

DAIN WHERE IS GOD IN MY PAIN

Part 2 – What Does The Bible Teach About Pain and Suffering? Ecclesiastes 4

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D.A. Carson (video) [Going Beyond Clichés: Christian Reflection on Suffering and Evil](#) <http://vimeo.com/67021614> or his book: D.A. Carson [How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil](#)

I. FACE THE FACT THAT LIFE ISN'T FAIR.

A. Innocent and powerless people are **abused** by others.

Ecclesiastes 4:1 "Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun: I saw the tears of the oppressed--and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors--and they have no comforter."

While others may be turning a blind eye to the oppression of others, we as Christians should never do it. We should always be on the forefront of helping the **helpless**.

B. The **political** system is oftentimes unfair.

Ecclesiastes 5:8 "If you see miscarriage of justice anywhere throughout the land, don't be surprised! For every official is under orders from higher up, and the higher officials look up to their superiors. And so the matter is lost in red tape and bureaucracy."

Ecclesiastes 10:5-6 "Here is an injustice I have seen, an injustice caused by rulers. ⁶ Foolish people are given positions of authority."

C. The **judicial** system is sometimes unfair.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 "Why do people commit crimes? Because crime is not punished quickly enough."

D. The **wrong** people seem to succeed.

Ecclesiastes 8:14 "There's something else,... righteous men who get what the wicked deserve and wicked men who get what the righteous deserve."

Ecclesiastes 9:11 "In this world fast runners do not always win the races...wise people don't always earn a living...intelligent people don't always get rich...and capable people don't always rise to high positions..."

E. *Revelation 21:4 "God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the **old order** of things has passed away."*

There are purposes for suffering in this present order and so pain is being used by God to accomplish His **purposes** in us and in the world until this world passes away.

II. THE BIBLE GIVES SEVERAL REASONS FOR WHY GOD ALLOWS PAIN AND SUFFERING.

A. The Bible says that God only allows pain and suffering so that it may produce a **greater good** we sometimes, maybe oftentimes, will not understand at this time or even in this life.

B. God sometimes **allows** pain because of His desire to give us **freedom**.

1. There is no choice to do good unless there is also a choice to do **evil**.

2. Injustice happens because it is the down side of **freedom**.

C. God sometimes **allows** pain to produce **inner growth**.

1. James 1:2-4 *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces **endurance**.⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”*

2. Troubles even in the form of injustice can actually benefit our life. We always learn more and grow stronger from **pain** than we do from pleasure.

D. God sometimes allows pain to open our lives to **new ministries** into the lives of others.

2 Corinthians 1:5-6 “For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.⁶ If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. (NIV)

E. God sometimes allows pain to **protect** us from worse things of which we are unaware.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 “To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (NIV)

F. God sometimes allows pain to show us that we need and have a **Savior**.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 “There is no one on earth who does what is right all the time and never sins.”

*Romans 3:23 “for **all** have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”*

Acts 23:11 “The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage!”

G. God allows suffering and injustice only for a **season**.

Ecclesiastes 3:17 “In due season, God will judge everything man does, both good and bad.”

Romans 12:19 "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord."

Revelation 21:3-4 "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (NIV)

III. HOW DO WE SURVIVE THE UNFAIR THINGS IN OUR LIFE?

- A. **Accept** the fact that unfair things are going to happen. In compassion, we should always strive to change what we can to alleviate suffering but know that pain is a part of life on this side of heaven.
- B. Although we cannot control the circumstances in our life, we can control our **reaction** to them.
- C. Though others do wrong, we can **choose** to do the right thing.

*Romans 12:17-21 "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right. ¹⁸...as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge...²⁰ On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, **feed him**; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink... ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

- D. Look for the **good** in trials and wait for God's intervention.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 "For our present troubles are quite small and won't last very long. Yet, they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever. ¹⁸ So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever."

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Notes:
