

# Limits and Loss

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[ 0 : 00 ] Last year, when COVID was really blowing up for the first time, many of us were walking around wondering, why do I feel so tired all the time?

I never even left the house today, and yet I just feel exhausted all the time. Why am I having such a hard time focusing? Why do I feel like I can't get anything done?

Did anybody feel this way? Why do I feel this perpetual mental fog? Why is it so hard even to make the smallest decisions?

I remember even the decision of what to wear in the morning or what to make for breakfast felt impossible. And I read this great article by a local psychiatrist, a guy named Kurt Thompson. And he basically says in the article, hey, you know that thing that we're all feeling, that fog, that inability to make decisions? That's called grief. And we need to recognize that we are all corporately grieving right now.

[ 1 : 03 ] And he says, and I love this analogy, just like COVID was creating a kind of inflammatory response in our immune system, he said, grief is our emotional inflammatory response to loss.

And he says, this is what loss does to you. It results in this inflammatory emotional response called grief. We've been in this series over the past few weeks during the season of Lent talking about emotionally healthy spirituality.

And a huge piece of emotional maturity is knowing how to deal with grief and loss.

That's essential for emotional maturity. And so we're going to be looking at probably the best place in the Bible to understand grief and loss, which is the book of Job. And as I said, we're going to just very briefly summarize the book.

We're going to focus on the final chapter. And this is going to show us three things. It's going to show us first the inevitability of loss, something we have to come to terms with.

[ 2 : 11 ] Number two, it's going to show us the necessity of grief, not something that can be avoided. And then finally, we're going to meet the God of the storm. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for your word. And we thank you that there are things in your word, there are parts of your word that are meant to speak into the deepest, darkest recesses of our hearts.

And Lord, I know that even as I've heard from people as we've been doing this series, this has been dredging up for some people old pain, old wounds, things that they haven't dealt with, things that they have maybe forgotten about that are coming to the surface.

And I pray that as you always do, that you would use your word in the power of your spirit to do your work, to do your surgery in your people, to gradually, progressively set us free from the things that bind us, open our eyes and our hearts to the truth and the hope that can only be found in the gospel.

We pray this in your son's name, Lord. Amen. So let me just give you a summary of the book. Very, very, very simplistic summary, I admit, but it's all we have time for.

[ 3 : 24 ] Job basically starts out as an ancient Near Eastern equivalent of a Jeff Bezos. And that is if Jeff Bezos were as righteous as he is rich, right?

Because Job is not only fabulously wealthy, but he's a paragon of righteousness and piety. He is and has everything an ancient Near Eastern person could want.

And then, in one fell swoop, catastrophe strikes, and he loses everything in a day. He loses his children. Very tragically, he loses all of his wealth, and he even loses his health.

And in short order, we find Job having moved outside the city, outside the wall, living in the trash heap, and covered in sores and boils.

And he's really in the midst of his grief. He's trying to wrestle with this profound, catastrophic loss that he has suffered.

[ 4 : 24 ] And so then his wife and his first three friends offer some pretty bad advice. And then a fourth friend comes along named Elihu, and he offers much better advice.

And then finally, we see God. Job meets God face to face. Job, all through the book, says, I don't want to talk to you. I want to talk to God. I don't want to talk to you. I want to talk to God.

Finally, God shows up. And what this is really about as a book is it's a lot about loss and grief. And it's about how loss and grief fundamentally change our relationship with God.

So I want to break this down into the three points that we're going to focus on as this relates to Job. The first is this. Job shows us that loss is inevitable if you're a human being.

You say, well, how can we get that from Job? Job is this ancient, mysterious book written thousands of years ago. It may or may not even be history. It could just be some sort of parable. How does that relate to me?

[ 5 : 24 ] And Jonathan Edwards, in his well-known sermon on Job, says that Job is actually the story of all human beings. You know, he says Job loses everything in a day, but all human beings will eventually lose all of these things over the course of a lifetime.

You know, no matter how many anti-aging products we buy or use, we can't slow the passing of time. We can't slow or stop the impact of time on our bodies.

We can't slow the breaking down inside that is occurring right now. Beyond that, we're all going to have to let go of dreams.

We're all going to have to watch doors close and know that they will never reopen. We will have to let go of childhood aspirations once and for all.

You know, this is what leads many people to have a kind of midlife crisis. You reach this point, and some people in our church are at that point now where you realize, I'm never going to do that thing.

