

# **PAINFUL LOVE**

**WHY GOD ALLOWS  
SUFFERING**

# Contents

<a href="#"><u>Introduction</u></a>	Page 2
1 – <a href="#"><u>Is it Good?</u></a>	Page 3
2 – <a href="#"><u>Is it Fair?</u></a>	Page 6
3 – <a href="#"><u>Is it Necessary?</u></a>	Page 9
4 – <a href="#"><u>Is it Too Much?</u></a>	Page 13

## Introduction

God is love, but that does not mean that God is soft, for neither is love.

Love toils, love works, love saves. Not by empty words, not by simple platitudes, nor by hugs, soft kisses, and definitely not by tolerance of evil ways. But by sacrifice, by action, by putting meaning into words, substance into feeling, reality into promise. Love seeks the welfare of others, not the approval of others. And God, the source of all love, seeks the welfare of us all.

But God is not soft, because love is not soft. True love sacrifices all in order to give all; it is noble, it is strong, it is resolute in the path of pain and loss. And God wants to see this same love displayed in us.

He made us in His image so that we might have this potential. But He had to die for us in order that we might fulfil it; for we have all sinned by going astray from His perfect plan for us, thereby requiring an atonement so that forgiveness can reconcile us to our Maker. Yet for those who do not seek it there will one day be a reckoning before the judgement seat of Christ, when because of their preference for darkness over light, for wickedness over holiness, for lies over truth, He will hurl them into the Lake of Fire for the second death.

Now nothing is worse than the second death, for it is the end of all victory, all promise, all hope. It is sunset with no sunrise. Illness with no recovery. Death with no restoration.

So God toils amongst us, weaning us off sin. And that is the crux of the issue.

But it is a painful process and it gains not the approval of the proud, of the self-righteous, of the arrogant... of the self-loving. But for the humbly repentant, it gains their eternal welfare, it gains them eternal life. It gains them rest from their cares in this world and the promise of the life to come.

But why is redemption painful?

Why is it necessary?

Why do some suffer more than others?

This is what we will explore...

## 1. Is it Good?

Is pain good?

That might seem like a perverse question. But ask any biologist and they will tell you that physical bodily pain serves an essential purpose in keeping creatures alive by warning them of danger. Scorching heat for example will keep creatures away from fire. The pain from a fresh injury will warn a creature to seek refuge or to change its tactics in a struggle for its life. Pain from an open wound will cause a creature to avoid bringing it into contact with something that might infect it. Pain from a festering wound will inform a creature that it has been infected and needs treatment. And pain from old age will tell a creature that it needs to be more cautious in the paths that it takes. Then there are stimuli that cause a creature to seek, rather than to avoid; such as hunger for food, thirst for water, shortness of breath for rest, and tiredness for sleep. The longer a creature goes without these essentials, the greater the risk of death, and so the painful warning becomes more intense.

So in the natural world pain is essential for survival. And this is still true for us as humans. For example, a baby who has escaped its parents' notice for a few seconds may reach for the fire once, but never twice. Later in life a child may take a few tumbles in discovering its limits on the playground or in a contact sport, but thereafter will be accomplished. Then into adult life, a soldier, an explorer, a deep sea diver, a miner; in all these occupations and more we need to learn the limits to which our bodies can be pushed without actually suffering death, and pain is our indicator. Thus pain is essential not just to survival but to advancement, at least until experience and wisdom take over, or situations change.

Pain is also good for increasing value and appreciation. The view from the top of a large hill or mountain is all the sweeter for the laborious climb to the top. The purchase of a new commodity is all the more satisfying for the many hours worked to afford it. The victory of a cup or title in sport is all the richer for the hurdles overcome on the way. The heart of a young man or woman won during a long courtship is all the more cherished. And the list could go on. But most importantly, pain increases our appreciation for others, by forming intimate bonds through shared trials. Whether in sport, combat, persecution, or through common tragedies, longer lasting and more richly rewarding friendships are formed.

