

Matthew 22-11-27a

Good morning. Welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is a great blessing and refreshment of soul for us all to be together on this great morning following the Thanksgiving holiday.

This is the 27th of November, 2022. We resume our study in the Gospel of Matthew. We're looking at the Lord Jesus and the disciples in the upper room.

The breaking of bread and sharing of the cup is our focus in chapter 26, verse 26 and 27. This is where we will pick up this morning. We are going to look specifically at the words of the Lord Jesus on this occasion.

This is my body, which is broken for you. It doesn't occur in our Matthew context for reasons we'll explore a bit later, but we know that the Lord Jesus said this from the parallel accounts, and it is important for us to understand whether or not you have the specific words in view, why the Lord Jesus' sacrifice of atonement required suffering. What is the role of suffering in the work of the Lord Jesus? What is the role of suffering in our own lives? It's a fascinating study.

I've been working on it for some weeks and we'll explore it together today. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study, and then we'll begin. Father, we are so grateful for another opportunity to spend this time together to receive the benefits of the fellowship that you have created, the individuals that you have gifted, and the benefits that we receive from our contact and our conversation and our shared enthusiasm for the Lord Jesus Christ and your plan into which we have been entered and interwoven.

We pray that as we look at these studies from your word this morning, these sections, these scriptures that deal with the role that suffering plays in the work of the Lord Jesus and in our own lives, that God the Holy Spirit will bless it to our hearts, impress it on our souls, and enable us to more fully understand and participate in the opportunities and the blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The words of the Lord Jesus, hear, take, eat, this is my body, this bread is blessed and broken. The bread is broken and he says, this is my body. I have suggested before that it would be an interesting thought experiment, if you will, to think about a different way that the atoning sacrifice of Christ could have been made.

This could have been done in a heavenly setting, in a glorious way that did not involve the beatings and the spitting and the tearing out of the beard and the horrific, grueling death that comes through crucifixion. Why suffering as a part of this sacrifice? The animals in the Levitical system were not tortured. They were not flayed.

They were not beaten. They were not mercilessly subjected to suffering as a part of

sacrifice. They were very cleanly and quickly killed.

Their method of death by nicking the carotid artery in the neck and draining the blood out was nearly painless. They basically fell asleep from sudden loss of blood pressure and expired shortly thereafter. But it was a merciful and relatively painless form of killing the animal in preparation for sacrifice.

Not so the Lord Jesus. His was an hours-long, slow death involving a great deal of pain and suffering. Why is that, I ask myself? Well, this leads us to a topical study here.

What we want to get this morning is the Bible's perspective on suffering. Many things have been written. As soon as you say suffering, and what is it for? What does it do? We can immediately think of Job.

You can think of the Apostle Paul with his thorn in the flesh. And there are a couple of quick answers that come to us. But we want to deepen our understanding and give ourselves a little bit better context for the suffering that takes place in our own lives.

The suffering that we observe in the lives of others, beginning with the suffering that we are about to read about and study in the Gospel of Matthew and the parallel gospels in terms of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. His suffering is not constant through his life. He didn't have a physical condition that brought about some sort of daily problems.

His suffering, the suffering of the Lord Jesus in his humanity, is largely confined to the trials and the crucifixion. And thus it is tied to his role as Redeemer, as the Atonement. And specifically so, there is a reason for this.

Unlike the Apostle Paul, who is repeatedly arrested, beaten, stoned and left for dead, and gives a litany of his sufferings across the years as an Apostle, Jesus' career is not that way. And there is a reason for this. He, under the auspices of the plan of God the Father, operates in his public ministry for a little over three years, at which point he allows himself to be taken.

There are many previous attempts to arrest him or to cast him off of cliffs, and he simply isn't available for that form of suffering. You think about the time he went to Nazareth and Capernaum and various places where people attempted to seize him and do him harm, and he just was suddenly not available for that. He walks through their midst and disappears.

There are other times when fear of the people prevents the religious authorities from arresting him during feasts when he's in Jerusalem and so on. It is at a time of God's choosing when the Lord Jesus subjects himself to this suffering, allows it to be perpetrated on his body. This bread that is broken represents that specific time and that specific aspect of his work.

He bore our sins in his body on the tree. So we want to explore this a little bit. Why did Jesus do this? Well, it begins really with the entrance of suffering into the world.

We don't have time to go back and read and explore the account of the fall. We can simply remember the words of the Apostle Paul, whereas by one man sin entered the world and death by sin, so that death passed upon all men because all have sinned. This sets the stage because there is no suffering until death enters the world.

Now, I am speaking in the human realm. There's a whole separate category of discussion where people want to talk about whether animals suffer in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve in that specially created environment that was walled off from the rest of the world. There is no suffering in the Garden.

There are no animals that die in the Garden. The fruit that is picked and eaten does not suffer. The trees do not suffer.

Adam and Eve do not suffer. Suffering does not enter until sin enters the world. And when Adam and Eve are held to account for that sin, Eve is told that in sorrow she will bear children.

That is suffering not just of the physical delivery process, but inevitably when parents have children, there will be suffering that ensues. Sometimes it is the parents who suffer because of the children. Sometimes it is the children who suffer because of the parents.

And you see this immediately. What happens to the first two children we know about in human history? Cain murders Abel. You think about Adam and Eve who are alive and will be alive for centuries after that event.

And that suffering does not go away. The loss of one son to murder, the loss of the other son to a grievous evil act that has permanent consequences. He is driven away.

He is marked. And the suffering begins before you have a third generation on the earth. So there is sorrow in the parent-child arena, and it's because of sin.

Very clearly observable in that event. Adam is told that he will no longer be able to walk up to a tree and pick the fruit, go to the tree of life and find life-sustaining fruit. He now must till the soil and earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.

And the ground is cursed. And thorns and thistles. This is going to be laborious.

It is sometimes going to be disappointing. There will be drought. There will be famine.

There will be loss due to blight and locusts and all sorts of variables where the sustenance is not automatic. And this involves suffering. Well, you can move forward through the book of Genesis and find many other instances, but we've established the point that suffering is related inextricably to death.

The wages of sin is death. It's helpful sometimes to take scriptures that talk about death and substitute the word suffering. The wages of sin is suffering.

Whereas by one man, sin entered the world and suffering by sin so that suffering passed upon all men for all have sinned. So we see the link and this shines a light on the cross because the problem of sin is death and its concomitant suffering. So the solution, God's deliverance and salvation from that sin is going to be marked by suffering and death as the bookend.

And we see this in the scriptures. Turn with me to Hebrews chapter two. This is a familiar passage beginning in verse nine, Hebrews chapter two, verse nine.

We see Jesus made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. Jesus made lower than the angels. We often are reminded of the Psalm that is being here quoted, made a little lower than the angels.

You have crowned him with glory and honor. But in Hebrews, you have this inserted concept. We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.

Jesus emptied himself and took on the form of a servant and came in the likeness of men, Philippians chapter two, humbled himself and became obedient even to death, to suffering, to death on the cross. For this reason, God has highly exalted him. Back to Hebrews 2.9, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that now we're going to find one of the reasons that Jesus was demoted, if you will, took on the form of a servant, came in the likeness of men, in order that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone.

He might experience suffering and death on behalf of everyone. Verse 10, it was fitting for him for whom are all things and by whom are all things. This is not a throwaway observation.

It was fitting for him who is related to all things, for whom are all things, by whom are all things. He is the source and he is the purpose. The revelation of Jesus Christ, the appreciation of Jesus Christ is central to God's plan.

And it was fitting that everything that God has done to reveal himself through Christ would have this component. It was fitting for him in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. It was fitting that in rescuing fallen human individuals in slavery and bondage to sin, inevitably suffering, inevitably headed for death, to bring them as sons to God, to make the means, the captain, the author of that salvation perfect through suffering.

This perfect means complete. It means something that has come to maturity, something that has reached its fullness. This is not a moral perfection in this use.

It means that he is complete as the captain of salvation through sufferings. Verse 11, for both he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one. This goes back to that phrase I said is essential in verse 10, for whom are all things and by whom are all things.

The one who is sanctifying and those who are being sanctified are all of a piece, all of one. This is the reason he is not ashamed to call them brethren. So what does this really mean? The sufferings of the Lord Jesus, specifically these that are involved in bringing us to God, redeeming us, saving us from sin and from the wages of sin, which is death and the concomitant suffering from which we are being and will be delivered.

This is the bridge between God and man. God is not the great distant other who shoots an arrow of salvation down to the fallen planet. God sends his son who becomes one of us and experiences our sufferings.

And our sufferings unite us with him. This is the contact point. This is the means by which we are delivered.

And that's the beginning point. It would be a shame, wouldn't it, if the only shared experience we had with the Lord Jesus is suffering. Well, I suffer and he suffered, so we have a common bond.

This is often the nature of conversations that take place in support groups. You lost a child. I lost a child.

You have survived cancer. I'm surviving cancer. There is a point of contact involving some form of suffering where people are bonded together by that suffering.

And many times it's difficult to expand that relationship because it's the Venn diagram where you have the two interspersed circles and the common area between the two is suffering. But then there's this wide area where politics and experience and likes and dislikes and generations and other things are quite different. And you only have the suffering to talk about.

And you have to keep returning to that because everything else is not in common. It would be tragic if that was our only means of fellowship with the Lord Jesus is, well, we suffer and he suffered, so we're bonded together by suffering. This is the entrance point.

Recognizing that he has suffered for our sake and that in taking on that suffering and taking on that death, he is delivering us, not just sharing in, not just sympathizing with, not just me too-ism, but in entering into suffering and experiencing death, he is removing them eternally for us. But that shared experience of suffering is not ultimately what bonds us with Christ. It's the starting point.

But then it expands because we share a love for God the Father. We share an

appreciation for righteousness. We enter into the fullness of the fruit of the spirit and the life of God, which is not just existence, but is life in terms of its divine quality, its satisfying fullness, its purpose and meaning and relationship on the positive side to God himself walking in the light because he is in light.

We are transferred out of the kingdom of darkness, out of the kingdom of suffering, into the kingdom of the son of his love. And we, as we grow, share more and more of those positive things that bind us to God through Christ in love. We love him.

He loves us. And he is able to express that love because we have built that relationship that goes beyond simply shared suffering. So it is fitting that in bringing many sons to glory, God the Father, by the way, it is fitting for him in verse 10 of Hebrews 2, him is God the Father.

It is fitting for him, God the Father for whom are all things and by whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory. This he is the father. The sons are being brought to glory.

I'm not sure I made that clear when I went through this the first time but to make the captain of their salvation. He, God the Father, is making the captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, the captain of salvation perfect through suffering. The suffering of the Lord Jesus is a part of the plan of the father.

God intended and purposed that the Lord Jesus would drink this cup. The cup that is giving the Lord Jesus pause in the garden of Gethsemane. If it be thy will, let this cup of suffering and death pass from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, but your will. It is the will. It is fitting that God the Father make the Lord Jesus a perfect savior, a perfect captain of salvation.

This suffering is necessary for that perfection. It is an essential part of it. Verse 11, for both he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one.

We are entering into this unity, entering into this relationship that makes us a brother of Christ and a son of God. He is the son of God. We become sons brought to glory, brought to God the Father, and suffering is an essential component of it.

It's so critical to understand the role that suffering plays in establishing our salvation and our relationship to God through Christ. Suffering is essential. Why? Because sin is the problem.

Christ is the solution. Suffering and death are the inevitable consequences of sin. God doesn't just wander the universe looking for a sin and then inflicting suffering.

Sin, which is rejection of God and separating of one's sentient self from God by choice, creates suffering and creates death. When you voluntarily disconnect a lamp from the

electrical socket, the light goes out. Nobody has to come and break the bulb or knock over the lamp or hit it with a hatchet.

If you unplug the lamp from the socket, the light will go out because the source of its energy has been disconnected. Angels and men who voluntarily reject God and disconnect themselves from God, that light goes out. Suffering and death are the inevitable consequence.

It's a law of physics. God doesn't have to actively prosecute or persecute sinners. The sin itself creates suffering and death.

Therefore, to rescue us from those consequences, God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, into the realm of suffering and death. He experiences suffering and death on our behalf and unites with us. It's a matter of place.

It's a matter of environment. God could have, in some alternate universe, said, well, you sinners, I'm going to rocket you up to heaven and I'll unite you with myself in my perfection. I'll bring you up to the perfect heaven and adopt you as my son.

That's not the way He did it. God came to the imperfect, fallen, suffering, death-filled earth and united with us down here, entered into our fallen condition, our fallen environment. He was tested in all points like as we are, experienced all of the suffering and death that we experience, yet without sin.

The suffering and the death can be experienced because they are a product of human sin. The Lord Jesus experiences suffering and death as a product of humanity's sin, but He Himself did not sin. And by that means, He comes and enters into our suffering and our death and He takes us to glory, having become the captain of our deliverance.

For this reason, He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, Hebrews 2.12, I will declare your name to my brethren. This is the psalmist, but these words are put into the mouth of the Lord Jesus here. I will declare the name of God, the Father, your name to my brethren.

In the midst of the assembly, I will sing praise to you. The Lord Jesus has come down to our assembly, entered into our flesh, and is declaring the name of the Father. And again, verse 13, I will put my trust in Him.

Circle this because it's another very essential component of suffering. When the Lord Jesus came to this earth, entered our flesh, our suffering, and our death, He says, I am here to declare the name of my Father and the opportunity for Him to be your Father through salvation, through deliverance, bringing you as sons and daughters to glory. That's one aspect.

A second aspect of that entering into our flesh, our suffering, and our death is, I will put

my trust in Him. He is the example of faith and obedience as a human being to the Father. I will put my trust in Him.

Keep in mind that the suffering of the Lord Jesus is our example. He is the captain of our salvation. He calls us brothers, and His suffering is instructive for us to understand our suffering.

So, very central, I will put my trust in Him. If you just blow through Hebrews 2 and read these, I don't understand why these Old Testament quotes are here. They don't seem to relate to making the captain perfect through suffering.

Okay, I would trust Him in suffering, maybe, but it just doesn't really seem to follow until you stop and think about it. I will put my trust in Him. Suffering and death provide the occasions for trust.

If there were no consequences, if we weren't in a bad place, where is the need for faith? I'm doing fine. And this is why unbelievers and those who have no interest in God or the things of God don't change their minds because they have no sense of need. I don't think that I'm in bondage to sin.

I'm a pretty good person. I don't think I'm in need of relationship to God. I don't think He's really even there.

And I'm doing fine. No sense of need. Suffering encourages a healthy sense of reliance on God.

I will put my trust in Him. He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, and this is what He says to His brothers. In the end of verse 13, here am I and the children whom God has given me.

We're back to bringing those sons to glory. Bringing sons to glory. Inasmuch then, verse 14, as the children have partaken of flesh and blood.

This flows now, right? This makes sense. The children have partaken of flesh and blood. He himself likewise shared in the same.

So that through death, anytime you see death, you can add the inevitable and inextricable component of suffering. That through suffering and death, He might destroy him who has the power of suffering and death. That is the devil.

This is death in terms of its suffering component. People say, well, does the devil go around? Is he like the grim reaper? And he decides who's going to die and where they're going to die. He's got the power of death.

He has the power of suffering that ultimately ends in death. The power of death in all of its frightful manifestations. So, He destroys him who has the power of suffering and

death.

That is the devil. Verse 15, and release those who through fear of suffering and death, were all their lifetime subjected to slavery, subjected to bondage. People have a mortal hatred in these days of slavery.

And they're anxious to disabuse any sympathy with it and repent for historical sins of the past and all other kinds of things. And slavery is just thought to be the most horrific crime that's ever been perpetrated against humanity. This is the real slavery.

We are all slaves to suffering and death. Some of us have kind masters and some of us have harsh masters, but we all suffer and we all die. Verse 16, indeed, he does not give this aid to angels.

Why? Angels don't suffer and angels don't die. Suffering and death doesn't pertain to angels. So, he doesn't send the captain of salvation to angels.

They don't have this problem. He gives aid to the seed of Abraham. Notice, not to the whole world.

There is not universalism. What does he mean by the seed of Abraham? Anyone by faith can be seed of Abraham. Right? This is the point that Paul makes when he talks about all Israel is not Israel, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called and so on.

You are children of Abraham and heirs of promise by faith. And it is those who turn to God in faith who enter into this salvation. It does not immediately relieve us of suffering and death, but it is the beginning because it is the contact point with the Lord Jesus.

And as we continue to remain on this earth and continue to experience suffering and loss and death, it draws us to closer union with the captain of our salvation. And like him, we are being perfected. It's a hard thing to see when we're in pain, when we suffer loss, when we grieve, when we have a grueling road day by day by day.

We can be subjective or we can be objective. Objectivity is looking at the Lord Jesus who was willing to give us perfection, light, unblemished holiness, and come and suffer with us and die for us. Our suffering and our experiences of death, the death of those close to us and our own death, unites us with Christ.

It's the entrance point. It's the contact point. Therefore, in all things, verse 17, he had to be made like his brethren so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest.

We have great confidence. We know that Jesus knows what we're going through and we know we have a merciful and faithful high priest. You can't say God doesn't know what it's like to be me.

God doesn't understand what I'm going through. We have a merciful and faithful high

priest who has gone through everything we've been through and more. His level of suffering and the nature of his death far exceeds anything, however extreme, however horrific.

Merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation to God for the sins of the people. In that he himself has suffered being tested, being tempted, he is able to aid those who are tempted. God could be a construct of divine attributes.

You could draw a box around them and say sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, eternal life, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, and veracity, and have a conceptual God who is distant and impersonal. But we don't. The Lord Jesus, because he himself has suffered, that's our contact point.

And we know it feeds our faith. It strengthens our dedication and our love, knowing that the Lord Jesus expressed God's love toward us. It's John 3.16. I just saw that sign in the background of a post-football game scene.

You know, at every one of those games, somebody will be there with a John 3.16 sign. It's an important verse. It shouldn't be overused.

God loved the world and sent his Son so that whoever believes, it is the seed of Abraham, it is those who trust, I will put my trust in him, should not perish. We are not surrendered to suffering. It's not an inevitable and unending consequence.

Paul is eventually going to call it a momentary light affliction. More about this when we come back from the break. But the first thought by way of application when we consider the topic of suffering, we're looking at it in Matthew 26.

It is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the captain of our salvation because he is the captain of suffering. He is wounded and bruised for our transgressions.

By his stripes, we are healed. So interesting that suffering is inextricably and inevitably and essentially involved in our salvation. And to the extent that we experience suffering, it should focus our attention on our impending and ultimate deliverance through the captain of that deliverance, the Lord Jesus Christ, and our appreciation for him.

We'll take our break. We'll come back and pick up here after our blessing in music.