

# ***Personal/ Small Group Sermon Study***

## **The Problem of Suffering**

**Week of December 5, 2021 A.D.**

Our culture is highly committed to the pursuit of ease, comfort, and pleasure. But, is that truly what God wants us to pursue during our brief lifetime in this broken and fallen world? Let's talk about that in this lesson.

### **Read Genesis 3:8 – 19**

1. Why is there suffering in the world? Is suffering a good thing, a bad thing, or neutral (i.e. neither good nor bad)? Please explain your answers.
2. Would it have been better for God to have killed Adam, Eve, and the serpent (i.e. Satan) instead of allowing them to live with sin and the consequences of sin? Please explain the reason for your answers.

### **Read Genesis 3:20 – 21**

3. Refer to verse 20. Are all human beings lineal descendants of Adam and Eve? If not, why not? If so, do all human beings have a "sin nature" when they are born? Please explain your answers.
4. Read verse 21. Does this verse give the account of the first occurrence of death on planet Earth? Read Hebrews 9:22. In your opinion, why does God require the shedding of blood in order for forgiveness to be granted? Read Genesis 2:15 – 17. In your opinion, if there was not a death penalty associated with every human sin, would God be (a) righteous, (b) just, and/or (c) trustworthy? Please explain your answers.

### **Read Genesis 3:22 – 24**

5. Why was it necessary for God to take measures to prevent Adam and Eve from eating from the tree of life? What would life on Earth be like if Adam and Eve had eaten from the tree of life? Please explain your answers. (Consider what is written in Genesis 6:5 – 13.)

### **Read Genesis 8:13 – 22**

6. Refer to verses 21 – 22. Did the flood remove the sin nature from Noah and Noah's family? Will the Earth and/or its inhabitants ever be destroyed by "climate change" and/or "global warming"? What, if anything, should a Christian say in response to friends and/or to fellow Christians who state that they are fearful because of the threat of "global warming" and/or "climate change"? Please explain your answers.

### **Read Romans 8:17 – 21**

7. Will every person who ever lives on planet Earth experience “suffering”? Is there a form or type of human suffering which is and/or can be experienced only by followers of Christ? If so, what is that suffering and why doesn’t God prevent it? Please explain your answers.
8. Verses 17 and 18 refer to “glory”. One definition of “glory” is “great honor and admiration won by doing something important or valuable”. Is Jesus worthy of and/or entitled to receive “glory” from all people? If so, why? If not, why not? Please explain your answers.
9. How, when, and why will Christians “share in his (Christ’s) glory” (v.17)? What is “the glory that will be revealed in us” (v.18)? What is “the glorious freedom of the children of God” (v.21)? Please explain your answers.

### **Read 1 Peter 4:12 – 19**

10. Please describe the way or ways in which American Christians “participate in the sufferings of Christ.” (v.13) Does God expect all Christians to “participate in the sufferings of Christ”? If so, why? If not, why not? Please explain your answers.

### **Read Philippians 3:10 – 11**

11. What are the “sufferings of Christ”? Should every Christian strive to develop a desire (and make an effort) to share in the sufferings of Christ? Without suffering, can a person (a) receive salvation? and (b) experience sanctification (i.e. the process of becoming more like Christ)? Please explain your answers.
12. Are you currently experiencing “the glorious freedom of the children of God” (see Romans 8:21)? Do you want to? If not, why not? If so, what must you do? If you are given the choice, would you choose to experience (a) a life of ease, comfort, and pleasure or (b) the fellowship of sharing in the sufferings of Christ? Does God, in fact, give to you that choice every day? Please explain your answers.

**Consider:** Jesus was “a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering”. We have been “predestined (by God) to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.” We cannot become more like Christ without sharing in the sufferings of Christ. You think about that. Amen.