

THE GOOD TORNADO

Passage: Nahum

Ah Amoxicillin and Dimetapp. Those were the two medicines we could get our young kids to take without a riot occurring. Amoxicillin for kids came as a pink, viscous liquid that tasted like bubble gum. It was the go-to treatment for several infections. Dimetapp was to relieve congestion that came with upper respiratory infections and the kids loved it. This was not universally the case with medicines. There were some that required an act of Congress to get the kids to take. And of course there were the shots. Those were always a big hit with the kids... Not! They were sure we were trying to torture them and wondered why we were so mean when we forced them to go to the doctor and undergo such abuse. That hasn't changed much. To his dismay our all-grown-up son learned that entering medical school requires having a number of vaccinations. He has been complaining about his sore arm the last couple of days because of the shots. The more things change the more they remain the same.

But of course the purpose of the shots and the medicines was not to inflict pain and misery on our children. They were a function of our love for them and our efforts to keep them healthy. Sometimes what's good for you is a bitter pill to swallow. Sometimes parents do things for kids that feel cruel to them, like vaccinations, but are for the child's good. This morning we're going to look at the book of Nahum. This obscure prophet tells us about a pill that seems bitter, but that is actually what we need. You're not going to like what I'm going to talk about today. You're not supposed to start a talk by saying that but it is true. I also know that the "it's good for you" argument never seems to win the day, so I will give you another one. I promise that though you might be surprised by this, in the end you will like this bitter pill. Once again I know that this is a tough sell. Again our son Toby insisted for years that he did not want any of the stuffing we had at Thanksgiving because he hated it. We told him "if you try it you will be surprised because you'll like it." He resisted that argument for years until about 3 years ago he finally gave in and discovered that we were right. He likes it. Hopefully will you today too.

THE LORD IS A WHIRLWIND GOD

We know very little about Nahum. His name meant "comfort," which is what he does in his book, although in a scary sort of way. We know he was from a town called Elkosh, which is in northeastern Nevada between Salt Lake City and Reno. Oh, wait, that's not right. That's Elko, Nevada. Ancient Elkosh was in northern Israel, though we don't know exactly where. There is an Elkosh today, a tiny town right on Israel's border with Lebanon, but it was founded in 1949, just a little after Nahum's day. We know this book was written sometime after the fall of Thebes in Egypt, which is mentioned in 3:8. That happened in 663 B. C. We also know the book was written before the fall of Ninevah, which happened in 612 B.C. So Nahum lived in the 7th century B.C. and he wrote his book some time in that 50 year period between those two events.

It doesn't take long for this prophet of comfort to get to the heart of his message. In his first words he says, "The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath." Nahum insists that not only is God a God of wrath, he is "filled with wrath." Oh, great, we're talking about a God filled with wrath. You're thinking, "oh this is going to be so inspiring. I know my heart is going to be strangely warmed by this message." Uh, no you're not. You're thinking, "I'd like to just skip this. This isn't going to be any fun at all." Don't check out just yet. While you might be mentally putting this sermon and this topic in the category of a really painful vaccination hopefully by the end you will nod your head and say, "actually that was kind of like Dimetapp. It tasted a lot better than I expected."

The message of God's wrath is consistent in this book. We get a little break from it in verse 3 when he writes, "The Lord is slow to anger." Okay, good, he may be filled with wrath but he's got it under control. But then the prophet says, "His way is in the whirlwind and the storm." A whirlwind is a tornado. God's way of handling things is the way a tornado handles them. Would you describe a tornado as having a light touch? Does it seem to you to be a cuddly sort of thing that is always sensitive to people's feelings? A tornado is a frightening, violent thing that you don't want to get anywhere near.

And so we see in verses 5-6, "The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it. Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire." Wow, does that sound like a God you'd find it easy to love? It sounds frightening, doesn't it? It makes God sound like an ogre, that angry tyrant who is anxious to destroy anyone who dares cross him. The ascription of wrath to God is not limited to Nahum. God's wrath appears in a lot of places in the Bible. Psalm 7:11 says, "God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day." Wow, God expresses his wrath every day? Sounds like he needs an anger management class, doesn't it? In Isaiah 1:24 God says, "I will vent my wrath on my foes and avenge myself on my enemies."

Well yes but that's the Old Testament. God seems to be depicted as always pouring out wrath and wiping people out in the Old Testament but it's different in the New Testament, right? Uh, not so much. Romans 1:18 says the wrath of God is being revealed against the ungodliness of humans. Ephesians 5:6 says, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient." Jesus spoke of God's wrath in Luke 21:23 and said when it comes it will be dreadful for people. Hebrews 12:29 says, "our God is a consuming fire." Yikes.