Sadly, without these struggles, mankind has a greater tendency to become self-absorbed and self-seeking.

But when is pain not good?

Quite simply when we cannot satisfy the needs of our body, mind, heart or soul. Pain may be our friend when we are in control, but it can quickly become our enemy when we are not. This is when pain becomes suffering.

So why? Why are there times - and frequently, almost incessantly - when we are not in control and when pain serves no other purpose than to make our hearts ache and our bodies sweat blood?

Quite simply because of sin.

In an ideal world, God would have no suffering and no tears. Certainly no death. Fear would not even have entered into the hearts and minds of mankind. And indeed, God did create such a world; Eden - where Adam and Eve were placed in the garden to the east - simply means "delight". God made the world and its occupants to delight Him and for them to delight in Him. It was all good. God, mankind, and the animal kingdom were all to live in joy and harmony. Plants and fruits were the sole diet of both humans and animals. There was no death. No suffering. Yet it lacked one thing.

Appreciation.

In order for Eden, and then by extension the whole world to be perfect, Adam and Eve had to choose to willingly love and obey God for all that He had given them; for God doesn't want slaves, nor automatons. He wants creatures who have the ability and desire to willingly worship Him, in order that they may rejoice in glorifying Him.

Now since God is perfect, God's desire for worship is not egomania but a love for what is holy (right and true). So since God defines holiness and holiness defines God, worship of God is a full appreciation for all that is good. The logical extension of this appreciation leads to adoration of God and a desire to follow all of His ways.

But an automaton does not appreciate, it just follows because it is told. Slaves do not appreciate, they follow because they are compelled by force or fear. So God gave Adam and Eve their free will so that they could choose to worship Him, to choose to do what is right, and thus be full of joy by dwelling in full appreciation of His glory.

Yet since God and His ways were all that Adam and Eve had ever known, they were in a state of innocence, with not even a concept of what it meant to disobey. This rendered their free will effectively useless. So God gave them a choice by providing an opportunity for them to disobey Him. He told them that they could freely eat from all the trees in the garden of Eden, except for one tree in particular.

Now had this been all that He did, Adam and Eve would have remained obedient, bearing no motivation to be anything else. So God allowed Satan to be present in the Garden in order to provide a temptation that would lead them into making a choice. Eating from the forbidden tree, they were told, would give them knowledge of another way separate from God's way; i.e. knowledge of sin, for the tree from which they had been forbidden to eat was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and eating from its fruit would open their eyes to the darkness.

Now if Adam and Eve had exercised their free will to obey God and ignore the devil's temptation, they would have demonstrated that they loved God and desired His holiness above all things. But instead they chose to disobey, and at that moment sin entered into their hearts. They chose another way; to know sin and risk death, rather than trust God and surely live. How that must have pained God's heart, for He had not set them up to fall, but to become so much more than what they already were.

And so suffering entered into the world, through the sin in the hearts of both man and woman.

Now how so?

Firstly through selfishness, for that is what sin is.

The apostle James put it very well:

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4: 1-3)

And secondly, suffering came into the world through divine judgement in ways and for purposes which we will explore in chapter three. But it's important to state right now that this judgement was not – and remains not until this day - a means of condemnation, but a means of mercy, for God would have been completely justified if back then, right at the beginning of mankind's history, He had destroyed Adam and Eve for ignoring His warning and following the path of the devil; He could have started over with a new creation. But as was noted in the introduction to this book, true love does not give up or turn away when things get difficult, but it sacrifices all in order to give all. And God is love. So God did two things to remedy the situation: He promised a Saviour, and provided a means whereby we could accept that saviour. And pain and suffering play a big part in both.

And this brings us to today. Like Adam and Eve, we have every one of us chosen the way of sin over the way of God, we have all become sinners and it is a nature that we simply cannot change without God's intervention. And at first we don't even *want* His intervention, for we are quite happy with who we are and deciding for ourselves the best way to live that suits us.

