

PeaceWorks Live | 2024

THEOLOGY OF SUFFERING

Darby Strickland, CCEF

1

our purpose

To correctly the heart of God to suffering
and vulnerable people. So that they know
their Father's love for them and can
discern what to do.

2

Suffering has a purpose

01 Suffering Produces Perseverance and Character (Romans 5:3-5)

02 Sharing in Christ's Sufferings (Phil 3:10, 1 Peter 4:13)

03 Suffering as a Test of Faith (James 1:2-4, story of Job)

04 Draws us closer to God (Psalm 34)

05 Prepares us for eternal glory. (Rom 8:18)

06 Serves as a witness to others (2 Cor 1:3-4)

3

Is it wrong to avoid suffering?

4

Is it wrong to address **marital** suffering?

5

Two common objections

Suffering is
Discipline

Marriage means
Submission

6

God may allow suffering to correct, teach, or sanctify His children

but we twist this truth.....

7

We blame victims for their suffering.

To distance ourselves from the reality we are all vulnerable.

Victims ask, "Is it my fault?"

Abusers accuse, "This is all your fault."

Other believers say or imply the abuse is her fault.

Not all suffering is the result of personal sin.

8

How does God deal with our sin?

- God says he forgives our sins.
- He goes much further to say, "For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." (Heb 8:12).
- He deals with us as if had forgotten them.
- Jer 31: 31-34, He will make a new covenant with us, writing his law on our hearts, changing us.
- We need to be able to explain that God's love goes beyond forgiveness. His love causes him to adopt us and transform us.
- God treats us with the same mercy and steadfast love as if we have never sinned.
- If God does not remember our sins, he certainly will not punish us, his people, for them.

9

Uproot Divine Retribution Theology

- Apostles' suffering
- Scripture tells Christians we will not escape suffering but should expect to suffer. (Phil 1:29, 2 Tim 4:5, 1 Peter 4:12-19).
- Not one of us is worthy of the Lord's care. The Lord does not care for us because we deserve it, but he delights in caring for his people because of who he is ((Ps 37: 23-24)

10



But just because God redeems our suffering, we do not have to endure it when we can avoid it.

Scripture gives many examples of how God's people avoid suffering or flee dangerous situations.

This is wise.

11

Moses

Fled from Egypt to Midian: After killing an Egyptian who was mistreating an Israelite. He feared for his life and fled Egypt to avoid punishment by Pharaoh. Ex 2:14-15

The Israelites

The entire nation of Israel fled from Egypt to escape slavery and the wrath of Pharaoh, who pursued them with his army. Ex 14:21-22

David

Had to flee repeatedly to escape King Saul's attempts to kill him. He lived as a fugitive for years. 1 Samuel 19:10

Elijah

After defeating the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, Elijah fled for his life when Queen Jezebel threatened to kill him. 1 Kings 19:3-4

Jacob

After deceiving his brother Esau and taking his blessing, Jacob fled to his uncle Laban in Haran to avoid Esau's anger and potential retaliation. Genesis 27:41-43

Paul

After his conversion to Christianity, Paul faced opposition from the Jewish leaders in Damascus. His followers helped him escape by lowering him in a basket through the city walls. Acts 9:23-25

12

Jesus

As a baby. Joseph and Mary fled when he was an infant to escape from Herod's Decree. (Matt 2:13-15).

He Withdrew from Hostile Crowds

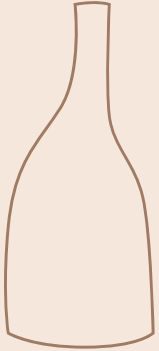
On multiple occasions, Jesus withdrew from crowds or moved to different areas when danger or opposition arose.

At Nazareth: After preaching in the synagogue of His hometown, Nazareth, the people were enraged by His message and tried to throw Him off a cliff. Jesus, however, passed through the crowd and left unharmed. (Luke 4:28-30).

Escaping a plot to kill Him: After Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath and began gaining followers, some Jewish leaders plotted to kill Him. Jesus withdrew to another place to continue His ministry. (Matt 12:14-15)

John 8:59: "At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds."

Avoiding Arrest His "time had not yet come"(John 7:30).



13

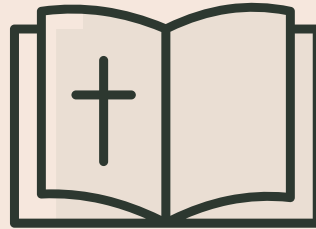
It's different when you
are married!
We are told to submit to
our husbands.
You cannot ask for help
or flee abuse- you are to
submit to it.



14

Ephesians 5

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.



What does this really mean?

15

We submit to righteous rulers

- Bible does not require a wife to submit to sinful or abusive behavior.
- Submission in Scripture is always framed within the larger principle of submission to God's authority.

Acts 5:29 "We must obey God rather than men," meaning that a wife's first loyalty is to God. If a husband is leading her to sin or act against her faith, her duty is to obey God's word first.

16

Start with Context



Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

17

Why are we afraid to unpack this?

