

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are
Most Surely Believed Among Us
An Expository Study of the Gospel According to Luke
Chapter 22- **Luke 22:63-71**
338- Jesus on Trial- Part 2- The Glory of God's Grace
Being Accomplished Through the Sufferings of Christ

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Luke 22:63-71

63 Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him,

64 and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, "Prophecy, who is the one who hit You?"

65 And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming.

66 When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council *chamber*, saying,

67 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "**If I tell you, you will not believe;**

68 and if I ask a question, you will not answer.

69 "**But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD.**"

70 And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "**Yes, I am.**"

71 Then they said, "What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

To the Glory of God

Now, as I told you last week, there is a lot of confusion surrounding the Trial of Jesus. And one reason is because the various Gospel writers only recorded certain aspects of it. And so, as we go through this, we're going to jump back and forth through all four Gospel Records so we can get the full picture.

We need to understand that the Trial of Jesus was actually an all-night series of several *smaller* trials that took place sometime right after midnight until early Friday morning. And there are actually six separate smaller "trials", or "confrontations", that constitute what we call "the Trial of Jesus". Three were conducted by the Jews and three were conducted by the Romans. And the reason the Romans were involved is because the Jews were not allowed to carry out the death penalty without Roman approval.

And we also need to know that at each of these small "trials", or "confrontations", Jesus was beaten and spit on and abused. And this went on all night long. So, after Jesus had agonized in the Garden for hours, praying so intently that He literally sweat Blood, He was led away and went through six separate "interrogations", each one accompanied by beatings and physical abuses that are almost incomprehensible. Look again at what Dr. Luke wrote in verses 63-65:

63 Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him,

64 and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, "Prophecy, who is the one who hit You?"

65 And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming.

Now we have to understand a very powerful dynamic that is going on here. In the midst of this Trial of Jesus, two things are going on:

1. Satan has tempted evil people to harm God's Son.
2. God has allowed this to happen.

So, anytime a godly person is persecuted or beaten by evil people, the very same God Who chose that person to be saved before the foundation of the world has sovereignly *allowed* this evil to come upon them. To be sure, God is absolutely Sovereign over everything, all the time. And so, God has the ability to stop or prevent all persecutions and injuries and hardships from ever touching His people. And many times He does.

Many times, it is God's Will to either outright *prevent* or *stop* or to *hinder*, or even completely *eliminate* evil from touching the lives of the saved. And we praise God for those times. And we know that the Bible

teaches that when that happens, when God so chooses to heal or deliver or rescue His people from trouble and persecutions and hardships and anguish, that it means that two things will always result from that healing and rescuing and deliverance:

- ✓ God will be glorified.
- ✓ God will work that deliverance to the fulfillment of Joy for that person.

But, there are times when it is God's Will to allow evil to touch the lives of those He loves. There are times, in God's Own Wisdom and Plan, where it seems Good to God to *allow* hardships and evil and trouble and pain and suffering to touch the lives of the people He loves the most. And, in those times, it is God's perfect Will *not* to deliver them. It is His Will to *not* heal or to *not* rescue His people, but to sovereignly *allow* evil to touch and harm the people of God. And those are usually times of great bewilderment to us and times of great anguish because, most of the time, we don't see, we don't understand what God is doing, or why He is allowing the evil to touch us.

But the Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly that when God does that, when God chooses *not* to heal, or when He chooses *not* to deliver or *not* to rescue, but when God chooses to allow His people to hurt and to suffer and to be persecuted by evil men, that it isn't because God is weak or because He lost His power. Suffering and tragedy does *not* come to God's people because God is mad at you or because you did something wrong, or even because you didn't manifest enough faith. That simply isn't true, even though that is commonly taught by many in the modern Church.

God allows suffering and hardship to touch the lives of His people for the very same two reasons that He delivers and heals and rescues:

- ✓ So that God will be glorified.
- ✓ So that the fullness of God's Joy will work in that person.

