

ICEBERG RIGHT AHEAD

Romans 8:28-30

INTRODUCTION

In one of her novels Agatha Christie has her detective, Hercule Poirot, say, “No, my friend, I am not drunk. I have just been to the dentist, and need not return for another six months! Is it not the most beautiful thought?” Laurie has been hearing from many of her friends that they share a fear of the dentist. Apparently this is a common phobia. Ogden Nash wrote, “Some tortures are physical and some are mental, but the one that is both is dental.” The late Johnny Carson said, “Happiness is your dentist telling you it won’t hurt and then having him catch his hand in the drill.”

That is a bit extreme. But most of us do not look forward to appointments with the dentist. I’ve been thinking about that because Laurie has been dealing with having a tooth pulled and then replaced with an implant. Her experience has caused me to be more diligent than ever about brushing and flossing my teeth. I don’t know if it can help avoid the kind of thing she’s dealing with, but if there’s any chance it might I’m all over it. She has some things ahead in the process that she would rather not think about and even more would rather not have to go through at all, but there’s no way to avoid it. It is going to happen and she just has to deal with it.

There are a number of things like that in life. There are some things that we are just going to have to go through because there is no way to avoid them. We have been considering some aspects of the downside of life and how to deal with them. On that list one would have to put suffering and especially suffering loss. I hate talking about it because I don’t want to have to put my words into practice. But we will all go through it. We all will experience loss. It could be the loss of a dream or of some hoped for circumstance, or it could be the ultimate loss, the loss of life itself. For some help with this let’s look at Romans 8:28-20.

ALL THINGS HAPPEN

In Romans 8:17-18 Paul wrote, “Now if we are children (of God), then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

Notice the mention of suffering twice. Paul had to deal with the question of suffering because of a faulty theological formulation that was common in his day, and still is pervasive today. In Romans 8:1 after explaining the gospel of grace through Jesus Christ then answering objections to it Paul concluded, “therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

This is great news, of course, but he knew that some people would object that it doesn’t always look like that’s true. Paul suffered terribly. Some people of his day would say, “Hey Paul if you’re loved and accepted by God how come you have so much going wrong in your life? How come you’re suffering so much?” Underlying that objection was the theological formulation I referred to.

The idea is that if God loves you and you are in his favor, then he will bless you with good and it will show in your circumstances. This is just common sense, right? We know if a person loves another person they do all they can to bless the beloved. So if God really loves someone, shouldn't he do the same?

A logical deduction from that principle is that if your life is miserable and you are experiencing suffering it must be because God does not favor you. He is punishing you for your misdeeds. This was the logic forcefully and persistently pushed by Job's friends in the book of Job. It was present in abundance both in Paul's day and today. We just naturally think if we do what God says we should, if we obey him, then he will bless us with good stuff in this life.

Years ago I knew a woman who understood the gospel of faith and was as committed as a Christian could be, but whose bedrock thinking included that theological idea. She had a vision for her life in which she had a beautiful home, very nice cars, quite a bit of money and the perfect family. She and her family believed in Jesus, and she assumed that if they did what God told them to do then he would bless them. That is, her vision for her life would happen. Her house would be lovely and her kids would be just what she wanted them to be. Her thought pattern was right in line with Job's friends and with those who objected that Paul himself couldn't be blessed by God because he was suffering. For a number of years it seemed she was right for she had exactly what she wanted. Then things started to go sideways. One child completely went off the rails and rejected the faith. Another made some really bad life choices that created enormous grief. A third didn't reject the faith but wasn't really living for Jesus either. Then they began having financial difficulties and she lost the perfect home she had been so proud of. It all led to something of a crisis in her faith.

Others have given up believing altogether because of suffering. Sara Maclachlan wrote a song she called "Dear God" in which she expressed her loss of faith. She wrote, "You're always letting us down. The wars you bring, the babes you drown. Those lost at sea and never found, and it's the same the whole world 'round. The hurt I see helps to compound that Father, Son and Holy Ghost is just somebody's unholy hoax. If there's one thing I don't believe in, it's you, dear God." What bitter, hopeless words. Truly this question of loss and suffering is one we had better come to some place of understanding, or our very faith is potentially in peril.

