

Perspective in Suffering

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[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles to Job chapter 1. And we're going to read the entire chapter, Job chapter 1.

It starts out, and it can sound a little bit like a fairy tale, but it's not. It's true, and it's the Word of God. In the land of Uz, there lived a man whose name was Job.

This man was blameless and upright. He feared God and shunned evil. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 donkeys, and had a large number of servants.

He was the greatest man among all the people of the East. His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning, he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.

[1 : 19] This was Job's regular custom. One day, the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.

The Lord said to Satan, Where have you come from? Satan answered the Lord, From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.

Then the Lord said to Satan, Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him. He is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.

Does Job fear God for nothing? Satan replied, Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.

But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face. The Lord said to Satan, Very well then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.

[2 : 30] Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. One day, when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, and the Sabaeans attacked and carried them off.

They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you. While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you.

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off.

They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you. While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, Your sons and your daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house.

It collapsed on them, and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you. At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head.

[4 : 00] Then he fell to the ground in worship and said, Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away.

May the name of the Lord be praised. In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. Job is an extreme book.

Job was an extreme case. No one here has ever been as high as Job went. He didn't just have children. He had ten children.

He wasn't just rich. He was really rich. He wasn't just great. He was the greatest man in all of the East.

High. Higher than you have ever reached or will ever reach. And no one here has been as low as Job went.

[5 : 13] Some of you have suffered. You've suffered greatly. Job didn't just lose a child. He lost all of his children.

He didn't just have financial setback. He lost everything. He didn't just go low. In chapter 2, he's sitting in the dust, scraping open wounds with broken pottery.

And if you were a homeless leper walking by, you would say, at least I'm not him.

There's only been one man more extreme. Only one man who's been more extreme, who was high and came so low.

But Job came closest to Jesus for height and depth. And Job is pointing. And this is what we're going to see just on and off throughout the sermon, I hope.

[6 : 27] Job is pointing to Jesus. You're seeing a picture, a type of Jesus when you look at Job. Job, though, was extreme.

He went through something. He went through something terrible. And he went through something terrible for our good. And that's Christ-like, too.

What do I mean that he went through something for our good? Well, what I mean is his story helps us to understand our stories. Are you suffering?

Are you suffering? Well, then you have a story. And this book, Job, is written to help you, to give you some perspective, to give you some understanding.

And perspective is really what you desperately need in suffering. We have an advantage over Job in one way, because Job didn't know what was going on in his suffering.

[7 : 38] We at least get more of the picture for our own suffering. Job's world is small. He doesn't know what's going on with the Lord and with Satan. He doesn't have that insight.

But we do. He doesn't get the full picture. But what the book of Job does for us is it expands. It blows up our world and gives us some perspective.

You know, suffering has a way of being so in your face, so close that you can't make sense of it. Maybe you've held a book to your face and it's so close that you can't focus the letters.

That's what suffering tends to do. But Job has a way. The book of Job blows up our world. It stretches us in some very good ways. It stretches our minds and our hearts and our understanding and gives us perspective that we need.

And so if you are suffering or if you have suffered greatly, then you know that when you do, your world tends to shrink.

[8 : 42] Your life shrinks. I just think of a woman giving birth. I don't think she's thinking about much else than the pain.

She's not thinking about what's going on outside. She's not thinking about the news. Her whole world shrinks down to what is happening on that bed in the hospital.

What is happening to her? What she's feeling? What the pains are? What this is all about? Your life shrinks. Now, extreme suffering has a way of almost trapping you from the rest of your life.

Just like that pregnant woman doesn't think about any other parts of her life. She's only thinking about that moment. What I'm saying is suffering tends to do that. It can trap you.

It can cut you off from the rest of your life. It can cut you off from your past. Suddenly, your past seems strange to you. It seems like a stranger's life.

[9 : 48] It cuts you off from your future. You used to be able to look forward and sort of plot your course and see where things are going. But now you ask, how do I go on?

How do I go on? If you've lost your spouse. And of course, I can't say amen to this personally, but if you've lost your spouse, I'm sure you can say amen to this.

Your past can almost seem strange to you. Like you aren't you anymore. Because you were married to her. You were married to him.

