowl, the cup of staggering. It's a fearful image, a cup. Imagine, against your will, being forced to drink again and again and again until you are totally witless, out of control.

that's the picture of the wrath, of cup of God's wrath. So in other words, Jesus is not dreading physical death in and of itself.

- [36 : 40] He's dreading here what His death entails. Namely, that for our sake, He who knew no sin would be made sin for us, that He, the righteous one, would endure the wrath and punishment of God that we sinners deserved.

It's the weight of it all that Jesus dreads. Yeah, the whipping is terrible. The crucifixion is painful. But this, it's tough, it's really impossible for us to grasp the enormity of Jesus' suffering.

Think about it this way. A person who is rejected and shunned by an acquaintance of one or two days is not going to be devastated. When I try to make conversation on the airplane with the person next to me and they don't seem interested at all, hey, I'm not bothered.

My ego's not hurt, right? It's just a stranger. But imagine a person who is rejected by someone he or she has been dating for a few months.

Now, that's going to hurt a little bit. A person that you thought liked you. A person that you thought you could maybe get into a more serious relationship with. Now, imagine that you have been married to someone for several decades and then your spouse rejects you.

[38 : 08] Now, that painful experience will scar you for the rest of your life. To be rejected by someone you had given all to, trusted and completely, to be rejected by that person.

But to an infinitely greater degree, the Son of God, who has enjoyed a perfect, loving relationship with His Father for eternity past, must now endure the wrath and judgment and alienation from the Father He has never known.

He's always had His favor, His love, His kindness. There was nothing to come, nothing could ever come between. Yet, He has taken up our sin upon His shoulders.

And no wonder Jesus dreads this cup of wrath. Father, is there any other way? Can you remove this from me?

We all know that truism, that what doesn't kill us only makes us stronger.

[39 : 23] But I want to tell you, especially if you're not yet a follower of Jesus Christ, there is one suffering in the world that doesn't make you stronger, it actually will kill you.

And that's sin. Because sin separates us from God. It alienates us from God, our Creator, our Heavenly Father.

Romans 6, 23 says, The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord. All the suffering that we experience in this life, all the suffering we experience in our own lives, within ourselves, within our friends and neighbors and family members, in all of creation.

All of these are but symptoms of the underlying root of sin. And unless that sin is dealt with, we cannot be restored to God.

Jesus is your only remedy for sin. That's why He's suffering here in this passage. That's why He's going to the cross, so that He can bear that suffering for your sake, so that if you repent of your sins and believe in Jesus, you might be saved and have eternal life with Him.

[40 : 45] If you're a believer, this means you can rest assured, Christ bore your sins, every last one of them, once and for all.

now all suffering that you experience, there are trials that will make you stronger, that will refine you, just like a lump of coal that under pressure becomes a diamond.

anyone else? Charles Spurgeon writes about this in one of his sermons. He says, in all this that I am called to suffer, there is not even a single particle of punishment for my sin.

God has punished Christ. Consequently, He cannot punish me. To punish two for one offense would be unjust. Therefore, there is nothing penal in all that I am suffering. I do not know of any reflection more consoling than this, that my sorrow is not laid on me by a judge, nor inflicted on me as the result of divine anger. There is not a drop of wrath in a river full of a believer's grief.

Does not that take the bitterness out of affliction and make it sweet? Are you with me? Are you following this? Because Christ has suffered and died on our behalf.

[42 : 21] He drank the cup of God's wrath Himself down to the dregs. We are now heirs with Christ and adopted as sons and daughters of God. Therefore, we can be assured that all of our sufferings and afflictions that we experience in this life, they don't come from a wrathful judge. They come from the hands of our loving Father to discipline us, to refine us, not to break us or destroy us.

He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also, along with Him, give us all things?

So if you're experiencing infertility, recurring miscarriages, don't think that God is punishing you for your past sins.

Christ has already been punished for you. If you develop a rare form of malignant cancer, don't you believe that God is punishing you for anything you've done?

It does not come from a vengeful God. It comes from the hands of a loving Father. If you have a chronic illness that does not seem to go away, don't think for a moment that God is punishing you for something you have done.

[43 : 58] Jesus has been punished for you. He drank the cup of God's wrath down to the dregs. Jesus has been punished for you for something you have done. Only the sin-bearing God who suffered in our place can help us make sense of and persevere through our suffering.

Only the sin-bearing God who once for all proved His love for us can fully entrust ourselves to Him. So I urge you this morning, come as you are to God in your suffering.

Pray, entrust yourself to Him, the strengthening, sovereign, and sin-bearing God.