

Present Suffering, Future Glory

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] John chapter 11 verses 1 through 16.

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary, and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.

So the sisters sent to him, saying, Lord, he whom you love is ill. But when Jesus heard it, he said, this illness does not lead to death.

It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this, he said to the disciples, let us go to Judea again. The disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you.

[1 : 14] And are you going there again? Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble because he sees the light of this world.

But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles because the light is not in him. After saying these things, he said to them, our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.

The disciples said to him, Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover. Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest and sleep.

Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died. And for your sake, I am glad that I was not there so that you may believe.

But let us go to him. So Thomas called the twin, said to his fellow disciples, let us go also, that we may die with him.

[2 : 14] May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? Growing up, I liked watching Batman.

And I'm not talking about Ben Affleck or Val Kilmer or Michael Keaton. I'm talking about Adam West, Batman.

Adam West. That Batman TV series aired originally on Wednesday and Thursday nights in two parts. And the first part always ended with a cliffhanger and you had to wait to the next day to figure out how Batman was going to escape this perilous predicament that he was in.

But I grew up watching the reruns. And the channel that I watched it on would play those two episodes back to back. So I wasn't left on the cliffhanger for very long. Only about three minutes during a commercial break.

But you better believe that those were three suspenseful minutes for me as a kid. What is Batman going to pull out of his utility belt this time to save his life and rob him?

[3 : 21] It's hard to wait in those cliffhangers, isn't it? One thing I love about streaming networks like Netflix is that they'll give you the entire season at one time.

You watch it whenever you want. If you're left on a cliffhanger, you don't have to wait a day. You don't have to wait a week. You can watch the next one right away. It's also, I think, part of the reason why I like reading books, especially nonfiction books.

When you're reading a good book, you know how you get glued to that book? And you just can't wait to see how it's all going to end.

And you can't put it down. You just keep flipping through the pages, wanting to know how the story is going to end. We want to know how the story is going to end.

And in fact, I think we express this same desire, wanting to know how the story ends in real life. We devour the coverage of court cases or political scandals or election results, following them diligently, minute by minute, hour by hour, wondering how is this all going to come to an end.

[4 : 42] And I think people have that same desire when it comes to their own personal stories. How is it going to end? And so what many people will do is they'll consult fortune tellers.

Or they'll talk to a psychic. Or they'll read their horoscope. Or there are people who are doomsday preppers. And they are filling up with supplies because the apocalypse could be on us at any moment.

So you better be ready. Unfortunately, those who follow such leads, especially fortune tellers, psychics, and the other one I said, is that they often discover that men don't know the future. They don't know the future. And because of that, many people spend their lives in fear of the future. There's a lot of fear, I think, in our own nation right now about our future. Because we don't know what is coming. And so sometimes we might ask the question, does anyone know how my life is going to come to an end?

[6 : 00] Well, surely, as Scripture says, no human knows that. But there is one who does know. There is one who does know. God knows. And so in this text, Jesus, who is God, is made aware of Lazarus, his friend whom he loved, and that he was ill and he was dying.

And so the key text, the key verse in this passage that we need to hold on to this morning is verse 4. I'll read it again. But when Jesus heard it, he said, This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it. Jesus did not immediately go to Lazarus, but he waited.

He waited for two additional days. Then in verses 14 and 15, Jesus said in his omniscience, in his all-knowingness, he says to his disciples, Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe, but let us go to him.

Now that can sound really confusing at first glance, can't it? Jesus knows that Lazarus is suffering. And he knows that Lazarus' suffering will end in his death.

[7 : 29] And so I ask you, have you ever seen someone suffering and close to death? If you have, you know it's not a pretty sight.

It really isn't. It's not glamorous at all. In fact, sometimes an illness that leads to a person's death transforms their body so much that they almost look unrecognizable.

Death is not pretty. They're in a lot of pain when they're suffering, and that close to the end. And so Jesus knew this about his friend, yet he makes two really puzzling statements.

First, he says that Lazarus' suffering would be for the glory of God, and that through it, Jesus would be the one primarily glorified in his death.

The second puzzling thing that Jesus says here is that he expresses gladness, gladness in this situation for the sake of his disciples.