In verse 17 Paul said those who are heirs with Christ are those who share in his suffering. Contrary to what seems logical to us suffering is a part of being a believer in Christ. In verses 19-27 he says that suffering is a natural and unavoidable part of living in a fallen, dark world. All of creation groans and suffers because of the human rebellion against God, Paul says, and if you are part of creation you are going to suffer too. Author and pastor Matt Woodley says in this world, "loss is the norm, not the exception."

In verse 28 Paul says, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." What "things" is he referring to? The context indicates that he means chiefly suffering. The "all things" tell us that we who believe in Jesus are not exempt from the tragedies of this world. We, too, will go through "all things." We will experience as much suffering as anyone else.

Believing in Jesus is not a “get out of jail free” card when it comes to the difficulties of this world. Most of the suffering that happens is not related in any way to the relative level of goodness or holiness of a person. It happens to us all.

This is a crucial point. If we do not grasp it we are in danger of giving up faith because we expect God to keep suffering from our door, and when he doesn't we might quit trusting him. There was a restaurant we used to patronize that changed. After a couple of trips there that were more than a little disappointing we quit going because it didn't live up to expectations. If God doesn't meet our expectation what do you think is going to happen? We're going to quit trusting him.

So it is crucial to keep firmly in our minds that the “all things” in verse 28 means that we are going to experience crushing losses. Tragedy is going to be a part of our life in this age. We must not be surprised when it happens or feel that God has let us down. When we suffer that agonizing defeat or when we experiencing the excruciating pain our reaction should not be “why me?” or “where are you God?” We should remind ourselves that this kind of thing is part of life in a dark world.

GOD PRODUCES GOOD FROM ALL THINGS

This familiar verse tells us that God will somehow work good from the suffering that we experience. This does not mean that the bad things that happen to us are not really bad. They are bad and often bring excruciating pain. But somehow God will redeem the hard things. He will cause something good to come from them.

There is something we need to know about this world. Things don't work together for good on their own. One of Paul's main points in verses 19-25 is that this world is subject to decay. In other words, if left to their own devices things don't get better and produce good, they fall apart. We all know this is true.

One morning last week we noticed some condensation on one of the windows in our house. Laurie decided to clean it off. She went outside and found out the condensation wasn't there. So I tried to clean the inside and it wasn't there either. Uh oh. We have double paned windows. If the moisture wasn't on the outside and it wasn't on the inside, where was it? It's between the two panes. Oh, well, that's all right. I'm sure it will get better all on its own. You know better than that. Something has gone wrong and that window will have to be replaced. I started reflecting on our house. It is 24 years old. One window has gone bad. We've already replaced some plumbing, the garbage disposal several times, the garage door opener, the water heater several times, the dishwasher several times, the refrigerator, the stove, the microwave several times and the carpet. We've painted it and tented it for termites. Down the road at some point we will have to do some of those all over again, plus we'll have to replace the furnace and maybe the roof. Why? Because in this world things don't work together for the good.

What I'd like is that the appliances all get together and decide not only that they're going to keep working but that they're going to improve their efficiency. I'd like the carpet to get more plush all on its own. Does that happen? In your dreams. We have this idea in our culture that things ought

to work and even get better. When things don't go right we sue somebody. We need to understand that when good comes out of things it is because God is at work. That is not the natural course of things. If in your hard times there is someone there to love you, that's because God is at work. Do not think that good coming out of all things is a natural process. It is not. It is the grace of God at work!

We must not misconstrue what Paul meant when he said God will produce good for us from "all things." It is common to interpret this to mean that while we might go through "all things" and experience suffering and loss, God will eventually give us something better. He will replace the thing you lost with something that's even better than what you lost. I call this "happy ending theology." In the book of Job we saw that godly man experience loss to a magnitude that would be beyond crushing for most of us. What he went through was too terrible to even contemplate. But then at the end of the book in Job 42:12-13 we see the happy ending. "The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1000 yoke of oxen and 1000 donkeys. And he also had 7 sons and 3 daughters." At the beginning of Job according to 1:2-3 he had the same number of children, 7 sons and 3 daughters, but he had 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen and 500 donkeys. In other words, at the end he had the same number of kids and was twice as rich. So God gave him an even better life than he had before.