So this leads us onto the question of whether the pain and suffering we have been exposed to in this world is really fair?

## 2. Is it Fair?

Everyone admits they sin, even if they don't use the very word itself. People may disregard the notion of absolute morality, but no one would ever be so presumptuous as to say they were perfect or always put others before themselves. Yet each of us has developed a mental dividing line by which we sort out who we regard as evil and who we regard as good. Surely the wicked deserve to suffer, we might think. But why do good people (perhaps like me) suffer?

Yet who are we to decide where that dividing line of judgement falls?

You might say that we can categorise the wicked into groups such as murderers, child molesters, adulterers, dictators, thieves, liars etc... well maybe not "liars", you might say, because we all lie! But what if we were all murderers? Would we then excuse that group too, just because we all did it? Your first instinct might be to say no, but people often justify themselves by saying that, "it is ok because everyone does it". Controlled group studies have shown that people try to get away with whatever they can as long as they believe that they cannot be caught and as long as their good self-image cannot be lost. These studies found that a person's self-justification was simply relative to the behaviour and moral code of the group.

But for the sake of argument, maybe we should limit our categories of the wicked to just the really evil acts? But what do we count as really evil?

Murder? Ok. Theft? Well some might say yes and some might say no; it depends on what is stolen maybe, or what methods were used, how ruthless the thief was in his determination to steal, or what even led him to steal... which means we now have mitigating factors to consider!

So what about mitigating factors for a murderer? Was it a passion crime or was it pre-meditated? If the latter, what factors in the past (whether over the previous few hours, days, years, or entire lifetime) may have contributed to the person committing this crime? What was really in his or her heart? Can we ever really know?

Then how we do make a judgement?

Where do we draw the line?

The Bible tells us that only God can see the heart, and that the heart is deceitfully wicked. We are reminded that we have all sinned and followed our own ways and that all of our righteous deeds are like filthy rags compared to God's glory, which we have rejected in order to pursue our own self-righteousness. And most condemning of all, we have been told that we are all equally guilty before God, because by having broken one part of God's law, we have broken all parts!

Guilty of one thing, guilty of all.

Now you surely ask, "How can having broken one part of the law (in other words having done only one thing wrong) be the same as having broken all parts of the law? (or in other words having done everything wrong)"

Well the answer lies in the knowledge that when we rebelled from God, we also rebelled from everything that is good and true, because they are one and the same. At the moment when we first sinned we rejected the way of righteousness in order to please ourselves, to gain something for ourselves that we would otherwise have been denied. It wasn't therefore the act in itself - whether a lie, a boast, a push, or even just a jealous thought - but the rejection of God's way for the way of sin; rejecting good for evil. It's not that we wholeheartedly embraced evil, but we did wholeheartedly embrace its course. From that moment on we put ourselves first, and everything and everyone else became damage control in our lust for self-gain; we may have drawn certain lines in what we will or will not do as part of that quest, but this is only down to the pride of a good self-image and the inbuilt fear of judgement from God, which God's presence in the world (through His people, His laws, and His word) helps to maintain. This indirect effect of God's presence in our world is what keeps it together, and our nations' abandonment of His ways is responsible for our eventual decline. On an individual level, if we do not accept God's *direct* intervention in our lives through the Atonement, the self-willed walk is a slippery path to real and pervasive evil.

Now because we cannot experience God in anything close to His full nature with the impure hearts that we have (sin acts like a blurry lens), we cannot comprehend just how wicked our rebellion really is. But that doesn't change the truth of it. The closest we *can* come to knowing God's true holiness in this lifetime is when we become reconciled to God through repentance and faith in His Son, by whom we receive His Holy Spirit; this third member of the triune godhead enlightens our minds and hearts throughout life in conjunction with the word of God to reveal just how truly sinful we really are, whilst simultaneously moulding us anew into better people.