So here is the theological statement that we get from this Biblical Truth:

Godly people hurt, godly people are abused and mistreated and maligned and Persecuted by evil people, and godly people suffer and are not delivered to the Glory of God, and ultimately to the fulfillment of Joy in their own lives.

Now I am fully aware that what I just said is radical theology. And, I also realize that it runs *counterintuitive* to human reasoning and logic. And I also realize that this is a hard sell, *especially* to those who are, right at this moment, hurting and suffering. But I am telling you that what I just said is true.

Now what makes what I just said true is *not* because I teach it and believe it. What makes this to be true is *not* that I have personally experienced this in my own life. What makes what I just said true is because the inspired and infallible and inerrant Word of the living God teaches it. And that makes it true, no matter how many people might disbelieve it or condemn it.

Now I could go into several different verses and passages to prove this to you, but we don't really need to look any further than in this very Passage that Brother Andy just read to us. Here the Gentile medical doctor, Luke, tells us that a perfectly sinless Man is being beaten and abused and spit on by evil people. Now keep in mind that Jesus was not merely a godly Man. Jesus was perfect. Jesus *never* sinned. Ever. Not a single time. Jesus is the only Man Who ever lived Who loved God with all His Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength. Nobody before or since loves God like Jesus did. We love God "on occasion" and "by times". And while our love for God may be growing and getting stronger, the reality is that we love God *partially* and *haphazardly*. And the proof that we don't love God like Jesus did is because we still sin. And sin is loving something else more than we love God. But Jesus loved God with the very *same* Love that God loves God, perfect Love.

The Love that exists between the three Persons of the Trinity is unspeakable. It is beyond anything we can imagine. The Joy and the Peace and the Love that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit share with each other every second of every minute of every hour of every day is too much for our puny minds to comprehend. Nothing compares to it. Every example of love that we can think of pales in comparison.

The love that a mother has for her child, the love that a husband has for his wife, the love that a man might have for his country, *none* of

these fallen human expressions of love even comes close to the Love that has *always* existed, the Love that exists right now, and the Love that will *always* exist between the three Persons of the one true living God. And yet, here is sinless Jesus, the Beloved of God, the Darling of the Trinity, being beaten and slapped and spit on by evil men. And not only is God *allowing* it, it is His Will.

Jesus loved His Father perfectly, He obeyed His Father fully, Jesus perfectly submitted to His Father's Will, and He was perfectly led by God the Holy Spirit. So why would God allow such evil to touch Jesus? Was Jesus lacking in His faith? No. Jesus had perfect faith. Was Jesus out of the Will of God? No, God sent Jesus to the earth for this very reason, to die for all the sins of all of God's people. So why is Jesus suffering here? Two reasons:

1. To display the Glory of the Grace of God.
2. So that our sufferings will be fulfilled in His Sufferings.

Now, it is very important that you realize that God is operating in His complete Omnipotent Sovereignty as Jesus is being beaten by these evil men. And that means that Annas and Caiaphas and Judas and the Sanhedrin are not decisive at this moment. And it also means that Pilate and Caesar, and the 600 soldiers, and even the entire Roman Empire is not decisive either. And this also means that satan is not decisive here, either. God in Christ is decisive at this moment, even as the sinless Lamb is being mocked and slapped and spit on and beaten.

So how are we to understand what is going on here with Jesus? Why is God allowing Jesus to be beaten and ultimately killed? Most people would answer: *"This is how much God loved me! God allowing Jesus to be beaten and killed is an example of the great love that God has for me!"*

And whereas I absolutely do think that God loves us, I think this kind of an answer exemplifies the self-centered attitude that permeates the modern Church. To suggest that God is allowing Jesus to be horrible beaten and killed for no other reason than to show how much He loves us minimizes everything else that the Bible talks about. And it proves just how Man-centered we have really become.

So what I would like to do in this final Sermon of 2016 from our "journey" through **Luke** is to magnify Christ in His suffering. And in the

process I would like to put forth the ultimate Biblical explanation for the existence of suffering. And I would like to do it in such a way that you and I would be freed from the paralyzing effects of discouragement and self-pity and fear and pride so that we would spend ourselves, able or disabled, in magnifying the supremacy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I believe that the entire Universe exists to display the Glory of the Grace of God. In other words, I believe that the Bible teaches that the reason that God created the Universe was so that He would have a vehicle that would enable Him to *display* the Glory of His Grace so it would be seen and marveled at.

