

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

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Preacher: Lindon Nairn

- [0 : 00] Isaiah chapter 53. Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
- And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.
- Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.
- Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.
- And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted. Yet he opened not his mouth. Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter.
- [1 : 25] And like a sheep that before its shearers is silent. So he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
- And as for his generation. Who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living. Stricken for the transgression of my people. And they made his grave with the wicked.
- And with a rich man in his death. Although he had done no violence. And there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him.
- He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for guilt. He shall see his offering. He shall prolong his days. The will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.
- Out of the anguish of his soul. He shall see and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall the righteous one. My servant make many to be accounted righteous.
- [2 : 27] And he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many. And he shall divide the spoil with the strong.
- Because he poured out his soul to death. And was numbered with the transgressors. Yet he bore the sin of many. And makes intercession for the transgressors.
- Luke chapter 13 verses 1 to 5. There were some present at that very time. Who told him about the Galileans.
- Whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them. Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners. Than all the other Galileans.
- Because they suffered in this way. No. I tell you. But unless you repent. You will all likewise perish. Or those 18.
- [3 : 27] On whom the tower in Siloam fell. And killed them. Do you think. That they were worse offenders. Than all the others. Who lived in Jerusalem. No.
- I tell you. But unless you repent. You will all. Likewise. Perish. The word of the Lord. Brothers and sisters.
- Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. You know. When. When we were. Growing up. We.
- We all thought. That our father. Ate nails. For breakfast. Lunch and dinner. He was. A tough guy.

He was. As tough. As they came. In fact. He was. The. The. Local. Local. Local. Policeman. In Andras. Having been.

[4 : 25] Transferred. From Nassau. Because. Frankly. There were so many people. Who were out to get him. And he had a reputation. In Andras. Such that.

If someone said. Someone who had committed. Some. Crime. Or. Done something. Maybe. To a spouse. Or whatever. And that person was told.

That oh. We're going to call cop. Rather than waiting. For my father to arrive. They would meet him. At the jailhouse. That's how tough.

He was. But interestingly. He had a very soft spot. He.

Did not like. To see any of his children. Cry. Or suffer. And I remember so vividly. When. Once.

[5 : 23] I had a. An injury. To my leg. And he cried. He cried. And he cried. My mother. Unmoved. But he cried. Unmoved. But here. It was this tough guy. You know. You couldn't do anything. To his children. Couldn't utter a word.

Anybody. Who said anything. Mean about his children. He was ready to get them. Take them out. He didn't want to hear.

Anything negative. From anyone. About any of his children. That was the kind of. Father he was. Today we come to.

Another of. The. Very difficult. Questions. In this very short. Series. And I must acknowledge.

[6 : 21] That. This is a difficult. Question. The question. Before us is. Why. Does God. Allow. Suffering.

Why does. Our father. Allow. Suffering. And. I don't. I consider this. Very. Weighty.

Subject. I wondered. A number of things. Firstly. I wondered. Why would this be important to us? Why would this be. An important question.

For us to contemplate. During this hour. That we are together. I thought that. It would be important for us.

Not just so that we can have. Head knowledge. But so that. When we. Suffer ourselves.

[7 : 19] As we have. And when. As. And as we will. And when we witness. The suffering. Of those we love. And even those who are.

Afar off. We can have. The right perspective. It can help us. We can grow. In love.

For God. And we can. Bring him glory. Even. In our suffering. And I pray today.

That. We would help to. Advance. Those things. As we. Listen to the message. Today. I also thought.

I considered. This subject. About. The evil. And the suffering. That. We witness. All the time. Take for example.

[8 : 20] Just a few. Short years ago. A 43 year old man. Lived with. His girlfriend.

And she awoke. At 3 a.m. One morning. Went into a room. Where her 10 year old daughter was. And there.

There. This 43 year old man. Was abusing. Her daughter. She immediately called the.

Police. And this man. You know what he did. He took the girl. To a convenience store.