An example of our deeply fallen state can be seen in the Old Testament when the prophet Isaiah receives a vision of God on His throne in all His glory:

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."  
(Isaiah 6: 1-7)

Now if one of God's greatest prophets can feel so convicted of his depravity by a vision of God as He really is (and this was just a glimpse of God's full majesty) then what does that say about the immense gap that also exists between our Maker and the rest of us?

Assuming that this is all sinking in, you may be thinking, "why if we are all just as bad as each other, are some more clearly corrupt than others?"

To answer this question we have to return to the subject of mitigating factors that were mentioned before. Rather than imagining ourselves as basically good people

who have been led astray by varying degrees of bad influence, we need to recognise that we are basically selfish people who have been influenced to different degrees by various good influences, all of which ultimately extend from God's presence in this world. It's hard to accept, yet if you were to look deep within yourself and truly examine your motives in life, you would find that ultimately your desire is to please yourself whilst causing as little damage to others as you can, rather than a primary desire to help others whilst causing as little damage to yourself as you can. It is this latter way of living that Jesus exemplified in His ministry, even to the point of death. It was whilst looking ahead to this self-sacrificing act that He told His disciples that they must also take up their own cross (figuratively speaking) if they wished to follow Him. And you can only do this for real with the help of His Holy Spirit. Even when someone performs a seemingly altruistic act, the true motivation behind their good intent will be ultimately selfish; such as a desire to feel appreciated, or to hide behind their good deeds from the truth of their own sinfulness. Whilst it is not wrong to want to feel valued and loved (and these are good things *as long as they are not expected*), as motivations they remove the altruistic nature of any act committed.

So the point being made here is that deep down we are all just as bad and selfish as each other – at least until we choose to repent and follow Jesus in faith, and only then are we able to do so by grace – and so no one has a just complaint for the things they suffer from the hands of others or from the fallen world we live in (which is our judgement as a means of redemption that will be explored in the next chapter.) And we certainly cannot say that God owes *us*, because *we* owe *Him* for our incredible betrayal of the life He has given us. If there was anyone throughout history who did not sin, they would have had just complaint for their suffering in this world. But there has been only one, Jesus Christ, and He never complained. He suffered more than any of us when He paid in full for our sins on the cross, and He did so because of His love for us. He had no need to feel loved and appreciated, for He already was by the Father. He had no shortcomings that needed to be covered up by acts of service, for He was already perfect. He simply wanted to share His love for the benefit of His own creation, a truly altruistic act.

Now no doubt the truth of your own depravity will not have sunk in just yet, even if you follow the logic of this paper, because one needs to first experience the truth of the statements that have been made, and even then it is a lifelong journey of gradual realisation and acceptance. So this is perhaps a good time to move on to the positives of suffering; for just as physical pain can be a positive force in the material world, so suffering can be a positive force in the spiritual realm.

### 3. Is it Necessary?

Suffering comes because of sin, but it arrives in two ways.

- I. From the natural consequences of following the way of rebellion instead of the way of God.
- II. From the corruptible natural world that we live in as a result of God's judgement.

We've already taken a look at the first way in the previous chapter, and how we can have no complaint, because of the human race's equality in sinning against a holy and perfect God. But it needs to be noted that this has also allowed deception to come into our world, which has led to further suffering.

You see there is a war being fought between unseen powers and principalities; angelic spirit battles that move behind the scenes of nations and individuals. Anyone unreconciled to God is unwittingly open to being influenced and controlled by the dark forces in this battle, in the most subtle, but often terribly destructive ways. These forces have also created many false religions and movements that hinder us from seeing the way of God through Jesus Christ, preventing us from being healed from our emotional and spiritual wounds. We have allowed the powers of spiritual darkness to gain a ruling possession of this world by abdicating the divine authority God gave us to rule over it in righteousness. Jesus won this back for us when He died on the cross, but to claim it one must repent and have faith in His name. Although repentance will lead to salvation, only the way of truth can set us completely free from the control of dark spiritual forces that cause additional suffering in our lives. This book does not intend to go into the details of this, but it is noted for the sake of diligence.