[8 : 44] Because through the death of Lazarus, his friend whom he loved, their faith would grow in him, and they would be strengthened as a result for what God would prepare and had prepared for them to do after our Lord died, arose, and ascended back into heaven.

And so, you know, if you've been in church for any period of time, certainly in Sunday school, you know that this is a story I'm sure that you've heard many times. You know how this story ends. Jesus does go. And when he goes, he raises Lazarus up from the dead. But we've got to think about what it would be like to be in that moment, not knowing that that was going to happen, to be in the shoes of Jesus' disciples.

They didn't know that. They didn't know what Jesus was going to do. And I'm sure that they, like us today, were perplexed by how suffering and death could result in Christ's glory and could glorify him.

Because suffering and death are things that we would rather avoid. But if you read the Bible, they are topics that Scripture is replete with.

[10 : 05] The reader of Scripture will consistently be confronted with the reality of suffering and death. In fact, Jesus used the cross, an instrument of suffering and death, to illustrate what it meant to be a follower of his.

Let's look there, Matthew 16, 24-25. Jesus told his disciples, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, this instrument of death, take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. And so, you know, today as Christians, we see the cross and we view it as a cherished symbol, and rightfully so.

It's a symbol of our atonement, of Christ's atonement for us, of forgiveness, of grace, and of God's great love for us. But in Jesus' day, the cross represented a torturous, humiliating death.

There was a time before his crucifixion when Jesus drew large crowds to himself. They hoped for a time that he was the long-awaited Messiah that they had anticipated.

[11 : 32] But their hopes in who they thought the Messiah should be, and what they thought the Messiah should do, were distorted. They hoped that the Messiah would restore the kingdom of Israel now, and put an end to their suffering under the Romans right now.

They were hoping that Christ would put an end to all of the suffering that they endured. But once they realized that Jesus wasn't going to be who they wanted him to be, they stopped following him. They were unwilling to put to death their own ideas, their own desires, their own plans, their own feelings, and exchange them for his.

They turned on him. And ordered his execution through crucifixion. A suffering Savior who commanded those who follow him to endure the suffering of self-denial, and who would not put an instant end to what physical suffering they were enduring in a sin-cursed world, is not a Savior that they wanted.

And a God who would suffer, and who would allow suffering, and who would allow or have a purpose in suffering, was a God that they didn't want.

[13 : 08] You know, I've learned in sharing the gospel, especially with an atheist, and particularly with an atheist, I always ask them this question, somewhere along the line of the conversation.

What happened in your life that made you want to stop believing in God? You know, our kids, when they're here for VBS, when they're here at Awanas, when I talk to my son's friends, they believe.

They know that there's like, we're not here by coincidence. Something doesn't come from nothing.

They're young. They still have a lot of learning to do, but they're at least rational in that sense.

It's everybody else who tells them there's not a God. You have to learn that, I believe. Though, yes, they're born with a sin nature, and they'll reject the God that we have. But you know what I'm saying?

These people who I've spoken to, at some point in time in their life, they believed in God, but something happened in their life. And usually what that one thing was is that there was some kind of suffering that they experienced, whether it was them personally or someone else close to them.

[14 : 28] But the Bible tells us that the greatest miscarriage of justice, the greatest suffering that anyone has ever endured on planet Earth was God Himself.

Jesus suffered the physical and grueling pain of crucifixion, and worse than that, the suffering of being forsaken by God the Father as He who knew no sin became sin so that we could be saved by His life, His death, His resurrection.

And because He came, and because He suffered, through faith in Him, we have eternal life. And we know, as we've sung this morning, that a time will come when for us, there will be no longer suffering and there will no longer be death because of Christ.

This text reveals to us that God has a plan and God has a purpose in suffering. And so that's the main idea for this morning's text.

Through suffering, God is glorified, and we are strengthened by the hope of a future resurrection.

[15 : 51] Through suffering, God is glorified, and we are strengthened by the hope, speaking of Christians, of a future resurrection. Following Jesus is easy when life runs smoothly.

But our true commitment to Him is revealed during turbulent times of suffering. Discipleship demands sacrifice. Jesus said so.