Bought a bottle of bleach. And poured it on the girl. In an attempt. To get rid. Of the evidence.

- [9 : 23] Over the last six months. Every. Day. For the last six months. 10 children.
Every day. Have been losing. At least. One limb. In Gaza. And thousands. Have been killed.
Their lives. Uprooted. By a ruthless government. Unmindful of innocence. As they hunt down.
Barbaric. Criminals. Consider this. Some years ago.
Some of you may have heard. Two hundred and seven. Six. Young girls. Living in a.
- [10 : 22] Town. Called. Chibok. In. Burno State. Nigeria. One evening.
These girls. Went to school. To. Take their. Final physics exam. And all of them.
Were kidnapped. By. A terrorist group. Boko Haram. And to this day. That occurred. Some.
In 2014. To this day. Many of them. Have not yet. Been rescued. We could spend a lifetime.
Documenting. Human suffering. And still not scratch. The surface. And so. The millions of Africans. Enslaved.
- [11 : 21] For hundreds of years. And millions more. While being moved. Along the. Across the Atlantic. Like cargo.
To suffer. And die. 19. 18. To 19. 19. 20. To 1920.
One third. Of the world's population. At the time. One third. Some 500 million people. Were infected.
With the deadly. With the deadly strain. Of influenza. And 50 million of them. Die. In 1931.
In China alone. 4 million people. Were killed. By the China floods. And I remember these two incidents very well, personally.
- [12 : 22] A healthy, young, vibrant boy playing off the beaches in New Providence dove headlong into the water and crashed into a rock, leaving him paralyzed.
A brilliant young man with a quiet and sobering demeanor consumed an inordinate number of pills in an effort to kill himself.
He failed. I remember this. But the damage was done. Physically, he was a shell of himself.
And what about this one? Several years after marrying her knight in shining armor, a young woman now with children is stunned to find that she is not the only one and finds herself raising her children all alone.
There's no kind of human suffering that has not happened. Prejudice, crime, disease, natural disasters, these all lead to suffering.
- [14 : 13] And so given all the suffering we see around us, and the suffering that affect us directly, it seems to me that we are compelled to ask, why does God allow suffering?
Why does God allow suffering? Does he not care? Let's pray. Father, Lord, we come to you this morning, Lord, and we acknowledge our inadequacy.
We acknowledge, O Lord, the questions remain in our hearts. Father, we pray that you will do a work that only you can do.
Lord, that you would receive glory, that you would receive honor. Lord, that you know where everyone is. Lord, you would do an individual work in every life.

And you would do a collective work among us as well. In Jesus' name, amen. When one has regard for the entirety of Scripture, and having specific regard for the texts that we read, I believe that a good summary of the subject would be the following.

[16 : 09] suffering, a fruit of a fallen world, beckons believers to grow spiritually, and warns unbelievers to repent.

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And so, in just a few moments, short moments, I'd like to consider the subject, the question, under three main headings.

The reality of a fallen world, spiritual growth for believers, and warning to unbelievers.

I want to make a few introductory comments before delving into those points.

[17 : 21] And let me also say that we want to just take a few minutes at the end to answer questions that you might have. I've already put my friends on notice that I'll be calling upon them, so they know who they are.

So let's start by asking a basic question. What is suffering? We've talked about it already. We've given examples already. Suffering is really the state of undergoing pain or distress, hardship, experiencing something that is unpleasant.

Suffering can be physical or mental, financial, emotional, or even relational. And there are other kinds of suffering as well.

But when this topic of suffering comes up, when we talk about suffering, why does God allow suffering?

We cannot escape this question without considering the nature of God. In fact, that's really why the question comes up.

[18 : 47] Is He able to prevent suffering? And if He can, why doesn't He?

Does He care? Yes, He cares. The death of His Son proves that. Does He love me?

Yes. The Scripture tells us, with an everlasting love, He loves us. How can He get glory from my suffering?

He can. He can. And He often does. And we'll see that in a moment. Here's another question. How can I serve Him in the midst of my suffering?

