

What happens to the prosperity gospel when I already enjoy prosperity? It metamorphoses into the therapeutic gospel... The therapeutic gospel is the gospel of self-fulfillment. It makes me, already healthy and wealthy, feel good."

– **Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Preaching the Word) by Christopher Ash**

Main Points

1. The Sovereign God

2. The Suffering God

- Kinds of suffering
 1. In consequence of sin
 2. As a catalyst for growth
 3. To prove the reality of our relationship with God

"Suffering for sin is punitive: its goal is healing, but the pain involved counts as (not unloving) discipline from our heavenly Father. But as often as the Bible shows us sin leading to suffering, there are many other examples of suffering deepening us as Christians—suffering that is not punitive but a catalyst for growth."

– **Suffering Wisely and Well: The Grief of Job and the Grace of God by Eric Ortlund**

"God sometimes allows Job-like ordeals, not because he is angry with us or trying to teach us a lesson but in order to prove the reality of our relationship with him. God sometimes puts us in a position where we lose every earthly reason to be in a relationship with him. This is because there is no other way to deliver us into the kind of relationship with himself where he is loved and honored simply for his own sake. This is the only kind of relationship with God that honors God as God and which will make us happy in eternity."

– **Suffering Wisely and Well: The Grief of Job and the Grace of God by Eric Ortlund**

- God is sovereign
 - God reigns over all but is not directly responsible for evil. God does not strike Job, Satan does.

12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

James 1:12-15

- God is directly responsible for blessing

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

James 1:16-18

- God will limit the activity of Satan in your life. In each instance, God controlled Satan's activity.
- Satan is at work

- Satan is a restless, opportunistic, evil enemy of your soul. He is the personal agent of evil in the world. When you suffer Satan is betting against you.
- Our warfare is primarily, through the use of Scripture to discern Satan’s activity, to reject his accusations against God and to remember God’s goodness through Christ.
- Job’s character –
 - In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.
 - Job glorified God in his prosperity and worshipped him in his suffering .
- Our character
 - Like Job, we are called to give God glory in times of prosperity, to worship him in times of trouble and be an example to those on earth and those in the heavens.

7 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. 8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. 13 So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Ephesians 3:7-13

One translation of Genesis 6:5 & 6 says it this way, “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become. . . . The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain” (NIV-1984).

Genesis 6:5-6

“The word grieved, is akin to the ‘sorrow’ and ‘pain’ [inflicted on human beings for their sin] in Genesis 3: 16, 17: already God suffers on man’s account.”

Theologian Derek Kidner

“We all know how heart involvement leads to suffering. The more you love someone, the more that person’s grief and pain becomes yours. And so even in the first chapters of Genesis, we see God is suffering because of our suffering, because of the misery of the world. Here we have no abstract deity, no “divine principle,” no “rational structure behind the universe.” This is not merely the “spark of divine life in every living thing.” This is a transcendent but personal God who loves us so much that his heart is filled with pain over us. That would be remarkable enough. But then there is Jesus himself.”

– Walking with God through Pain and Suffering by Timothy Keller

“God knows what it is like to suffer, not just because he sees it in far greater clarity than we, but because he has personally suffered in the most severe way possible . . . the agony of loss by death, the separation from a beloved . . . [and] the disruption of his own family (the Trinity) by the immensity of his own wrath against sin.”

– Why Does It Have to Hurt?: The Meaning of Christian Suffering by Dan McCartney

I believe like a child that suffering will be healed and made up for, that all the humiliating absurdity of human contradictions will vanish like a pitiful mirage, like the despicable fabrication of the impotent and infinitely small Euclidean mind of man, that in the world's finale, at the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity, of all the blood that they've shed; that it will make it not only possible to forgive but to justify all that has happened."

Fyodor Dostoevsky *The Brothers Karamazov*