Now I will soften this blow a little by pointing out that Nahum's language is poetic. So in part he uses imagery and hyperbole to help his listeners get the feeling, the sense of dread of how awful it will be when God does, indeed, pour out his wrath. There is also a bit of snarkiness in his words. In verses 4-5 Nahum says things like God "rebukes the sea and it dries up" and "the mountains quake before him and the hills melt away." We have extant today some ancient records of Assyrian kings like Sennacharib, Ashur-nasir-apli II, and

Ashurbanipal in which they boasted of their great deeds and threatened their enemies. They used exactly these kinds of descriptions of how terrible and awesome they were. So in effect Nahum was saying, “Oh, so you’re so powerful and scary that even the sea dries up and the mountains shake before you? Well guess what? Our God, the Almighty God, the Maker of heaven and earth, is coming, and he literally has the power to dry up the sea and make the mountains shake. And when he shows up he’s going to kick everybody out of the pool. It’s going to be epic! Only for you, not so much.”

A God of wrath is politically incorrect today and totally unpopular. In 21st century America a God of wrath couldn’t get elected dog catcher. We want a kinder, gentler God. Laurie had a conversation with a friend who is not a believer. The topic of spiritual things came up and at one point Laurie’s friend said, “My God wants me to be happy.” Well isn’t that nice? How sweet of him. That’s a really common thought and a God filled with wrath doesn’t really qualify for the position of Happy Promoting God. Thanks for applying, wrathful God, but another candidate fits our needs better. We wish you success in your search for future employment. One of our problems is that we are in the age of the designer God. I’ll design my God to be whatever I want him to be. I don’t like a God of wrath. That seems cold and harsh. I want a warm, fuzzy, cuddly God who will say yes to everything I want and who will approve of everything I do and who would never, ever utter a discouraging word.

Do you really want a God who just wants everyone to be happy? Have you thought that through? Let’s envision a bully who likes to abuse other children and make their lives miserable. Does God want him to be happy? So he should smile upon the bully’s abuse of innocent kids? Let’s imagine that the guy you’re seeing decides he would like to sleep with another woman. That will make him happy. Or let’s decide that you marry him and a few years down the road what will make him happy is to trade you in on a younger model. He should do that because, after all, God wants him to be happy, right? Maybe this “Happy Promoter God” isn’t such a good idea. Could it be that the medicine we absolutely didn’t want any part of is in fact exactly what we need? Could we actually need a God of wrath?

THE LORD IS A GOOD GOD

In verse 7 Nahum says, “The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.” So after all this talk of wrath and vengeance it is good to hear that God is good and that in fact anyone who trusts in him doesn’t have to fear that he is going to suddenly explode in anger and vaporize them. Far from it. He is in fact a refuge.

A refuge is a place you go when the storms hit. Years ago our family was on vacation in Florida and we ended up in Ft. Myers on the gulf coast. We stayed in the Lanikai Island Resort. I looked up its website. At one point it said, “The Lanikai offers guests an unforgettable experience they can’t get anywhere else.” That was absolutely true. We’ve never forgotten it. At that time we all voted it The Worst Hotel We’ve Ever Seen. I had hoped to show you some pictures but sadly, it is clear from the website that it has been refurbished and today actually looks presentable. Back then it was terrible. We stayed there

because it was cheap. We noticed that the certificate on the very sketchy and rickety elevator was out of date. Our room had a linoleum floor that was discolored and peeling, the door to the room didn't lock, the sofa bed Carissa slept in was like an instrument of torture. That evening we were hungry. We sure weren't going to eat at the hotel's restaurant because we felt the Ptomaine Tavern was a bit concerning as a name for an eatery. We had no idea about restaurants in the area and out of desperation just walked across the street to this rather sketchy looking Italian restaurant. It appeared to be a step up from a fast food restaurant, but not a big step. It had a small interior space with a few tables, but most of the tables were outside on a sort of covered patio. The food was served in fast food type containers with plastic utensils, but we were in for a surprise. The food was terrific. We enjoyed a great meal but as we finished, a Florida thunderstorm hit. This was spectacular. The thunder roared and the rain did a remarkable imitation of Niagara Falls. There was no way we were going to try to dash through that back to our hotel. Not in that deluge. The owner of the restaurant took pity on us. He said, "Just stay here in the restaurant. We'll get you some dessert." They made fried pizza dough for us. It was terrific. We stayed there until the rain stopped. We took refuge in that restaurant. Nahum tells us that God is so good that he is like that. He's where you want to go when the storms hit. That is quite a contrast with the picture of God as fearsome and "filled with wrath." It seems like a violently abrupt change of direction.

This idea that God is good is another common theme in the Bible. Psalm 136:1 says, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever." Psalm 25:8 says, "Good and upright is the Lord." Psalm 34:8 says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalm 86:5 says, "You Lord are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you." There is no hint of evil or darkness within him. He is perfect in his goodness. Deuteronomy 32:4 says of God, "He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he." He does no wrong. All that he does is good. Habakkuk 1:13 says of God, "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil, you cannot tolerate wrong."