Well, there are ways that we can serve. And we'll answer that in a moment as well. But you know, I don't know how many of you have had the privilege, or perhaps I should say, the displeasure of speaking with a so-called atheist.

[20 : 19] And many of them will say to you that they cannot accept that a loving God would allow pain and suffering. That's what they say.

They say, no, there can't be, the God that you talk about can't possibly exist because He would not allow the pain and suffering that we see.

And that is their rationale. That is their basis for being atheists. Undoubtedly, they think that if they were in God's place, if they were God themselves, things would be different.

But I'm always amazed, taken aback by this rationale. Because here it is. These people, some of them don't even know how to bake a cake.

They don't know how to perform heart surgery or repair a computer. They don't understand 90% of what constitutes the universe.

[21 : 26] Yet they think that they can rationalize God. They think that they are smart enough to do that.

All of that said, we must acknowledge that God's character, what we know about God, does make this a difficult subject.

He's omnipotent. He's all-powerful. He's all-loving. He's full of compassion.

He's sovereign. Those things make this a difficult subject because God, if my father had anything to do with it, my earthly father, I would never suffer.

I feel pretty certain about that. But it is vital that we consider, that as we consider this subject, we bear in mind that God's sovereignty means that human suffering does not surprise him.

[22 : 56] Indeed, human suffering is part and parcel of his redemptive plan, which he purposed before the earth was created.

You know, we can stop right there. We can park right there and end. Human suffering is part of God's redemptive plan.

That is to say, how many of you know, if man never sinned, there would be no redemptive plan. Jesus would not come to die.

How many of you know also, how many of you know also, that, and here's a little difficult piece for us to bite into just a little bit.

Some people say that Satan is the architect of evil, which leads to man's suffering because of the choices he makes.

[24 : 23] But we know that Satan is evil, but God is sovereign. God permits him. God created him. God created him. But here's a, here's what we do know.

We know that when we look at a person who is suffering in a specific way, that we can't generally, generally, we can't say for certain why that person is suffering in that specific way.

we might be able to make some general comments about it, but we don't know specifically most often. I want to say this to you before we go into these points.

We don't have all of the answers to all of the questions. But here's what we do know from Scripture. The Scriptures tell us that the secret thing belongs to the Lord, our God.

And so you and I would do well to remember that. To remember that our sovereign God, He works all things out for our good.

[26 : 08] Now let's talk quickly, and we've got to move quickly because we, we want, we do want to have time for some questions. Let's move to our first point, the reality of a fallen world.

Romans tells us, the book of Romans, that sin came into the world through one man, one man, and death through sin.

And so death spread to all men because all sinned. Adam is the one about whom Paul writes here.

Sin came into the world through one man, Adam. Adam's sin really is what started it all. Adam's sin, and I want to just tell you two things about Adam's sin really.

And I thought it might make sense. It might be easier to, for us to get it if we were to break it out into two bits. How did Adam's sin affect suffering that are caused by humans?

[27 : 31] Well, the answer is simple. Adam's sin, and we see that humans sin as well as Paul writes here.

How many of you know that man's sin, your sin, and my sin, they have consequences either for ourselves or for others.

A man who shoots a store manager, for example, while robbing a store. Well, the impact of that is clear. Go all the way back to King.

King killed his brother. Sin. My point is that sin causes human suffering.

Fallen world. Not only for the one who sins, but also for the one who is sinned against.

[28 : 45] And it is true, though, it is true, we have to acknowledge, that the one who sins does not always suffer. He doesn't always suffer.

At least not immediately. We also know that even our very best efforts, even our very best efforts in this fallen world, could result in pain for others and even for ourselves.

Adam's sin plunged all of mankind into the abyss of sin. But what about nature?

What about natural disasters? And that's the second point under this heading that I want to talk to us about. What about natural disasters?

The Bible helps us to see that the earth itself was corrupted during the fall.

[30 : 05] Listen to what God says to Adam in Genesis 3. Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it.