You see, before God ever made the world, He was full and complete. The one, true, and living God had no lack and needed no assistance. God was complete in Himself as manifested in the three Persons of the Trinity. And yet, in His perfections, God was not able to *manifest* or to *make visible* certain aspects of His Holiness. He had these Aspects and Attributes and Qualities, and He had them in fullness. But, He was not able to display them in Himself.

For example, God was gracious from the very beginning. But He had no way to *manifest* or to *display* His Grace by Himself, precisely because He didn't *need* Grace. And so God created the Universe so that Man would fall, and in that fallen state Man would *need* God's Grace to be saved. And then as God would issue that Grace to these rebels through what Jesus did, the Glory of God's Grace would be seen and valued and praised. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote this in **Ephesians 1:5-6**:

**5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,
6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.**

... so let's examine this quickly.

The Apostle Paul begins verse 5 by saying:

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself...

Now this tells us that God issuing Grace to save unworthy sinners through the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ was *not* a Divine *response* to us being fallen. This was the Plan all along. By using the word “**predestined**” here, the Apostle was being moved along by God the Holy Spirit to say that God saving sinners through Jesus was *not* an “after-thought”. In other words, God didn’t see that we were lost and helpless, and then worked to fix that problem by sending us His Son. That isn’t what the Bible says.

The Bible says that *before* God ever made the world, He chose to display the Glory of His Grace by adopting wicked rebels into His Family by what He alone would do for them in Jesus Christ. And then look as to what caused God to do this in the last part of verse 5:

... according to the kind intention of His will

So the *catalyst*, the *origination*, as to *why* God chose (from before the foundation of the world) to adopt sinners into His family through Jesus Christ had nothing to do with us. In other words, it was *not* based on some “quality” that we possessed, or some “act” or “work” or “deed” that we *have* done or that we *would* do; it was not based on some *choice* or *decision* that we made, but it was based on God’s “choice” that He made before the world was, to save us in Christ, and was made solely on the basis of Who God is. Paul said:

... according to the kind intention of His will

And then, in verse 6, Paul tells us what the end result of doing this would be:

to the praise of the glory of His grace ...

Now when you “praise” something, you *admire* it, you tell of its *value*, and you *marvel* at it. When you see a beautiful garden and you say, “*Wow!*”, you are “praising” the garden. When you see a gorgeous sunset and you gaze at it lovingly and admire its beauty, you are “praising” it. When you so value your Marriage that you look for ways to encourage your wife and you have eyes only for her, you are

"praising" your Marriage. So to "praise" something is to *honor* it, to *value* it, to *admire* it, and to *marvel* at it.

Now God's Grace has a "glory" to it. But that "glory" cannot be seen or known or appreciated unless that Grace is *displayed* or *manifested* or *made visible*. And the only way that God's Grace can be displayed is if somebody needs it. So the only way that God can *display* or *show* or *manifest* His Grace is that there exist sinners who need that Grace.

Now, before God ever made the world, He possessed Grace. And God's Grace was full and complete. But Grace was hidden and was not seen or displayed precisely because God didn't need Grace. So Grace was hidden until there could be fallen people who needed it.

So God created a world and He allowed Adam to fall so that from his loins there would be people who desperately needed the Grace of God. And when God's Grace is extended to unworthy sinners, by and through Jesus Christ, the "glory" of God's Grace is "praised". It is *seen* and it is *valued* and it is *marveled at*. And that is why God made the world and allowed Adam to fall.

Now, the word "to", in verse 6, could be understood as "because" or "for". So, the Holy Spirit writes infallible through Paul here to say that *reason* that God predestined to adopt sinners (who have offended His Glory) into His Family was so that the Glory of His Grace would be "seen" and "valued" and "appreciated" and "marveled at" (praised).