It is a MARRIAGE



We worry that we are contributing to the breakout of a marriage

Who and what are responsible for the destruction of the marriage?

18

Biblically Framing Submission Passage

Greater to Lessor

If Jesus can humble himself and serve men, who are supremely inferior to him, a husband can most certainly serve his wife. Serving one's wife does not involve condensation, both are creatures.

Husbands are not equal to Christ

Hence in Eph 5 when Paul is comparing husbands to Christ he has in view Christ's sacrifice, which is reinforced in the rest of the context.

19

Context for Submission

25: Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

————— it is about SACRIFICE

20

So....

- If it is about sacrifice we do not read into it that a husband's desires, discernment or wisdom being superior to his wife's.
- Thinking this way would quickly slide into an abusive mentality- men are wiser, theological sound and superior.



21

submission is asked of us all

Eph 5: 20-21 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **submitting to one another** out of reverence for Christ.

- Children are called to submit to parents (Eph. 6:1)
- Men and women are called to submit to the government (Rom. 13:1)
- Church members are called to submit to elders (Heb. 13:7)
- Servants are called to submit to masters (1 Pet. 1:18)

22

Submission is not

- Subjugation- bring under domination or control, especially by conquest

The submission of the wife is seen as a reflection of the church's relationship with Christ, which is based on love and voluntary submission.

- Blind
- Unconditional

23

We submit "unto the Lord"

- Therefore, it must align with God's principles.
- We submit to righteous rule.
- This is true of everyone, men and women.
We all submit to Christ.

God has established authority in society for order and justice.
(Romans 13:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13-17).

24

Limits to Submission

Submission is always in the context of God's ultimate authority.

- Not used to cover over evil (1 Peter 2:16)
- When Authorities Command What God Forbids (Acts 5:29, Daniel 6)
- When Authorities Promote Injustice or Evil (Exodus 1, Daniel 3)

25

Obedience to God is Supreme!

If rulers or laws demand something that contradicts God's law, Christians must follow God's commands.

Faithfulness to God takes precedence over submission to human authority when the two are in conflict.

Even in marriage?

26

The Bible does not instruct believers to submit to evil.
Instead, it encourages resisting evil and standing firm in faith.

1. James 4:7: “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
2. Romans 12:21: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”
3. Ephesians 6:11: “Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.”
4. 1 Peter 5:8-9: “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.”

27

Abigail *she was married ;)*

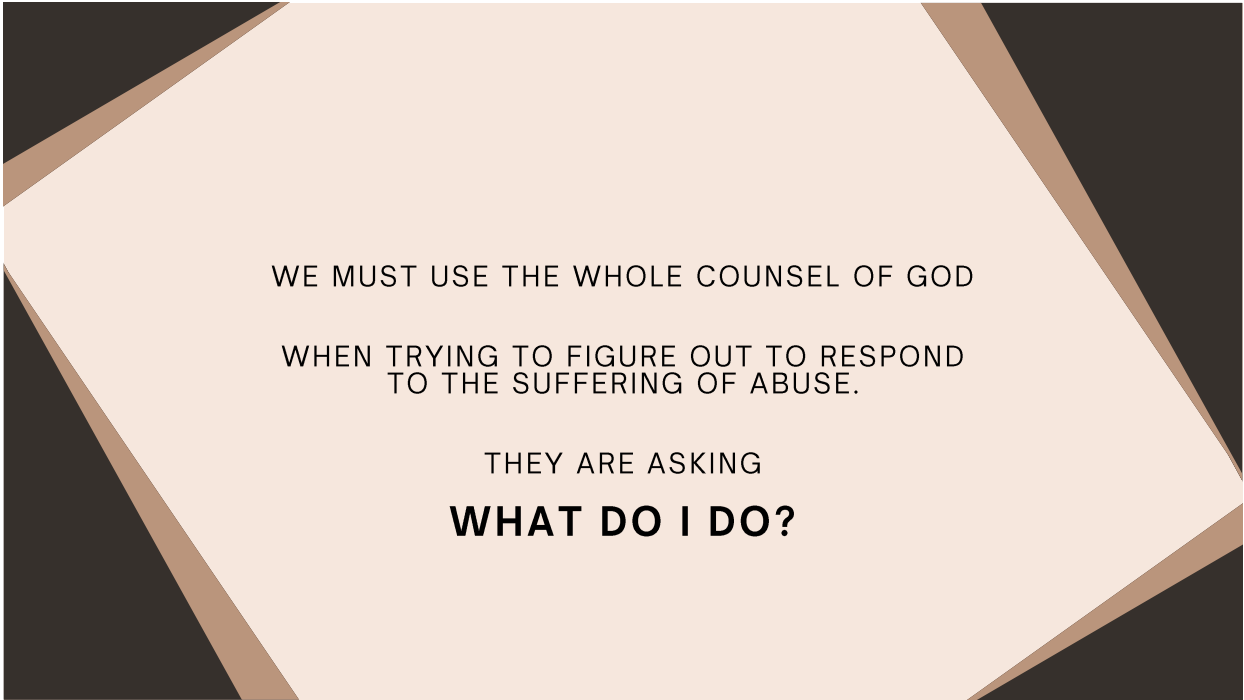
Nabal, her husband, is described as a wealthy but foolish and harsh man, while Abigail is depicted as intelligent and wise.