Now to explain the second way in which suffering has come into our world, we need to explore the realm of judgement.

Because we have sinned, we are under judgement and justice must be satisfied, otherwise evil would go unpunished and that would be an evil in itself. But because of God's mercy, if we repent He is willing to take that punishment upon Himself instead.

Repentance is key to this gift of grace, because without it God's substitutionary sacrifice would be a tolerance of sin. It would also be worthless, because the recipient of the gift would still not be willing to receive the Spirit of God in order to be refined into a perfect son or daughter of God and would therefore continue sinning forever. And if God were to force His Holy Spirit upon an unrepentant sinner, then that would take away their free will and be just as worthless, as was explained in chapter one.

So if we have all chosen to rebel from God to serve ourselves, how can God lead us to repentance?

He could walk among us (as He did in the person of Jesus Christ) and gain our admiration, but that would not be enough to convict us of our sins. After all, there are many today who see Him as a great teacher but nothing more. We might in fact even feel honoured by His presence and therefore think more of ourselves. So no, the only

way we can be led to repentance is to be made to realise that the way we have chosen is the wrong way. But pride is a mighty barrier, and many think they know best and that they see it all. Because of this, God has to humble us, and only by suffering can we be humbled. Thus God cast Adam and Eve out of the paradisiacal garden of Eden and provided us all with a world which both serves and torments us; where we can learn the true nature of sin.

So why would we be willing to listen to God this time?

Firstly, the original rebellion was of ignorance. We are told that Eve was *deceived* by the serpent; therefore she didn't understand in her mind the true consequences of rebellion. Likewise neither did Adam, who was tempted by his wife. And neither at first do we ourselves understand the true consequences of sin. But this takes away no culpability on our part, because we have still chosen to pursue sin rather than pursue holiness. Yet the opportunity to change comes when we can see the consequences of sin in all of the suffering around us. Then we can use our free will one more time to choose to accept God's offer of forgiveness and redemption. We still can't change our hearts, but God can give us new ones:

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezekiel 36: 25-27)

However, if we still do not choose to repent, then we have rebelled from God in our minds as well as in our hearts, knowing full well the evil consequence of sin. And then there can be no forgiveness - because there is no repentance.

Secondly, now that we have experienced the horror of sin and suffering, we now see the transcendent glory of God's love in the sacrifice of His Son:

We love Him, because He first loved us. (1 John 4: 19)

He was despised and rejected and forsaken by men, a Man of sorrows and pains, and acquainted with grief and sickness; and like One from Whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we did not appreciate His worth or have any esteem for Him. Surely He has borne our griefs (sicknesses, weaknesses, and distresses) and carried our sorrows and pains [of punishment], yet we [ignorantly] considered Him stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God [as if with leprosy]. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities; the chastisement [needful to obtain] peace and well-being for us was upon Him, and with the stripes [that wounded] Him we are healed and made whole. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has made to light upon Him the guilt and iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53: 3-6)

For God Who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts so as [to beam forth] the Light for the illumination of the knowledge of the majesty and glory of God [as it is manifest in the Person and is revealed] in the face of Jesus Christ (the Messiah).  
(2 Corinthians 4: 6)

So for our sakes God had to suffer, to fulfil justice for our sins and to show us just how much we are loved. And we also need to suffer, so that we may understand the consequences of sin and be humbled into repentance for our redemption.

Now once we have chosen to repent - if we do - we find that even though we have a new heart, we still have the old mind which has become accustomed to thinking in sinful ways. We therefore need a new mind! But because this is an area of the will, it is not something that God can just give to us immediately as He can with a new heart, otherwise He would be overriding our free will by brainwashing us. So we gain the Holy Spirit to help renew our minds, to bring us in accordance with God's mind and will, so that we may think and act as our new heart now desires. But this is not easy, because we have come to rely on our own efforts and wisdom to get by in the world, and now we need to trust God that His ways and His protection will yield a greater joy and security than we could ever provide for ourselves.