So that is the catalyst behind *why* Jesus was born and *why* He lived and *why* He died and *why* He rose again. And that is why He suffered and was beaten and spit on and laughed at and mocked.

You see, the Glory of God shines most brightly, and most fully, and most beautifully in the manifestation of the *glory of His Grace*. Therefore, that is the ultimate aim and the final explanation of all things that God created. And that includes suffering.

God decreed from all eternity to display the greatness of the glory of His Grace for the enjoyment of His creatures. And He revealed to us in Scripture that this is the ultimate Aim and the final Explanation of *why* there is sin and *why* there is suffering, and *why* there is a great suffering Savior.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came in the flesh to suffer and die. And, by His Suffering and Death, Jesus would save undeserving sinners like you and me. So this "coming" to suffer and die, is the supreme

manifestation of the greatness of the Glory of the Grace of God. Or to say it a little differently, the Death of Christ in Supreme Suffering is the highest, clearest, and surest display of the glory of the Grace of God.

And, if that is true, then a stunning Truth that shines forth from that is, that suffering is an *essential* part of the created universe in which the greatness of the Glory of the Grace of God can be most fully revealed. So suffering is not an afterthought either. And suffering is not a triumph by evil men or satan over God. No, suffering is an *essential part* of the tapestry of the universe so that the weaving of Grace can be seen for what it really is.

Or, to put it most simply and starkly, the ultimate reason that suffering exists in the universe is so that Christ might display the greatness of the Glory of the Grace of God by suffering in Himself to overcome our suffering. The suffering of the utterly innocent and infinitely holy Son of God in the place of utterly undeserving sinners to bring us to everlasting Joy is the greatest display of the Glory of God's Grace that ever was, or ever could be.

So, in conceiving a universe in which to display the glory of His Grace, God did not choose "Plan B". This was the Plan all along. This was the Plan for which everything else in the universe was planned. We must understand that there could be no greater display of the glory of the Grace of God than what happened at Calvary. And therefore, *everything* leading up to it and *everything* flowing out from it is explained by it. And that includes all the suffering in the world. And that is why God is allowing evil men to beat His Own Son.

Now this is either just lofty theology or it is true. And, if it is true, then it is shown in Scripture. **The Revelation 13:8** says:

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Now this means that before the world was created there was a book called the "book of life of the Lamb who has been slain." And the slain Lamb is Jesus Christ crucified. And so, the book is "the book of Jesus Christ crucified". Therefore, before God made the world, He had in view Jesus Christ slain, and He had in view a people purchased by

Christ's Blood written in that book. And that is exactly what Paul said in **Ephesians 1:5**:

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

And that is why I tell you that the suffering of Jesus, *not* just on the Cross, but also here in **Luke 22**, as He was being beaten, was *not* an "afterthought", as though the Work of Creation did not go the way God planned and God had to do something to fix it. No, before the foundation of the world God had a book called "the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain." So the slaying of the Lamb was in view *before* the Work of Creation ever began. Now turn with me to **2 Timothy 1:8-11**:

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,

9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

10 but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

11 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

Now look closely again at verse 9:

who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

... in other words, God gave us *Grace* (unmerited Favor, undeserved Special Treatment, and unearned Love) in Christ Jesus *before* the ages began. We had not yet been created when God planned this. We had not yet existed so that we could sin and need this Grace. Yet, before God ever made the world, He had already decreed that Grace, an "in Christ" Grace, a "blood-bought" Grace, a "sin-overcoming" Grace, would come to

us in, by, and through Jesus Christ. God predestined this *before* He created the world.

So, **The Revelation 13** tells us that there is a “book of life of the Lamb who has been slain,” and **2 Timothy 1** tells us that there is a “grace” flowing to undeserving sinners, who are not even created yet. And don’t miss the magnitude of that word “slain”. John didn’t say that the Lamb *would be* slain, but that He has been slain. And this Greek word is used in the New Testament only by the Apostle John. And it literally means “slaughter.” So here we have Suffering, the slaughter of the Son of God, in the Mind and Plan of God, *before* the foundation of the world. The Lamb of God will suffer. He will be slaughtered. That’s the Plan. And that is the *Prime Plan*.