[ 6 : 32 ] That thing that I always thought I would do, I'm never going to do it. And that can be really terrifying and unsettling. And we lose some things very slowly, like our neuroplasticity or our vision.

You know, I just this past year was getting headaches and realized I needed to get glasses because my eyes are starting to fade. I can no longer read the text in front of me as well.

That's inevitable. It's a kind of loss. But then we're also going to all face catastrophic loss at some point in our lives, right? Many people have lost loved ones to COVID this past year.

And that's been horrible and tragic. Maybe your spouse has an affair. Or maybe one of the doors that closes that never reopens is the possibility of getting married or having kids.

Maybe you lose your job. A lot of people lost their job this past year. Maybe you get a cancer diagnosis. But in one way or another, catastrophic loss is going to come. And the point that we need to see in Job is that loss is an unavoidable part of life.

[ 7 : 35 ] There's no way to avoid it. It's a part of being alive. And I think that this is, you know, it may sound like an obvious point to you, but this is a point, particularly in the West, that needs to be made and that we need to hold on to.

Because in the West, I think that we have lost touch with this fact of life. I think in the West, we have increasingly denied that loss is inevitable.

And you really see this trend ever since the Enlightenment. There's been this increasing optimism and confidence and reliance on our technology and our democracy and our prosperity, just our ability as a society to generate unimaginable amounts of wealth.

It's very recent, historically speaking. And there are many people who, because of all of these massive advancements, truly believe that one day we're going to be able to transcend the limits of our humanness.

You know, and I'm not just talking about the transhumanist movement, you know, people who want to take our consciousness and sort of upload it into a machine. That's part of it.

[ 8 : 40 ] But there's a broader kind of rejection of limits across the board. And so many people in our culture say that limits are meant to be broken.

Right? Don't let anything stand in the way of your dreams. Don't even let your own body stand in the way of your dreams. Limits are meant to be broken. That meme will go far. It will go viral.

I'll tell you a meme that won't go very far. Embrace your limits. You know, if you post that, you're not going to get probably as many likes. Because people hear that and it's not quite as inspiring.

Embrace your limits. No, I want to hear chase your dreams. You know, limits are meant to be overcome. You know, climb every mountain. You can do anything. That's what we want to hear. But the Bible says that limits are what make us human.

In other words, they're the thing that reminds us that we're not God. And if you look back at Genesis 3, that's kind of important to remember.

[ 9 : 42 ] Because it's something that we tend to forget. And the message, embrace your limits, may not be as popular. But that is the beginning of true wisdom. Biblically speaking.

That's where true wisdom, that's the acorn of wisdom. Embrace your limits. And the problem that we will see is the more we deny our limits, and this is where it gets really practical, the more unprepared we will be to face loss when it comes.

Which it will. The more we deny our limits, the more unprepared we will be to deal with loss. Here's why. Much of what determines whether or not suffering is traumatic has to do with our subjective experience of it.

You can have two people who go through the same horrible thing. This person comes through relatively okay. They're able to move on with their lives. This person is left deeply traumatized. What's the difference?

It's the subjective experience of the suffering. Suffering is much more likely to traumatize you if it is completely unexpected. It's much more likely to traumatize you if it's completely unexpected.

[ 10 : 55 ] If it completely overturns your sense of how the world works. So if you're cruising along and it completely comes out of left field and it overturns your entire sense of what's possible, it's going to be much more traumatic.

So accepting our limits and accepting the fact that loss is inevitable will actually prepare us to face loss much better. So that's the first point.

Loss is inevitable. Now what do we do with loss? Well, in order to deal with loss, we have to know how to grieve. As Dr. Thompson says, it is the emotional inflammatory response to loss.

So we need to understand what grief is and why it's necessary. Behind every loss, whether it's a minor loss, like a loss of mobility due to a sprained ankle, or a catastrophic loss, such as the loss of a loved one, eventually, grief will come knocking at your door.

I remember in my high school psychology class, I remember having to memorize the Kubler-Ross stages of grief.

[ 12 : 06 ] And maybe some of you know what I'm talking about. Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally, acceptance. And I remember looking at that and thinking, even as a high schooler, wow, isn't that great that somebody has been able to map this out?

And look how linear this is. This seems pretty doable, you know? Well, of course, I had never really had to grieve at that point in my life. And then that same year, I lost one of my dear friends in a really tragic car accident.

And it was the first time I'd ever encountered anything like that. And I remember thinking, I think that the Kubler-Ross stages of grief diagram, I think looking at that is kind of like looking at a diagram of a hurricane.

You know, it's technically accurate, but it somehow doesn't quite capture the experience of it when you're in the middle of it. Because I remember feeling like my life had been turned upside down.

The way I thought the world worked was turned upside down. You know, I know other people who know people who know people who die. I don't know anybody who dies. And I realized how privileged my life had been.

[ 13 : 20 ] Some people know grief from their earliest memories. And it really shook me. Job's account of grief is much more realistic. We have basically 35 chapters, you know, Job 42 chapters, 35 chapters full of Job weeping and raging and even cursing the day of his own birth.

And even, dare we say, there are times when Job hopes and prays that God might just end his life so that his suffering would end. And this is something that people maybe not, are not prone to tell you about grief.

There will be times that you want to die. There will be times that you may lay in your bed and say, God, just end it. Now, that doesn't mean that you're suicidal. It doesn't mean that you're having suicidal ideation and need to go.

There's a way in which we can think that even if we never really intend to do it. Because the suffering is just that bad. You know, most people don't kill themselves because they want to die.

They kill themselves because they want to end the pain.

Now, if you're feeling those feelings and you begin to develop specific ideas about it, you begin to develop a specific sense of how you would do it and when you would do it and where you would do

it and all of those things, you need to recognize that and you need to recognize that you're in trouble and you need to reach out and you need to get help.

[ 14 : 38 ] But there are a lot of times when people who would never actually do it when you're grieving think, wow, that would be nice just to not feel this anymore. And Job, we see that.

It's very honest in Job. In fact, Job's not the only one in the Bible in whom we see that kind of prayer. And Scazzaro in the book, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, does a pretty good job of describing what grief looks like in Job.

He says, look at what Job is doing. First of all, he's paying attention to his emotions. He's not running from them or numbing them out. He says he's willing to wait in the confusing in between. There's a lot of times when you're in grief when really nothing makes sense.

You don't have a sense of moving through the stages of the Kuper-Ross model. You just feel like everything's upside down. You see Job embracing his limits in a whole new way. You see Job growing profoundly in humility.

His creatureliness is unavoidable. And then finally, Scazzaro says that part of grief is letting the old give birth to the new. That out of the things that die, out of the things that we grieve, out of the loss, new things grow.

[ 15 : 50 ] But the main thing I want us to see for purposes of this message is this. Job doesn't run from the pain. Job faces it. He doesn't avoid the grief.

He's willing to go through it. You know, different cultures have different ways of dealing with and processing grief. It's a very, very culturally specific phenomenon.

I think in our culture, many people, our kind of commonly understood way of dealing with grief is to not deal with it. It's to deny it. It's to minimize it.

It's to avoid it through various forms of addiction. Some more socially acceptable than others. You know, I love the quote from the actor Russell Brand, who has been very public about his battle with various kinds of addiction.

And Russell Brand, he wrote a piece in The Guardian a few years ago. He's very honest about his struggle with drugs and alcohol. And he says, drugs and alcohol are not my problem. Reality is my problem.

[ 16 : 50 ] And I bet that rang true for a lot of people. Drugs and alcohol, he says, are my solution. I look to drugs and booze to fill up a hole in me. Another guy whose quote I have to include, the comedian Louis C.K., despite his recent infamy, his words still ring true.

He talks about how everyone is constantly on their devices, texting and Snapchat and Instagram and TikTok all the time. And he says, he's like, why do we do, why are we all on our devices all the time?

He says, the reason that we do it, you know, the reason that we fill up every available minute with distraction is because, and here's the quote, underneath everything in your life, there is that thing, that forever empty, he calls it.

The forever empty. And he essentially says that the reason that we're constantly doing all of this is to keep ourselves constantly distracted because we're trying to outrun the sadness. And he talks about this one experience where he didn't outrun it.

He just pulled the car over to the side of the road, set his phone down and allow it to hit him. And he says, he just cried. He's just sitting in his car for no reason in particular and just breaks down into tears. And then he says, and you know what?

[ 18 : 04 ] I cried and then I felt better. He stopped running. I think a lot of that sense that we have where we're trying to avoid something, I think a lot of that is what you might think of as deferred grief.

