

# A Theology of Suffering

Various Texts

**Sometimes Life is Painful**

Why Is There Suffering In The  
World?

“ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.”

Romans 8:18-22

**Why Am I Suffering?**

# 1. We Suffer Because We Live In A Broken World

# 2. We Suffer Because Of Other People's Sin

# 3. We Suffer Because We Reap The Rewards Of Our Sin



# 4. We Suffer Because God Is Disciplining Us

“because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, and because you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel. 52 For you shall see the land before you, but you shall not go there, into the land that I am giving to the people of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 32:51-52

**5. We Suffer Because God Is  
Harnessing Suffering To Sanctify Us**

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

James 1:2-4

“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.”

Hebrews 5:7-8

**6. We Suffer Because We Are  
Christians Representing Christ**

**“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”**

**John 15:18-19**

# 7. We Suffer Because We Are In A Spiritual Battle



“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered the Lord and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” 8 And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” 9 Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “Does Job fear God for no reason? 10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.” 12 And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Job 1:6-12

**8. We Suffer That God May Be  
Glorified**

**“As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” 3 Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”**

**John 9:1-3**

**Suffering From The Way You Are  
Suffering**

“You never just suffer the thing that you’re suffering, but you always also suffer the way that you’re suffering that thing. Let me explain what I mean by that phrase, through the experience of my sickness. The abbreviated story is that I was in acute kidney failure, and had I waited another seven to ten days to go to the hospital, you probably wouldn’t be receiving my weekly email devotional. Four years and six surgeries later, my symptoms are as manageable as possible, but I have been left a physically damaged man. I learned and was reminded of many things through my suffering. Perhaps one of the most significant principles is this: Our suffering is more powerfully shaped by what’s in our heart than by what’s in our body or the world around us.”

Paul Tripp

“Don’t misunderstand what I’m saying. My suffering was real, the dysfunction in my body was real, the pain I went through was horribly real, the damage to my kidneys is real, and the weakness that is now my normal life will continue to be real. But the way that I experienced all those harsh realities was shaped by the thoughts, desires, dreams, expectations, cravings, fears, and assumptions of my heart. Yes, I went into my sickness with my theology in the right place, and I did believe that I lived in a groaning world crying out for redemption, but it was battling with something else inside me. There was this expectation that I would always be as I had been; that is, that I would always be strong and healthy. There was little room in my life, family, and ministry plans for weakness within or trouble without. So when I realized I was very ill and that weakness and fatigue would be with me for the rest of my life, the blow was not just physical, but emotional and spiritual as well. Honestly, I didn’t suffer just physical pain, but also the even more profound pain of the death of my delusion of invincibility and the pride of productivity.”

Paul Tripp

**“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from  
it flow the springs of life.”**

**Proverbs 4:23**

# Gospel Theology In Suffering



# The Cross Radically Transforms How We Experience Suffering

**“There you find his values. God cares about your body. He’s the creator of it. But his primary purpose is to rescue you from your bondage to sin, from your slavery to self, to do the thing that you cannot do for yourself. You can run from a situation, you can run from a location, you can run from a circumstance, but you cannot run from yourself.”**

**Paul Tripp**

# The Cross Radically Transforms How We Experience Suffering

**Is Jesus  
Enough?**

**The Cross Brings Us Hope**

**The Holy Spirit Comforts Us**

**“So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.”**

**Acts 9:31**

God The Father Redeems Suffering



“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be  
afraid? 2 When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh,  
my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.  
3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall  
not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be  
confident. 4 One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will  
I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all  
the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord  
and to inquire in his temple.”

Psalm 27:1-4

“David had come to realize that there’s one who sits on a throne of the universe who is way more beautiful than any ugly thing he would ever face in life... And you will only ever properly understand the dark things you face in this broken world when you look at them through the lens of the stunning beauty of your Redeemer. Weakness drives you there, strips away your self-reliance, strips away your self-righteousness, strips away all of those crutches that you lean upon, strips away your dependence on substances or whatever and drives you in humility to your Redeemer.”

Paul Tripp