When Abigail hears of Nabal’s foolish decision and realizes the impending danger, Abigail acted decisively:

1. She did not consult Nabal (1 Samuel 25:18-19).
2. She interceded for Nabal (1 Samuel 25:25).
3. Her actions saved her household (1 Samuel 25:32-35).

She wisely avoided unnecessary suffering
for her and her household

28



29



30

ENEMY

One who hates another and wishes him injury or attempts to do him injury to gratify his own malice or ill will.

FOOL

Denies God's Existence (Psalm 14:1)
 Hates Wisdom and Correction (Pv 1:7)
 Speaks Recklessly (Pv 18:2)
 Vent their rage (Pv 18:2, 29:11)
 Acts Without Moral Integrity (Pv 10:23)
 Prideful and Self-Reliant (Pv 12:15)
 Refuses to Fear God (Pv 9:10)



31

KING SAUL

ENEMY & FOOL

How does David respond to his adversary?

32

DAVID IS ON THE RUN

PSALM 57



Let Your Glory Be over All the Earth
To the choirmaster: according to
Do Not Destroy. A Miktam of David,
when he fled from Saul,
in the cave.

33

DARK PLACE NO LIGHT

DEEP AND ISOLATED

BURRIED TRAPPED FEELING

UNSEEN UNREACHABLE

“A SONG FROM THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH”

S U P R G E O N

34

PLEADING FOR MERCY

**BE MERCIFUL TO ME, O GOD,
BE MERCIFUL TO ME,
for in you my soul takes
refuge;**

CONTINUAL DEPENDANCE

**DISCOVER HOW VICTIMS
DEPEND UPON THE LORD.**

35

**GOD'S PROTECTIVE CARE IS
BOTH COMFORTING AND
POWERFUL**

**IN THE SHADOW OF YOUR
WINGS I WILL TAKE REFUGE,
till the storms of
destruction pass by.**

**SURROUNDING HIS PEOPLE
LIKE A FORTRESS**

**LIKE A MOTHER BIRD COVERS
HER CHICKS**

36

**I CRY OUT TO GOD MOST
HIGH,
to God who fulfills his
purpose for me.**

**WE CRY OUT FOR
PROTECTION AND COMFORT**

THE LORD IS HIGH ABOVE THE CAVE

**WE RECALL FAITHFULNESS
AND BUILD TRUST**

37

**HE WILL SEND FROM HEAVEN
AND SAVE ME;
he will put to shame him
who tramples on me.
Selah
God will send out his
steadfast love and his
faithfulness!**

HE KNOWS GOD WILL SENT HELP

OUR RESCUE IS REALIZED IN JESUS

**SALVATION TO THE LORD'S
FAVOR**

**SALVATION FROM EVIL AND
ADVERSITY**

38

**MY SOUL IS IN THE MIDST OF
LIONS;
I lie down amid fiery
beasts—
the children of man, whose
teeth are spears and
arrows,
whose tongues are sharp
swords.**

**DAVID DESCRIBES HIS
REALITY**

**WE NEED TO HELP VICTIMS
SEE THEIR REALITY**

**DAVID ASKS FOR HELP TO
DETERMINE HIS REALITY**

1 Samuel 20, David approaches Jonathan, Saul's son and David's close friend, to inquire about Saul's intentions toward him.

39

**BE EXALTED, O GOD, ABOVE
THE HEAVENS!
Let your glory be over all
the earth!**

DAVID TRUSTS GOD'S JUSTICE

HE IS SUBMITTING TO GOD'S JUSTICE

BUT HE STILL PLEADS FOR RESCUE

40

**THEY SET A NET FOR MY
STEPS;
my soul was bowed down.
They dug a pit in my way,
but they have fallen into it
themselves.**

**THREATS ARE HIDDEN, TRAPS
AND SET- PEOPLE SCHEME**

EVIL DOES NOT WIN

**SCHEMES OF THEIR SPOUSE
ARE THWARTED**

41

**MY HEART IS STEADFAST, O GOD,
my heart is steadfast!
I will sing and make melody!**

**Awake, my glory!
Awake, O harp and lyre!
I will awake the dawn!**

**I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing praises to you among the nations.**

**For your steadfast love is great to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.**

**Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!
Let your glory be over all the earth!**

42

WHAT DO I DO?

WE ARE CALLED TO PLEAD FOR RESCUE;
HE IS TURNING TO HIS GOD BECAUSE HE
KNOWS THE ONE WHO STANDS ABOVE
THE HEAVENS.

HE IS JUST

GOD'S GLORY WILL BE MANIFESTED WHEN
HE COMES TRIUMPHANTLY TO DELIVER
HIS SERVANT AND EXACT VENGEANCE ON
HIS ENEMY

RESPONDING TO ABUSE