That's what I want this verse to mean. Job suffered terribly, but God worked good for him and in the end things were better than they had ever been. See, God gave him a happy ending, so just hang in there and he will give you a happy ending too. You might lose something and it will be hard, but God will make it all better with better stuff. So the thinking goes, yes it is terrible that you lost your job, but God promises to bring good out of this so he will bring you a better one. I dated this girl for a while in college that I thought was terrific. Then she dumped me. It really hurt. I didn't go to the lengths my son did when he was jettisoned by a girl he had fallen for in college when he let himself go so badly he was mistaken for a street person by a kindly woman at Costco. But I really felt pity for myself. A friend said, "God has someone better for you, Rick." I didn't believe it, especially as years went by. But it was true! An incomparable woman eventually showed up in my life. She's not just better for me, she's the best wife in the history of the human race. Happy ending indeed.

We may want that, but it was *not* what Paul was saying. God will do that at times. But that is not the good that God promises us. It could not be. When my mother was in her senior years she suffered the loss of the man she loved for 50 years. God never promised give her another husband who is even better. That was my dad who died, and God did not promise that he would give me another dad.

The final nail in the coffin of the happy ending interpretation of this section of Scripture comes from just reading it. Paul specifically tells us what good he had in mind. "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son." The good specifically is that we might have our lives shaped so they look more and more like Jesus. This passage does not promise that from our suffering God will give us better *circumstances*, but that from our suffering God will make us better *people*. How does that look?

He will produce compassion in us. In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Paul wrote, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the 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.” God comforts us in our losses so we can comfort others.

Our losses soften our hearts toward the pain of others. All of us have experienced this. A familiar expression is “I feel your pain.” We only feel it when we know what it’s like. As I mentioned Laurie recently began the process of having a tooth removed and replaced with an implant. For me this is the stuff of nightmares. It involved removing one of her front teeth, cleaning out infection that was there and putting in a bone graft because the infection had eaten away some bone. She will have to wait months for that bone to be restored, so she’s missing one of her front teeth. A number of friends who have gone through it have sympathized with her and encouraged her. The whole experience has made her hyper aware of teeth. She sees kids on commercials missing teeth and says, “Hey that kid looks like me.” She sees people on television and says, “Wow, look at her teeth.” She also has become very empathetic toward people undergoing dental issues. She knows their pain and she feels for them. The way we increase in compassion is by experiencing pain.

Laurie and I have had occasion over years of ministry to console other parents who have survived the death of a child. I had a conversation with one grieving dad several months after the death of his child when he bemoaned some of the things people were saying to him, “Rick, they just don’t understand.”

Did you notice in 2 Corinthians 1:3 that God is the "Father of compassion." He is where compassion comes from. Colossians 3:12 says, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion.” Read the Gospels and note how often it said Jesus had compassion on people. Often they were not deserving of compassion, yet Jesus was compassionate. If God wants to make you like Jesus he is going to make you more compassionate. Success, power and money do not make us more compassionate. Typically those on the top of the heap do not have a lot of compassion for those down at the bottom. God uses suffering to create more compassion in us and make us more like Jesus.

Another good thing God produces in us through loss is a clear view of life. Loss enables us to see life as it really is, while our culture tries to create an illusion. There is a surprising event in John 11. It involves every Sunday school kid’s favorite memory verse. If they have to memorize Bible verses they love John 11:35 because it’s the shortest one in the Bible. It says, “Jesus wept.” Do you remember when in Jesus’ life that happened? It was while he was standing outside the tomb of his dear friend Lazarus, who had just died.

Why did Jesus cry? Was it for the same reason I cried at the grave of my son, Joel, and again at my dad’s grave? I cried because they had been taken from me and I was helpless to stop that. They were gone permanently and I knew I would never be with them again on this earth. Jesus was not helpless to stop what happened to Lazarus. He also knew that he would see him again. So clearly he did not cry for the same reasons I did. Then why did he cry?

