

**Series** - Facing our Present Troubles  
**Topic** - Perspectives On Suffering

**Date** - 1-Mar-2020  
**Speaker** - Pastor Ernie Song

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## **CORONAVIRUS “COVID-19” PREVENTION MEASURES**

During this period, we recommend all cells to practice the following preventive actions to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus:

1. Minimise Contact. Avoid handshakes and hugs during this period.
2. Deny entry for those with respiratory symptoms such as cough, sore throats and runny nose.
3. Individuals that have come into contact with other individuals who are confirmed cases or suspected cases should not attend cell.
4. Practice good hygiene during cell time.

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## **WELCOME** [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)

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## **WORSHIP** [15 min]

You may select songs like

1. Blessings (by Laura Story)
2. Living Hope
3. God I Look To You

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## **WORD** [45 min]

### **Spiritual Objectives**

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand that suffering does not originate from God;
2. Recognise that God can intervene in our sufferings but depending on His will and nature, He may choose not to intervene to remove the suffering; and
3. Respond in faith and together with our spiritual community, when faced with suffering.

### **Sermon Summary**

The following are the key points of the sermon:

1. Suffering does not originate from God.
2. God may or may not intervene in our specific sufferings.
3. Having the right posture can turn our season of suffering into a season of victory.

### **Sermon Recap (Full Summary)**

Pastor Ernie preached about the perspectives on suffering.

**What is suffering?** It is commonly associated with loss, pain, affliction and/or sickness. If God is omnipotent and good, why is there evil and suffering? We must beware of false or inaccurate teachings that do not accord with the reality of evil and the Scripture.

**What is the origin of suffering?** In the account of Genesis 3:15-19, we see that suffering and evil – natural disasters, fractured human relationships, toil and death – in this world is a result of the Fall. They do not originate from God – see Psalm 92:15 and 1 John 1:5. Through God-defying ways of exercising human free will, evils and sufferings result from our sins and the sins of others.

**Does God intervene in our suffering?** God has intervened in our suffering through Christ – see John 3:16-17 and Revelation 21:1-5. We are living between the CURSE (of the Fall) and the PROMISE (of Christ's return). The Scripture gives us plenty of evidence that God does intervene in our sufferings, for example, Christ healed all that came to Him. Scripture also gives us plenty of evidence that God does not intervene in **all** our sufferings, for example, the Holy Spirit led Paul to Rome to be a martyr in Acts 23:11. In 2 Corinthians 12 and other letters, Paul spoke of a "thorn in the flesh", which was likely to be a physical affliction, that was not removed from him despite him pleading with God.

If God is good, why does He not intervene in our suffering **all** the time? Pastor Ernie shared on the various reasons for this: (a) to remove all suffering is to remove free will; (b) God is not only good, merciful and loving, He is also just and wise; (c) unresolved sin; and (d) self-inflicted suffering.

**What is the right posture?** We can reflect on the following amid suffering:

- a. What is God doing in this season that He cannot do in other seasons? – 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.
- b. Remember what we are and who God is (that is, created and the Creator) – Job 42:4-6.
- c. Have faith in who God is – Mark 4:38-40.
- d. Ask God, personally or as a community of believers, for divine intervention – James 4:3.

God allows us to ask Him the hard questions. We should seek Him in His Word and lament (which is the honest cry of a hurting heart) with an eternal perspective – see Lamentations 3:19-23. We should get our spiritual community involved – see Proverbs 17:17. Finally, we can ask God for the strength to dance until it rains, meditating on the verses 2 Corinthians 12:9 and Psalm 84:5-6 as we pray for His victory to come!

Pastor Ernie concluded the sermon by praying for the many who are suffering as a result of COVID-19 and its global impact (loss of jobs, pay cut, limited job opportunities for fresh graduates, etc). Christians need to have the right perspective towards this season of suffering so that we can emerge stronger and not bitter.

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### Discussion Questions

- 1. The problem of evil as set out by C.S. Lewis is: “If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy and if God were almighty, He would be able to do what He wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore, God lacks either goodness, or power, or both.” Read Genesis 3:15-19. What is the origin of suffering?**  
[15 min]
  - 2. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Pastor Ernie mentioned that this affliction that Paul suffered could be physical and God did not take it away from Paul despite his pleading with God. Share about a time when you are faced with a suffering. When faced with this suffering, what is your response? What can we learn from Paul?** [20 min]
  - 3. As a result of COVID-19 and the resulting economic impact here and globally, many are suffering. As a Christian community, what should be our response?**  
[10 min]
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### **WORKS** [10 min]

Let’s pray:

We will always respond in faith and trust our beloved Heavenly Father when faced with suffering.

**Church Vision**

“A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.”

**Mission**

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.