Cursed is the ground because of you. Hear that? Hear that? Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you. And you shall eat the plants of the field. It's clear from this reading that it was not always this way.

That the grounds were cursed. Thorns and thistles. It was not intended for there to be thorns and thistles to be as difficult as it is today to plant and to harvest.

But just in case that's not clear enough, Paul tells us that the whole creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

[31 : 40] So the creation, Paul writes, was subjected to futility, not willingly. The whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

Sin corrupted the earth. Sin So we see natural disasters. We see floods and hurricanes.

Earthquakes. The Bible also tells us about the enemy of our soul.

That he has come to kill, to steal, and to destroy. The reality of a fallen world.

Sin. The fact that we sin, we cause suffering. The fact that sin occurred, we have, the earth is different from it was, than it was.

[32 : 59] We have an enemy of our soul. He's come to kill, to steal, and destroy. Suffering, by definition, must be a fruit of a sinful world.

The truth is that there, that where sin exists, there must be suffering. Can you imagine that if there was sin, but we had no suffering?

That makes no sense. Think about it for a moment. How could there possibly be sin without suffering? Can you imagine that at all?

Imagine you sinning against someone, and not causing offense, in some way, shape, or form. That cannot be.

But let's consider this subject from another perspective. Let's consider it from the perspective of how suffering ought to affect us as believers.

[34 : 19] Spiritual growth for believers is our point number two. Someone coined the term, don't waste your suffering.

Not certain who did. But this term is very useful, if you think about it, because it is so easy for us to suffer, and as we do, to become self-absorbed.

and to wallow in pity. I don't know how many of you are like that, but when you are suffering, when there is difficulty, it's hard to see beyond the pain and the difficulty that you are experiencing in that moment.

But the word is, the thought is, that we ought not to waste suffering, we are not to waste it. I believe we ought to take that to heart.

Consider the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4, verse 18, where he tells us to look not at the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen.

[35 : 52] Here, Paul tells us that we ought to have in our moments of challenges, in our moments of suffering, we ought to have an eternal perspective.

Moreover, we ought to have confidence in God's sovereignty. humanity. Here's what we know. Here's what we know about suffering.

Our suffering and my suffering is not unique. Although, very often, when we are suffering, we feel that it is unique. I, it's happening to me and to no one else.

It's not unique. But I want to just repeat this phrase. Don't waste your suffering. I, I think that's a, that's a really good one and I just plug that in right there because I believe somebody needs to hear it again.

Don't waste your suffering. Everyone suffers including the, the great men and women in the Bible. Moses.

[37 : 10] Moses was in the wilderness for much longer than he really wanted. and he didn't make it into the promised land. David.

Death of his son. And then David, David had some bad boys, boy. Absalom, one that comes to mind, killed his brother who raped his sister.

Did some, some incredible things. mess, what a mess in his household. Apostle Peter.

Tradition tells us that he was crucified and he said he, he didn't want to be crucified the way his Lord was. He wanted to be crucified upside down.

So suffering, suffering is not unique. And Paul, well Paul, there's a lot that Paul says about himself. And we'll talk about that in a moment.

[38 : 21] But suffering, how do you and I as believers approach suffering? I want to tell us that suffering reminds us of what we have in Christ.

When we suffer, we should remember what we have in Christ. Suffering reminds us that we are, that we have a treasure in jars of clay.

That's the way Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians chapter 4. He says, we have this treasure in jars of clay.

to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. Then Paul said, let me talk a little bit about this first before I tell you what he writes.

Paul said, that you and I as believers that the power is not us, but it is the one who is in us.

[39 : 46] Paul says that we've got this treasure on the inside of us. And he says that when you and I are suffering, we draw from that well.

He says that we, you and I, can shine in the moments of our suffering, not because of ourselves, but because of the treasure that is in us.

And then he goes on to say in verse five, he says, we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed.

we are perplexed, but we are not driven to despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, shrugged down, but not destroyed, always carrying in the body the death of Christ, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies.