There is pain that we've tried to put off that we've tried to escape. So I think a lot of us, I think a lot of Christians in particular, because in a lot of churches you hear the message that Christians should be happy.

We should be at peace. If you have true faith, then you should have lots of hope. And there are a lot of Christian communities where negative emotions are really not that welcome. Christians aren't supposed to act that way.

And so I think there's a lot of unresolved grief. And what you've got to understand is unresolved grief will show up in different ways. It has symptoms, right? So people who are very irritable or angry with no real reason, sometimes that could be caused by unresolved grief.

If you just feel a general sense of apathy or a low-grade depression, that could be unresolved grief. Feeling stuck or feeling fixated on some loss in your life, a job that you lost or a person that you lost, and it's been years and years and years and years and years and years and you're still stuck, it could be that there's a way that you haven't grieved yet.

[ 19 : 17 ] You've never really faced the pain, right? Hypervigilance. In other words, an overblown fear of loss.

Sometimes when people lose something and they don't grieve it, that can create a kind of magnified fear of losing anything else in their current or future life.

And so they become hypervigilant about loss. Of course, addictive behavior, self-harming behavior. You know, cutting isn't the only kind of self-harm.

For some people, going to the gym two, three, four times a day can be a form of self-harm. You know, you look healthy, it's more socially acceptable, but it's actually self-harm. So there are a lot of more subtle ways that this can show up.

And so it's very important that we recognize when we need to grieve, both collectively and individually. And this isn't just true for you as an individual or me as an individual.

[ 20 : 14 ] This is also true for the church. The church needs to learn how to grieve better. Many of the prayers, many of the psalms are psalms of lament, corporate lament. That's corporate grief.

You know, this week, I think that we as the church need to grieve the deaths in Atlanta. You know, we need to grieve the eight people who were shot, six of whom were Asian women.

We need to grieve the horror of that, the atrocity of that. Whatever twisted motives Robert Aaron Long had, eight people died. And we have our Asian American Pacific Islander community filled with fear that this is representative of deeper layers of hostility waiting to be expressed in this way or even worse way.

Right? And a lot of that in the wake of COVID and the impact that COVID has had on people's attitude toward Asian Americans and the ways that that has been expressed, right, a lot of that fear feels very justified.

And we as the church, whatever role we have played in this and whatever way that the church has been complicit in this, that's something that we need to grieve and we need to repent. There also may be some ways that you need to grieve individually that may never have occurred to you.

[ 21 : 31 ] Let me just ask you this before we move on. Maybe you need to grieve the childhood that you wish you had had so that you can accept the childhood that God gave you.

You know, there are a lot of people stuck wishing, lamenting, resenting the childhood that they had, the parent who wasn't there or the parent who was there, who shouldn't have been.

The circumstances of their childhood, where they grew up, where they went to school. Instead of holding on to that and trying to change something that you can't change, maybe that's something that you need to grieve.

Grieve the childhood that you wish you had had so that you can accept the childhood that God gave you. You know, this is what Skizero is talking about. Let the old give birth to the new.

Grieve what has died so that you can embrace what has come to life in its place. Maybe you need to grieve the loss of the person that you want your spouse to be so that you can accept the spouse that God gave you.

[ 22 : 37 ] There are a lot of people who can go through 20, 30 years of marriage in love with the spouse they want, resenting the fact that their actual spouse isn't that person.

Maybe you need to grieve the death of the person that never existed. You know, there's this really fascinating movie, I'm blanking on the name now, where a couple goes on this kind of strange couple's retreat and there's this building where when you go in by yourself, you actually meet an idealized version of your spouse.

Almost like your actual spouse, but your idealized version. And it's a really fascinating movie. I'm sorry, I'm blanking on the name. I wish I could remember the name.

But it's out there, you'll find it, it's really great. And, you know, one final kind of unresolved grief, maybe we need to grieve the loss of other lives we might have lived so that you can accept the life that God has given you.

If you're always dreaming, always fantasizing about the life that you wish you had, maybe that's something that you need to grieve. You know, in other words, when I say something that you need to grieve, maybe there is a kind of pain in there that you're not facing.

[ 23 : 53 ] And maybe you actually need to stop and face that pain rather than trying to mitigate it through fantasy and daydreaming. So there's all kinds of grief that we may need to go through that we have probably deferred for one reason or another, mostly out of fear.

And the hard truth in Job is this, the only way to deal with grief is to go through it. The only way to deal with it is to go through it. That's the only way.