And it includes suffering. And Jesus never hid that cost from those who wanted to follow Him. Look at Luke 9, verse 57 through 62.

As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, to Jesus, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said to him, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

To another, He said, Follow Me. But He said, Lord, let Me first go and bury My Father. And Jesus said to him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

[17 : 03] Yet another said, I will follow you, Lord, but let Me first say farewell to those at My home. Jesus said to him, No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

You see, Jesus had a much different approach to seekers than we do today, didn't He? How many people in our modern-day churches would respond to an altar call that says something like this, Follow Jesus, and you may and probably will face the loss of friends and family, reputation, career, maybe even your life, but come and follow Him.

Many people would say, Suffering? No thanks. I'm not in with that. I don't want any part of that.

When we suffer, or when we see others suffering, we are tempted to question God.

We are tempted to question His goodness. We are tempted to question His sovereignty and His faithfulness. But this passage reveals to us four truths to remember and to cling to whenever you experience suffering in this life.

And that may be you today. But as we've sung, because we so often forget, we must remember.

Remember these four truths when you're suffering.

[18:39] The first, when you suffer, remember that Jesus knows what you're enduring. Remember that Jesus knows what you're enduring.

Look at verses 1 and 2 again. Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.

And so here, what John is doing is he's setting the background in which this miracle will take place.

Jesus is going to raise Lazarus from the dead. This will be the seventh miracle that John records.

And it is, to this point in his earthly ministry, the most dramatic sign that Christ is God. Have you ever noticed, though, as I've read through this chapter this week, have you ever noticed that this story, which is about Lazarus being ill and dying and being raised again, really doesn't have much to do with Lazarus at all.

He's really not mentioned all that much. John says he was sick and he was dying. Jesus says Lazarus is dead and he really doesn't have any active role.

[19:57] He's dead. What active role can he have? He's dead. He's really not the focal point of this story. You know who is? Jesus is. Jesus is the focal point of this story.

And so, Christian, you must remember that you are not the hero of your life. You're not the main character, even. That's Christ's role.

Jesus is not a supporting character in the story of your life. He is to be the preeminent one in all things, especially in the life of a believer and always in his church.

Look at what Paul said to the Colossians, the church there. Don't forget this. About Jesus, he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him, all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.

All things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things. And in him, all things hold together. And he is the head of the body of the church.

[21:01] He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Jesus is a big deal. A big deal. And we need to treat him as such. Without Jesus, you are nothing. Without Jesus, everything falls apart.

Without Jesus, there is no hope of salvation. Jesus is not a footnote in the story of your life. Jesus is to be on the main cover, on the title page, and on every single chapter, the main subject of every single page, divided into two sections.

This is who I was before Christ. This is who I am now, in Christ. He's called you to know him. To know him as your Savior.

He's called you to know him also as your Lord. And you know him as your great king. And you know that your great king suffered for you.

[22:12] Verses 6, 11, and 14. Jesus knows you're suffering. Look at verse 6. So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Verse 11.

After saying these things, he said to them, Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him. Verse 14. Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died. And in all of this, Jesus is revealing that he is omniscient.

That he knows all things. Even though a messenger was sent to him, he knew all along. He knew all along what was happening to Lazarus and Bethany. And demonstrated through these verses that though he was not physically present, he had a handle on the situation.

He had a handle on the situation. He knew that his illness, his suffering, had a greater purpose than anyone else realized. Jesus would bring him back to life and he would be glorified through it all. He knew the end of the story. Now you could, though, read that passage and think, Jesus seems pretty callous. He knows Lazarus is fatally ill, but instead of going to him right away, he hangs back. [23 : 27] Not just for one day, but two. And you might think maybe he's not omniscient because he said that Lazarus' suffering would not end in death, but then he does die.

You could also wonder, how can he call Lazarus a friend? And how can he say that he loves Lazarus and not immediately put an end to his suffering? Jesus was across the Jordan from Bethany where Lazarus was.

Jesus does arrive in Bethany and if you remember, we'll get there, you've heard the story, when he gets there, he's told that Lazarus has been dead for four days.

That's important for us to understand. The messenger's journey to Jesus would have accounted for one day. Jesus then delayed two days, as we see, and then would have had to travel another day in order to get to Bethany where Lazarus was.

So by the time Jesus first received the news, chances were that Lazarus was already dead or going to die imminently.

[24 : 42] So Jesus knew all of that, even without the report. Jesus knows something that none of the others of them do.

He knows that ultimately though, that Lazarus would die but that his death would not be the ultimate outcome of his suffering.

He would go. He would bring him back to life. He knew that this was what he was going to do and that through his suffering and his death, Jesus would be glorified as the one through whom there is and the only one through whom there is resurrection and life.

He knew this all along, all the time and gradually as this story unfolds, reveals that to his followers. So know, when you are suffering, Jesus knows. He knows. Jesus, and know, child of God, that your suffering is not pointless.

[25 : 50] It is not pointless. Jesus is at work. He knows the end of the story. Thank God we have the Bible. We know it too. He's at work.

And though you may not currently understand what in the world is going on, one day you will. In this life or the next.

One Scripture that I have hold dearly to my heart, especially through times of sorrow and suffering, Romans 8, 28-30.

And we know that for those who love God, all things no matter how we perceive them, good things, bad things, all things, work together for good.

For those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

[26 : 50] And those whom he predestined, he also called. Those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified. Man, I love this passage.

It's a constant reminder to me that no matter what I'm going through, Jesus knows he's in control and the end of it for me as a follower of his is glorification.

It's glorification. Know when you suffer that Jesus knows he's got a handle on the situation. Second, remember when you suffer Jesus and his love for you.

Remember Jesus' love for you. He knows and he loves. Verse 3, So the sisters said to him, saying, Lord, he whom you love is ill.

And what I love about this too is that the sisters' message to Jesus is pretty simple. They did not spell out all the details of what Lazarus was ill with, nor did they specifically look.

[27 : 56] They didn't really specifically ask Jesus to do anything. They also did not attempt to manipulate him by reminding him of Lazarus' affection for him at this time.

They merely appeared to the fact that they knew Jesus loved them and loved their brother. And they were humbly and trustingly bringing that to his attention.

Verse 5, there again it says, now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So John here notes that Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters and he makes it explicit though we see it's implied throughout the story.

Jesus was close to this family. And John makes sure to draw our attention to the fact that Jesus' delay was not intended to intensify their sufferings but to multiply their joy.

He would come. He would do far more than they thought possible. He loved them and he would show up at the right time to demonstrate his love to them in an extraordinary way that would glorify him.

[29 : 09] That would further reveal that he was who he was and what he was capable of doing. This is not a mere man. This is the son of God who can bring dead people back to life.

He would risk venturing back towards Jerusalem where they were seeking to kill him and he would perform the miracle knowing that in doing so he would further aggravate his enemies knowing that in doing that he would be brought closer to the cross where he would there demonstrate the heights and the depths of his great love for us by dying in our place for our sins.

When you are suffering brother and sister in Christ the Lord is near. He knows what you are going through. Draw near to him.

Draw near to him. Be reminded of his love. You know again for me a great place to retreat to when I am tempted to doubt that is the Psalms.

Psalms 37 5 Commit your way to the Lord trust in him and he will act. Psalms 46 1 God is your refuge and strength a very present help a present help in time of trouble.

[30 : 28] Psalm 55 22 Cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you. He will never permit the righteous to be moved.

When you are suffering Jesus knows when you are suffering don't forget that he loves you and has a purpose and plan for that that though you may not realize it now one day you will.

Third promise we have thing that we need to be reminded of when we suffer when you suffer remember Jesus is in control when you suffer remember Jesus is in control look at verse 7 through 11 again after this he said to the disciples let us go to Judea again the disciples said to him Rabbi the Jews were just there now seeking to stone you and are you going to go there again Jesus answered are there not 12 hours in the day if anyone walks in the day he does not stumble because he sees the light of this world but if anyone walks in the night he stumbles because the light is not in him after saying these things he said to them our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep but I go to awaken him Jesus is in control the disciples though want to be cautious he wants to go back to Jerusalem that's risky we just read in John 10 they were threatening his life in fact they were wanting to take it from him by pelting him with stones until he died and so perhaps rationally thinking the disciples thought let's let things cool down it's a turbulent time you going back that's going to stir the pot let's let things just cool down a little bit but when you follow

