

SUFFERING AND PAIN

By Dr. Hal Webb, Evangelist

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which was planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up." Ecc. 3:1-3.

Ecclesiastes goes on to show many other things that must be in the lives of man in this sin cursed world in which we live. Pain and suffering are two that seem to increase as we age. We need not throw up our hands in despair, but learn the value of suffering and pain, and how it affects us and others around us. Nothing God allows into our lives is without reason in His timing to bring about His purpose. Let's consider some of God's purposes for Suffering. (1). **Suffering Comes With The Freedom To Choose:** *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* Gen. 2:17. The response to God's warning was very wrong, and Adam and Eve brought on suffering from sin to all mankind. Loving parents protect their children from pain as we point out dangers to them. Our world would be worse yet, if we could do wrong without pain. Stop and think, are you ready for the pain cancer will reward you Wrong choices can result in great suffering. whatever you plan, consider the consequences before you proceed. A careful, God pleasing life can avoid much sufferings brought on by our stupidity. (2). **Pain Often Warns Of Danger:** *"Be sure your sin will find you out."* Num. 32:23b We hate pain especially in those we love. Without pain would you ever go to the doctor? Our wornout bodies would get no rest. Children would laugh at correction. Criminals would not fear the law. Pain warns when an arm or finger is broken. It often brings

warning of worse consequences to follow if we break God's law. Pain can be an awakener to urge us to change the cause if possible. Pain often results from our own short sided choices. If there is a correction, then go for it. If not, accept it as the will of God. (3) **Suffering Reveals What Is In Our Hearts:** *"Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."* Rom. 5:3b-5. Sometimes suffering comes at the hand of others but often it is God's way to show us our own hearts. We are all capable of love, mercy, anger, envy and pride and these can lie dormant, then awakened by circumstances. We discover strength or weakness of our heart in the midst of testing. Gold and silver are refined by fire to become a diamond. Our human hearts can be developed by pressure and pain. Our real strength of character is revealed in the presence of pain and suffering. (4). **Suffering Causes Us To Glimpse Eternity:** *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."* Rom. 8:18&19. You are very fortunate to discover through suffering, that this life is not what we live for. If we learn to understand ourselves, and our wonderful God even in suffering, it was well worth the pain. Often poverty, grief and perhaps hunger drive people to the Lord. Since He dwells within us, He can calm the storm, even lift the pain, and prepare us for the glories of Heaven above. Remember the song, "Heaven is a wonderful place." There will be no pain and suffering there in the presence of the Lord. (5). **Pain Loosens Our Grip On This Life:** *"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this*

we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.” II Cor. 5:1&2 In Eccl. 12:1-14 the process of aging is clearly given. Our bodies suffer under the wear of human life. Our joints suffer and ache. Eyes grow dim. Digestion slows and sleep becomes difficult. Our teeth decay and our energy becomes limited. Physical problems loom larger, while our options narrow. Each new pain makes the world less inviting and our next life more appealing. The ouch will cease and joy will flood our soul when we see the Lord in glory. **(6). Suffering Presents Opportunity To Trust God:** *“Wherefore we labor that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.* II Cor. 5:9. In the Old Testament Job certainly faced unbelievable suffering. Satan did everything to get him to curse God and his friends were not much help. When the testing time was finished, God raised him up and gave him twice what he had before. Whatever pain you are suffering God will use it to draw you nearer, to trust Him in all that is best. He never promised that our lives would be without suffering and pain. Through our tears we can snuggle up to Him for comfort and strength, to bear whatever cross is ours. Remember He said, *“Lo I am with you always.”* Matt. 28:20. Our laid aside time in pain and suffering can give earthly opportunity to draw closer to Him. **(7). God Suffers With Us In Our Suffering:** *“For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”* I Peter 2:21. No one but God has ever suffered by giving His Son to be crucified for us. He stretched out His arms on the cross to show how much He loved us. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* John 3:16. Our suffering will never outweigh His suffering on the cross to make our salvation possible. As pain may disturb, and suffering stretches on, remember, He bore it all

for us because He is God. **(8) God’s Comfort Is Greater Than Our Suffering:** *“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”* II Cor. 12:9. Paul made it very clear that he would rather be with Christ in suffering than without Christ, in good health and human happiness. It seems when we are weak in the flesh we can be strong in the Lord. Christ dwells within us and knows how we feel, and what we need. So cry out for His will, and abide in it without complaint. He will wrap His arms around you, and all will work to His glory. **(9). In Crisis Times We Find Each Other:** *“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”* II Cor. 1: 3&4. As a church member keep your eyes open to those weighed down with pain or suffering, and stand with them in their need. This draws the family together, shows our love to them, and gives us an opportunity to help. You too may face the same problem ahead, so assist others with a willing heart. Remember people are always more important than things. Share the load with each other and be encouraged. **(10). God Can Turn Suffering Around For Our Own Good:** The testing of Job was a time of great suffering, but yet when he withstood the test he rejoiced greatly in the goodness of God, who watched over him every moment. Jesus Himself cried *“My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?”* Matt. 27:46b. No one can imagine the pain He suffered for our sins on the cross of Calvary. By His personal suffering He purchased Life eternal for all who would believe forever. When His pain was finished it opened Heavens glory to trusting mankind. Don’t complain in pain but trust in love.