You have never known anyone like God, for God is absolute good. There is nothing in him that we need to be afraid of for everything he does is good. It will always benefit others. He has no ulterior motives. We have never met a person like him, for we have never known anyone who could not, given the right circumstances, turn on us. But God never will. This could leave us a bit confused. These two aspects of God's character, wrath and goodness, don't seem at first to be a natural fit. How are we to view God? Nahum goes on to explain exactly how this all worked out.

NINEVEH WAS ABOUT TO BE IN A WORLD OF HURT

Nineveh was the capital city of the Assyrian empire. It was near modern day Mosul in Iraq. The Assyrians were the superpower of their day. They had conquered northern Israel in the previous century, killing many of the Jews and deporting the survivors. They were now a threat to Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. You may be familiar with Nineveh from the

story of Jonah. He was sent to go preach to them, but he wanted no part of it. He feared God might use him there to cause them to repent, in which case God wouldn't destroy them. You know he tried to run away and ended up in the intestinal tract of a very large sea creature. The fish spit him out near shore and Jonah finally relented and did what God had told him to do. He preached to Nineveh that unless they repented, judgment was coming. Sure enough they listened to him and turned to God, which upset Jonah. He wanted them to be destroyed.

Nahum is the sequel to Jonah. Nineveh eventually went back to their old ways. So now Nahum is once again preaching that a judgment is coming. Only this time there is no repent with an "or else" part of the message. It's too late for that. God's judgment was coming and nothing was going to change that. From 1:11 to the end of the book the message is the same. Nineveh is about to be judged, and it is going to be horrendous. This is what the talk about the wrath of God was aiming at. That wrath is about to be poured out on Assyria in a devastating way.

In 1:14 Nahum says, "The Lord has given a command concerning you, Nineveh; you will have no descendants to bear your name." In 2:13 he says, "I am against you, declares the Lord Almighty. I will burn up your chariots in smoke, and the sword will devour your young lions. I will leave you no prey on the earth. The voices of your messengers will no longer be heard." In 3:1 we get a picture of God's view of Nineveh. "Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims." Verses 2-3 tell what is coming. "The crack of whips, the clatter of wheels, the galloping horses and jolting chariots! Charging cavalry, flashing swords and glittering spears! Many casualties, piles of dead, bodies without number, people stumbling over corpses." Finally in verse 19, "Nothing can heal your wound; your injury is fatal. Everyone who hears the news about you claps his hands at your fall, for who has not felt your endless cruelty?" The whole world would applaud the fall of Assyria because they had been brutal to every other nation. It's sort of like when the New York Yankees lose. Everybody else is happy.

So now we begin to see how Nahum's two statements, that God is full of wrath and God is good, can come together. The ancient Jewish people had already suffered at the hands of Assyria. But Assyria itself was an abomination, a blight on the world because they were so violent, oppressive and harsh. As they threatened the remaining Jews once again the Hebrews wondered where God was. If they were really God's chosen people how could he let this happen to them? And if he really was good why would he allow such terrible and cruel people to have power? Nahum told them that in his goodness God is going to deal with Assyria. He was about to pour out his wrath on them and the whole world would cheer.

Our culture says there is no possible way that God could be good and threaten violence against people. Perhaps that's because we haven't experienced the kind of things Israel and many of her neighbors suffered at the hand of Nineveh. Here is a quote from the annals of Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II describing his "accomplishments" after conquering a

neighboring people. "I built a pillar over against the city gate and I flayed all the chief men...I covered the pillar with their skins; some I walled up within the pillar, and some upon the pillar on stakes I impaled...Many captives from among them I burned with fire...From some I cut off their hands and their fingers, and from others I cut off their noses and their ears...The eyes of many men I put out...Their young men and maidens I burned in the fire." He's *boasting* about this. This was common with Assyrian kings. These were cruel and brutal people. If God did nothing about people who were that cruel there is no way that his people could ever have seen him as good and no way they could have loved him.

Nahum's prophecies were fulfilled. In 612 B.C. a coalition army led by Medes destroyed Nineveh and conquered the Assyrians. Assyria was never again a nation that played any role in the world scene.

IMPLICATIONS

Nahum, like many of the minor league prophets, is something of a tough pill to swallow for modern American sensibilities. It is all about God pouring out wrath and people in our society don't like that. In fact, we don't even like the word "wrath." Laurie for some reason has a problem with the word "moist" and I've learned others share that odd quirk. But it is common in our culture to have a deep dislike for "wrath." Yet we must come to grips with it in the book of Nahum. I'd like you to think about God's wrath with me.