And that's who you were. But now you aren't just cut off from them. You're cut off from who you used to be. You're cut off from you. You aren't you anymore.

Not the same. It doesn't seem the same. And you don't know how to make sense of it. Even God can seem strange. If you're in extreme suffering, even if you're holding on to the Lord, even if you're holding on to God, it can be like holding on to a mystery.

[10 : 59] And so once, you know, you had a big world with God and you were it was light and it was day. But now it's very, very small. And you're holding on to a God who hides himself.

And now you're starting to see, oh, that's what those verses are talking about. And you say, what does he want me to do? Where does he want me to go?

How do I go on? Do you see what I'm saying? Your world shrinks. And now we can hold on through all of that like Job did.

Or we can give way. And in your suffering to some degree or other, lesser or greater, the greater the suffering, the greater this is true. This is more and more of a test of am I going to hold on to the Lord like Job did?

Or am I going to give way? Am I going to fall apart? Am I going to let go of God? Stop trusting him. In the words of Job, which is just the central whole theme of will you curse God?

[12 : 09] Will you be done with God? Will you despise him or will you hold on to him? That's always the question that's being pressed upon you in your suffering.

So, again, I ask, are you suffering? Well, are you holding on to the Lord? Or if you could look at your life objectively, are you retreating from the Lord?

Are you letting go? I see this happening. And you can see this kind of thing happening. It happens in very mundane but difficult situations.

People with special needs children, they divorce at a higher rate than even normal marriages. What happens is they lose their way.

They lose themselves. They lose each other. In the pain and the agony and the confusion, they can't figure out what they're supposed to do and they can't figure out how to relate to that person who's in it with me.

[13 : 15] And they lose each other. And they don't know how to make sense of what was, of what their life or their marriage or their family was before this child came along or what is, what's going on or what could be.

And they can't make sense of themselves. They can't make sense of their spouses. And their ship wrecks. They don't have stars in the sky. They have no moon to guide them.

And they don't have a pilot to hear their cry. I love that hymn. They don't have hymn. And so they crash. They lose each other in the pain.

It doesn't necessarily even have to end in divorce. You know, a teenager hangs himself in the garden shed. In the barn outside.

That happened when I was in high school. A senior hung himself in the barn outside. And mom and dad, you know, they stayed married.

[14 : 21] But, you know, she moves into the spare room. And there's only polite hellos and goodbyes as they pass in the kitchen.

And maybe their hearts are full of accusation and resentment towards the other person. What you should have done. What I could have done. What you didn't do.

What we didn't do. And their world shrinks. And, you know, they stay married. They stay together. But it crashes. Well, the book of Job is all about enlarging our worlds.

About stretching our worlds. And it's really as God stretches us. And pulls us out of ourselves. And pulls us out of these things.

That he does save us. We do need protected and saved in our suffering. And he rescues us from shipwrecking our own lives.

[15 : 19] From letting go of God. By giving us truths to hold on to. To give us some perspective. And this morning I just want to give you four stretching, saving points.

Just from Job 1. We're not going to, I'm not going to exposit the whole text. And go verse by verse or anything like that. But I do want to just, there's a reason these chapters are here.

It gives us perspective. It gives us understanding. It's telling us things that we need to know when we go through suffering. It's giving us more of a divine and eternal perspective of what Job is going through.

And so as we go through our suffering, we're supposed to understand these things. Job didn't, but we get to. So there are four stretching, saving points from Job 1.

They all start with the letter S. And the first is sovereignty. Sovereignty. Job 1 tells us something very interesting about how God runs the world.

[16 : 28] And it might seem strange as, like, we don't exactly know how it connects to suffering, but I think you're going to see that it does. Job 1 tells us something very interesting about how God runs the world.

And we need to know this if we're going to understand our suffering. If we're going to be saved from shipwrecking our lives. Well, how does God run the world?

How does he exercise his sovereignty? Well, look at verse 6. Verse 6 gives us a picture of God running his world.

One day the angels, or literally the sons of God, came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.

Now, who are these sons of God? Well, these sons of God are God's heavenly counsel. Is that interesting that it's his cabinet, if you will?

[17 : 31] Maybe that's strange to you that God has a cabinet or a counsel. It's not a counsel as in God is taking advice so much as these people are heads of the department, so to speak.

They run the secretary of defense or the interior department or whatever. It's something similar to that. Now, is that strange to you? It shouldn't be that that's how God runs his world.

There's several verses that point to this, and there's a lot of other parts of the Bible that show us this actually happening. Psalm 82, verse 1, the ESV says, So God has these people, these sons of God, ruling under him.

Psalm 89, Who in the skies above can compare with the Lord? Who is like the Lord among the heavenly beings? In the counsel of the holy ones, God is greatly feared.

So that's what we see going on in Job 1. So one day, it was just a normal day. Jewish scholars posited all sorts of special days that maybe this day happened on.

[18 : 55] But the book of Job just says it was one day. An ordinary day. The sons of God come to present themselves to stand before the Lord.

That word stand before the Lord is used in Proverbs. You see a man skilled in his work. He will not stand before. He will stand before kings.

He's not going to serve in just some sort of lowly government position. In the book of Proverbs, it's saying, you know, if you see a man skilled in his work, he will serve on the highest council in the land.

He will serve in front of the king. So that's how God exercises his sovereignty. Through others.

He puts others in places of authority. And that's how he rules. Now, we understand that completely on the earthly level. Children, why do you need to obey your parents?

[19 : 56] They're bigger than you. They're stronger than you. They can threaten you. Well, that's not why. You need to obey your parents because it says it pleases the Lord.

For this is right. God has put parents in charge of children. There's an authority structure. You obey them, children. And God says, oh, you're obeying me.

Romans 13, it's talking about government. The authorities that exist. We're talking about the Roman authorities here. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted. Well, that's how God rules this world. He has authority structures.

And his laws and his commands and his will is exercised through them to a greater or lesser degree. But what the book of Job shows us is that that goes all the way up.

[20 : 59] That doesn't just stop at our world. It goes higher. That's how God rules the world. So where is Jesus now?

Well, first Peter tells us. First Peter three, two. He has gone into heaven. And is that the at God's right hand? There's authorities.

With angels, authorities, and powers in submission to him. There's authorities. There's powers.

There's this heavenly council in submission to him. Now, we need to be very clear. Are all parents good? No. Some parents are downright abusive and cruel and evil.

are all governments good well we'd say no does god hold them responsible for how they use their authority yes uh but does he just wipe them out all immediately when they misuse their authority and say and just put a good angel in their place well obviously not because here i am i'm a sinful dad i've sinned and i'm still alive and god still expects me to use my authority does that make sense so here we are we're imperfect but god is working through us well the same thing is going on in heaven he uses them he rules through them he rules despite them sometimes doesn't he even in heaven yeah even in heaven colossians says jesus through his cross disarmed the powers and the authorities and made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them by the cross so these aren't good powers these aren't good authorities but for now they have authority and they have power they're misusing their rule but they have this rule nonetheless satan himself is called the god of this age or the god of this world and he has a kind of authority over the world and what what does he do with it but god uses him in in luther's words satan is god's satan and we're going to see that in a second now is this something why why is this something all the no why is this important what does this have to do with my suffering well is this something we need to know and the answer is yes we do live in a world of angelic authorities who misuse their authority and we live in a in a world with angelic authorities doing the will of god and all this is to say there is more going on than meets the eye there's more going on than meets the eye there's more going on in your suffering than meets the eye you are a part of the conflict one way or the other you know we have we have such little worlds and those evil authorities want nothing more than for us to think that all there is is flesh and blood all there is is what you see all that's going on and what other people are doing or what i'm doing or what's happening to me but our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers and against the authorities against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms your suffering isn't just about you my suffering isn't just about me it's a part of something greater it's a part of something that's going on in heavenly places it's a part of this angelic cosmos wide height and depth struggle against the rebels against the usurpers against the traitors the sons of god who have taken their god-given authority and used it to destroy this world to bring hurt and sin and sadness and abuse into the world so we pray for mayanmar what is going on in mayanmar now evil men are doing evil things heartless men are doing heartless things but more than that

[25 : 53] there's powers of evil stirring up violence and hate and war stirring up lust stirring up a will to dominate there's more going on than meets the eye that's what peter needs to know that's what the children who are suffering need to know suffering is a part of a wider conflict and that's what job shows us and so whose side are you on if you're suffering you're doing something with that suffering you're choosing a side with it are you are you moving away from god cursing god reviling god or are you holding on to god like job does no so do you see how this this this helps suffering it pushes us down deeper into ourselves you become fascinated with your own pain you become fascinated with all these questions about what i'm going to do and what this means for me but here this is this is saying this is more than about you god is pulling you out of yourself out of just feeling sorry for yourself or out of the relentless question of what should be what could be what should i do all of these things he's saying there's something to do here there's something on the line suffering is a chance to choose suffering is a skirmish in this greater battle does that make sense it's pulling you out of yourself it's it's it's saying there's more on the line than just how you feel about things right at this moment now here comes the second s satan what's his job in this cabinet so to speak and again i understand that this is not a perfect analogy um but i'm just using it because we don't really have human words or government to describe what's going on here but it's it's close how does god use him well you see it here they all one day appear and we have the lord said to satan in verse 7 where have you come from in other words it's it's reporting time you can imagine the the table and the people are sitting around the table and it's it's time to report on what you have been doing what have you been up to and satan answers rather blandly from roaming the earth from going back and forth in it now he's a roaring lion seeking who he may devour sometimes he devours us by putting us through suffering sometimes he devours us by giving us all of our dreams and making them all come true and then he devours us that way but he's seeking to devour but here in this case it doesn't seem that satan has anyone in particular that he's focusing on or maybe at least he's not being honest or giving any helpful information this is sort of a cloy uh backward kind of response so the lord says and the lord does something very frightening in this next bit he brings up job now i don't know about you but you know you don't like people talking about you do you uh if if you got a malicious mean boss at your place you don't want your name coming up in front of him do you well i don't know about you but satan is is one person i don't want my name to come up in front of i'm very happy if he doesn't even think or or contemplate me but that's what the lord does he has a reason he has a good purpose have you considered my servant joe literally have you

taken to heart my servant joe has come to your attention have you started to contemplate and think about him he's blameless and upright a man who fears god and shuns evil you know the lord is saying look at this guy he really loves me he serves me he obeys me he trusts me now why why in the world would the lord do this well it's a chance for god to get glory this is a part of the skirmish this is a part of the fight this is about answering the question here's a moment here's a chance that the lord can win a battle against his rebellious servant against his rebellious servant satan and so he and his wayward angel have been having this long standing dispute an argument that we get brought into an argument that's been going on since the very beginning satan says no one serves you willingly no one could possibly serve you because they love you no one could serve you apart from some sort of selfish motives how could they how could they that's what satan is saying satan would never serve the lord out of love and there's no chance that anyone else would either that's satan's argument so are there people who will love and serve god just for who he is not for what he gives them not for his blessings but for who he is will they love him because they love him will they trust him because he's trustworthy so if there are do you see how that glorifies god do you see how that magnifies god well and if there aren't then then satan is right and so what is going on here is the lord is going on the offensive he's going on the offensive against this wayward servant satan and he's bringing job along with him and you know what he brings us along with him sometimes too where he calls us into battle he calls us to the line have you taken to heart job have you thought about him and satan's answer is clear does job fear you for nothing all you do is bless him verses one through six one commentator says looks like a disneyland fairy tale everything about job's life is going great he lives a disney blessed life a charmed life and so of course he loves you people only like you because you give them things when i was like in fifth grade there was this girl that was trying to be my friend and all she did was giving me money and gum and i found out later she was stealing it from her parents her mom's purse but saying saying that's what kind of person you are you're you're no better than a fifth grader who gives their lunch money and all their lunch to the kids so that they'll be friends with them but breach the hedge tear down the hedge let me at him and then we'll see then we'll know change the circumstances then we'll know now satan is completely malicious but you know what he has a point he has a point how easy would it be for you to love and serve the lord if chapter or verses one through six was your life how could i know if you really love the lord then if that was your life satan has a point you know you make the comfortable

really suffer and then we'll know but the other way can be true you know make the poor man rich then we'll find out there's been lots of people who are christians who've been given lots of money and then it proves that they're not make the poor man rich to see what's really in him maybe he's only serving you because he is poor you put money in front of him and we'll see what happens and he'll turn and then we'll know that's satan's point so satan has his purposes he wants to destroy he wants to defame he wants to say god that's the kind of god you are but what is god's purpose for satan what does he use him for well very simply at least one thing that he does not this isn't comprehensive but one thing that he does and one thing that we see him doing here is god god uses satan to sift to sift to test to shake up to so agitate that what is real stays on top and what is not falls through sifting is all about remember the lord said peter satan has asked to sift you and god and jesus didn't say but i said no i'm not gonna let him do that that would hurt you no i'm gonna let him sift you now satan doesn't use suffering or riches he uses some temptation and the fear of man but satan is sifting peter he's shaking him back and forth sifting is all about separating the kernels from the chaff the good from the bad to make true faith and true love rise to the top and in that way to prove that satan is wrong to prove it out of your heart your life i love him because he's lovable i love him for what he for what for who he is not just for what he gives me and so satan sifts job and that's what we see the rest of chapter one you you know the story we just read it i don't have to go over it so the sabians attack and lightning falls and the chaldeans raid and a wind blows in the all the corners of the house and the and the house collapse where the children are celebrating and job's world is ripped apart and the hedge evaporates chapter two the story gets replayed again but this time it's a step further and job is physically ruined some of you have been there physically ruined and hurt and damaged so much what is all of that you say what what is going on maybe you're like paul saying lord heal me i i would so serve you better if you would take this thorn out of my flesh and the lord says no maybe that's that's what's happening happened to you what is all of that oh it's satan sifting let's see what's in that man let's see what's in that woman and here's the thing god's glory is on the line your faith is being tested now the lord knew what was in joe the lord knew what was in joe and the lord

knew what he was going to use joe for and the lord knew the grace that he was going to give joe but he was going to use him to show the devil you're wrong you're wrong again you've been wrong before and you're wrong here and so he's going to use joe to just undermine satan's kingdom bit by bit day by day he's going to tear down satan's kingdom and expose the lies of the devil for what they are there are people that love the lord for just who he is that hold on to him despite suffering and so that's what god is doing through satan he's showing satan and the watching world they do love me they go on trusting me so do you see what god wants to see in your suffering you know he's not looking for great deeds of faith great things flashes of glory in your suffering he's looking for you to hold on keep loving me through this keep trusting me through this don't back away press in job suffers and job holds on he goes on this journey he goes on this journey from death all the way to resurrection as it were and as he goes by the end of chapter 2 he's cut off from everyone even his wife is saying curse god and die that's the question will satan curse god and despise god he's cut off from everyone and everything he's even cut off from himself chapter 3 begins with this lament of all laments where he says i wish i was never ever born curse the day i was conceived curse the day i was born he's so far apart from the joy of life that he would just wish he never was he's cut off from everything even himself but he holds on and he holds on when absolutely he has nothing but confusion and questions when he has no hope he has no hope of feeling or he has no feeling of hope inside of him he feels nothing but despair but he holds on and you know what god is glorified in that and satan is humiliated in that and christ you know it's the same thing christ put the powers and the authorities to shame and dying on the cross and job is going to do the very same thing he's going to put them to shame he's going to put them up to open shame as he holds on and brothers and sisters this is what i want to say you do the very same thing in your suffering when you hold on there's a more there's some similarity between christ's suffering and your suffering there's some ways that you are doing exactly what jesus did and so that's why it's called sharing in the sufferings of christ you put the authorities and powers to shame when through it all you hold on and you say though he slay me i will trust him peter says in his first letter you suffer grief suffered sadness and all kinds of trials why that your faith which is of greater worth than gold which perishes though refined by fire may be proved genuine and may result in praise and glory and honor when jesus christ

is revealed now here's the question who is this faith of greater worth to well it's a greater worth to us that's for sure but i think what he's saying is in god's sight this faith is of greater worth than anything that you anything that man could possess so when the Lord looks on his suffering people and sees them believing he puts a premium on their faith and as that faith is tested and as that faith is tried and refined in the fire it's proved genuine and it says it results in praise glory and honor when jesus christ is revealed i don't think that is talking about us praising and glorifying jesus so much as him praising and glorifying us on the day that you is talking about the very same things suffering is faith genuine do you love do you keep on trusting what is

[43 : 08] God doing and thinking about all of this so it's part of something bigger your suffering shows you what you're truly made of and it's your opportunity to show the watching world that you don't love God just for his things I love him for who he is you see how that's pulling you out of yourself there's more on the line than what you're just feeling suffering isn't just all about your hurt it's also an opportunity suffering isn't meaningless it is opportunity now that brings us to our third s and these last two are shorter than the first two the third s is making sense of your suffering making sense of your suffering I just want to can I tell you that meditating on this little story this little part has helped me so much because suffering can be so confusing it can be so perplexing it can be so hard to put words on to we we like to be able to put on put words on things and sum them up because that it helps us to understand them and suffering can be so hard at that and so I've asked myself questions and I'm sure you have too you've asked yourself the very same kind of questions what was that what was that or or or what now well why did that happen how does all this fit together you know it's like you had your puzzle your life was a puzzle and you had all the pieces and they were all fit together and all of a sudden someone came around it and tore it all up and and now you're missing pieces and the picture isn't the same as the picture on the box and you're saying well I still have to put this thing together but I don't know what it's supposed to look like and I don't know if I have all the pieces anymore you you ask yourselves those questions and and you're left afraid because when you're in that situation where you don't know what all that was and why that happened and where this is going it it can really take away your confidence it takes away your confidence because you know how close you came to falling apart you know how close that was and you're afraid that that might happen again because no one wants to hurt like that again and and so we're afraid and we're afraid to move on and we're afraid to go forward but this is where Job the book of Job helps and I found it so helpful to say just to myself a very simple truth I was sifted I was sifted you know sifting is this violent shaking back and forth of Satan tears us all around and I say yes that's what that's what happened to me there's words there's words that's what that was the Bible has a name for what happened and it's something that happened to Peter and it's something that happened to Job and it's something that happened to Jesus it's something that happens to all of God's servants what that was was not so unique so

Peter was sifted and he made it to the other side and job was sifted and he made it to the other side and Jesus was sifted and he made it to the other side and Jesus said to Peter afterwards afterwards strengthen your brothers there was an afterwards and there was something to do afterwards there was going on and there was future usefulness there was a future and a plan and a purpose and that's what And so I can say, and you can say, here I am.

Satan sifted me. Or, here I am right now. He is sifting me. But look, I'm holding on.

I'm holding on. Or, I made it to the other side. There were times when, you know, I thought my faith would fail, and it was pretty bad, but look, I'm on the other side.

The Lord saw me through. Now, do you see how just that one truth sort of puts bedrock that we can put our feet on?

[47 : 33] It sort of brings some order to the internal chaos and confusion. Things snap into focus. So this is bigger than me. That's the first thing we saw.

Satan had a purpose, but God has a purpose. And I was sifted, and now I'm on the other side. Or I am being sifted, but guess what? There is another side.

And so here I am, maybe on the other side, a little wiser, a little more humble, and certainly, you know, with more appreciation for Jesus. You know, when I couldn't hold on, he held on to me.

That's what we say. So that's making sense of your suffering. That's sorting it out. That's helped me, and I hope it helps you.

And maybe you need to take it home and think about it and talk about it. Talk to the Lord about it for sure. Now, the last S. Job points to Jesus.

[48 : 34] We've said that. Job, in a real way, suffered. And then his story is written down, and then his story helps us. And so Job suffered in some way for us.

Job points to Jesus in other ways. He was great, and he became low, and then he was exalted again. That story is Philippians chapter 2. Jesus, or Job points to Jesus, but let's talk about Jesus directly.

And let's talk about what Jesus has to do with all this, with Satan and this heavenly council and all of the rest. You know who is no longer allowed into the heavenly council?

You know who no longer God listens to at all? After his death and resurrection, something happened.

There was a war in heaven. And Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough.

[49 : 43] And they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. And then I heard a loud voice in heaven say, Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ.

For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. First thing I want you to notice is that because of Jesus, even to suffer death is victory.

Even to suffer martyrdom is a great defeat for Satan. And that's one reason why that's not his altogether go-to weapon.

Sometimes he uses it. But it has the great tendency to backfire on him. And it always does. But further, I want you to see Satan has lost his place.

[50 : 59] God still uses him. He still leads the whole world astray. But the Savior has overcome him. And we have overcome him as well. And so he accuses us.

And we need to learn to know what to do with those accusations. We need to learn to know what to do with those accusations.

But when he accuses us, God is not listening. The devil no longer has access like that.

There was a time when Satan had a point. God, how can you let these people go? How can you not punish them? How can you forgive them? But the cross settled all that.

The cross settled that. And now he's been thrown down. And he no longer has access. He has no longer any legitimate accusations. And so Jesus Christ has saved us from Satan and his accusations at the cross.

[52 : 02] And so this is the key point. So we suffer. But we, you, Christian, do not suffer for your sins. It is not wrath that is in your suffering.

We suffer to fight. We suffer to show the glory of God. And so are you suffering now, Christian? Well, you can know it is not God pouring out his wrath on you.

Now, does, is he, does, do our sins displease him? And does he discipline us? Yes. I'm not saying that is not true. But do you understand what I'm saying? It is not God turning his face against you and inflicting you a suffering out of wrath.

It is, there are times when he uses suffering as a loving discipline, but there is no wrath in your suffering now. And so are you suffering now, Christian? It's not for your sins.

It is for God's glory. And you are suffering with Jesus who suffered for God's glory. And so when Satan accuses you and opposes you, when he sifts you, he's still a lion chained.

[53 : 14] And all of his accusations just fall flat. They don't have a, they don't have a hearing in heaven. Because Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe.

Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow. And so now we suffer with two eyes on Jesus. We suffer with him and we suffer for him. And when he comes back, he'll say, well done, good and faithful servant.

Look, your light and momentary troubles have worked for you. An eternal weight of glory come now and enter into the joy of your master.

So what is your suffering doing to you? Some of you are suffering. And in that suffering, God is shouting, come to me.

Come to me. Come to me. C.S. Lewis said, God whispers to us in our pleasures and he shouts to us in our pain. God is shouting the gospel to you in your suffering.

[54 : 20] Come to me. You need me. You can't live without me. Look how hard this is. Come to me. Now, suffering is hard for anyone, but you don't have to suffer without a savior.

You don't have to suffer all alone. Jesus will be the best friend. As you go. That's what that beautiful hymn that we sang.

The Lord is on my side. My friends leave me. People die. Change happens. Darkness around. But the Lord is with me.

And. So. If your suffering is moving you towards. Or away from God.

Your heart is closing down and you're becoming more and more bitter and you're cursing God. I just want you to know that despite what you're doing, God is still in that moment calling out to you to come out.

[55 : 23] To come to him. To turn away. To turn away. And. To fall down. To surrender. To be saved. To be saved.

Well. Let's pray that God would bless his word to us. Please pray with me. Our great God in heaven.

We thank you for your word. We thank you for the clarity that it gives us. The truth that we see in it. And how it helps us. We thank you most of all that in this.

In our suffering. That you use it to move us towards you. You use it to fight. You use it for greater purposes.

You use it for your glory and for your victory. That you are not content to do all the fighting all by yourself. But you call us into the fray.

[56 : 25] You call us to live lives that are meaningful and purposeful. Because you have given our suffering purpose. And so I pray for my brothers and sisters who.

Who do suffer. And who. Who suffering even now. Hard things. Frightening things. Pray that your word would. Give them help.

Holy Spirit. Make these things real to them. Giving them a sense of purpose. Giving them. A sense of opportunity. Giving them. A sense of.

This is my chance. This is my chance. To show. What's in me. This is a chance to show. Everyone. How much I really do love Jesus.

For those who are lost. I pray that you would use their suffering. To call them to them. To yourself. You've done it before. You've done it so many times before. Do it again.

[57 : 21] I pray. In Jesus mighty name. Amen. Amen. Well please. Take your hymnals. And stand. We're going to sing hymn 79. Stand.

79. I. I. I. I picked this hymn. Because it talks about the things that we just talked about.

Troubles assail us. And dangers of fright. And friends fail us. And foes all unite. But we have a promise. And we have a savior. The Lord's going to provide for us.

The Lord's going to help us. 79. 79. 79. And■.