For we who live are always being given over to the death, to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

[41 : 15] Paul tells us that you and I, yes, we are going to be afflicted, but we need not be crushed, brothers and sisters.

Yeah, we might be perplexed, but be not driven to despair, not going to be given up, giving up, persecuted, but not forsaken by the one who loves us, shrugged down, but not destroyed, not utterly destroyed.

We have this treasure in jars of clay. Suffering reminds us what we have in Christ.

We stand not on our own strength, but on the strength that he provides. suffering produces patience.

James 5, 10, tells us, as an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

[42 : 39] Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You've heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Paul is simply saying to us, don't waste your suffering. He says, endure it, endure it. He says, take the prophets of old as example, and remain steadfast.

Tribulation, the Bible tells us, produces perseverance. Suffering brings us closer to God. It makes us more dependent on him.

I believe everybody here knows that. Everybody here knows that suffering brings us closer to God. You want to get a brother or a sister on their knees. Suffering does just that.

Can I, I want to share a little joke with you. You know, I was thinking the other day, you know, some people, the only time they pray is when they eat.

[44 : 02] And it's a wonder that so many people are overweight because perhaps God, that's God's way of getting their attention.

But suffering, you know, where did that come from? But here's the point, here's the point, here's the point.

The point is this, that when we suffer, it brings us closer to God. It makes us more dependent on him.

In fact, the truth is, it makes us, it ought to make us, it ought to make us stronger. For when we are weak, the apostle tells us, he is strong in us.

remember what Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 12. He says, Paul, here, Paul is, I tell you, Paul is just like us.

[45 : 07] Paul had an issue. I don't know precisely what Paul's issue was, but it was something that he did not desire to have. It was a problem for him, and he wanted it to go away.

And Paul said he prayed to the Lord, three times for this issue to go away. And the Lord came back, and this is what the Lord said to him.

And sometimes this is what the Lord says to us. My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Therefore, Paul says, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities.

[46 : 17] For when I am weak, then I am strong. brothers and sisters, I got to tell you, this is so true. Let's grab a hold of this truth.

When I am weak, I am strong, not because of me, but because of Christ who is resident in me. if you and I just, if you and I were to grab a hold of this truth today, nothing that can hold us down.

Because when they say stuff about you, when they insult you, when you are having some issue with somebody, when perhaps your body is weak and broken, when there's hardship, when there's financial hardship, when there's the loss of a loved one, Paul says in those moments I am weak, but I know that I am strong because his grace is sufficient for me.

His power is made perfect in weakness. I wonder why that's true. Perhaps that's true because we're not competing with God.

Perhaps that's true because we're on our backs and we can't, the only thing that we can do is look up. We're not relying on ourselves anymore.

[47 : 49] Maybe that's what it is. But we allow God, allow the Holy Spirit to help us to be strong in us.

I want to share another one with you. Suffering ought to do. Can I tell you, we've talked about suffering, personal suffering, but what about suffering that we observe in others?

How would that to impact us? How would that affect us? can I say that suffering, the suffering of others gives us an opportunity to serve them and in so doing to bring glory to God.

I want to say that again. Oh, this is a big one. suffering, the suffering of others gives us opportunity to serve them and to bring glory to others.

What an opportunity. What an opportunity we have as believers is to stand next to a brother or a sister who is suffering and to say, here I am.

[49 : 12] I'm going to help you through this. I'm going to stay right there with what a privilege. Listen, what a privilege you and I have to bring glory to God.

Oh, my. What a what joy it is. what joy it is. You want to gladden your own heart?

You want to uplift your own self? Stand next to someone who is suffering and extend a hand to them. Do something for someone who is suffering.

Do something for someone who is down, who doesn't know where the next meal is going to come from. Give them a nice word of encouragement. Say, I'm going to hear you.

I'm going to listen. I'm going to stand and just listen to what you have to say. Just a couple days ago, on Friday in fact, I saw a middle-aged man and his wife, a Caucasian couple, with a small group, about 12 people.

