

WHY does God allow so much PAIN and suffering? (Especially among His own children.)

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Greetings, children of our Most Holy Father – and by that I mean Almighty God in heaven. This is Philip with another message that I hope and pray will make a lot of you think deeply about a most important question – and at the same time bring a lot of joy and peace to your heart by the time we're finished.

A survey was done a while back with the question, **“If you could ask God one question, what would it be?”** The number one answer by a large margin was this, or a variation of this: *“God, why do You allow so much pain in the world?”* In other words, they would ask God why He doesn't intervene more, use His power more, to stop injustices, stop the wars, stop the sufferings, stop the tortures going on, stop the incurable diseases. We would ask Him to especially do more to keep so many children and young people – the innocents – from the pain of disease, accidents, senseless shootings and killings, and so on.

Let's talk about that today. Why is there so much pain when there is also an omnipotent God who could stop all pain if He so chose, right now. Or could He, would He?

I think all of us could relate to that. Why *doesn't* He intervene more? Why is there so much pain –even among the very family of Abba, among His own children!? You and I reason that if we had children going through so much anguish and pain, that we'd stop the suffering if we could. So why doesn't God?

We all know people who are men and women of God who are suffering with MS, or Alzheimer's, or the results of an accident that wasn't their fault. We know children in pain because of sins and stupid things *others* did that hurt these children physically or emotionally and spiritually. I remember a woman in Canada who held her own 12 year daughter in her arms – as her daughter was writhing in pain and finally died from leukemia. Why did Abba allow that? Why did the 12-yr old girl get leukemia at all? Why didn't our Father just heal her?

You may be thinking about people within *your* own family who are enduring endless pain and suffering though they've been prayed over, been anointed for healing – and the pain and anguish continues.

My own family and siblings has gone through a lot of pain. Two of my siblings have suffered debilitating strokes. They are strong believers in Jesus Christ, in fact my brother has a prison ministry and nursing home ministry, served in his church constantly, writes a regular blog or essay in the church paper, and on and on. I have two relatives through marriage who are suffering with dementia. In our very human times, we plead for healing and ... let's admit it; we often wonder why the suffering continues.

In today's message we'll talk about *some* of the reasons why there's so much pain in the world, even afflicting innocent children and bystanders. But I want to FOCUS especially on why would our heavenly Father allow so much pain His own children? That's the hardest part to understand.

Caveat: I don't think anyone could claim to always be able to tell someone why his/her specific pain is going on, with 100% accuracy, unless God reveals that specific reason. But we can look in scripture for many of the reasons generally. God's thinking is way above ours, but remember we are to let the mind of Christ come into us (Philippians 2:5) by His Spirit. Paul even claimed to "have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16), so though we can't presume we know all the reasons, what follows will be *some* of the reasons some of us go through so much pain.

This sermon started out as a personal study to help me through some immense pain I was going through. Only when I learned the lessons from our pain at the time, did that pain stop and Father just blessed and blessed after that. But the pain itself led us to be able to be blessed. The blessings would not have happened without having the pain first. And looking back, I praise Yehoweh for the pain and in the pain now.

I've prayed deeply and long about this message and I pray even now as you hear or read this teaching (I recommend you do both), that the Holy Spirit will speak in your hearts the message Father wants YOU to hear. I pray you will feel a new and deeper peace about this topic, no matter your trials and pain. My hope is that you and I will handle pain and trials with greater peace, joy and grace – and strength – as a result of this message.

Here's partly why we have so much anguish in our pain: You and I reason, that if WE were "Father" of the spiritual family of God, we would do more than we see Him doing. We'd do something. We'd have more healings than we see. We'd have protected more children, than we see. We'd be more involved. We wonder why He isn't doing more to help, to relieve the pain, to stop the tragedies and so on. And may I dare say it? In the end, when we wonder too hard, *we may even cross the line and start to judge Abba*; thinking surely there's something better?!! God forbid... but let's face it, some of us have crossed that line!

And then we wake up, repent of that, and realize we best be careful lest we find ourselves finding fault with the Potter of all this living clay called humanity. Right?

So please understand—as I bring up the questions many ask, I have gone past that now to praise for the pain rather than wallow in bitterness, despondency or fear – common feelings when we're in deep physical pain or mental anguish and we don't seem to be receiving answers to our many prayers about it.

Let's get back to a central point we must believe – even in our pain – to get through the pain:

- **Abba is LOVE. Everything He does, everything He allows, everything He doesn't do (from our perspective) – is from perfect love.** When we put ourselves in His hands, we must conclude "It is well with my soul", everything is alright. It's all good! *We must come to the point where we grieve in HOPE. When we're in anguish we look UP, and not down. But we wouldn't learn these lessons where there is no pain.*

When our Father seems absent, we must remind ourselves: *Abba is never absent when it comes to His children.* He knows every hair on our head and every thought we have even before we have them.

I hasten to add, though we often wish Father would be more positively involved – from our point of view – we must surely believe that Father has involved Himself positively in my life and yours -- thousands of times, saving us from disaster – and we were never even aware of it. Now that I'm 60 years old, I look back at many stupid things I did while younger and I know Yehoweh was being merciful to me. I know He must have intervened so many times, sparing me severe problems and pain. I am sure that is the case for you too – regardless of what pain you have had to go through. God intervened many times without our awareness.

So let's start with that. GOD IS LOVE. He knows you. He loves you.

Everything He does is for your ultimate good. We all know Romans 8:28 and the promise to those who are the called – that everything we are going through will work out for the good in the end. Everything. Even when we just don't see it—yet.

It's OK to ask Father why all this is going on. Even Yeshua in the Garden of Gethsemane, undergoing severe anguish, had to resign Himself to the Father's will – even with the impending severe, excruciating pain He was about to endure. "Is it possible to not have to drink of this cup --- but not my will, but yours be done." (**Luke 22:42-45**). Father did send a strengthening angel, we're told, as Jesus sweated blood from the anguish. And we see even our Savior get up after that and get on with the pain. HE understands pain.

Even Yeshua was in severe anguish of mind (**Luke 22:44**) – but came through that as the victor.

Instead of seeking Father's perfect will, we so often hope His will matches our hopes and dreams. We have it backwards. *Scripture tells us HIS plans for us –at the end of it all anyway -- are so much more exciting than we can even imagine.* But WE focus on what's happening now. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard the marvelous things Father has prepared for us. So we need to trust Him and His will for us no matter what He allows in our lives.

One of the BIGGEST reasons for pain is to teach us to keep looking to our Father and Yeshua, even IN our pain, no matter what. To TRUST, no matter what. No matter what outcome Father allows. He is good, He is Love personified, and as the saying goes, "it's all good" – even in pain, even in suffering, even in severe tests and trials. It's all good. That's the bottom line.

Isaiah 26:3-4

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

Trust in Yehoweh forever, For in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength.

Paul addressed this topic of "WHY, GOD?"-- briefly in **Romans chapter 9**, but basically says the Potter can do as He pleases and the clay dare not challenge the Potter. Read all of Romans 9 some time. IN verses 20-21, Paul reminds us to remember our place, as it were, and let the Potter do as the Potter pleases – and have peace with that. Paul, who went through so much personal pain and suffering, was a great example of that.

What does Paul say in Philippians 4:12-13?

Philippians 4:11-13

Not that I speak in regard to need, **for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:**

12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things **through Christ** who strengthens me.

That's where each of us has to end up as well, no matter what. And remember Paul went through trial after trial -- stonings and left for dead, shipwrecks often, five times he was lashed 39 lashes, three times beaten mercilessly with rods -- and more -- and Abba our dear Father *allowed* His servant to go through all that, culminating in his beheading at the end! And yet Paul teaches us, "it's all good."

That's where we must end up as well. So maybe if we take this subject apart we can learn the steps to arrive at the same peaceful state of mind, though the body was racked with pain, that Paul and Isaiah came to. Remember tradition tells us Isaiah was sawn in two! And he's the one who wrote Isaiah 26:3-4. Please ponder that. Is it because we're thinking too much about this life -- and not about eternity?

These men and many women of God experienced abandonment by family, beatings, stonings, torture, loss of jobs, unemployment, death in the family -- and came through it with peace. Now it's our turn, and like them -- let's cross the finish line in victory with and through Yeshua who gets us there.

THE POINT

Frankly, I realize that won't satisfy most of you, so we will delve into this much more -- but in the end, **the point of our calling is to TRUST ABBA, no matter what is happening to us, our loved ones, or around us. No matter what.** No matter if a divorce is underway, or a loved one is hurting, or we've just lost our job, or our back pain is killing us -- the goal is to trust, and rest in Him, no matter what.

Am I there yet? Only sometimes. I need to be more consistent. In fact, this message started as a request from two people and then when I was going through intense emotional pain not that long ago, I decided to focus on the topic. This sermon is the result of that focus. May this study bless you, as it has blessed me.

In a sense, that is the whole message -- No matter WHAT is happening to us, Father MUST know we won't waver in our faith being placed squarely on Him. We learn to put the pain in context; that pain is necessary, that our light afflictions won't even be remembered when we receive the glory that is in store for those who persevere.

I hope by the end of the sermon you will even appreciate pain more, even thanking Abba for the pain He has sent or allowed in our lives.

WHEN WAS THE FIRST PAIN?

Can YEHOVEH Feel Pain?

WHEN would you say that PAIN was first experienced? Do spirits suffer pain? God is a Spirit (**John 4:24**), and angels are called “ministering spirits” (**Hebrews 1:13-14**).

Can a spirit being like God or angels feel pain? Certainly not “PHYSICAL” PAIN, as they are spirit. At least that’s how I understand it. Abba, and spirits, can’t be hurt by jabs, pointed things, fire, knives or bullets. But what about MENTAL anguish? Does Abba feel sorrow and anguish? Stop and think about that for a minute. Some people reason that since God is in perfect control of all things, as HE sees fit, that He feels no mental pain or anguish or grief. Does He – or not?

Concerning the pre-Flood world during the lifetime of Noah, scripture gives us a clear statement about whether or not God FEELS pain, grief:

Genesis 6:5-6

When Yehoweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And Yehoweh was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

So it’s clear that Yehoweh can be grieved. A quick concordance study will show you many instances where Yehoweh felt anger, sorrow and other emotions – “grieved in His heart” is a strong statement. You can’t read the story of the Gold Calf incident without feeling God’s pain. Can we read Isaiah 1 and not feel His pain? Or the story of asking Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman – really a whore – to illustrate how GOD felt about HIS wife, Israel, who had become unfaithful (**Hosea 3:1-5**).

So when do you think PAIN was *first* experienced?

Some of you will think it was in the Garden of Eden when God banished our ancestors Adam and Eve, and really the whole human race through them, from the Garden. Then in Gen. 3:16, Yehoweh tells Eve that she’ll experience PAIN whenever giving birth to children...and God takes the responsibility for being the One who sent the pain as part of their punishment. Read it carefully:

Genesis 3:16-19

16 To the woman He said: "**I** will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; **IN PAIN** you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

"Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.

18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.

19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."

Was there pain *before* Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden?

I believe so.

What is pain? WHY is there pain? I believe pain is the evidence of something or some relationship not being right. (repeat). When our body parts aren't in harmony, they get sick – and in pain. When the spiritual body is not in harmony, there is pain in the spiritual body too. This paragraph is a key point.

So when was the first pain? I believe the first pain was with the first sin – when *Heylel* (commonly called Lucifer, a Latin word) got out of harmony with God and sinned - and rebelled against YHVH.

When we read about Satan's rebellion, it is recorded as a lament. Go back and read it in Ezekiel 28:11-19. Though it starts by talking about the King of Tyre, we know there are spirit beings “behind” the human governments. Clearly this is referring to Satan, who was a covering cherub and was in the Garden of Eden. This is a lament. God was feeling deep feelings about one of His own creation going wrong. Notice especially Ezek 28:13 -15.... “you were perfect UNTIL iniquity was found in you.”

Ezekiel 28:11-19 (But I'll just quote to verse 15)

Lamentation for the King of Tyre

11 Moreover the word of YHVH came to me, saying,

*12 "Son of man, **take up a lamentation** for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says Adonai YHVH: "You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*

*13 **You were in Eden, the garden of God;** Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created.*

*14 "**You were the anointed cherub** who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.*

*15 **You were perfect** in your ways from the day you were created, **Till iniquity was found in you.***

So YES, our heavenly Father Himself feels pain, disappointment, grief, sorrow, anger, and much more. I'd say there's no doubt He feels and experiences it far deeper than any of us ever has. HE is the one who gave US our emotions. Certainly our sins upset God, they anger Him even – you can't read through the Bible and conclude otherwise. That's why He so often sent plagues, drought, famine, disasters – to get Israel's attention when they seemed entrenched in sin. He was upset. So sin angers Him, but sin also saddens Him.

And – we certainly know that God made flesh (Yeshua), felt pain. He felt the dismay and pain of being rejected by His own people. He was thought to be illegitimate, by His own people (**John 8:41**). How do you think that felt? He wept over Jerusalem (**Luke 19:41**) and earlier had said how often He would have gathered them under His wings like a mother hen, “but you would not” (**Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34**). He certainly felt the severe pain of the scourging and the crucifixion. And now He understands pain as one who has gone through it, so when we PRAY to Yeshua, He does understand what it's like to be flesh and blood and suffer rejection, physical and mental pain.

So let's get into reasons for pain. There will be many...

WHY IS THERE SO MUCH PAIN IN THE WORLD?

#1 There's PAIN – because of FREE WILL, FREE MORAL AGENCY

This first point explains most of the pain in the world, and a lot of the pain even in the family of God, *but it's only the first point*. It does need to be covered. Yehoweh, the one true God, has decided He wants to be surrounded by beings and people who have free choice to do good, or do evil. He does not want robots.

There can't be free choice – and the ability to sin or make mistakes – without having the inevitable pain. As long as there is free moral agency and the ability to sin, the ability to make stupid decisions, the ability to inflict consequences and pain on innocent people by OUR own stupid decisions – there will be pain.

This is a huge explanation for so much of the pain we see. So many times, the one who is suffering pain is going thru that *pain as a consequence of someone's decisions. It could be his/her own actions, but sometimes it's because of others' decisions.* Almighty God has decided to allow that – so we all learn that there are consequences for everything we do.

- My friend who died of severe prostate cancer and other issues – due to Agent Orange. Was not his fault that the US Govt decided to spray antifoiant Agent Orange in Vietnam and affect thousands of soldiers.
- **One man's sin -- Adam's sin – affected us all.** By one man sin entered the world and in essence, all humanity got kicked out of the garden. This is very clear in **Romans 5:12-14, 17-19**. (You and I would not have done any better, by the way.) Yes – one man, one person – including you and me – can have tremendous impact for the good or bad, for generations to come.

So my point is: decisions by others, decisions we make, Gov't decisions, wars, drunk drivers, sins of passion that result in unplanned pregnancy – and then the sin of abortion – affects innocents! Sometimes babies are born with deformities because of medications or poisons in our food – like all the *thalidomide* babies of the 1960's. Thousands were born without arms, for example. That wasn't the baby's fault, and probably not even the mother's fault. But because this is not yet God's kingdom on earth, and due to free moral agency, the natural law that for every action there is a reaction, has to play out. Seeds sown result in a harvest. Weed seed results in weeds. Good seeds result in good. Sometimes our gardens of life have dandelions because the neighbor's yard spread bad seed to our yard.

This is not the world of our Living God! This is Satan's world. He's the ruler of this age. **2 Cor. 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; John 12:31; John 12:44**. He has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9). So Yehoweh has a hands-off approach to much of what goes on in the world today. In the end, Satan still has *limits* – but it's not yet God's world until the millennium – so MOST of what we see going on around us, is a result of this being Satan's world.

So sin abounds, Satan's way abounds – and what we reap is pain. The world is sowing sin, and so we ALL to some degree participate in reaping the results of sin and Satan's way.

Romans 8:19-22

(The whole creation is depicted as GROANING – can't wait – for their liberation from Satan's way).

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. . . . **For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.**"

So in this world, which is not God's world, even we will suffer. It's all part of the plan – so we have had enough of Satan's way and fruit of his way. So in this world, even men and women of God suffered and had physical issues. That can happen to us as well.

- Isaac was blind in his old age
- David couldn't stay warm in his last weeks (1 Kings 1:1)
- Paul had an unhealed "thorn in the flesh"
- Elisha = who healed so many, died of an illness (2 Kings 13:20) himself.
- Timothy had "often infirmities". Why wasn't he healed?

Life and life's issues happen to us all eventually. We shouldn't feel God is necessarily failing us somehow. We all will eventually die, right, unless Christ returns first.

I could go on and on and on. We are actually promised trouble/tribulation! Peter says don't think some strange thing is happening when we experience trouble (**1 Peter 4:12-13**).

And whatever our pains and trials have been, none of us surely has even come close compared to what our forefathers had to go through! Let's keep everything in perspective.

Hebrews 11:32-40

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again. **Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.**

[ENDURING THE PAIN helps test and prove us – so we end up in a better resurrection.]

36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins,

38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and being destitute, afflicted, tormented-caves of the earth.

39 *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,*

40 *God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*

So point #1 – we live in Satan's world and so we experience some of the problems of this world along with everyone else. When our governments implement bad policies, we're all affected. That also helps us long for the kingdom of God to be set up on earth.

#2 – EVEN GOD’S CHILDREN HAVE BEEN PROMISED PAIN AND SUFFERING IN THIS LIFE

In Satan’s world, EVEN the children of God will go through hard times, pain and suffering. We have to accept it and then even thank God for it. **DON’T BE DECEIVED by the many false “health and wealth” ministries** out there. I believe they really just want you to make *them* wealthy! A life of ease and health/wealth is not what we’re promised!

John 16:33 (Jesus’ words)

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation (TROUBLE);** but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Acts 14:22 (Paul’s comments as he prepares to leave Ephesus)

“...strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, **“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”**

Not only troubles, but we are also promised persecution and even martyrdom for our witness.

2 Timothy 3:12

Yes, and **all** who desire to live **godly in Christ Jesus WILL suffer persecution.**

Many became martyrs. **Actually the Greek word for martyr” means “witness”.** A “*marturios*” was a witness. And AS we are going through pain of persecution for our witness, guess what Satan is doing? He’s broadcasting DOUBT.... Like a modern day “Tokyo Rose”, who tried to discourage American GI’s in world War II in the Pacific.

But WE have to become good soldiers of Christ who will love Him *whether He heals us or not, whether He allows pain and suffering or not*, whether we get what we hoped for, or not. The pain tests us, shows God we will not back down –in pain or not.

1 Peter 5:8-10

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, ***knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.***

10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to ***His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, AFTER you have SUFFERED a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.***

We’ll say more in a few minutes, but we’re already reading how the pain perfects us. Keep that thought.

Certainly Paul went through tremendous physical pain and anguish. He lists some of them in **2 Cor. 11:23-28**. Be sure to read that passage if you’re unfamiliar with it. There he mentions frequent imprisonments, “in deaths often”, 5x he was lashed with 39 lashes, 3x beaten with heavy rods, stoned and left for dead, shipwrecked 3x and on and on and on ... read it in 2 Cor. 11:23-28.

But Paul took all that suffering as a matter of course for believers. So don't feel despair if your suffering goes on for a while. It's all for a purpose. It is supposed to perfect, strengthen and stabilize us (**1 Pet. 5:10**).

Let's take a break for a second from the points and ask a question:

WHO ULTIMATELY SENDS THE PAIN – especially when the righteous are involved?

Now, a tough point to consider: In fact, since God the Father and Yeshua could STOP the pain, or tell Satan to leave us alone, ultimately pain is from God. You heard me right: ultimately pain is from God. **Elohim either allows pain and suffering – or sends it.** We certainly know He imposed the pain on Adam and Eve. He is the one who often sent plagues, famine, wars and so on – which would be very difficult if you were the recipient of the famine and wars. As an example, you can read **Ezekiel 14:21-32**.

Who ultimately was responsible for Job's severe trials – Satan or God? Satan delivered the pain, but who really authorized it and sent it? Here are the concluding statements:

Job 42:10-11

And YHVH restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed YHVH gave Job twice as much as he had before.

11 Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him **for all the adversity that YHVH had brought upon him.** Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.

How about all the pain Joseph and Jacob went through? Who was responsible for that? After Jacob died, his brothers were in fear that Joseph would then feel free to take revenge on his brothers and they pleaded for mercy (**Genesis 50:15-18**). Joseph calls them to his presence and they fall down before Joseph, and so now let's pick up the story:

Genesis 50:19-21

Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?

20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but GOD meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

21 Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

It gets no clearer than that! GOD saw it all along, and He just sees life very differently than we do. "*Life*" is not about *this life* – but *the next one*. But maybe some of you are shocked: "GOD meant it for good..." and "for all the adversity that Yehoweh had brought upon him (Job)". Amazing, huh? Finally, it becomes clear for Joseph.

In Joseph's case, this clarity didn't come to Joseph for many years. **The reasons for the pain and suffering you're going through may not be clear to you either, for many years, but we must TRUST our heavenly Father, regardless,** that somehow He will cause it to be for glory and to affect people maybe even across the world, maybe years from now. We have to trust and believe.

Are we beginning to see the picture come together? Now let's continue hitting a few more points quickly before the biggest points...

#3 -- SOMETIMES, PAIN is for our CHASTISEMENT or chastening.

When a child goes off course, Dad has to do something. Same for us. Some of our pain is because Elohim is trying to get our attention and get us back on HIS path, the right path. We bring on more of our pain that we probably want to admit. This is not the case for all our pain, however. And neither is this point the same as the first point we made.

Revelation 3:17-19

Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked —

18 **I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire**, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

19 **As many as I LOVE, I rebuke and chasten.** Therefore be zealous and repent.

Psalms 119:71

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes."

Being chastised by God is proof we are His children. You don't chastise your neighbor's kids. You don't chastise kids who aren't around, or kids you never think about. But when we chastise, it's proof we care for our kids. God doesn't chastise because He hates us, but because He loves us. (PARENTS of young children, listen! Too many of you have listened to the world on this and have given up chastisement, contrary to scripture!) Chastening has to always be done in control, with patience, and a ton of love – not in anger. It is course-correction.

Hebrews 12:5-8 (One of my kids' comment – my attention proved my love)

And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, **do not despise the chastening of the Lord**, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

6 **For whom the Lord loves He chastens**, And scourges [punishes, corrects] every son whom He receives."

7 **If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons**; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

8 *But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.*

When Father sees us going astray, or doing something stupid or sinful, or about to do such, He calls us in for some chastening – for our own good, so we learn to quit doing stupid things and realize sowing the seeds of sin will be even more painful than the chastening HE puts us through.

So, MUCH of the pain we're going through is because of our own decisions in life. Not always, but much of the time. I'm overweight. That has led to some problems in my life and health. That's my doing. So now I'm waking up. Sometimes people don't change their lives until God allows a heart attack to wake them up. Or a diagnosis of diabetes. Or sleep apnea. Let's think of that as 2 things:

- Reaping what WE'VE sown

- Chastening from God to wake you and me up!

This does not explain the pain on the innocents. But maybe it partly does too. Sometimes other people are suffering because of stupid things YOU or I have done. With God's spirit, that should make a child of God feel even WORSE when we see others suffering from *our* sins. David's sin of counting Israel resulted in 70,000 Israelites dying. As a shepherd, David couldn't stand it, and it drove to God's mercy seat – and he was heard. (**2 Samuel 24:10-24**).

David's sin of murdering Uriah and stealing Bathsheba resulted in many dead people also, including the illegitimate son from that union. God spanked David very hard for that. I've had many of those spankings from God too, because He cares about me and wants to wake me up. So now I thank Him for the pain and spankings. It's all for my good. And yours.

But the pain you're suffering could also be because of someone else's actions and God is working through all that. We look up, we trust Him in our pain, even if it was or wasn't a result of our own sin. In the end, "it is well with my soul". In the end, "it's all good".

If we were tougher on ourselves, we could avoid much of God's spanking and correction.

1 Corinthians 11:30-32

For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

In audio I describe my "White stone".... To remind me to be tougher on myself, to appreciate God's pardon of my sins, to fight temptation with Christ's power; to remember I have been forgiven and acquitted by Yehoweh, and need to walk grateful of it.

#4 – PAIN HELPS US TO RELATE TO OTHERS AND COMFORT OTHERS GOING THRU SOMETHING SIMILAR. Helps us be a BETTER EMPATHIZER.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, ***THAT we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.***

Again, thank God for your pain – whether mental or physical -- because without it you would not understand that kind of pain or issue, and could not encourage others going thru the same thing. Remember in the Millennium, we'll be dealing with all KINDS of people with all kinds of issues, and they will need leaders who can understand.

#5 - PAIN MAKES US MOVE – AND GET IN SYNCH WITH GOD'S PLANS FOR US.

Pain makes us take hand off the hot stove.

Pain should tell us something is not in synch. A relationship is off. A law may be being broken by someone, someplace. Severe pain causes actions and reactions in our lives.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

The entire story of Joseph – as painful as it was for him, his dad, his brothers eventually – it was all designed to elevate Joseph after he had first been humbled, and more importantly, pain forced Jacob to move! It forced him to bring the entire clan of Israel to Egypt, for God's purpose. So the whole known world had a famine for 7 years that ended up with Jacob and his family living in Egypt. Without the pain of the famine and the pain of losing Joseph all those years, the whole history of that part of the world would be different.

PAIN makes us move. Pain makes ME move. And IN that move, we trust we're going where Yehoweh wants us to be. It all ends up for good – sometimes hundreds of years later! Abraham never saw the descendants like the sands of the sea, but we do today. And HE did, in his mind's eye, in faith.

#6 -- PAIN DRIVES US TO OUR KNEES IN PRAYER – MUCH MORE THAN IF WE HAD NO PAIN. Ask for examples, discussion... ask

- King David – when was told the baby would die. Fasted 7 days.
- King Hezekiah, King Manasseh, nation of Israel – in book of Judges, etc.

Whatever drives us closer to God – in the end, is a GOOD THING. Pain makes us pray more. Pain drives us to God's throne. That's a good thing. Thank God for pain.

#7 -- PAIN ULTIMATELY CHANGES OUR PERSPECTIVE, PRIORITIES,

The trying of our faith helps us see what is truly important. Shallow people are people who have never gone through serious trials. Pain gives us a depth, an appreciation for the big things in life.

When we lose everything, and gain what is of true worth, our whole perspective changes. Paul came to say he was glad to count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He gave up everything, to gain the only thing worth really having: a knowing relationship with our Saviour (**see Philippians 3:8-11**, one of my favorite passages). Talk about perspective: everything else was rubbish, he says. KJV – “dung”. PAIN helps us get to this point.

Pain helps us learn life is not about having a present comfy existence the rest of our lives. Life is going to get much tougher. And it's all going to be for a purpose.

- This life is NOT about us having a comfy experience – but learning to love and trust God always, in all things no matter what. And to love people no matter what. We learn through pain that life is ultimately about relationships. We learn broken

relationships are painful – such as divorce. Or estrangement from your own flesh and blood. And so we strive to restore those where possible.

- Pain drives us to our knees and teaches us what's important and not important. What is *most* important is our relationship with Father in Heaven and Yeshua. If pain drives us closer to Abba our Father, that's a good thing!
- We learn through pain that life is not about what WE want, but about preparing for eternity. It's about what Abba wants.
- Pain makes us realize true priorities. All the gruesome pain and trials in the world can't compare to the glory that pain is preparing us to receive. World class athletes understand that! To stand on the winner's platform and get your medal required a lot of pain and sacrifice beforehand. It will be no different for us.

Romans 8:18

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed in us.”

- **If you let it, your pain can be to *HIS* glory.** As people see your stellar faith and peace in your severe trial, it can help them be strengthened too. Paul said his sufferings had resulted in many good things.

Philippians 1:12-14

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,

13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;

14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

The man born blind – was to be for God's glory (**John 9:1-4**). **Lazarus** was allowed to die to help bring many to believe in Yeshua (**John 11:1-4, 44-45; John 12:10-11**).

Pray that in YOUR pain, God can be glorified!

#8 – Severe trials and pain help build patience, humility and perseverance.

If you pray for more humility and patience, you're asking for trials and pain.

One of best examples – God gave Paul a “thorn in the flesh” and wouldn't take it away, to keep him humble, after God had allowed Paul to have incredible visions and insights, even seeing what heaven was like. And perhaps having seen what lay ahead, he knew whatever Abba allowed him to go thru was worth it.

2 Corinthians 12:7-8

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, **a thorn in the flesh was given to me**, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

8 Concerning this **thing I pleaded with the Lord three times** that it might depart from me.

James 1:2-4

My brethren, count it all JOY when you fall into various trials, **knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.** But LET **patience** have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Peter adds that we can have joy in our heart, even though we grieve outwardly (1 Peter 1:6).

Romans 5:3-4

And not only that, but **we also glory in tribulations**, knowing that **tribulation produces perseverance**; and **perseverance, character**; and character, hope.

#9 - PAIN TEACHES US TO FOCUS ON THE END – NOT THE PRESENT.

Hebrews 12:1-2

“Therefore WE also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the JOY that was set BEFORE HIM [ahead of Him] **endured the cross**, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

That's should be our strategy too: focusing on the joy ahead of us. Look to Yeshua who set us the example. Focus on what all this is about – preparing us for eternity, rather than on the trials. Now look how Peter puts it under inspiration...

1 Peter 1:4-9

4 ...to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept *by the power of God through faith* for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 **receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls.**

1 Peter 5:10-11

“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His **eternal glory by Christ Jesus, AFTER you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.** To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

#10-- SO PAIN MAKES US STRONGER. No pain, no gain. “What doesn’t kill you - makes you stronger”. But the stronger you must not be you – but the life of Yeshua shining through you.

We must “get” this. Spiritually we get stronger when we submit, when we surrender our own strength, our own plans and rely on Him. We have victory not in our efforts – but in trusting in Him, in spite of everything we see humanly. We must see everything spiritually.

Sometimes we take a long time to learn this and so the pain drives us to our knees and we finally surrender – and He gives us His grace and strength to get through it, to His glory. And even His glory – he promises to share with us. We will be co-heirs with Christ – if we learn and grow from the pain we go through. Remember when Paul asked about his “thorn in the flesh” trial? Notice what he was told. It’s all there for us too.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

9 And He said to me, "MY grace is sufficient for you, **for MY strength is made perfect in weakness.**" Therefore most **gladly** I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 **Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

WOW, WOW, WOW! That’s where we have to end up. Paul actually says he appreciated pain and infirmities, for he realizes Christ is able to demonstrate HIS power in those trials. That happens when we rely on HIM; when we give up our own strugglings.

We are being trained to be God’s crack team of leaders – **but the strength and power is in HIM**, not in our own strength. We grow strong not when we push ourselves but when we surrender ourselves completely to Him.

We will be God’s team of leaders only when we have learned to surrender all and trust Him 100%, always, no matter what we’re going through. And to say with Christ – “NOT MY will, my dear Abba who loves me, but thy will be done... And whatever you make me go through, whatever happens in all my trials, Lord – it’s all good. It is well with my soul, for I am with you. Even as I walk thru this painful valley of the shadow of death, I walk with you, for your rod and your staff comfort me.”

Father has different priorities

Father is concerned about our well-being, but not always in the same way *we* think He should be. Abba is more concerned with eternity with Him and our growth in our relationship of trusting Him. He wants hearts that trust Him to transform us to HIS way of thinking. That often requires severe pain. The crucible of “fiery” pain is what refines out the sludge and leaves the pure gold that God is seeking. *Even when we see nothing good apparently coming from the severe trial we’re in – at least not yet* – we’re learning to have the peaceful trust that He’s there, He’s working His plan, and all will end up magnificently.

Nothing in God’s word promises us we’ll like everything in this life. There’s nothing in His word that says we’ll understand everything He is doing in us. But everything in His word says “Trust ME! Have peace in ME, regardless of what’s going on around you.” Paul came to that. David came to that. You and I will come to that.

HE is the Potter. We are the clay. What He's sending or allowing – is all for good reasons. We don't need to understand fully why, we just need to understand fully WHO. HE is involved, and HE will make it all good for eternity. HE will explain someday how it all fit together for good. In that, and in Him, we come to trust. PAIN leads us to that point.

Without pain, there would be no growth. Without pain there would be no glory, for without pain, we probably wouldn't end up in the Kingdom. Without pain, we would not come to see and know Abba as deeply.

So the pain God sends us or allows us to go through is a good thing. So start thanking the living God for the pain in our lives. I mean every word of that.

Pain drives us to Abba and in the end that is a good thing! Do you pray more when all is going well – or when you're in deep pain and trouble? Whatever drives us closer to Abba is a good thing!

There's a story you can read later in Acts 16:22-34 where Paul and Silas in Philippi (Greece) were brutally beaten with rods and shackled in stocks in a dungeon. How would you feel? Would you wonder where your heavenly Father was, who could have killed all those who were beating them? Paul and Silas did something different.

Paul AND SILAS IN PRISON in PHILIPPI .. WHEN THEY BEGAN TO SING AND PRAISE....

Acts 16:22-26

2 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be **beaten with rods.**

23 **And when they had laid many stripes on them,** they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.

24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the **inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.**

25 **But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.**

26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

And the end result was a great testimony of how we should handle pain – in *our* midnight hour, in *our* prison of our minds, in the tortured places of our lives – in our time of pain—we start to pray, sing praises to Abba..... Hallelujah, hallelujah!

Father really needs you and me to get this. It's not about this life. It's not about how much fun we can pull out of this life. It's not about health and wealth we would like to have now. That's not what life is about. Life is ultimately about knowing Abba and knowing Yeshua our Messiah. Life is about relationships – with the Almighty and with one another. Life is about eternal life. If pain helps us get there, then we thank you great God for the pain. Like Paul, we come to where we can say we actually “take pleasure in infirmities...”

As we learn and live this, our trials bring glory to God.

2 Corinthians 4:7-11

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the excellence of the power **may be of God and not of us.**

8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but *not in despair*;

9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed —

10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, *that the LIFE of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*

11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, ***that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.***

WORRY and Faith do not cohabit. When we know Abba is aware of all things, we can be like Christ, asleep in a boat in a storm while everyone else fretted.

Isaiah 26:3-4

You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Trust in Yehoweh forever, For in Yah, YHVH is everlasting strength.

After asking God to please remove Paul's "thorn in the flesh", here is how he concludes. Read this next passage slowly and several times until it "sinks in" to your own heart.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet *the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

17 For our LIGHT affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

18 ***while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.***

Whatever brings us closer to Abba is worth going through. Pain should help that happen. So we accept the trials, the pain, the suffering, the aches, the disappointments of life with a new heart now, with new vision now – and we realize it's all good.

WILL THERE EVER BE AN END TO PAIN?

Revelation 21:2-5

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 **And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be NO MORE PAIN,** for the former things have passed away."

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

My brothers and sisters in our Master's care, no matter what's going on around us, we MUST learn – "it's all good, when I am looking up, when I refuse to worry and fret. I can

grieve, but I grieve in HOPE. I can wonder – but I must not lose heart. I can cry out to Him – but know HE LOVES me, and so I TRUST HIM – even in severe pain, even if it leads to death, even if it leads to martyrdom, It's all for a witness, for His glory, if that is what He so wills. We look to the glory that lies before us and so we ENDURE whatever we must, in hope and in faith.

And in the end, it's all good. It is WELL with my soul.

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If you are going through a lot of mental and physical pain, I urge you to listen to this message a second and third time. And be sure to put the message on pause while you read the verses out of your own Bible, on your knees if you can. We MUST learn to trust our Father. If this message has blessed you, share it without cost with any others. Just please do not edit it.
PShields.