



MAKING (SOME) SENSE
of SUFFERING



“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world”.

- C.S. Lewis





WE ALL **SUFFER**
SOMETHING
IS WRONG!



¹⁶To the woman he said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

¹⁷To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

Genesis 3:16-19 (NIV)

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¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

Romans 8:18-21 (NIV)

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**Free will
Creation suffers**

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²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.

Romans 1:28-31 (NIV)

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Romans 1:28-31 (NIV)



GOD KNOWS
ABOUT SUFFERING



⁷ The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

Exodus 3:7-8 (NIV)

GOD KNOWS

Our suffering

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¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

¹¹ After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

Isaiah 53:10-11 (NIV)

GOD KNOWS

**Our suffering
His suffering**

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GOD WORKS
IN OUR SUFFERING



³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

Mark 4:38-39 (NIV)

GOD WORKS IN OUR SUFFERING

God saves us - sometimes

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Mark 4:38-39 (NIV)

⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2Corinthians 12:9-10 (NIV)

GOD WORKS IN OUR SUFFERING

**God saves us – sometimes
Strengthens us - every time**

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The number one contributor to spiritual growth was not transformational teaching. It was not being in a small group. It was not reading a deep book. It was not exciting worship or meaningful service. **It was suffering!** People said they grew more during seasons of loss, pain and crisis than they did at any other time.

- John Ortberg

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God saves us – sometimes
Strengthens us - every time
Shapes us - always

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In this (salvation) you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come **so that your faith** – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – **may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.**

1 Peter 1: 6 – 9

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God works all things together for good for those who love him, those who are called to his purposes. ... predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.

Romans 8:28-29 (NIV)

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Romans 8:28-29 (NIV)

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though' outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are **achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all**. So we **fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen**. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)

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2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)

⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. ⁶⁸ You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees. ⁶⁹ Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies, I keep your precepts with all my heart. ⁷⁰ Their hearts are callous and unfeeling, but I delight in your law. ⁷¹ It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.

Psalm 119:67-71 (NIV)

RESPONSE

Deal with disobedience

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RESPONSE

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Seek God's heart
Trust God daily

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³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (NIV)

RESPONSE

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Trust God daily

Comfort one another

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