So the suffering of Jesus in His beating and humiliation and mocking and Crucifixion is *not a peripheral part* of God’s Plan. It is *not a secondary part* of God’s Plan. No, the very *center* of God’s Plan, the important *core*, to display the Glory of His Grace through the suffering of His Son.

Now why is that? And I’ll give you the biblical text which tells the answer, but let me state it again: it’s because *the entire Purpose of Creation is the fullest, clearest, surest display of the greatness of the glory of the Grace of God. And that Display would be the slaughter of the best and most important Being in the universe for millions of undeserving sinners.*

So the suffering and death of the Lamb of God in history is the *best possible display* of the Glory of the Grace of God. And *that* is why God planned it before the foundation of the world. Now go back to **Ephesians 1:4-6a:**

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace ...

... so the Goal of the entire history of Redemption is to bring about the praise of the Glory of the Grace of God.

But notice that twice in these verses Paul says that this Plan happened “in Christ” or “through Christ” before the foundation of the world. He says in verse 4:

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him

God chose us *in* Christ before the foundation of the world in order to bring about the praise of the glory of His Grace. And he says in verse 5:

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself

... so God predestined our adoption *through* Christ before the foundation of the world to bring about the praise of the glory of His Grace.

Now what does it mean that “in Christ” we were chosen, and that our adoption was to happen “through Christ”? We know that in Paul’s mind, Christ suffered and died as a Redeemer so that we might be adopted as children of God; **Galatians 4:4-5** says:

4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

... so our adoption could not happen apart from the Death of Christ. Therefore, what Paul means is that to choose us “in Christ” and to plan to adopt us “through Christ” was for Him to plan the Suffering and Death of His Son *before* the foundation of the world.

And verses 6 and 12 and 14 of **Ephesians 1** make plain that the primary Goal of this Plan was to bring about:

the praise of the glory of His grace.

... *that* was God’s main focus. And that is why God planned and then allowed both the Suffering and Death of His Son for sinners before the creation of the world. Now please go to **The Revelation 5:9-12**:

9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

10 "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

Now here the Apostle John sees the host of heaven worshipping the Lamb precisely because He was slain, killed, slaughtered. These beings focus their worship not simply on the Lamb, but on:

the Lamb that was slain.

... and they are still singing this song over in **The Revelation 15:3**.

Therefore, we can conclude that the very *centerpiece* or the *catalyst* or the *reason* why those in Heaven will worship God throughout all eternity is because God displayed the glory of His Grace in the slaughtered Lamb to redeem sinful rebels.

So angels and all the redeemed will sing of the suffering of the Lamb forever and ever, and what the displaying of God's Grace that that suffering produced. So the suffering of the Son of God will *never* be forgotten. The greatest suffering that ever was will be at the very center of our worship and our wonder in Heaven forever and ever! And that is why I say that Christ's Suffering and Death is *not* an afterthought of God. It wasn't simply something that evil men did. It was the Plan of God from before the foundation of the world.

And that means that everything else is *subordinate* to this Plan. Everything else is put in place *for the sake of* this Plan, to assist and compliment and help to display of the greatness of the glory of the Grace of God in the suffering of Jesus Christ.

Now, since that is absolutely Biblical, do you see what this Truth *implies* about sin and suffering in the universe? According to this Divine Plan, God *permits* sin to enter the world and temporarily thrive.

He passively *allows* it. God could have stopped it. He has that kind of omnipotent Power. But He chose to step aside and allow it. And that means what God ordains, what He hates, will come to pass.

So it is not sinful for God to “will” that there be sin. God doesn’t *cause* sin, He doesn’t *create* it, but He *allows* it. And the reason it isn’t sinful for God to do this is because by *allowing* that evil to exist and to temporarily thrive, and even temporarily dominate, an infinitely greater Good will come from it.

Now it isn’t important that we fully grasp this mystery, as long as we believe it. We may content ourselves by saying over the sin of Adam and Eve what Joseph said over the sin of his brothers, when they sold him into slavery in **Genesis 50:20a**:

As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good ...

Now it is very important that you see that Joseph did *not* say:

“You meant evil against me, *but* God turned it for good.”

... but that God sovereignly *meant* for “Good” what you sinful men *meant* for evil. And this means that God didn’t simply *respond* to what evil men did, but that God *originated* this from the very beginning, He decreed it. It was His Will that Joseph’s brothers perpetrate the evil that was in their hearts on him. And, instead of *stopping* it, which He could have, God chose to use the evil that He allowed in these men to further His Will.

So, God sovereignly and passively *allowed* evil men to manifest a portion of their evil (even though He did restrain them from killing Joseph). And the Bible goes on to say that the reason it was correct, and was not sin for God to do this, was because of what allowing that evil brought forth:

Genesis 50:20b

... in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

So, even though Adam and Eve meant evil against God, as they willfully rejected Him as their Father and Treasure, O what an infinite Good God meant through their Fall! The Seed of the woman will one

day bruise the head of the great Serpent, and by His suffering, He will display the greatness of the glory of the Grace of God!

Neither Adam and Eve, nor Joseph's brothers, undermined God's Plan; they were *allowed* by God, in their evil sin, to bring it to pass! Just as Joseph was sold sinfully into slavery, Adam and Eve sold themselves for fruit. And once they were sovereignly *allowed* to fall and were not *hindered* or *prevented* from falling, their wicked sin set the stage for the perfect display of the greatness of the Glory of the Grace of God!

By God allowing them to sin, by God stepping aside and not stopping them from doing the evil that was in their hearts, terrible things happened. But with those terrible things came the Promise of utterly magnificent things. So not only did sin enter the world, but through sin came suffering and death. But through all this evil, also came the Promise of the Glory of God's Grace.

Romans 8:20-23

20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

When sin entered the world, horrible things followed. Diseases, defects, disabilities, natural catastrophes, human atrocities, from the youngest infant to the oldest codger, from the vilest scoundrel to the sweetest saint, suffering is no respecter of persons. And that's why Paul said in **Romans 8:23**:

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

... so the grand Purpose for all Creation is to display God's glorious

Grace in the suffering of Christ for the Salvation of sinners.

Now almost 600 years before Jesus was beaten and killed, the Prophet Ezekiel was moved along by God the Holy Spirit to say:

Ezekiel 33:11

Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'

So, while God takes no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked, nevertheless, God sovereignly allows the wicked to exist. Now why would He do that? So that sinners may be shown the Grace of God and live. And by showing unworthy sinners His Grace, the Glory of His Grace would be displayed and marveled at.

And the same God who spoke through Ezekiel also spoke through Jeremiah to say this:

Lamentations 3:32-33

32 For if He causes grief, Then He will have compassion According to His abundant lovingkindness.

33 For He does not afflict willingly Or grieve the sons of men.

Now the word “**willingly**”, here in verse 33, doesn't mean that God acts against His Will. It means that He doesn't afflict people for no reason. In other words, the reason that God afflicts (allows suffering) is because:

... He will have compassion According to His abundant lovingkindness.

In other words, God allows evil to exist and sometimes to thrive, but only so that by allowing that evil to exist and thrive, an infinitely greater Good will come forth from that evil that would *not* have come forth if God had sovereignly stopped the evil from ever happening.

So, God ordains that sufferings come, so that through that evil, God can work *the display of the glory of the Grace of God in the suffering of Christ for the Salvation of sinners.*

So the stage has been set. The drama of Redemptive history begins to unfold. Sin is now in its full and deadly force. Suffering and death are present and ready to consume the Son of God when He comes. All things are now in place for the greatest possible display of the glory of the Grace of God.

Therefore, in the fullness of time, God sent his Son into the world to suffer in the place of sinners. And every dimension of His Saving Work was accomplished by His Suffering. In the Life and death of Jesus Christ, suffering finds its ultimate Purpose and ultimate Explanation:

Suffering exists so that Christ might display the greatness of the glory of the Grace of God by suffering in Himself to overcome our suffering.

And that means that everything, *everything*, that Christ accomplished for us sinners, He accomplished by suffering. And that means that everything that we will ever enjoy, even in Heaven, will come to us because of His suffering.

Now I would like to end by asking you to consider the display of the glory of the Grace of God in the achievements of Christ by His suffering in seven ways:

1. Jesus absorbed the Wrath of God on our behalf, and He did it by suffering.

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us — for it is written, "*CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE*" —

The Wrath of God should have been the end of us. Every human is guilty of deserving that Wrath because of our sin, and yet no human can endure it. So, instead of bringing about our annihilation, God planned to take on human flesh Himself and pour out His Wrath on Jesus. And by doing that, God's Righteousness, that had been insulted by our sin, was honored. And that allowed God to be free to show Mercy to sinners. So by Christ becoming a Curse for us and absorbing God's Wrath against sin on Himself, the glory of God's Grace was displayed. And it was displayed by suffering.

2. Jesus bore our sins and purchased our Forgiveness, and He did it by suffering.

1 Peter 2:24

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

Isaiah 53:5

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

The sins that *should* have crushed us under the weight of guilt were transferred to Christ. And this is the glory of God's Grace. And it could only come by suffering.

3. Jesus provided a perfect Righteousness for us that becomes ours in Him, and He did it by suffering.

Philippians 2:7&8

7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Romans 5:19

For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

The Obedience of Christ by which many are counted righteous had to be an Obedience unto Death, even Death on a Cross. This is the glory of God's Grace. And it would come only by suffering.

4. Jesus defeated Death, and He did it by suffering death.

Hebrews 2:14-15

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

1 Corinthians 15:55-58

55 "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.

This is the glory of God's Grace. And it would come only by suffering.

5. Jesus disarmed Satan, and He did it by suffering.

Colossians 2:14-15

14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

With the record of all our lawbreaking nailed to the Cross and cancelled, the power of satan to destroy us is forever broken. Satan has only one weapon that can damn to hell. Unforgiven sin. And Jesus Christ stripped this weapon from satan's hand on the Cross. This is the glory of God's Grace. And it could only come by suffering.

6. Christ purchased perfect final Healing for all His people, and He did it by suffering.

Isaiah 53:5

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

The Revelation 7:17

for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.

The Lamb was slaughtered and the Lamb was raised from the dead, and the Lamb together with the Father will wipe every tear from our eyes. This is the glory of God's Grace. And it could only come by suffering.

7. Christ will bring us finally to God, and He will do it by his suffering.

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

The ultimate achievement of the Cross is not freedom from physical sickness or material poverty in this life, but Fellowship with God. And this is what we were made for: seeing and delighting and showing the Glory of God. This is the glory of God's Grace. And it could only come by suffering.

So the ultimate Purpose of the universe is to display the greatness of the glory of the Grace of God. And the highest, clearest, and surest display of that Glory is in the suffering of the best Person in the universe for millions of undeserving sinners. Therefore, the ultimate Reason that suffering exists in the universe is so that Christ might display the greatness of the glory of the Grace of God by suffering in Himself to overcome our suffering and bring about the praise of the glory of the Grace of God.

So to those of you who are suffering right now, I want to say this to you. Remember what those who have gone before you have said. Remember what people like Carl Ellis and David Powlison and Mark Talbot and Steve Saint and Joni Eareckson Tada said: they all, in their own way, said that whether we are able or disabled, enduring loss or delighting in friends, suffering pain or savoring pleasure, all of us who believe in Christ are immeasurably rich in Him and have so much to

live for. So don't waste your life by wasting the suffering that Christ has allowed to come your way. Savor the riches that you have in Christ, that was paid for through the sufferings of your sinless Savior, and spend yourself, no matter the cost, to spread your riches to this desperate world so that the greatness of the Glory of the Grace of God may be seen and valued and marveled at!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.