

Hope Beyond The Fall: Enduring The Trials Of Life (Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 8:18-25; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

From the moment sin entered the world through Adam, mankind has lived in a creation marked by sorrow, pain, disease, decay, and death. Every person experiences the consequences of living in this fallen world, whether through illness, bereavement, disappointment, disability, or the many other trials of life. Christians are not exempt from these hardships because they continue to live in the same fallen creation as everyone else. However, God has not left His people without hope. Through His promises, His presence, and the loving support of His spiritual family, we are able to endure life's trials while looking forward to the complete removal of every consequence of the Fall.

Introduction:

1. Suffering is universal because we all live in a world that has been affected by sin (Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 5:12).
2. The gospel does not promise freedom from the hardships of this present life, but it does promise the strength and hope necessary to endure them faithfully (John 16:33; Philippians 4:11-13).
3. The Christian's confidence rests, not upon present circumstances, but upon God's eternal promises, which can never fail (Romans 8:18-25; Titus 1:2).

1. The Fall Introduced Suffering Into God's Creation (Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 5:12-21):

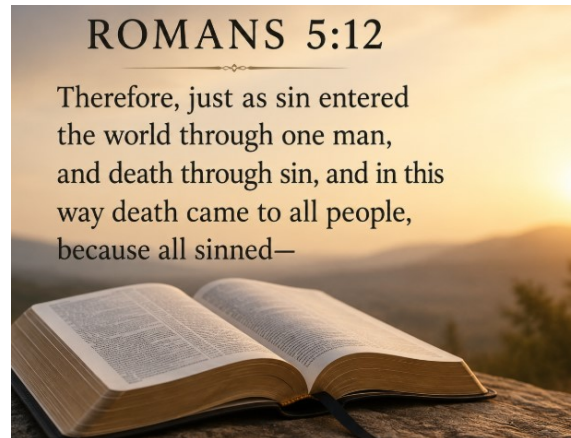
- a. God originally created the world "very good." There was no death, sorrow, pain, corruption, or separation from God. Adam and Eve enjoyed perfect fellowship with their Creator (Genesis 1:31; Genesis 2:15-25).
- b. Through Adam's sin, death entered the world, and mankind became subject to pain, labour, sorrow, disease, and physical death. The consequences of sin spread throughout the human race (Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 5:12).
- c. The curse extended beyond mankind to the whole creation. The ground was cursed, thorns and thistles appeared, labour became burdensome, and creation itself now groans while awaiting its final redemption (Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:20-22).

2. Christians Understand The Nature Of Present Suffering (John 16:33; James 1:2-4):

- a. Christians are not surprised when trials come because God never promised that faithful people would escape the difficulties of living in a fallen world (John 16:33; Ecclesiastes 9:11-12).
- b. Not every hardship is the result of personal sin. Faithful servants such as Job, Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus suffered greatly while remaining approved by God (Job 1:8-12; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Philippians 2:25-30).
- c. Although suffering is never pleasant, God is able to use it to produce patience, strengthen faith, refine character, and deepen our dependence upon Him (James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-5).

3. God Has Not Left His People To Suffer Alone (Galatians 6:2; James 5:13-16):

- a. God has given Christians a spiritual family to encourage, comfort, strengthen, and help one another through life's burdens. We are commanded to bear one another's burdens and fulfil the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- b. Prayer is one of God's greatest blessings during times of suffering. Christians should pray for one another, trusting that God hears the prayers of His faithful people and answers according to His perfect wisdom (James 5:13-16; Philippians 4:6-7).
- c. God may choose to remove a burden completely, grant partial relief, or provide the grace necessary to endure faithfully. Whatever His answer, He never abandons His children nor withdraws His sustaining presence (2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Hebrews 13:5-6).



4. Christians Endure By Fixing Their Hope Upon Eternity (Romans 8:18-25; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18):

- a. Paul reminds us that the sufferings of this present time are insignificant when compared with the glory that shall one day be revealed. Future glory completely changes our perspective on present trials (**Romans 8:18-25**).
- b. Although our outward bodies gradually weaken through age, sickness, and suffering, our inward man is continually renewed because our eyes are fixed upon eternal realities rather than temporary circumstances (**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**).
- c. Christian hope is not uncertain optimism but confident expectation based upon God's unfailing promises. Because God's word cannot fail, our hope remains steadfast regardless of present circumstances (**Hebrews 6:17-20; 1 Peter 1:3-9**).