Christ when you risk for Christ there is always reward in that so again one of my favorite parables in fact well one of my favorite parables is the parable of the talents and to me that's what it's all about Jesus says you are a steward I will place gifts in your hand risk risk it multiply it but the promise that we have with that is whatever we risk for the Lord there will be a reward Jesus is in control he's in control of the situation because he trusted in the father's will it was still day he said meaning meaning that he the light of the world still had work to do but night would come and Jesus is emphasizing the point that as long as he is on the earth no matter what he would accomplish his father's will trusting in his sovereignty he knew he would go to the cross but he knew that he would not go to the cross until that appointed time that the

God the father had established from eternity past and the threat of death would not deter him in any way from doing his father's will but this was very confusing for the disciples it seemed it to them to be a little bit of a waste of time Jesus said Lazarus is asleep and so they needed to go back to wake up their brother and in verse 13 and 14 it says there now Jesus had spoken of his death but they thought that he meant that Lazarus was sleeping but Jesus told them plainly Lazarus has died!

[34 : 12] And so we must remember in times of confusion and uncertainty especially in the midst of suffering Jesus tells us you can trust me trust me have faith in me and listen Christians faith is not wishful thinking Hebrews 11 1 defines it well faith is the assurance it's assurance of things hoped for the conviction of things not yet seen faith is taking God at his word and you know what else faith also ought to get us into a little bit of trouble it should look at what Jesus says there's trouble here in going back the disciples said Jesus says hey we're going you got to have faith in me it's dangerous but

I'm in control and so in verse 16 Thomas the twin says to his fellow disciples let us go also that we may die with him this faith that we have and Christ is going to get us a little bit in trouble maybe a lot

in trouble it seems on the outside looking into the disciples that Jesus is putting them in a perilous situation he's risking their lives it seems like a situation that at the very least will probably result they think in increased suffering why they reason why I think they reason leave a fruitful ministry here Lord already dead why leave a thriving ministry here for one that is already dead why risk peace and prosperity for danger and maybe even death you know we admire the saints of old who risked their lives to share the gospel and defend the gospel thank God for those who were willing to follow him in whatever he asked them to do trusting in his control in his sovereignty and letting their faith put them in a little bit of danger where would we be without someone like

Martin Luther saying you know what this is wrong where would we be with all these other ones who said this is wrong culturally or to the church something must be done and it might mean danger for me but I put my faith before that and my trust in God and his control when we fear!

I think we fear because we are concerned that he's not really in control don't we?

We fear the risk of what we might lose not realizing what we have to gain I have been there in that situation before at a college leaving a job with great prospects to go to seminary instead when I had a historically bad record of being a student and I remember everyone who knew me saying are you sure seminary is hard I think their way of saying in between the lines what I was reading you're dumb and that's hard to do there is suffering in that and it was suffering to go back to school I was finally!

[37 : 48] there's suffering too for me and entering the pastorate instead of chaplaincy I never wanted to be a pastor I was going to do ministry I was going to do it my way chaplaincy seemed like fun something that I could do but that wasn't God's plan hey even coming here to Highland Park there was suffering I grew up in Kansas City my entire life I went to school there I went to college there I went to seminary there that's where my family was we're not really far away from them but that was hard to let go of a lot of those things there was suffering involved in each of those moves and I'm not in any way comparing the suffering that I've experienced to what others have experienced or to what a lot of you have experienced but I know for me that God has continually demonstrated that He is someone I can trust time and time and time and time again God has demonstrated to me that He is faithful how about you if you are currently suffering do you doubt

God's control over the situation are you tempted to take matters into your own hands instead of being obedient to Him and casting those cares over to Him maybe maybe you are avoiding His will because you're afraid of what suffering that might bring to you because you fear the suffering of what might result with you making that choice you know hey Thomas gets a bad rap and I've given him a bad rap before but we need more Christians like Thomas here yeah yeah he was a pessimist he was always seeing the negative in things but you know what you cannot question Thomas devotion here he thinks that he is going to die and he's willing to suffer in obedience to Christ submitting himself to his will despite what might happen without reservation you know Thomas here doesn't dig his heels in and refuse to go they don't carry him off okay you you you guys grab Thomas we're going grab him and Thomas is kicking and screaming no no I'm not going to go he doesn't do that Lord he might have been thinking this doesn't make sense to me and you know what this is not how I want things to go and I'm not comfortable with this change and in fact I fear what this decision might result with but nevertheless I trust you I trust you Jesus wants us to trust him and he's told us it's not easy to follow him look at Matthew 10 16 through 20 where he said to his disciples look at this look at the danger here behold