You've got to go to the darkest place where there's the least light, where it seems like there's the least hope, where there's the most fear. That's where you need to go. It's the only way to get through it.

But as terrifying as that might be, the book of Job shows us that that is often where you will find God. Third point, the God of the storm.

As I said at the beginning, Job gets a lot of bad advice through the course of the book. First bad advice comes from Job's wife. I do think it's interesting that God says, let's make Job suffer, you know, says that to Satan, right?

[ 25 : 00 ] You can make Job suffer and Satan kills the kids, takes the health away, takes the wealth away, but leaves his wife alive. I don't know what's going on there, but I don't think they had the best marriage. And Job's wife is the first to give advice and her advice is simply this, just curse God and die.

Now, not everybody's gifted to be a counselor. And that's okay. But that's clearly bad advice. Then we have roughly 29 chapters where three of Job's friends try to counsel him.

And you say, well, why would 29 chapters of this book be taken up with bad advice? Clearly, the author wanted that to be front and center, right? Wanted us to wrestle with the bad advice of his friends?

Well, I think this gives us a clue into why the book of Job was written in the first place. Job was likely written sometime in the second millennium BCE.

It's possibly, as I said, the oldest book in the Bible. And there are other ancient texts from that time period, from other cultures and religions, that also deal with the same question of evil and suffering.

[ 26 : 06 ] And I think that's fascinating. Job is what you might think of as a theodicy. It tries to resolve the issue of suffering in God. But it's not the only theodicy from the ancient world. We have other, for instance, Mesopotamian theodicies about somebody who suffers and has to make sense of that in light of the reality of God.

But what's even more fascinating than that is when you compare the book of Job to these other theodicies, the advice of Job's friends reflects the wisdom in all of these other theodicies from the ancient world.

And so one very plausible explanation for the book of Job is the book of Job is meant to counter the teaching that you would find in these other Mesopotamian theodicies.

So the advice of Job's friends perfectly reflects what you would find in these other texts. And it's almost as though the text is trying to dialogue with these other texts. And so all three friends basically make the same argument.

They say, Job, you must have done something horrible. There must be some egregious sin in your life. Look at the amount that you're suffering. Nobody suffers like this unless they deserve it.

[ 27 : 23 ] Surely you've done something that you haven't told us about, you haven't told God about. Just confess. That's what they keep saying. And it gets harsher and harsher. There are several cycles of dialogue between Job and his friends and each time they get a little less nice, a little less refined and the gloves finally come off and they're like, Job, obviously you're a horrible sinner.

Just admit it and be done with it. And that's essentially what all of the other Mesopotamian cultures believed. It's what most religions believe today. That ultimately, if you're blessed, you must have done something good.

God must be on your side. God, if you're suffering, if you're cursed, if you're having to grieve loss, then you must have really screwed up and God must be frustrated with you. And that's what we think.

You know, you get a cancer diagnosis and a lot of people, your first thought is, God, what did I do to deserve this? Or you look at somebody else and you're like, why are they having all the success and not me?

What did they do to deserve that? But Job counters this in two ways. First, he says, look, when you look around the world, what do you see? You don't see righteous people flourishing and

unrighteous people being punished.

[ 28 : 32 ] He's like, you see the opposite. You see unrighteous people flourishing and you see righteous people suffering. He's like, this doesn't make sense according to your logic. And then secondly, Job insists, I really and truly haven't done anything to deserve this.

And he's telling the truth. In this story, Job is innocent. So by chapter 31, Job has proven his friends wrong. That retribution principle that they're operating out of, that's not true.

But he has not solved the problem of suffering. Because what we are left with in chapter 31, if Job just had 31 chapters, what we're left with is a God who is capricious and arbitrary.

And I think a lot of Christians secretly believe that that's how we understand suffering. Ultimately, God is capricious and arbitrary.

The only way to explain it is that God just randomly dispenses blessing and suffering. And that's not enough. That's not enough. And Job's not going to leave us there.

[ 29 : 42 ] Chapter 32, we meet Elihu. And Elihu says, you're all wrong. The friends are wrong and Job's wrong. He says, suffering is neither proof of God's wickedness nor is it proof of God's, or I'm sorry, neither is suffering proof of Job's wickedness nor is it proof of God's arbitrariness.

And then he says something pretty radical. Sometimes suffering is proof of God's love. In chapter 33, verses 14 to 19, he says, God speaks to humans in two ways.

