

Some issues contained in a message on suicide:

1. **Insensitive given the timing of recent issues: There will never not be suicide at the current rate. In the last several days, more have committed suicide.**
2. **Making the text fit: descriptive versus prescriptive; yet, we have one prevailing opinion today and that is the opinion given in Scripture.**
3. **Legitimate fear of which I pray love will cast out.**
 - a. **Me fearing that one in here will misunderstand.**
 - b. **Me fearing that I will not answer all your questions.**
4. **Clarification of terms**
 - a. **Depression**
 - i. **A desire to die**
 1. **Job (Job 3)**
 2. **David (Psalm 55)**
 3. **Elijah (1 Kings 19)**
 - b. **Genetics**

3:23-29

1. **Suicide is a moral issue.** While the topic here is about the “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit,” Christ gives, in no uncertain terms, the reality that there are but two forces in the world and they are consistently active. One must, therefore, decide whether their suicide is God’s idea.

*Suicide involves the unauthorized taking of a human life, and as such **violates the sixth commandment (Ex 20:13)**; God does not sanction it...The biblical narrative records examples of several individuals who took their own lives. In each case the circumstances of the suicide were inglorious and regrettable. Samson, tortured and humiliated by the Philistines, took his own life with theirs after a ruinous career of disregard for the Lord (Jdg 16:30). Ahithophel committed suicide after being publicly humiliated by having his advice rejected, and in order to avoid being executed for treason (2 Sm 17:23). Zimri, after murdering an Israelite king, ended his life to avoid being killed by his pursuers (1 Kg 16:18). Judas committed suicide after his betrayal of Jesus (Mt 27:5). There are no biblical examples of honorable suicide. An examination of the Bible’s accounts of these lives and deaths suggest two primary scriptural observations about suicide: first, it is an option that some deeply troubled people will choose when facing desperate circumstances; and second, it is a pathetic and tragic end to a human life.¹*

- i. **Myth: “Suicide is not a spiritual issue.”**
 1. **A corollary: “some suicides are mental issues.”**
 2. **A corollary: “some suicides are simply depression-caused.”**
Nothing we do is secular. All things are to be done to the glory of God (Colossians 3:17). Every person the earth either glorifies God or does not glorify God with all actions. If we find one who is outside their faculties when they commit a crime—

¹ Ted Cabal et al., [*The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), 454.

due to their choices or not do to their choices, their life changes forever (consider involuntary manslaughter).²

Moreover, a believer should never stop thinking like a believer (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:23).

There are two important groups of emotions: positive faith-based emotions and negative fear-based emotions. Each of these groups has its own set of emotional molecules attached to it. It is vital to understand the difference between these two polar opposite groups. Faith and fear are not just emotions, but spiritual forces with chemical and electrical representation in the body.³

2. **Suicide is forgivable.** Notice the idea in this passage, as already defined, is that when you reject Christ's Words and Christ's Works (to include redemption), you are committing the most heinous sin. This means, that somehow, someway, in some manner, if a person hasn't rejected Christ, forgiveness is obtainable for suicide.
 - a. **Myth: "All sins are equal." This is the knee-jerk response to those who insist that "suicide" is worse because you can't ask forgiveness.**
 - i. **This very prooftext shows that this statement is not true. There is a sin that is unforgivable so to say that God sees all sins the same is simply not true.**
 - ii. **Perhaps we should remind everyone that there are many sins that can cause you to not have time to "ask forgiveness:" drunken driving, for example; eating one's self into coma.**

5:4-15

As far as suicide is concerned, here is a man who wishes to inflict pain on Himself (5:5) and would have killed himself if the demons had full reign—as it says they finally did kill their host in verse 11.

3. **Suicide is not God's idea (5:5).** Perhaps not all suicides are demonically-influenced as in this portion of Scripture, but you better know that Demons were self destructive. Consider Jesus' response to the question about "killing a marriage" in Mark 10. He appeals to "what Moses said at the beginning." What did Moses say at the beginning? Among other things that Moses said at the beginning, Genesis 2:7 says God "breathed into man's nostrils life's breath." Life is God's idea. Abundant life is God's idea. Nobody can look at Ahithophel or Zimri or Judas in the despair-driven suicides and say "their suicide was of God!"
 - a. **Myth: "It was their time." Be very careful about this. That assumes that people never die early, and the fact is Scripture does not say that. As a matter of fact we keep pointing out that Scripture says the opposite for something as simple as taking the Lord's Supper unworthily.**

²Carries 13-16 months as a Class F Felony in NC; <http://statelaws.findlaw.com/north-carolina-law/north-carolina-involuntary-manslaughter-laws.html> [accessed 5/19/17].

³Caroline Leaf *Who Switched off My Brain? Controlling Toxic Thoughts and Emotions* (Dallas: Switch on Your Brain USA LP, 2009), 19.