5. Our Hope Looks Beyond The Curse To God's Final Victory (Revelation 21:1-7; Revelation 22:1-5):

- a. Everything that began with the Fall will one day be reversed. Death, sorrow, crying, pain, and every consequence of sin will be removed forever (**Revelation 21:1-4**).
- b. God's faithful people will dwell eternally in His presence, enjoying perfect fellowship with Him in a world where righteousness dwells and suffering can never enter again (**Revelation 21:3-7; Revelation 22:1-5**).
- c. Because Christians know how God's story ends, they are able to endure faithfully through every trial of this present life, confident that God's promises are certain and eternal (**Romans 8:37-39; 2 Timothy 4:6-8**).

Conclusion:

1. Suffering is the tragic consequence of the Fall, but it will not have the final word (**Genesis 3:16-19; Revelation 21:1-4**).
2. God has provided everything His people need to endure faithfully through present trials: His word, His promises, His presence, and His spiritual family (**Romans 15:4; Hebrews 13:5-6; Galatians 6:2**).
3. The Christian's hope reaches beyond this temporary world to the eternal inheritance prepared by God for those who love Him (**Romans 8:18-25; 1 Peter 1:3-5**).
4. Therefore, let us remain steadfast, encouraging one another and fixing our eyes upon the glorious future that God has promised to all who remain faithful (**Hebrews 10:23-25; Revelation 2:10**).

Applications:

1. Do not become discouraged when trials come, remembering that suffering belongs to a fallen world and not to God's original design (**Genesis 3:16-19; John 16:33**).
2. Pray faithfully during times of suffering, trusting God to answer according to His wisdom, whether by granting relief or by supplying sufficient grace (**James 5:13-16; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10**).
3. Look beyond today's difficulties by filling your mind with God's promises concerning eternity and the inheritance awaiting His faithful people (**Colossians 3:1-4; Romans 8:18-25**).
4. Do not suffer in isolation. Allow your brethren to help bear your burdens, and willingly help carry theirs (**Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:15**).
5. Encourage those who are suffering by comforting them with the same comfort that God has given to you (**2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:11**).

Questions:

1. Why does suffering exist in the world today (**Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 5:12**)?
2. Does God promise Christians freedom from the hardships of this life (**John 16:33**)?
3. How has God provided help for Christians during times of suffering (**Galatians 6:2; James 5:13-16**)?
4. Why are Christians able to endure present suffering with hope (**Romans 8:18-25**)?
5. What glorious future awaits God's faithful people (**Revelation 21:1-4**)?

Summary:

The Bible explains that suffering is not part of God's original creation but entered the world through the Fall. Ever since Adam sinned, mankind has lived in a world marked by pain, decay, frustration, and death. Christians are not exempt from these realities because they continue to live in the same fallen creation as everyone else.

Although suffering is unavoidable in this present world, God has not left His people to face it alone. He strengthens them through His word, His promises, His sustaining grace, and the loving care of their spiritual family. As Christians bear one another's burdens and pray for one another, they experience God's comfort even in the midst of life's greatest trials.

The Christian's hope reaches beyond the brokenness of this present world to the day when every consequence of the Fall will be forever removed. Genesis records the entrance of suffering; Revelation records its complete removal. Until that glorious day arrives, God's people endure by faith, encouraging one another and looking steadfastly toward the eternal inheritance that God has promised to those who love Him.

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Questions & Answers:

1. Why does suffering exist in the world today (**Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 5:12**)?

Answer: Suffering entered the world through Adam's sin, bringing death and the consequences of the Fall upon mankind and the whole creation (**Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 5:12**).

2. Does God promise Christians freedom from the hardships of this life (**John 16:33**)?

Answer: No. Jesus taught that His followers would experience tribulation while living in this world, but they can have peace in Him (**John 16:33**).

3. How has God provided help for Christians during times of suffering (**Galatians 6:2; James 5:13-16**)?

Answer: God strengthens His people through prayer, His sustaining grace, and the encouragement and support of fellow Christians (**Galatians 6:2; James 5:13-16**).

4. Why are Christians able to endure present suffering with hope (**Romans 8:18-25**)?

Answer: Because the glory that God has promised far outweighs the sufferings of this present life, and His promises cannot fail (**Romans 8:18-25**).

5. What glorious future awaits God's faithful people (**Revelation 21:1-4**)?

Answer: God will remove death, sorrow, crying, pain, and every consequence of the curse, bringing His people into eternal fellowship with Him forever (**Revelation 21:1-4**).