[50 : 28] I didn't count them. and the couple, these were all adults, couple, they were feeding these people.

It was clear to me that this was not an ordinary group, because they were, one of them was in a wheelchair, and the others, you could see that they had issues.

groups. But as the man walked by me, I stopped him and I asked him to tell me about the group.

and he explained to me, he said, firstly, he said, I'm a missionary from the United States, my wife and I, and this is a small group from a local facility here in New Providence.

He said, you see the young man in the wheelchair? He has cerebral palsy. You should see this young man. Couldn't do anything for himself, couldn't feed himself.

[51 : 47] He was being fed by this woman, being fed Kentucky fried chicken. And there she was with the chicken in her hand, and he was there, his teeth, you could see his teeth, and he was dribbling, and she was feeding him Kentucky fried chicken.

And then he said, he said of this young man, he said, let me tell you, he said, if anyone can feed this young man, then I know they're serious about helping people who are suffering.

He had no idea I was about to preach this message. He said, I must tell you, it took me years to do that, but my wife was comfortable with it from the very beginning.

And then he said, he pointed to another man. He said, you see that young man over there? He stayed at Princess Margaret Hospital for the first 15 years of his life.

No one came for him. No one wanted him. And he said, now he's mentally confused. And then he said, you see all the ladies there?

[53 : 07] they made up, perhaps nine of them. He said, all these ladies have AIDS.

And he said, I don't want to misquote him, I believe he said, in every instance except one, these women were married and their husbands were unfaithful and gave them the disease.

Then he said, the lady there is the one exception. And she has been raped 30 times.

and she now suffers from schizophrenia. She has four personalities. And he said, and I asked him, I said, why do you do this?

He said, I do this because I bring glory to God. And I thought to myself, how amazing this is.

[54 : 33] and I felt so small. I felt so little. I couldn't compete with that.

Not that I have to, but that's the first thing that came to my mind. The second thing that came to my mind was to give him everything that I had in my wallet.

And I did that. And I thought to myself, how easy that is to just give money. How easy that is.

But this man said, what a privilege. He says, you sold everything that we had. We came here to the Bahamas. This for us is an opportunity to bring glory to God, to service to those who are suffering.

Brothers and sisters, we have opportunities galore right here in Amensis in our church. Perhaps the person sitting next to you presents an opportunity for you to bring glory to God, to be of service to them.

[55 : 52] I'm saying to us, that we can go beyond just hearing the gospel preached, to living it out.

Then we read earlier that Jesus in Isaiah 53, we read about how Jesus himself suffered. Jesus, you see, he's not removed.

As Isaiah tells us and as the gospels remind us, that he's not removed from our suffering. And I dare say that we can't even comprehend the suffering that our Savior endured because he was bruised for your and for my iniquity.

Can you imagine someone beating God for me? Lord, have mercy, I feel sorry for him already. Being God for me, for me, for all the sins, all the sins that I have committed.

And then you add Brother Calvin's sin on top of that, and Lord have mercy for that person. More than anyone can bear.

[57 : 18] The Lord laid on him what we deserved, although he had done no violence. John Lennox says that God's suffering on the cross proves that he is not removed from human suffering, but has become a part of it.

I gotta move on. Time is quickly approaching. Let's go to point number three. Point number three. Warning to unbelievers.

And here we find this, we see this laid out very plainly in the scripture that was read to us in Luke chapter 13 verses 1 through 5.

You've got to see this, brothers and sisters. I want you to appreciate what is happening here. Jesus is teaching.

teaching. And at this particular point, the Bible tells us, Luke tells us, that there was some present at that very time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

[58 : 53] Now, I don't know what the intent was. Luke does not elaborate on this particular point. It could very well be that these people came to Jesus to tell him about this because they had the expectation that he would react in a certain way.

Maybe they thought that Jesus would be so angered by this that he would move against the Romans. I don't know.