Now because a believer is still liable to occasionally follow the way of the world due to his or her unrenewed mind, it is necessary that at times they be chastened by God to bring them back to the right path. We are told that God only humbles those who do not humble themselves, and this continues to be true for believers, especially for spiritually immature believers who are puffed up in pride. But because Christians only need reminders, God will humble believers with gentle reprimands, rather than the calamitous events He often creates to initiate repentance in those who do not yet believe.

In fact God expects far more from his followers, and they are called to suffer just as Christ suffered, that:

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1: 6-7)

These verses tie us back to the beginning of the first chapter, in which it was declared how pain can lead to a greater appreciation of a prize. It's quite amazing that even though God forgives us through mercy and redeems us through grace, He will still gift us by allowing us some measure of praise, glory and honour when He returns. As His bride, He is preparing His church to become a beautiful accompaniment to His glory in the new creation:

And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory. (3 Romans 8: 17)

In the meantime, trials are still needed to “toughen up” believers in order to be of effective use in evangelising the world; just as a sword must be sharp and perfectly balanced in the hand of the one who uses it, so it must also be firm and unbreakable to fulfil its purpose:

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in

our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (Romans 5: 1-6)

There is yet one more reason why Christians in particular must suffer, and that is so that they can come to rely on God more than on their own abilities, lest they be carried away with pride and fall within their own limitations.

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.

(2 Corinthians 1: 8-10)

And so He shall deliver us from all things when we cling to Him in faith.

#### 4. Is it too Much?

It is relatively easy to grasp an intellectual understanding of the things written in this book, but there are many times in life when you might feel forced to say “is it really worth it?” Or a believer may feel it is all too much for them to handle, despite their faith. Some people will feel as though they have seen too much in their lives or experienced too much sorrow, violence, or heartbreak to ever again know joy or view life as worth living.

To the non-believer, it is important to consider the words of the apostle Paul, who said that the joyful experiences of the world to come far outweigh anything that we have witnessed or suffered in this world:

But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him" - these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.  
(1 Corinthians 2: 9-10)

If you were only to admit to your wrong doing and see the blessed grace available in the Lord's offer of forgiveness, then this promise can be yours. As for the horrors of the past, God speaks of the future:

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create...  
(Isaiah 65: 17-18)

For the Christian, it is important to note, “that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22) And many of the great prophets of God felt similarly distressed at times:

Elijah - But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a lone broom or juniper tree and asked that he might die. He said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers. (1 Kings 19: 4)

Jonah - Therefore now, O Lord, I beseech You, take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. (Jonah 4: 3)

Jeremiah - Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed...Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame? (Jeremiah 20: 14,18)

Job – Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night which announced, There is a man-child conceived. Let that day be darkness!... (Job 3: 3-4)

Yet God provides them all with the response they need to grow, mature and find joy in Him and in life once more. And how much more so now that we have seen the hope and glory of Jesus in our midst, Who is always there for anyone who calls upon His name. And although He may not always give us answers to the reasons for our woes, there are few if any that do not come under the umbrella of the reasons given in this book.

The greatest source of comfort we have is in found in the book of Romans:

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8: 28)

This verse and others tell us that not one moment of pain or suffering is wasted in the great plan that God has to redeem us and conform us to His image so that we may exist in a state of perpetual worship and joy of wonders that go beyond our imagining and which are all summed up in the glory and majesty of Christ.

But if you are not yet reconciled to God, then I would encourage you to spend the next quiet moment you have to pray to God, to admit your selfish heart and to ask for His forgiveness through the atoning sacrifice that He made in the person of Jesus Christ. But if you feel as though such a petition would be insincere or lacks sufficient belief, then I would recommend reading my book “Justice and Mercy: Why God is Angry”, for a more in depth look at some of the things written here and for a greater understanding of Christianity and its everlasting relevance to the present time.

[www.justiceandmercy.co.uk](http://www.justiceandmercy.co.uk)