He cried because Lazarus his friend had to experience death. Death is a manifestation of the tragedy of this world. Death is an ugly, terrible thing. And it is a certainty for every human being. Jesus cried because the people on whom he had compassion, the people he loved, lived every day of their lives under the tyranny and the terror of death. It stalks us every day of our lives. Though we try not to think about it that foul enemy is going to win in the life of all of us. In other words, Jesus cried because the tomb of Lazarus, though it would be temporarily defeated that day, was a reminder that this life in its essence is tragic beyond description. We cannot win. We can only hope to lose gracefully.

That realization gets brutally shoved in your face when you hold your lifeless child in your arms. But with that horrific realization comes the realization that if there is some hope that death could be defeated, that your beloved child might live again and you might see him again, that hope would be infinitely more precious, infinitely more important, than anything else in all of creation.

In my final months of high school in addition to being on my school baseball team I played on a church softball team that had games at night. One of the men on that team was an ophthalmologist. I'm not sure how he knew but he could tell that my vision wasn't very good. In fact, he started calling me Helen Keller and said he was pretty sure I was tracking fly balls by sound, not sight. He urged my parents to have my eyes checked. They did, and sure enough they discovered that I was almost as blind as a bat. I either needed sonar or corrective lenses. The doctor told me to come back in a week and they would give me my first pair of glasses. I was not happy about the idea of wearing glasses. That changed the day I got them. When I first put them on the whole world suddenly popped into focus. I could actually see. It was a startling experience. I remember marveling as we walked out of that office that I could see individual blades of grass in the lawn. Prior to that there had just been something green down below.

In so many ways the horror of losing a child had a similar effect on me. With shocking clarity I could see that none of the stuff that we all stress over and focus on really matters. Success, prestige, status, money, power, impressing other people, being accepted and liked, houses, cars, investments, none of it mattered. Next to having hope that in Christ we will have eternal life, that we will see our loved ones again, all that other stuff was trivial. This is a perspective that Jesus has very clearly. He understood it so well he was willing to undergo the brutal horror of the cross to make eternal life possible for us.

Everything in our world as engineered by the enemy of our souls is intended to blur your perspective of life. He doesn't want you to see it clearly. Gut wrenching loss can and often does clear away the fog and let you see as though on a bright day. Oddly, that crystal clarity gets fogged as time moves us away from the event of loss and suffering, but it never gets completely lost. We see what life really is about and we don't get as easily fooled by the things that don't matter in this world. Going through loss can help us see life as it is and see the crucial centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I would like you to do a little mental exercise with me. Imagine that you are a passenger on one of the most famous ships in history, the Titanic. You see wealthy people on board the ship, famous people, and you see how others treat them with such respect. You wish that you were also famous and powerful, that you could have that glamorous life. Perhaps you see someone gambling and winning such huge sums of money that he is becoming wealthy, and you wish you could get that kind of money. And then the ship runs afoul of an iceberg. What matters now? The fame, the glamor, the power, the money, the status are all utterly meaningless. If you had a billion dollars, what good would it do you if you rode that doomed vessel down to the bottom of the sea? What would matter in those moments? Only one thing – a seat in a lifeboat. The only thing of any consequence would be some way off that ship without going into the freezing water where you would die. Suffering is our iceberg. Every time we suffer loss it can and should remind us of this truth – we are all on board the Titanic. It's going down, but there is a way off. The lifeboat is available to all regardless of status and wealth. It is the good news of rescue through faith in Jesus Christ. There is no other lifeboat. Loss reminds us if we have this we have all that matters, and if we do not have it, we have nothing of any value whatsoever.

Another good thing God will do when we suffer is to use it to teach us that he is with us even in our loss and pain. The book of Hebrews was written to people who were suffering. Their faith was wavering. Some were tempted to give up. Hebrews 13:5-6 says, "God has said, 'never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'" Later in Romans 8 Paul will list some of the awful things he experienced, peril, danger, sword, persecution, and then say that none of these can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Nothing in all of creation can separate us from God's love.

John Fountain is a former national journalist for the *New York Times* and is now a professor of journalism at the University of Illinois. On a show on National Public Radio he said, "I believe in God. Not that cosmic, intangible spirit in the sky that Mama told me (about) as a little boy... But the God who embraced me when Daddy disappeared from our lives—from my life at age four—the night police led him down the stairs, away from our front door in handcuffs. The God who warmed me when we could see our breath inside our freezing apartment... in the dead of another wind-whipped Chicago winter and there was no food, little hope and no hot water. The God who held my hand when I witnessed boys in my 'hood swallowed by the elements, by death and by hopelessness; (the God) who claimed me when I felt like no man's son, amid the absence of any man to wrap his arms around me and tell me everything's going to be okay, to speak proudly of me, to call me son. I believe in God the Father, embodied in his Son Jesus Christ. The God who allowed me to feel his presence—whether by the warmth that filled my belly like hot chocolate on a cold afternoon, or that voice, whenever I found myself in the tempest of life's storms, telling me even when I was told I was nothing that I was something... I believe in God, the God who I have come to know as Father, as Abba, as Daddy."

There are other ways God works good, but I will point out only one other that is identified in these verses.

GOD GIVES US HOPE

In his book *River Out Of Eden*, renowned late atheist Richard Dawkins recalled a tragedy in England when a bus crash killed several children and people asked why God would allow something like that. One priest said the horror of the crash revealed that we live in a world of values and that if the world were just atoms and electrons there would be no problem of evil and suffering. Dawkins wrote, “On the contrary, if the universe were just electrons and selfish genes...blind physical forces...some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to luck, and you won’t find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.” What a terrible and hopeless life we all face if Dawkins is correct. There is no hope and no comfort whatsoever. All we have in this world is pitiless indifference...if God is not real and not at work in our lives.

Notice that verse 30 says those whom God called he also justified. The term “justified” was one of the main points of the gospel of grace. To be justified is to be declared righteous by God, to be given his stamp of approval and to be accepted by him totally. Paul has powerfully made the case that God has done that for us by grace through Jesus Christ. But notice that those God justified he also glorified. That is an interesting concept. What does it mean to be glorified? Glory has both subjective and objective components. The subjective component pertains to something having glory in itself. In other words, there is something glorious about it. To be glorified in this sense is to be made glorious. The objective part means a person is the object of glory, in other words, is given glory by others.

First, consider the subjective aspect. I thought about the difference between our old car and our new car. Our old car was great, but it had a whole lot of miles on it. It still looked good, but it had issues. When the headlights were on the turn indicator would freak out. It had a problem with the screen under the catalytic converter. Our mechanic said it didn’t affect the car mechanically but it made a racket that was less than pleasant. The check engine light kept going on and off. It was making a weird noise that was ominous, but no one could figure out what was causing it. It had problems with the fuel injectors. Our new car is glorious. It is shiny and clean and new. Everything works on it like it is supposed to and it has some capabilities that our old car never had.

Right now I’m the old car. Physically this is obviously true. I do not have the original complement of hair that was issued to me. And why is it that strange gray color? My eyes can’t focus on small print, or even medium print. My hearing is not as crisp as it used to be. My back hurts. I’m not as strong, fast or flexible as I once was. I don’t recover from things as quickly as I used to and I don’t have as much energy. Some of my internal systems don’t operate in line with the original specifications. I am not glorious!

But the bigger picture is that I have never been glorious. I never was particularly glorious physically, but the much more important point is that internally I have never been glorious. Do you have a mental image of the person you would like to be? I do, and I have never been close to being that person. That person is glorious. He doesn’t have the kind of unworthy thoughts I sometimes have. He is unfailingly kind, loving, patient and gentle. He is courageous and strong.

He is not obsessed with self but is noble and truly good. I wish I was that noble and worthy of praise, but I'm not. I'm not glorious.

Laurie and I had a layover in the Honolulu airport on our way home some time back. We were going to be there a couple of hours and were very hungry, but there was no place to get food in the part of the terminal where our gate was located. I told Laurie I would go find us some food. I had to take a shuttle to a different part of the airport. I got the food and was waiting for the shuttle back to our gate. A nice employee asked where I was headed. I told him, so he said I was in the right place and to just stay there, the bus would be along shortly. I thanked him, and then he began conversing with me. He said the gate we were at was the "spooky gate." I wasn't sure I wanted to hear about that, but he went on. He explained that part of the terminal was built on an ancient burial ground and that it was haunted. All sorts of weird things happened there. I asked if he really believed that, which gave him somehow an opportunity to segue into his life story. He began riffing on all manner of things pertaining to his family history. The glorious Rick, the one I wish I was, would have patiently listened and come up with some wise way to express love to the guy and open up a conversation about the state of his soul. The real Rick couldn't seem to get a word in edgewise and just wished the bus would show up soon. When it did I quickly and gratefully got on board. It wasn't a glorious moment for me. This passage promises that one day this Rick that you see will be even better than the glorious Rick I picture in my mind. That Rick will be truly magnificent. He will indeed be glorious beyond his dreams.

But glory has an objective component, meaning the thing is given glory. We give glory to that which is glorious in our eyes. We honor and praise it. And all of us long to be glorified in that sense. We wanted to be applauded and praised. Have you ever wondered why the entertainment industry has so many award shows? In part it is because humans long for glory. Why do we have an MVP award in the Super Bowl and World Series? Because humans crave glory. We all do.

This was not originally a selfish thing. It has become distorted due to our fallen human nature, but we were created in the image of God. God is glory and worthy of praise. God created us to be glorious and praiseworthy as well. We have the echo of a desire for that to be fulfilled in us still. Now in its distorted form it comes out as the desire of attention and approval. The promise is that we will be glorified. We will be glorious and given glory. The whole time I've been talking about this you have probably been thinking, "Wait a minute. You're talking about something that is going to happen in the future, but Paul wrote of it as past. He said those God called and justified he also glorified, past tense.

I'm so glad you noticed that. It is a future event. In verse 18 Paul referred to "the glory that will be revealed in us." Will be. It's future. In verse 23 he said we still "wait eagerly" for it. How do we explain the past tense in verse 30? Who is acting in verse 30? It is God. He calls, he justifies, he glorifies. Paul's point is that he has already done it. He has already done what is necessary to justify us and glorify us. It's a done deal, signed sealed, but not yet completely delivered. Our justification was completed when Jesus died and rose from the dead, and so was our glorification. The point of putting it in the past is that it is not in question. It has been done.

This is what we must remember when we suffer. Our suffering does not call into question our future. In verse 18 Paul said the glory that awaits us is so spectacular, so magnificent, that the worst of our suffering does not even compare. In other words, you can't even say that it is 50% or 100% or 200% or even 1000% greater. There is no comparison. The glory is going to be a total eclipse of our suffering. Imagine that someone has just won the Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes. They're going to be given \$10 million, and their reaction is, "Well, I guess that's nice, but I have a sore throat and I'm bummed." Excuse me, but the sore throat doesn't compare. Neither does our suffering compare with the glory that awaits us in Christ. In that glory there will be no suffering. Our present suffering should remind us that this is how life is here. We must never pin our hopes on life being glorious the way we desire for it will always fall short and always involve loss. But God has glorified us, and in that day there will be no loss, only glory.

APPLICATION

DON'T WIELD THE SLEDGEHAMMER

This passage all too often is trotted out any time someone suffers. While it is true and hopeful, to bang on a hurting person with it is often not helpful. When Laurie and I suffered the loss of a child some Christians immediately told us, "Well, God works all things for the good." True, but at the time not helpful.

DON'T FREAK OUT

Do not think that God doesn't exist or that he doesn't love you. This is part of life and all of us are going to get our share. So keep calm and trust.

DO REMEMBER THE TRUTH

Our suffering has meaning. Suffering hurts. What makes it hurt worse is when it is pointless. The great news is your losses and your suffering are never empty or meaningless. God is changing you. He is making you more compassionate, giving you corrective lenses to see the world right, prying your hands from your grubby little worn out worthless toys to give you something precious.

God is glorified in your suffering. You have the chance to bring him great glory as you trust him, as you find your peace and comfort in him even as you hurt.

Remember that God loves you and is with you. He knows suffering, for he has been through the worst our fallen world can inflict on a person. He feels compassion for you. We have hope. Though we will have pain in this life, we have an eternal weight of glory ahead of us that totally eclipses the suffering. Let your pain turn your thoughts and your hurt to the hope before us, and give thanks for that blessed hope.