I am sending you out as sheep sheep no claws no fangs no speed or agility no strength I'm sending you out in the midst of wolves speed agility claws fangs a sheep is not a match for a wolf but listen we don't gotta be because we have a good shepherd and the wolf is no match for him I am sending you out he says look let's see it into danger as sheep in the midst of wolves so be wise as servants and innocent as doves be aware of men for they will deliver you over to the courts they will flog you in their synagogues they will drag you before governors and kings for my sake to bear witness before them and to the gentiles when they deliver you over do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour for it is not you who speak and sometimes by faith we get put in those dangerous decisions so that the gospel is proclaimed and people see that

Jesus is the son of God if Thomas and his disciples wouldn't have gone let's just play out the scenario they would have missed out on seeing Jesus demonstrate his glory in a phenomenal way the most phenomenal way I think that he had to this point so when you're suffering don't give up

don't give up and don't lose hope Jesus Christ knows you he loves you he's in control of your life you are in his grip and there is no power greater than him no one can take you out of his mighty hand don't be afraid press on when it doesn't make sense when you feel overcome with fear and sorrow press on continue with the

[43 : 25] Lord it might not make sense now but it will one day move forward with Christ and then fourthly when you suffer remember that Jesus will be glorified through it verse 15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there so that you may believe the resurrection of Lazarus was designed to strengthen the faith of his disciples more important than that to declare that Jesus Christ is the Son of God that he is greater than death that there is no power that he cannot overcome that he can bring the dead back to life and as we continue on with this chapter what we'll see and what we need to remember is that if the resurrection is true not just speaking of

Lazarus more importantly speaking of Jesus own resurrection if the resurrection is true everything is going to be okay and the resurrection is true Jesus came Jesus died on the cross for our sins he was dead and buried for three days and on the third day because he is all who he said he was the son of God he came back to life and he lives now forever!

again we have the end of the story here we know what the end is going to be and since the resurrection is true know for you that everything is going to be alright everything is going to be alright you press on with the Lord let's look at our application questions there's three but it's really six if you hadn't noticed sometimes I do that number one what should a Christian's theology of suffering look like think about this passage what should a Christian's theology of suffering look like think about Jesus and what he said about what it meant to follow him in his own suffering for you what should a Christian's theology of suffering look like and how does what the Bible say about suffering conflict with the message of the prosperity gospel and boy does examples can you think of where

God used suffering to glorify himself how does God glorifying himself benefit us and then finally why is it so tempting to lose sight of God's love and sovereignty when we suffer how has God used your past times of suffering to increase your present faith in him your present faith in him and we'll talk about these tonight at 630 I invite you to come be a part of that right now let's pray heavenly father we thank you that you are a God who who knows suffering greater than we ever could know it that you came intentionally purposefully to die on the cross as an atonement for our sins to appease the wrath of God for the sins that we've committed against him Lord if anyone knows what it's like to suffer it's you and we thank you

God that when we suffer you don't say to us you know what just pick yourself up and dust yourself off it's not as bad as what I've gone through no Lord you know and you love us and you help us during those times to be reminded by you that you are in control and that ultimately though we may not see it there is glory that will result in it and ultimately we know Lord that great day is coming and we pray that it comes soon when we will see you and we will be glorified by you and with you in heaven where there is no more suffering where there is no more death but until that time God encourage us not to waste our lives encourage us not to waste our lives trying to make heaven of earth encourage us Lord not to be afraid but to be faithful even!

[48 : 03] if that means that we might suffer and be placed in danger knowing Lord that whatever we risk for you is going to end up being great reward beyond our imagination God may we be faithful to you use us we pray in Jesus name Amen to to