I don't know. I suspect. But this was a horrific situation. Jesus said to them, and I want you to get this.

Don't miss this point. They came to Jesus with what was a horrific event. And listen to what Jesus said.

Listen to what Jesus said in response. Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered in this way?

[60 : 02] That's the first thing he said. So let me just comment on this point. Jesus is making the point that they did not suffer because of their sin.

They did not suffer because they were worse sinners than others. That's the first point that Jesus is making. But I want you to get a hold of the overall point that Jesus makes.

Jesus says to them, no, he answers his own question, no, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

That's Jesus' response. Jesus is told about major human suffering and Jesus responds to those who come with the message.

Can I say this? Don't want to be misunderstood. But here Jesus shows no sympathy it would appear at first glance. Instead, Jesus says, you got to repent.

[61 : 10] They came to Jesus and said, Jesus, look at the suffering. And Jesus says to them, you better repent. Because unless you repent, you will likewise perish.

And just in case the point was not made, Jesus said this.

Or, this is what Jesus says, of those 18 to whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?

No! I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. So Jesus, they came to Jesus with what they thought was a horrific situation, expecting Jesus to respond in a certain way.

And Jesus said, you better repent, otherwise you will likewise perish. And then Jesus, to make the point even clearer, Jesus said, what about these other 18 who died the other day?

[62 : 19] He said, unless you repent, you will likewise perish. Can I tell you what that's almost like?

And then I want to tell you what it means, what this means. It's like this. It's like a major fire happening in Nassau.

And 20 people die. And someone comes and says, oh man, you heard about those 20 people who died in the fire? And the response that you get is, listen, unless you repent, you will likewise perish.

There is no sympathy, there is no, man, that's a big deal, oh, what happened, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, that's none of it. Jesus says, unless you repent, you will likewise perish.

What's the point that Jesus is making here? Jesus is saying to us, brothers and sisters, Jesus is saying to us that as we see human suffering, you and I ought to consider our own end, the possibility of our own end.

[63 : 29] Jesus is saying that you think that's bad, he's saying to you and I, he's saying to unbelievers, if you think that that's bad, you should wait until judgment day.

You should wait until judgment day. That's a drop in the bucket. That's a drop in the bucket. So when you and I see suffering, when you and I see natural disasters, when you and I hear about things happening around the world, let's just remember that the Lord himself, that the Lord has rescued us, he has saved us, but for the unbeliever, the unbeliever, he should know that unless he repents, what he sees, he's dropping the bucket for what will happen.

But how many of you know, brothers and sisters, that there is coming a day when suffering will cease, it's going to cease.

This is what John the Revelator says, and I heard a loud voice from the throne say, behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

[65 : 10] Every tear from their eyes will be wiped away. And death will be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

Brothers and sisters, there's more, but let's end there. Let's end there. I don't know, Pastor, if we have some time.

Okay. All right. Okay. Very good. Very good. Okay. So, let's remember that we can rejoice and be glad in this day and in every day.

And it doesn't matter as the song that we will sing at the end tells us. That whether the sun will shine or whether the skies will rain, we know that God is good.

Whether in life or death, whether in joy or pain, I know this truth remains. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[66 : 37] Father, this message today was heard by people in different seasons of life.

Some, O Lord, see major suffering in the rearview mirror. Others who understand the cycle of life know that suffering will come again.

even others are right now walking through a period of suffering. Some are recent. Others are prolonged.

God, would you grant that both there would be a godly perspective to endure suffering and a tangible blessing to overcoming.

Lord, would you give us active eyes to see the suffering of others and not to run from them but to them. Lord, may it be true that the one in the throes of suffering is comforted by your presence and the active and overwhelming support of others.

[67 : 54] May we grow during our seasons of suffering. And, O Lord, may the sight and awareness of human suffering drive unbelievers to you as they consider the fate that awaits the unsaved.

May that reality evoke in us a heart for evangelism first in our households, and in our neighborhoods, in our workplaces, and indeed throughout the world.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen.