

God's Use of Suffering and Evil for a Higher Good

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[0 : 00] I greet you again in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

To him be the glory forever and ever. We've lived another week under his goodness and mercy. And so we do pause at the beginning of this new week to thank and praise him, to adore him and to put ourselves under his word as he speaks to our hearts there.

We thank God for his mercies and bringing David Hart home from the hospital. He would like to express his gratitude for your prayers for him. And we continue to pray for his brother, Pete, who is in very critical condition.

My granddaughter, Maya, had such a good week in God's mercies that she may be able to come home in the next day or two. Tom and Julie are thankful for your prayers and for God's answers to those prayers in Maya's life, but also in what he's done in their lives this last trial of two weeks. And then on Thursday, our sister, LaVantierian, was taken from the nursing home to the hospital here in Bremen with respiratory problems. She was doing somewhat better yesterday.

[1 : 24] We'll want to remember to pray for her and her family. I invite you to turn to Hebrews chapter 12 as our text this morning.

Hebrews chapter 12. And I'll read the first 14 verses. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood, and you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons.

My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.

[2 : 50] Endure hardship as discipline, as child training. God is treating you as sons for what son is not disciplined by his father.

If you're not disciplined, and everyone undergoes discipline, then you're illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them for it.

How much more should we submit to the father of our spirits and live? Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, but God disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness.

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet. See that the lame may not be disabled, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

[3 : 59] Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy without holiness. No one will see the Lord. Let's pray together.

Our God and Father and Friend, we come to you through the Lord Jesus, who has reconciled us to you by his blood and brought us into friendship, into sonship, into your wonderful family.

When we consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you should care for him?

Who are we that you should show such goodness and mercy to us? Lord, you have taken care of our sin problem, our worst problem of all.

Lord, you have daily loaded us with benefits. We have had all that we need. Your hand has provided this past week. And so here we are, worshiping you and thanking you today, that you would deign to be our shepherd, who would lay down your life to purchase for us the best of blessings.

[5 : 20] And because you're our shepherd, we need not fear. Because you're our shepherd, we do not find ourselves lacking one good thing.

No good thing will you withhold from them that walk uprightly. So thank you for your loving care for us. We thank you for bringing David Hart home. Thank you for your mercies to that family.

And we beg for his brother Pete, the same mercies and for his family in need. Thank you for touching little Maya and causing her to recuperate so well this week.

And for what you've taught Tom and Julie through this. And thank you, Lord, that LaVanche is in your hands. You've given her a hundred years of life. And she is in your hands.

And we pray you would comfort her spirit and care for her needs and for the needs of her family.

Now we rejoice to think that you would have put in your scriptures things that we would need in April of 2020.

[6 : 25] We're here. We are poor and needy. And you are rich and generous. So speak to us from your word. Even as we draw near to you now, draw near to us. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, is God good? Is God good? Can he possibly be good when his world is so full of evil and suffering?

We began our study with that question. And with each new suffering that is encountered, that question becomes even more important for us to answer. And that question is at the bottom of an even more personal question.

Can I trust God with my good? Is my good safe in his hands? And that's a very important question because if I'm not convinced that my good is safe in his hands, then I will have to take it into my own hands and I will seek for goodness where it is not to be found and in ways that will be disappointing.

Well, God's own answer is seen in Psalm 119 and verse 68. God is good. And what he does is good. That's no false claim.

[7 : 48] It's on display. It's open for inspection. And we saw that his goodness is seen, first of all, in the creation. All that he made was pronounced very good, Genesis 1.

We've seen that all evil and suffering is the result of man's sinful rebellion against his good creator. All evil and suffering is the result of God's curse that we deserved.

So, in short, mankind is to blame for all that's wrong with us in our world. It's our fault. And yet, even our ungrateful mutiny could not extinguish the goodness of God that still overflowed to us as he promised to send a redeemer to save all who would repent and believe on the Lord Jesus.

To save us from the curse of sin, even from condemnation in hell forever. That's God's goodness in redemption. A redemption that, when it is complete, will not only redeem us, who are his body and soul, but will redeem the whole creation as well.

Forever purged of all evil and suffering. But what about now? How is God's goodness being displayed here and now, in this present age?

[9 : 13] And it's here that we began to look at God's goodness in providence. His present rule over all things, including suffering and evil. And we saw his present goodness in common grace.