4. **Jesus is the cure for suicide (5:12).** This man was driven to Jesus. Whether we are demon possessed or demon oppressed, our cure for the demons of life, whether demons of angelic origin or demons of mental illness are all found lying prostrate before the King.
 - a. **Others sought to assist (5:4)**

8:34-36

5. **Suicide is not merely a willingness to die.** Willingness to die is not the problem. An unabashed, deliberate planning for death is not the issue.
 - a. **There are honorable ways to give one's life**
 - i. **War**
 - ii. **Mother versus child (Rachel in Genesis 35).**
 - b. Saving your life as an end to itself is a problem.
 - i. Fear of death is a problem
 - c. Giving one's life, not taking one's life is the honorable action.

9:20-22

6. **People are its survivors**
 - a. **In this case, a father and a son, with little thanks to the disciples.**
 - b. **In this case, a father who had been with his son from childhood. Perhaps the greatest part about foster care is that when fathers and mothers for some reason cannot dwell with their troubled children, one will find help from a father who will find Christ.**
 - c. **Somebody better care when there are attempts to "self destruction."**
 - i. "slow suicides"
 1. **Personal habits**
 - a. **Smoking**
 - b. **skydiving**

10:45⁴

7. **Jesus Died for It.**
 - a. **Sin is the master. It owned us.**
 - i. **We do no favors by downplaying the willful act of taking a life...even if it's our own.**
 1. **It is a fearful thing to cause one's own death through willful, cognitive action, and to wake up in the face of God.**
 - ii. **Christ paid the ransom to rescue us from the bondage to sin. There is a certain bondage and grief caused by**
 - b. **Did Jesus only die for those sinners He knew would confess their sin?**
 - i. **Salvation is by the death of Jesus + prayer then?**
 - ii. **Everybody who dies in rebellion of any kind is no longer saved.**
 - c. **Did Jesus only die for those sins that don't lead to one's death?**
 - i. **If so, what about carelessness like drunk and driving fast?**

⁴See Matthew 20:24 and following and their treatment in the author's commentary on Matthew.

Closing words to the Christian:

1. **Keep a high opinion of “life.” Keep a high opinion of godly life.**
 - a. **½ of all transgendered peoples attempt suicide (UK study in 2012).⁵**
 - b. **Those in late teens and early twenties are 18% more likely to have suicidal ideation with each casual sexual encounter (OHSU study from 2013).⁶**
 - c. **80% of suicides may be reduced if we can keep folks from romanticizing about methods to do so.⁷**
2. **Keep some honest foresight and suspect that anybody could be heading in that direction.**
 - a. **Think about your regrets ahead of time so that your recollection of your relationship is**
 - i. **Honest**
 - ii. **Helpful**
 1. **To you (in your honesty; not covering things up)**
 2. **To them**
 - b. **Begin relationships and maintain rates of interaction that you can maintain.**
3. **Be committed to a truth that exceeds your own opinion. There is a connection:**

“A survey by the Barna organization in 2002 found that only 22 percent of American adults believe there is absolute truth. For born-again Christians the figure is 32 percent. To get a sense of how people view moral issues today, take a look at some that the Gallup research organization asked people to judge as right or wrong. Percentage of Americans who think these are morally wrong: Divorce 23%; Gambling 34%; Having a baby outside marriage 40%; Gay or lesbian relations 43%; Doctor-assisted suicide 46%; Abortion 50%; Suicide 77%”⁸

Charles Weigle’s song, “No One Ever Cared For Me Like Jesus,” was the product of one of the darkest periods of his life. Weigle spent most of his life as an itinerant evangelist and gospel songwriter. One day after returning home from an evangelistic crusade, he found a note left by his wife of many years. The note said she had had enough of an evangelist’s life. She was leaving him. Weigle later said that he became so despondent during the next several years that there were even times when he contemplated suicide. There was the terrible despair that no one really cared for him anymore. Gradually his spiritual faith was restored, and he once again became active in the Christian ministry. Soon he felt compelled to write a song that would be a summary of his past tragic experience. From a heart that had been broken came these choice words that God gave to Charles Weigle:

*I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus since I found in Him a friend so strong and true;
I would tell you how He chang’d my life completely—He did something that no other friend could do.*

⁵<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=213151346321> [accessed 5/18/17].

⁶<http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/casualsex.htm> [accessed 5/18/17].

⁷https://world.wng.org/2014/07/hello_darkness? [accessed 5/18/17].

⁸ North American Division Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists, [Adventist Men’s Ministries Curriculum](#) (Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 2011), 75.

All my life was full of sin when Jesus found me; all my heart was full of misery and woe; Jesus placed His strong and loving arms around me, and He led me in the way I ought to go.

Ev'ry day He comes to me with new assurance, more and more I understand His words of love; but I'll never know just why He came to save me, till some day I see His blessed face above.

Chorus: *No one ever cared for me like Jesus; there's no other friend so kind as He; no one else could take the sin and darkness from me—O how much He cared for me!*⁹

⁹ Kenneth W. Osbeck, [*Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 193.