**“A Theology of Suffering”**

**Pleasant View Baptist Church**

**October 5th, 2019**

**Introduction:**

 As many of you that are here may know, I suffer from severe migraines. I have suffered with them to differing severities for the past 24 years. At the moment, I have had a continuing headache (with various stages and levels of pain) since December 20th last year. Every day. I do not tell you this for your sympathy, although I do appreciate your prayers. I tell you this to bring to the forefront our topic this morning. The glory of Christ through suffering.

 You see, I have had many people pray for me over the years, all very well meaning. But the prayers have not varied very much in their request. The request has been to have the headaches removed. Now as nice as that would be, believe me, it would be quite nice, I have to question whether we are thinking about things appropriately. Spiritually speaking, is the removal of my migraines what is best for me? You might say how can you know? I would say you are exactly right. How can I know what is best for me? Only through God’s word can I find out what is best for me, and I find that He knows what is best for me more than I do. So I must trust God through my suffering. But thankfully there is a purpose to it.

**Hebrews 2:10
“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”**

1. **Context**
	1. **Jesus is the fulfillment of the law.**
	2. **Jesus is above the angels.**
	3. **And yet, He suffered and died for all that would believe.**
2. **‘For it became Him’**
	1. **What does ‘it became’ you mean?**
	2. **This phrase tells us, that not only was it necessary for Jesus Christ to suffer for His people, it made Him more attractive or beautiful to His people because He suffered. We will expand this more in a few moments.**
3. **‘for whom are all things and by whom are all things’**
	1. **All things were created for the Lord Jesus Christ.**
	2. **Revelation 4:11 ‘Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.’**
	3. **All things were created by the Lord Jesus Christ.**
	4. **Colossians 1:16-17 ‘For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.’**
4. **‘bringing many sons to glory’**
	1. **What did Jesus do in His death? Brought salvation to each one who believes.**
	2. **The writer of Hebrews tells us that in so doing, Jesus is bringing them to glory. What glory was that? Was it bright and shining literally in the present? Or was it the glory of the sufferings and cross of Jesus Christ? Or is it future glory when we see Him face to face? I would put it to you that it is the sufferings and cross of Christ because we would not see him face to face without the cross.**
	3. **A question you must ask yourself, are you one of those sons He is bringing to glory?**
5. **‘the captain of their salvation’**
	1. **This does not have any relation to military orders as we would think today. My family.**
	2. **The Greek meaning of the word used here is obscure**
		1. **It is used 4 times in the N.T.**
* **Here in our passage where it is translated Captain**
* **In Hebrews 12:2 where it is translated Author**
* **In Acts 3:15 and 5:31 where it is translated Prince**
	+ 1. **Its construction makes it difficult for translators because it is not used in extra-biblical texts either.**
		2. **It gives the meaning of a leader or originator of something that has experienced what he is leading through.**
	1. **This is a reference to a captain of a ship.**
* **A captain is responsible for the cargo.**
* **A captain is responsible for the crew.**
* **A captain is responsible for the destination.**
* **A captain is responsible for the navigation.**
* **A captain is responsible for the defence of the ship.**
1. **‘For it became Him to be made perfect through suffering’**
	1. **Let us first consider what this means in a broad scope. In the days of our Lord upon the earth, we can concede that the Jews were looking for a strong armed Messiah. One who would rule with the rod of iron of Psalm 2. But when we consider Jesus Christ and the prophecies that are made about Him in the Old Testament, what are the passages that give us the greatest hope, the greatest encouragement, the ones that lift our spirits into heavenly places? I would make a list that would include Psalm 22, 23, 51 and Isaiah 53.**
		1. **Psalm 22 – the Psalm of the cross and resurrection of our Lord.**
		2. **Psalm 23 – the Psalm that pictures our Lord as shepherd caring for His sheep, there is no way for that to be unless He is the lamb of God that takes away our sin.**
		3. **Psalm 51 – the Psalm of David’s repentance. What a glory it is to know that no matter how dark the deed, our Lord forgave him, it gives us hope for that same forgiveness, does it not?**
		4. **Isaiah 53 – The spiritual side of the cross. Let us read it. ‘Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openers not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.’**
	2. **The two ordinances of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ.**
		1. **Baptism.**
* **I think that you would agree with me that when someone who professes salvation through Christ Jesus and follows the Lord in Baptism, they are performing an outward action that signifies what took place with them spiritually.**
* **What does the action signify? It tells all those that see that we have been buried with Jesus in His death and are raised with Him in His resurrection.**
* **Membership in one of His churches is dependent upon this act, signifying what Jesus has done in the life of a believer. This act is a picture of His death – the glory of Jesus Christ.**
	+ 1. **The Lord’s Supper.**
* **Why do we celebrate the Lord’s Supper in our churches? To remember His death till He comes!**
* **1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ‘For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.**
	+ 1. **What is the glory of any of the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ? I would humbly submit it to you that the glory of the Lord’s churches is found in the ordinances as a church remains true to the Lord and His word. It is by His death that any church exists.**
	1. **Jesus states to the disciples after Judas has left to betray him, in John 13:31-32, ‘Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.’**
	2. **Why did the centurion at the foot of the cross exclaim ‘Truly this man was the Son of God’? Was it because of the power of Jesus? Was it because of some great miracle that Jesus had performed? Or was it because of the manner in which he suffered, forgave those who committed such acts and was witnessed to by the Father through the events of those 6 hours upon the cross?**
	3. **What does Jesus say to the two disciples upon the road to Emmaus? When they walked with Jesus and seemed distraught for the events of the cross? In Luke 24:25-26, ‘The he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?’ Had Christ entered his glory? Not his heavenly glory, but he entered the glory of His cross!**
	4. **Time constrains us to move ahead, but foregoing speaking about the glory of God in the resurrection of Lazarus, the glory that is spoken of repeatedly in the Gospel of John, I will close this point with the statement by Paul in Galatians 6:14 ‘But God forbid that i should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.’**
1. **Should the servant be made any different than his master?**
	1. **Matthew 5:11-12 ‘Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.’**
	2. **Matthew 10:23-31 ‘But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.’**
	3. **Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 ‘Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?’**
	4. **2 Corinthians 4:6-11 ‘For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.’**
2. **God’s purpose in your suffering**
	1. **To glorify himself through you**
		1. **2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ‘And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.’**
		2. **2 Thessalonians 1:1-5 ‘Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith growth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:’**
	2. **To conform you to the image of Jesus Christ**
		1. **Philippians 3:7-10 ‘But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.’**
		2. **Romans 8:28-29 ‘And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestination to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.’**
		3. **2 Corinthians 3:18 ‘But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord’**
3. **It was the glory of our Captain to suffer**
	1. **This is a reference to a captain of a ship who has already experienced what he is leading through.**
* **Our captain is responsible for the cargo.**
* **Our captain is responsible for the crew.**
* **Our captain is responsible for the destination.**
* **Our captain is responsible for the navigation.**
* **Our captain is responsible for the defence of the ship.**

**Conclusion:**

**In conclusion, let me quote to you 2 Corinthians 4:15-18, ‘For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, workers for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not sen are eternal.’ Do you suffer? Do not think it strange. If you are a child of the king, you should expect to suffer, your captain did. But He will show His strength when you suffer. He will conform you to his image when you suffer. He will receive glory when you suffer. So ask God to remove it, if it be His will, but overall ask God to be glorified by it, whether he removes it, sails you past it, or takes you through the heart of it. Isn’t that the ultimate goal of the Christian? To be conformed to the image of Christ and to glorify Him?**