Through His word and through suffering. C.S. Lewis lost his mother at an early age. He was emotionally abandoned by his dad.

He suffered from a respiratory illness as a teenager. He fought and was wounded in World War I. and then he had to bury his beloved wife. And out of all that pain, he wrote a book called The Problem of Pain.

And in there, he says this, pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain.

[ 30 : 59 ] It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world. So God is not capricious or arbitrary. arbitrary. Elihu says, there's a purpose behind everything that God does, including the suffering that He allows into our lives.

He only allows exactly as much as He needs to allow in order to accomplish the purposes that He has in the lives of the people He loves. And this takes us beyond a capricious God, but the final word in Job has to come from God Himself.

All the while, Job keeps saying, I don't want to talk to you, I want to talk to God. And God finally shows up. And Job gets a little more than he bargained for. God shows up as a massive hurricane. Very fitting. And He speaks starting in chapter 38. And here's what He says, just to paraphrase a few of the verses. Job, He says, prepare yourself.

I've got a few questions for you. And He says, where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? I was there. I don't remember seeing you there.

[ 32 : 08 ] Where were you when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Where were you when I laid the clouds over the sea like a blanket over a newborn child?

He says, I was there. Where were you? And He goes on and on and on and on. And the point is clear. He says, there's a purpose behind suffering.

And it flows out of God's wisdom. But that purpose is so much greater, it is so much higher than anything that we could ever hope to understand. It would be like you trying to explain your laptop to an ant.

In the storm, Job comes face to face with his finitude, with his creature creatureliness, with his humanness.

And then, and only then, does he see God clearly, maybe for the first time in his life. He says, I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you.

[ 33 : 13 ] You know, I had this abstract concept of you, but the problem was I was so big in my own eyes and you were so small that I was actually not able to see you because you were cast in my shadow.

I was so big that I was looking at you, but you were shrouded by the shadow that I cast. And now that I've gotten smaller and you've gotten bigger, now I can see you.

Now you're not just an abstract concept in my mind, now I can actually see you. And he says, I'm going to shut up and I'm going to repent in dust and ashes.

That's all I can do. And this is what grief ultimately does in us. It brings us face to face with the truth of our own limits and then it brings us face to face with the truth of who God actually is.

And this is the core of all true wisdom, by the way, the realization that there is a God and I am not Him. If you want to be wise, start there. Now I'm almost done but there's one more little thing we have to say.

[ 34 : 20 ] Some people might object to this and say, so I'm just supposed to accept that God has reasons for suffering even if we can't understand it. How do I know I can trust that kind of God? I'm just supposed to leave it entirely in His hands?

And the reason that we can trust God with the suffering in our lives is not really found in this story. It's found in the story to which the story points. It's found in the greater story of the Bible.

In this story, Job is supposedly innocent and yet as an innocent man he suffers more than any of his friends. Through all of his suffering he remains faithful to God and in the end God tells the unfaithful friends offer sacrifices and ask Job to pray for you and if Job prays on your behalf I won't deal with you according to your folly.

And what we need to understand is this story points to an even greater story and an even greater Job. There's only one human being who ever lived who was really and truly innocent and his name was Jesus Christ.

And yet Jesus was willing it was his delight to go to the cross to suffer more than any other human being in history and he was willing to do that to offer himself as a sacrifice.

[ 35 : 36 ] And the gospel says that because Jesus did that he offered himself as a sacrifice and because Jesus prays to the Father on our behalf if we come to Jesus and ask for him to intercede for us it says that because of the prayers and the sacrifice of Jesus God won't deal with us according to our folly.

He won't deal with us according to our sin. He won't deal with us according to all of the ways that we have questioned and even abandoned God. And so this is what we see as God's final answer to suffering in the world.

Not an explanation but a solution. So we may never understand why God allowed suffering to enter the world but we do know this that God was willing to suffer more than any one of us to bring an end to suffering once and for all.

Let's pray. Lord again I we I know that there are people who are genuinely really truly suffering who might be hearing this and we know that words alone aren't enough and so what we pray now is that you would take whatever of this is of you from you and that you would make it true make it flesh through the power of your Holy Spirit.

Deliver your word as medicine to those parts of us that most need to be healed and we pray that this would kindle in us a hope that enables us to face the inevitability of loss and grief and to do it faithfully Lord we pray this in your son's holy name Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Love Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen