

A Wise God Allows Suffering Part 1

In the last sermon I shared the story of a man who almost lost it all due to his addiction problem. And so now, I'm going to share a story from a girl who shares how her mother's **drug problem** actually helped to change her life for the better!

"Mamma DRUG me to Church services on Sunday, and told me God was real. And she DRUG me to the Wednesday night prayer meeting where she'd show me how to kneel.

Then she DRUG me back to Sunday School, to be taught to live the life I should. And I NEVER sassed a teacher cause I knew that I'd be DRUG into Momma's bedroom and be given a switch picked from a piece of wood.

Mamma DRUGGED me to Church services three times a week and then DRUG me to Bible School. And I was DRUGGED inside and chastised well when I acted like a fool.

Now I'm all grown up today and I teach to make a living. But I see kids every single day, and no DRUGS their momma's giving.

And I think back to the lessons learned when I was at her knee, and I thank God for the DRUGS that my Momma gave to me."

Now how many of you guys know of a few people who could use a little more drugs in their life? Drug to Church services that is. And people, this is actually a bigger problem than we realize. Now more than ever people are turning away from the Church and turning on to other things and then they wonder why their lives are falling apart. Yeah, they got a **drug**

problem all right and it's this. As ironic as this might sound, people today want answers to their problems **but** they refuse to be drugged to the one book that not only **provides the answers** but also tells us **Who God Is**. And because of this self-imposed ignorance of God that comes from **not studying the Bible**, the lives of many Christians are now filled with just as many questions and just as much pain as the rest of the world. We are actually living in a time when many Churches are full of Christians who are living like **practical atheists**.

Oh, we say we believe in God, but half the time, by our **lips** and by our **lives**, we act like He's not there. And people, this not only keeps you from growing in your own walk with God, but it also keeps others from believing in God. Therefore, to avoid this irony of Christians living like practical atheists by not knowing **Who God Is**, we're going to continue in our study from the Word of God on the Character of God entitled, "**Who Is God?**"

And we've already seen that the very **first thing** we need to know about God is that **God Is Real**. The **second thing** we need to know about God is that **God Is Personal**. And in the last sermon we saw the **third thing** we need to know about God is that **God Is Wise**. And there we saw one reason why we know that **God Is Wise** and that's because He **Knows the**

Beginning from the End. And it's by knowing this that saves us from **being led astray**, from **being blasphemers of God**, and from **being left behind**.

But people that's not the only reason why we know that **God Is Wise**.

The **second reason** why we know **God Is Wise** is because **God Is Above and Beyond Time**. But hey, don't take my word for it, let's listen to God's.

Revelation 4:8-9 "Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever."

Now according to our text, one of the things that makes God so Wise is that He not only exists forever and ever, but He's eternal which means He's **above and beyond time**. And because God's above and beyond all time, this enables Him to get an **eternal perspective** on all things at all times simultaneously. And you may not think this is a big deal. But I'm telling you, if you follow the logical train of thought here, it's going to revolutionize your life! You see, because God alone sees all things this means that He also **knows all things**. Therefore, He's not just wise, but He's **infinitely wise**! And people if we truly understand that **God Is Wise**, it's going to reveal several things we've never even thought about. What things? Great question, I'm glad you asked.

The **first thing** knowing that **God Is Wise** is going to reveal is that **There's No Such Thing As An Accident.**

Proverbs 16:9,33 “A man’s mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure. The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly of the Lord, even the events that seem accidental are really ordered by Him.”

Now according to our text, even though we personally live out each day and make our individual plans, **behind it all**, God in His infinite wisdom is directing our steps. People, did you know that **God is so Wise** that nothing ever catches Him off guard? Did you know He never has a “plan B.” In fact, He never says “oops” and He never has to say “Sorry! I didn’t see that one coming.” Therefore, **nothing happens by accident.** And people, this is the great news. Because **God Is Wise** and there are no accidents, then this means that there must be some sort of a **wise purpose behind all things**, even our difficulties.

But instead of being comforted by this truth, we often label our difficulties as being **bad luck** or an **unexpected encounter** with no rhyme or reason. But people, this not only denies God’s infinite wisdom, it also causes a whole lot of unnecessary pain. Therefore, since we seem to have such a hard time seeing this, we’re going to look at just a few of the **wise reasons** that God allows difficulties to occur. And the **first reason** why God allows difficulties to occur is **To Expose Our Sin Nature.**

Romans 7:7 “Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is evil? Of course not! The law is not sinful, but it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, Do not covet.”

Now according to our text, the Apostle Paul had no idea of the sin in his life until he came face to face with the Law of God. It was God’s Law that forced the sin in Paul to “spring to life.” And people, if we’re honest with ourselves, it is when you and I encounter the difficulties of life that we **also** see what we’re really made of, isn’t it? You see, when life is going “great” according to our definition anyway, we can appear to be calm, cool, and collected and act like we have it all together. When everything is going “our way” we think we got this sin thing mastered and being a Christian is a “piece of cake” **when all the while** we’ve got major problems.

So out of mercy, do you know what God does? He orchestrates a few difficulties or a few difficult people to come our way and voila! Our sin nature rears its ugly head. And we find out with the Apostle Paul just how sinful we really are. So is God being a big ol’ meany? No, not at all. In His wisdom He’s orchestrating events so our sin can be exposed and hopefully done away with like this story reveals. The following story is from a Christian brother in China about the war with Japan.

“During the first three months of the Japanese War in China we lost a great many tanks and so were unable to deal with the Japanese armor, until the following scheme was devised.

A single shot would be fired at a Japanese tank by one of our snipers in the ambush. After a considerable lapse of time the first shot would be followed by a second.

Then, after a further silence, by another shot; until the tank driver, eager to locate the source of the disturbance, would pop his head out to look around.

The next shot, carefully aimed, would put an end to him. As long as he remained under cover, he was perfectly safe. The whole scheme was devised to bring him out into the open.”

People, when the shots of life come flying at you and I, a lot of the times our flesh is **tricked** into coming out into the open, isn't it? And even though it's humbling to see and painful to endure, the **poison becomes the cure**. Whether we like it or not or whether we want to admit it or not, our difficult circumstances have actually just served as an opportunity to deal with the sin in our lives. And if we **take advantage of the opportunity** and surrender it over to God, we'll find that we have actually grown closer in our relationship with Him. And isn't that what we all pray for? Of course it is! And it's all because **God Is Wise**.

Oh, but that's not all. The **second reason** why God allows difficulties to occur is **To Keep Us From Becoming Spiritually Lazy**.

Judges 2:18,19 “Whenever the LORD placed a judge over Israel, he was with that judge and rescued the people from their enemies throughout the judge's lifetime. But when the judge died, the people returned to their corrupt ways.”

Now according to our text, whenever the Israelites would **stop seeking God** they would start getting into trouble. And so they'd cry out to God to save them and **out of mercy** God would save them by sending them a judge. But as soon as the troubles were over and the judge was gone, what did they do? They went right back to their evil ways. And folks, if we're honest with ourselves, we do the very same thing. If things are going smoothly in our lives, we have a tendency to start slacking off in our relationship with God. We start getting **spiritually lazy**, don't we?

So out of mercy, do you know what God does? That's right, He orchestrates a few difficulties and voila! Spiritual laziness goes right out the window! Joni Erickson Tada talks about God's wisdom in allowing this to occur.

“In God's wisdom and love, every trial in a Christian's life is ordained from eternity past, custom made for that believer's eternal good, even when it doesn't seem like it. Nothing happens by accident...not even tragedy...not even sins committed against us.

Our pain, poverty, and broken hearts are not His ultimate focus. He cares about them, but they are merely symptoms of the real problem. God cares most – not about making us comfortable – but about teaching us to hate our sins, grow up spiritually, and love Him.

Every sorrow we taste will one day prove to be the best possible thing that could have happened. We will thank God endlessly in heaven for the trials He sent us here. This is not Disneyland – it is truth.”

People, whether we like it or not or whether we want to admit it or not, many times our difficult circumstances are God's loving way to shake us out of our spiritual laziness and get us back on track seeking Him. So is God being a big ol' meany for allowing us to go through difficult times? No, not at all. **God is so Wise** that He can even use unpleasant circumstances to get us on our knees to start seeking Him. Therefore, the challenge is to seek God at **all times**, not just when things are difficult. And people, this is the great news. Once we're back on track, we find that we've actually grown closer in our walk with God. And isn't that what we all pray for? Of course it is. And it's all because **God Is Wise**.

Oh, but that's not all. The **third reason** why God allows difficulties to occur is **To Cause Us To Be A Blessing to Others**.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of compassion and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."

People, did you know that we're not the only ones who benefit from our personal suffering? You see, many times it's **also meant** for the comfort or blessing of another person. And people, I've learned this truth time and time again in my own life. For instance, I would never wish upon anyone the hellish life of drugs, sexual immorality, and selfishness that I lived before becoming a Christian. But I can honestly look back **now** and thank God that

I went through it all because when it was all said and done I got saved. And if that wasn't cool enough, I've watched how God has not only comforted me in my pain but He has even used my wretched past over and over again to bring comfort to others who may be struggling with the very same things that I went through. And it's a level of comfort that only one who has been there done that, wish they **wouldn't** have bought the T-shirt, can give to another person like this guy was able to do.

“There was a boy who had lost his right hand and he felt so badly about it that he did not want to see anyone. His father said, ‘I’m going to bring the minister in to see you.’ The boy said, ‘I don’t want to see him.’

But out of his concern for his son, the father brought the minister anyway. When the minister had arrived, the boy looked up and noticed that the man had no right arm; there was an empty sleeve.

The minister came over to the boy and said, ‘I haven’t any hand, either. I lost mine when I was a boy, and I know how it feels.’ And because of this, it wasn’t hard for the boy to get acquainted with the minister who knew how it felt.”

People of God, every single one of us have the ability to be a **tremendous blessing** to another person in distress that the rest of us may not be able to. Why? Because every single one of us have our own **unique set of difficulties** which means that every single one of us can **uniquely** comfort others with the same comfort God has extended to us. Therefore, working together, we can comfort a multitude of people in a multitude of situations. People, whether you believe it or not, **God is so Wise** that He can actually

recycle our tears and turn them around to be a tremendous blessing for others. And isn't that what we all pray for? Of course it is. And it's all because **God Is Wise**.

But you might be asking, "Come on. Does knowing something as basic that **God is Wise** really make a difference in lives of people worldwide?" Well, you tell me if it wouldn't save us from a whole lot of unnecessary pain.

"You are walking down the street, minding your own business, when you are assaulted and forced to carry a huge and heavy basket on your back. You're ordered to walk three blocks, turn left, go two blocks, turn right, then proceed straight on. Staggering under the weight, you stumble on bewildered and angry.

The weight of the basket is crushing. Your back is breaking. The whole thing is meaningless and haphazard. You resent how the heavy burden consumes you, becoming the focal point of your entire existence. When your halfway down the third block, reeling under the burden, you finally cry out, 'What gives!'

Then the truth is revealed. The burden you are carrying is your child, injured and unconscious. 'What?' And on top of that, you discover you're not trudging through a meaningless rat-maze but the most direct route to a hospital emergency room.

Immediately you straighten. You inhale new vigor. Your knees quit buckling. Adrenaline and fresh energy quicken your pace, and you move forward with a new attitude.

So why the sudden change? Because the suffering you're going through involves a relationship. Not just any relationship, but one with your child. It is the love you have for your child that quickens your step and buoys up your heart. Your relationship gives your burden *meaning*.

Even your twisted path makes sense. You know where you are going. Your journey has a positive end – the hospital – and this instills *hope*. Suffering has no meaning in itself.

Left to its own, it is a frustrating and bewildering burden. But given the context of *relationship*, suffering suddenly has meaning.”

People, there’s nothing worse than having to go through a bunch of difficulties thinking there’s no rhyme or reason to them. Therefore, what a **healing balm to a broken heart** when we learn that **in our relationship with God** that there are no accidents and there’s always a reason. What an incredible truth to redeem the pain of all life’s trials when we can see that **God is so Wise** that He can actually create value and purpose **even in our sufferings**. Therefore, yeah, I’d say knowing something as basic that **God is Wise** really does save people from a lot of unnecessary pain, how about you?

And people this is the awesome message we get to tell to the nations, “God not only exists, but through Jesus Christ people **really can** have an intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the universe **before it’s too late!**” But people, I’m telling you, if the world is ever going to believe our message, then we’ve got to stop acting like practical atheists. We’ve got to start demonstrating by our **lips** as well as our **lives** that God is not only **Real and Personal** but **God is Wise!**

To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.”