That things are not as bad as they could be and would be had he not been restraining much evil. And still filling this world that is under the curse with much of his goodness.

So now today we continue our study of God's goodness seen in his providence. And we see that God is not only ruling over all evil and suffering, but he's actually using it to promote his glory and our good.

I've recently finished Randy Alcorn's book, If God is Good. And in it he shares an imaginary story that could be played out many times in real life.

A two-year-old boy swallows poison from a bottle under the bathroom sink. The father calls poison control. And he's told you have to get him to the hospital quickly.

[10 : 22] And whatever you do, don't let him fall asleep. Because if he falls asleep, he will die. Now it's winter and yet the father opens all the windows in the car as he speeds to the hospital.

Chilling wind is blowing through the car. But halfway there, the boy's head starts to droop. And so his father slaps him in the face. The boy cries out in pain, looking betrayed and confused at his

father.

Moments later, his head starts to droop again. And again the father slaps him, stinging his face and bringing more tears. And so it goes all the way to the hospital.

Can the boy understand why his father is slapping his face, causing so much pain? Of course not. He's only two. And though his father is telling him, son, I love you.

The boy is thinking, if this is love, I don't want any more of it. Though he can't understand it, the father is actually acting in his best interest. He's doing him good, enormous good.

[11 : 32] He's saving his life. And what the child considers cruelty is actually great kindness and love. Now is it possible that in a similar way, God is actually showing us love through our pain and suffering?

And that like that two-year-old, we sometimes don't get it. We don't understand it. It doesn't feel like love. It doesn't look like love. It doesn't look good. Could it be that he is actually accomplishing far more good for us in our suffering than we realize?

That his ways and thoughts are just that high above our own that only in heaven will we see just how loving and good he was in all of our suffering.

Suffering that he brought to us and that brought to us no small amount of tears and heartache and pain and confusion. Our lesson today then is to appreciate how God is using suffering and evil in this present age under his providence as tools to do us good.

To bring about a greater good. And in that way, we'll see just how good God is. Now that's precisely what God is claiming to do here in our text in Hebrews chapter 12.

[12 : 54] God is a father who uses painful hardships to do his children good. He's part of his child training. He disciplines everyone he loves and accepts as true sons.

How backward is our thinking, believers, when hard times bring us to doubt God's love for us when just the opposite is true. So don't lose heart.

Endure hardship as discipline. But God is treating you as sons. And we get this on a human level, don't we? It's easy for us to see as parents, at least.

Verse 9 of chapter 12 of Hebrews. We have all had human fathers who disciplined us. We respected them for it. Indeed, the older and wiser we get, the more we respect them for it.

For loving us enough to discipline us. Lest we should become worthless, spoiled brats. And if we respect human fathers who disciplined us, how much more should we submit to the father of our spirits and live?

[14 : 04] Now, our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best. And sometimes they got it right and other times they got it wrong.

They were fallible. But God disciplines us for our good. There it is. For our good. Always and only for our good.

He gets it right every time. So when you're tallying up the goodness of God, you must not forget to count the hardships that he ordains for you.

For he does it for your good. Now, let me state the obvious. Hardships, by very definition, are hard. They're not easy. And more than that, Hebrews tells us they are painful. They hurt. Verse 11, no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.

[15 : 02] Full of pain. Like a slap on the face of a poisoned child. Like a swat on the rear end for a rebellious child. But both done for the ultimate good of the child.

But if it doesn't hurt, you can know it wasn't discipline. There may be painless dentistry as advertised, but there is no painless discipline. Not from our human fathers, nor from our heavenly father.

It's always painful. Like the loss of your good health. Your loss of financial security or a job or a friendship or a loved one.

The loss of your desires and plans for the future. Painless pain. Always hard. Always painful. But always and only for your good, child of God.

Pain is the ingredient that God uses to do us good. Pain and good. Those are two words that we don't usually associate together, do we?

[16 : 09] But God does. And when we think about it, are not birth pains good pains? Not that I have experienced them, but you who have.

Are not birth pains good pains because of what they are producing? What they are bringing about? The good end of a child born. And so the pains are working for the good.

And even so, no discipline is pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Verse 11. A harvest. That's a later on word, isn't it? The farmer puts a lot of blood, sweat, and tears and painful hard work into his field.

But later on, a good harvest makes it worth it all. And even so, painful suffering is not good in and of itself, but only because of the good things that it produces.

[17:15] So fathers and farmers are both after a harvest. And so is our heavenly father. He's after something good in our lives.

Do you know what it is? What is the good harvest that God is after in your life? And for which he sends you hardship and painful suffering.

Well, verse 11 says it's a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Righteousness. Righteousness.

That's a life of right living. Right in God's eyes. Living God's way. Defined by God's word. In line with his values and priorities. And the peace that comes from righteous living. For the fruit of righteousness will be peace. And the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.

[18:16] Isaiah 32, 17. Fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. That's what he's after. He wants these branches of his.

These sons and daughters of his. To be bearing rich fruit of righteousness. That's the harvest he's seeking. Verse 10 tells us again what the good is that God is out to produce through suffering. He says, but God disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness. His holiness. There again, it's moral, ethical likeness to God.

Sharing in his holiness. His moral purity. Now is that how you define good? Is that the good you are seeking?

That's the good that he is seeking. And I think it's all too easy for us to subtly fall into the prosperity gospel doctrine. As much as we might think that we abhor it.

[19:19] That we think that when we see this word good. That God is out to do for us. We begin to define it as we would like. To define it.

And we think of all the good things that we want to see. An uninterrupted happiness. With everything going as we want and as we like. Nothing hard.

Nothing painful. Just good. And we sometimes define good in that way. And we may be thinking that's what God's after too. And if we so. And if that's so.

Then we're setting ourselves up for a big disappointment. Because God's definition of good. Is to share in his holiness. That's our ultimate good.

God's goal for us in life is not an easy painless life. Void of suffering. That's heaven. That's what he's preparing us. Or that's what he's preparing for us.

[20:15] But here and now child of God. He's preparing us for that holy place. By making us holy. Through the instruments of painful hardships and sufferings.

So what are we seeking? What's our daily pursuit as we wake to a new day? Lord I hope it's a good day. Well he's after a good day too.

But what is a good day? A good day is when we bear more and more the likeness of our Savior. Jesus Christ. And so we've got to come to terms with this fact.

That there are things far more important to God than our uninterrupted happiness. Like our holiness. Like our sharing in his holiness. Now that's amazing goodness.

For us poor sinners to be made like he is. That's what we were made for. That's what Genesis 1. 26 and 27 tells us.

[21:16] You'll never understand yourself. And never know what fulfillment is. Until you come to know that you were made to bear the likeness of God. You are to be image of God. That's how he made you.

And that is our highest good. And unless we realize this. Is God's present priority for all of his children. We won't understand what's happening to us in this life.

We'll find pain and suffering. And we'll think God doesn't love us. And all the while he's doing us the best good he could. Making us after his likeness.

Now this harvest. Of righteousness and peace. And of sharing in his holiness. It's not automatic. It's not like all painful trials in life.

Just automatically work. For our holiness. You know it may actually produce bitterness. And discontentment. And depression. And we see this in the Bible.

[22 : 13] And good men like Jonah. And Job. And Jeremiah. And Asaph. And Elijah. No trials don't automatically.

Make us holy. It's when we submit. To the father of our spirits. That we really live. That's what he says. That we. When we submit.

To the father. Of our spirits. Even as Jesus did to his heavenly father. As he prayed in the garden. Not my will. But yours be done.

We too must come to submit. That is to put. Ourselves under him. Our will. Under his will. Our desire. Under his desire. And so when we see.

What his desire is. And his will is for our lives. Ordered up in the providence. That is hard and painful. We submit to it. We accept it.

[23 : 08] We embrace it. As his good. And perfect will. For us. And only then. Does suffering produce. The good harvest. Of righteousness. And peace.

And holiness. And how important. Is that holiness? Well for four verses later. He says. Make every effort. To live in peace. And with all men. And to be holy.

Because without holiness. No one will see. The Lord. What a precious thing it is. That God works holiness. In his people. This is his work.

We need holiness. It's the mark. That. That we're his. And it's only those. Who persevere in holiness. To the end. That will see the Lord. So God is good.

To train his children. He's committed. To training his children. With painful suffering. He's. He's not going to spare us. Or spoil us. He's going to see us.

[24 : 04] All the way home. To heaven. Made holy. Along the way. Now David confessed. The same thing. In Psalm 119. 71. He said. It's. It was good for me.

To be afflicted. That I might learn. Your decrees. He's looking back. On his affliction. His painful trial. And says. It was good for me. Before I was afflicted.

I went astray. But now. I obey your word. Do you see the holiness. That God. Worked. Through his affliction. He was straying.

And God used. A painful affliction. In his life. To bring him back in line. With God's righteous ways. And walking with his God. That was the tool. That God used.

To bring him back. From straying. To withhold affliction. From us. Would be to withhold. Great good. From us. So David sees. Painful afflictions.

[25 : 02] As good for him. It's in the goodness. Column. The goodness of God. Column. Many people. Never give a thought.

Of their need. For Christ. Until they're brought. To an end. Of themselves. In deep waters. Of suffering. And pain. And God. Used. Uses. That suffering.

Than to bring them. To saving faith. In Jesus. Some of our young people. Were away for. The winter retreat. And were studying.

The unexpected Jesus. And some of the staggering things. That he did. And many of our young people. Testified. How they were struck. By God. By Jesus. Unexpected kindness.

To a leper. And they. Had explained to them. Just the. The isolation. And the suffering. That a leper. In that day.

[25 : 55] Would have felt. And how kind. And good Jesus was. The way that he. He touched him. And healed him. Well. Howard Hendricks. Seminary professor.

Now with the Lord. Told of visiting. A leprosy. A leprosy center. In India. And when he arrived. The residents. Were having a. A worship. An appraised service. And a woman with leprosy.

Hobbled up to the platform. And Hendricks said. That even though. She was partially blind. And badly disfigured. She was one of the most. Beautiful women. That he's ever seen.

And raising. Both of her nearly. Fingerless hands. Toward heaven. She said. In a clear voice. I want to praise God. That I'm a leper. Never. Why would a woman.

Never say that. Well she went on to say. Because it was through. My leprosy. That I came to know. Jesus Christ. Is my savior. And I would rather. Be a leper. Who knows Christ.

[26 : 54] Than to be completely. Whole. And a stranger. To his grace. God had used. Painful suffering. In her life. For her highest.

Good. Even to come to know. Jesus Christ. As her Lord. And savior. We've had a similar testimony. Among us. Our brother. Joe Peverell. Has said the same thing.

About losing his leg. In a motorcycle accident. It brought great pain. Right there. And then. Beside the highway. In the weeks. Of recuperation.

In the hospital. And even up to this day. Much pain. But up to that point. In his life. Joe was going. His own way. Too proud.

To listen to God. God. But Joe will tell you today. It's better to lose a leg. And gain Christ. Than to have both legs. And not know Christ. You see.

[27 : 47] God used the pain. To do him. The greatest good. To wake him up. To some realities. That he had been trying to ignore. His need.

For a savior. And he says. He wouldn't go back. If he could. So you see. Some things. Are more important. To God. Than our uninterrupted. Happiness.

In this life. Like our uninterrupted. Happiness. For eternity. And sometimes. He uses pain. As the lever. To bring people.

To repentance. And faith in Christ. Could it be. That through the suffering. Of COVID-19. And its consequences. Some people. Will actually come. To the end. Of themselves.

And weigh. Eternity. And their place. As a sinner. Before a holy God. And see their need. For Jesus. In a new way. And come.

[28 : 42] To place. Saving faith. In him. Well that's what. We're praying for. As people's dreams. And lives. Are being shattered. Beyond their fixing. I do believe.

That we'll meet some. In heaven. Someday. When you exchange. Testimonies. Of salvation. They might say to you. Do you remember. The coronavirus. Of 2020. Well let me tell you.

What God did. Through that. And perhaps. It was as they were lying. There all alone. In a hospital. On a ventilator. That they began. To consider again.

The issues of eternity. And remembered. The things. That had been told them. About the gospel. Of Jesus. Willing to save. The worst of sinners. Even a thief.

In his dying hour. And that led them. To put their trust. In him. Well. That's. The goodness. Of God. To use. Painful things.

[29 : 37] For. A far. Greater. Good. And isn't that. The meaning. Of the well-known promise. Of Romans 8. 28. We know. That in all things.

God works. For the good. Of those who love him. Who are the called. According to his purpose. God. Now this is something. We know for sure. That all things. And in the context.

Paul's been talking about. Our present sufferings. About things. That make us. Grown. And that includes. A whole lot of bad stuff. And hard. And painful things.

And God promises. To so work. In all these things. That they bring about. Good. For his people. Is God good. Or what? He. He makes all things.

Even our worst things. Our most painful things. To serve our good. And it's here again. That we need to let God himself. Define. What he means by.

[30 : 31] Our good. He doesn't mean. That he takes all the painful stuff away. In this life. God defines. What this good is. In the very next verse.

It's a very specific. Good. That God is working. In all things. In our painful sufferings. Verse 29. For those God foreknew. He also predestined.

To be conformed. To the likeness of his son. That he might be the first born. A man. Among many. Brothers. That's the purpose. To which the believer was called.

To be conformed. To the image of Christ. And that's what God is working. In all things. In our sufferings included. It's to conform us.

It's to. To shape us like a pot. Or shapes a vessel. With pressures. And. And. And suffering. And pain. In our life. He's. He's making us more like Jesus.

[31 : 27] The highest good. That's possible for man. That's the good he works. In his people. Through all things. In. All.

Hardships. So. How is this present crisis. Of suffering. To make you more and more like Jesus. How is God teaching you.

How is he shaping you. To be more like Christ. In this present. Suffering. Well. Is he teaching you more patience.

With people. Starting with those that you're living with. Is he teaching you more humility. And submission of your will to God's.

When. He's calling shots that aren't on your calendar. And. He's teaching you. To say not my will. But yours be done.

[32 : 22] Is he teaching you more faith. In his wisdom. To know what is even best. Is he teaching you more heavenly mindedness. Is he's. Showing you the futility.

Of this world. That it's things are passing away. With the using. But there is. Another country. To which we're moving. Is he teaching you more eternal values.

And priorities. To seek first the kingdom of God. And his righteousness. Is he teaching you more love. And compassion. For others. When so many are out. For their own good. Are you thinking outside the box.

More. The box of me. And thinking. And seeing. The needs of others. And. That's Jesus like. And he's.

Conforming you to his image. Is he teaching you more gratitude. For things that you've. You've taken for granted. You didn't realize how good it was. Just to have a job. To go to every day. To go to school.

[33 : 22] To gather together. As God's people. And worship. And in prayer. Your health. Your freedom to come and go. Your money. Our health care system.

All these things. That. That we had. So. Uninterruptedly. And now that they're interrupted. We. We start to. Grow in gratitude.

Thank you Lord. And that's more Jesus like. See. Making you more thankful. For God's word. The rich treasure. That it is for us.

Giving us just what we need. In times of trouble. Like this. Is he giving you more thanks. For God himself. As your ever-present help in trouble. Are you aware. That that's what God is up to.

In this trial. And every other trial. Many purposes. But this one is sure. In all of our trials. He's. He's conforming us. To the image. Of Christ.

[34 : 16] Christ. And that is what portrays. His great glory. As we are more and more. Like his son. Could that be why.

James tells us. To count it all joy. My brothers. Whenever you face trials. Of many kinds. Because of what we know. We know that the testing. Of our faith.

Develops perseverance. And perseverance. Develops. Character. Character. And. And. It must finish. Its work. So that you may be. Perfect.

And complete. Not lacking anything. Just like Jesus. And. And this trial. Is moving you. In that direction. That's why it belongs. In the counted all joy column.

So that rather than singing. The blues. At the approach. And arrival. Of a new trial. We should be singing. Dixie. Because of all the good things. God is fixing to do. In us. And to us.

[35 : 11] And for us. Through the. Trial. The severity. Of the trial. Might rightly bring sadness. And tears. Of grief. But even in our tears. We should.

Have an expectation. Of good. From our heavenly father. Who's promised. To work it. Together. For our good. Well.

That means. Trials are more of a reason. For optimism. Then. Then depression. God is coming. To do us good. We may not be able. To sing. I just feel like.

Something good. Is about to happen. But we can sing. I just know. That something good. Is about to happen. For I know. That in all things. In this thing. Almighty God.

My father. Is working. For my good. To make me more like. Jesus. And that's the highest. Good. He uses pain. To make us more like.

[36 : 07] His son. The apostle Paul. In second Corinthians 12. Tells us how that worked. In his life. He says. A painful. A thorn. In the flesh.

And if you've ever had a thorn. You know. That it's painful. It was a messenger. Of Satan. He says. To torment him. That shows us something.

Of the. The pain. And I don't need to. To tell you. That emotional pain. Can be. Even stronger. Than physical pain. Whatever the problem was. It was. Satan's intention.

To torment him. He rejoices. In our pain. But God's intention. Was. To use it. For Paul's good.

To make him more like Jesus. And what was the particular good. Well Paul says. Well. He did it. To keep me. From being puffed up. With pride. Due to all the surpassing.

[37 : 03] Revelations. That God had given to Paul. And so though Paul pleaded. Three times with the Lord. To take the painful thing away. It hurt. It tormented him. But keeping Paul humble. Was more important. To God. Than. Keeping Paul. Pain free. And God. Showing his power. In Paul's weakness. Was more important. Than removing his weakness. So that. Paul came to. The realization. That. Well if that's the way. God's operating. In my life. That he brings these. Hardships. And difficulties. And suffering. And painful things. Into my life. To. To show. All the more. His power. As being all sufficient. For me. Then he says that. I can welcome them. I can. Rejoice in them. At the advancement. At the. Approach. Of these things. I can. Say.

[37 : 59] Thanks be to God. He's. His grace is sufficient. He's going to. Let his power. Now rest upon me. In new ways. To show me. How he takes. What is. Evil.

And painful. And tormenting. And works it. For. Our greater likeness. To. To Jesus. So what do you think? Is God.

Good enough. For you. To entrust. Your well-being. Into his hands. Is your good. Safe in his hands. Can you just. Cast all your cares. Upon him.

Knowing that he cares. For you. More than you care. For yourself. Young children. Rarely understand. How good their parents are. While they are making them. To do many painful things. Like go to bed. At a certain time. Like making you study. And work. Before you play. Not letting you eat candy bars. Right before supper. Limiting your screen time.

[38 : 55] Disciplining your wrong behavior. And so on. It's only later. As. As. As children. Grow up. And realize. Then. How good their parents were. To make them.

Suffer in those ways. Only later. They understand. The good. That their parents. Were doing them. The same way.

We children of God. Don't always see. At this young age. Of our experience. Just how good God is. And. Being. In. In. In. Bringing painful.

Hardships. Into our lives. That he's actually saving us. From worse. Worse things. And working. Far better things. Things that will make the suffering. Seem as nothing.

Not worth comparing. To the gains. Of glory. To be revealed in us. We don't see all the good. He's doing through our pain. And suffering. Wasn't God doing far more good.

[39 : 52] Through Joseph's suffering. Than he ever realized. At the time. During the 13 years of. Being in a far country. As a slave. And in jail.

Oh God. Was doing amazing things. Wasn't he? You intended to harm me. Says to his brothers. But God intended it. For good.

To accomplish. What's now being done. The saving of many lives. The saving of the family. Line of Messiah. So that you and I. Can be saved. Through Jesus Christ.

What a tremendous amount. Of good. That God was doing. That little Joseph. The two year old. Being slapped in the face. Had no idea. Why father was treating. Him that way.

Or Job. He didn't understand. That this painful struggle. Was working. So much good. Think of how much good. We have received.

[40 : 47] From the book of Job. Alone. As we see a man. Struggling. Honestly. With his. His suffering. And pain. And we see God's answer. To him.

And we sit with Job. Sometimes. And we. We. We profit from God's. Interaction. With him. How much good. Was coming. Through Job's suffering.

To the. Angels. And angelic beings. In heaven. To Satan himself. How much good. Was being worked. By Job's suffering. To show that Job. Doesn't just. Serve me.

For the good stuff. That I'm doing. For him. No. Job. Job loves me. And Job. Will serve me. No matter what. What good. Far more good.

Than what. Joseph. Or Job. Or you. Or I. Ever. In this life. Understand. Johnny Erickson. Tata. Has been a quadriplegic.

[41 : 41] In a wheelchair. For 50. Over 50 years. She says. God cares most. Not about making us comfortable. But about making us.

To hate our sins. To grow up spiritually. And love him. Now that's holiness. Isn't it? She says. We're headed for heaven. Where at last. Every sorrow we taste.

Will one day prove. To be the best possible thing. That could have happened. So is God good enough. For you. To entrust your well-being. Into his hands. If you still have any doubts.

Then come with me. Outside of Jerusalem. 2,000 years ago. And see a man. Suffering more than any other man. On the middle cross. Between two thieves. He's God. God the son. Took our flesh. Real body. And soul. On a mission of mercy. To save us. He's Jesus of Nazareth. And out of heaven.

[42 : 38] Into this world of woe. God came. As the man. Christ Jesus. And throughout his life. He suffered right alongside of us. Elbow to elbow. With our griefs.

And our sorrows. He's called the man of sorrows. Well acquainted with grief. And he wept. And he groaned. And he cried out. But then he suffered the greatest evil.

The greatest injustice. As men took out their hatred. Of him. He was despised and rejected. They lied about him. Falsely accused him. Condemned him. Beat him.

Humiliated him. Stripped him. And nailed him to a wooden cross. Of torture. Reserved for the worst of men. The painful. And the shameful. Death of the cross.

But there was more suffering there. On that middle cross. Than what men dished out. And this is what distinguishes. The middle cross. From the other two. Because there on the middle cross.

[43 : 34] He was bearing. The infinite wrath of God. Against sin. For Jesus was bearing. Our sins. In his body. To the tree. He was made sin for us.

And he took that sin. To the place of punishment. And he was standing in for us. The righteous. For the unrighteous. Our substitute.

With our sins. To come before a holy God. And receive what sin deserves. The curse. The condemnation. The hell. And we saw him there.

Stricken. Smitten. And afflicted. And we thought he's getting what he deserves. God doesn't want him. Look at the sinner that he is. False Messiah. Deceiver. Liar. Blasphemer.

God's giving him what he's got coming. Oh how wrong. We were. Because he was being wounded. For our transgressions. And he was being crushed. For our iniquities.

[44 : 30] And the punishment. That brought us peace. Was upon him. And by his wounds. He was healing. Us. And why?

Why does he so willingly suffer there? The worst. From God. And men. Well it was just that we might be delivered. From endless. Torment. Endless.

Suffering. And instead given the greatest good. Of eternal life. Knowing God. Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. And living with him. In a new heaven.

And a new earth. Without anything. Of suffering. You see. All objections to God's goodness. Are silenced at the cross of Christ.

It was unequalled goodness. When he stood in for us. And took what we had coming. And there the greatest evil. Was made to serve our greatest. Good.

[45 : 26] And that goodness is meant to lead us all to repentance. We go to heaven repenting. Or if you've never repented. This goodness of God and Jesus.

Is meant to draw you. To this good God. Come on and taste and see that the Lord is good. Your good. Is in good hands. With Jesus Christ.

It's he who offers this so great salvation. Who wants you to be spared from eternal suffering. You're an everlasting being. Which means you'll live somewhere forever.

Who are you going to trust with your eternal well-being? Will you trust the devil? He wants you damned. With him. Forever. Will you trust this world?

They don't care about you. Not really. You trust our government? It can do nothing for your soul. Trust yourself. As long as you remain aloof from Christ.

[46 : 29] You do yourself the worst harm. For coming to him. Is the beginning of real life. No one cares for your good like Jesus.

Not even yourself. So come to him. That's his invitation. Come and take me. I'm yours. Doesn't matter what you've done. Who you are. I'm yours. And my great salvation.

Yours. Ask him to forgive your sin. Right now. Place your well-being for time and eternity. Into the nail-pierced hands of Jesus. Jesus. He takes the worst of suffering and evil.

And works it. For our everlasting good. Let's pray. Our good and gracious God. We have seen again.

A chapter in your word. And another element of your goodness. That reveals your heart to us. Indeed this 12th of Hebrews.

[47 : 32] Tells us that the way to run the race of life. With perseverance. Is to fix our eyes on Jesus. Because here we see. Who it is we can.

Commit the keeping of our soul to. Who it is we can trust. With our todays. And our tomorrows. And the uncertainties. And who we can trust.

Our. Our dying day to. Our judgment day to. Indeed our eternal life to. And never be disappointed. Make your son.

To shine out in all of his worthiness. Draw others to faith in him. And let us who know him. Show by our submission. To his difficult providences.

That he is a good savior. And we can safely trust. Our lives into his hands. Help us we pray. In Jesus name.

[48 : 29] Amen. Amen.