

Why Does God Allow Suffering in the World?

The late Corrie ten Boom experienced extreme suffering in her days as a Nazi concentration camp prisoner during World War II. In her book *Corrie ten Boom's Prison Letters*, she wrote that she "often felt lonely and afraid." Suffering became a way of life.

To seek relief from fear, loneliness and suffering, ten Boom turned to the assurance of God's Word found in Psalm 91:4: "He shall cover thee with His feathers" (KJV). She prayed this verse every night. Then, closing her eyes, she would picture herself under the actual feathers of God's protection. Peaceful sleep would follow.

What did ten Boom do to combat the grim picture of life during the day in a concentration prison? She turned to Jesus. In John 15, Jesus refers to Himself as the true vine from which we, as His branches, can draw strength and life itself. Ten Boom received succor from this vine of life daily—she depended totally on Jesus.

How did she do this? She cultivated an intimate relationship with Him by praying to Him and talking with Him as a best friend (see Prov. 18:24). In her book she shares, "I spoke with my Savior!"

In her place of suffering—a tiny prison cell—Corrie ten Boom found miraculous peace and complete joy in Jesus. How was this possible? God's Word confirms that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8, NKJV)—so His comfort is available to all of us at all times and in all places.

Years later, after ten Boom's release to freedom, a friend who was suffering in severe pain from a terrible accident asked

her what she had thought when she was going through her own sufferings in the concentration camp. In reply, ten Boom shared this nugget from Romans 8:18 that had sustained her in the midst of her sufferings: “The sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Corrie ten Boom is an example of one person who suffered greatly but did not break or succumb to her present afflictions. Rather, she chose to live her life with Christ in her, “the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). Because of her choice, she soon discovered that only through Him was she able to experience a far bigger picture of life beyond the present painful moment—where greater glory from Him awaited her for all eternity.

Have you ever noticed the way in which God’s Word uses the word “through” in some Scriptures? It is often used as a preposition that presents a picture of journeying from one point to a destination. It connotes movement, never stagnation. It promises release, never captivity.

When the message of Scripture deals with pain and suffering, it offers a passageway out—with the promise from God that pain or suffering cannot last forever. God, being the God of all things possible, is with us and can see us through the painful rough times and move us on to something better.

Read Isaiah 43:1-2; Psalm 23:4; Luke 4:30 (see below).

These verses have some added insights for you to contemplate. Take time to ponder how you can apply the verses to your present circumstances. Incorporate them into your prayers.

“But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the

fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you (Is. 43:1-2, NKJV).'"

Verse 1 is significant. It establishes you in Him—your Redeemer who has chosen you to be His no matter what you go through on your journey. Verse 2 affirms His faithfulness to move you through the rough challenges with Him at your side. "Yea, though I walk through [but a passing] the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me" (Ps. 23:4).

No matter how dark or depressing the situation, the Lord's light will guide you through it all.

"Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way" (Luke 4:30).

Here is an example of Jesus moving in His great power past opposition that had come against Him. If you are encountering the pain of resistance or rejection from people, let the power of Jesus move you through the worst of circumstances to the best He has for you.

We live on in a world of painful circumstances born of man's original sin and fall. However, God has made a way through it all when we move in Jesus: "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37).