WRATH IS ESSENTIAL TO GOODNESS

First let's be clear that God does not have uncontrolled anger. He had sent prophets warning Assyria for hundreds of years to change their ways. God is slow to anger. He's not like that person you know that you have to tiptoe around because you never know what will set him off. In fact, we will see that even the way God expresses his wrath is in a surprisingly patient and loving way.

Having said that, we need to get firmly in mind that God could not be good without wrath. You would have understood that if you were an ancient Israeli who had loved ones tortured and cruelly killed by the Assyrians. If God just let them do that with no repercussions, could that Israeli have any love and respect for him? Absolutely not. He *needed* God to pour out his wrath on those cruel people. Just imagine how you would feel if your child was taken by the Assyrians who then peeled his skin off of him and nailed it to the city wall. Would that be all right with you, or would you want God to make them pay?

We recently took care of Toby and Anna's dogs, Doc and Banjo. The two of them have some interesting habit patterns. One pattern I see raises the issue of wrath. Wanting to treat them equally we get them both one of those chew toys shaped like bones. They each have one, but Banjo likes Doc's more than his, so he stalks Doc and takes it from him. Wanting to right this situation we give the one Banjo had to Doc, which he is fine with. But then Banjo drops the one he has so he can go and take back the one he used to have, the one Doc

now has. And so it goes. It turns out, whatever Doc has, Banjo wants and takes from him. Doc looks to us with plaintive eyes as if to say, “Aren’t you going to do anything?” He’s appealing for us to reveal our wrath against Banjo. He wants us to right this wrong. This is a reminder that I’m definitely not God, because I have not come up with an answer to this problem. We know instinctively it is not fair for Banjo to insist that he have a bone but that Doc not have one. He is only happy if he has one and Doc doesn’t, but that’s not right.

Wrath is really God exercising justice, dealing with wrong. Would he be good if he did not deal with evil, wrong and injustice? No. Was dying sufficient punishment for Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, Adolf Eichmann and the many others who perpetrated unspeakable atrocities and murdered millions of innocent people during the Nazi reign of terror? Does not justice demand something more? We long for God to pour out his wrath so that justice is done.

Anna, our daughter-in-law, was essentially ripped off by a previous employer who didn’t pay her for more than a month’s work. That would be forgivable if they just ran out of money, but they knew they didn’t have the money to pay her when they hired her. They were deliberately dishonest. It galls me to think those guys might get away with that. She has gotten a judgment against them, but no one is exercising wrath. No one is going to make them pay. Is that good? No, it is wrong! That is not a good justice system when someone can do what is wrong with no consequence. For it to be good there must be wrath, punishment of wrong. ***For God to be good he must punish evil.*** He must pour out his wrath on evil.

WRATH IS ESSENTIAL TO PEACE

Romans 12:19 says, “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath.” What is going to happen if God does not have wrath and pour it out on wrong doers? When someone does wrong people will take revenge. What is the problem with that? When we exact our revenge the other party will now see himself as the victim and he will seek to in turn take his revenge. That’s how wars start.

A few years ago I was at a college football game standing on the sidelines so I could see close up what was going on. The game was at Oregon State University. I admit my own bias, but I saw what happens when wrath driven by goodness doesn’t exist. I won’t say who Oregon State was playing but there was some bad blood between the teams. The opponents decided to vent some of that bad blood. They began to deliver cheap shots. There were several really ugly and potentially injurious plays, several after the play was over. There were people on the field whose job is to exercise wrath, to punish those who do football wrong. For whatever reason, they chose not to. Perhaps they had the modern sensitivity to wrath and felt that the best approach was to do nothing and simply appeal for everyone to get along. Maybe they just wanted everyone to be happy. Whatever the case, they let go some egregious football evils. What do you suppose happened? The Oregon State players began to realize there was going to be no justice. Since there was no other recourse they

began to respond in kind. It wasn't long before fights began to break out and pretty soon it turned into a brawl. By this time it wasn't just the players who were upset, it was the near 50,000 people in the stadium. I was afraid it was going to turn into a riot.

If there is no wrath of God to deal with evil that is a picture of life on this earth. We will conclude it is up to us to get justice. There will never be peace. We see things happening that run the gamut from road rage to war that are all a function of a person not trusting the wrath of God. However, if God's wrath is real, then I can trust him to deal with injustice and wrong so I can be at peace. This is great news. Because of the wrath of God no one gets away with anything. I, like you, have experienced people treating me in ways that are not fair or right. That's been true of cell phone companies, car repair shops, banks, acquaintances, even some former employers. Were they fair with me? I am not the person to say, for my perspective isn't totally objective. But here's the great news: I don't have to get back at any of them. I don't have to fix the problem. I don't have to make sure they get their just desserts. Because of God's wrath I can trust them to him and be at peace. Remember this: ***because of God's wrath no one gets away with anything!***

WRATH IS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTAND SUFFERING

There's so much pain in the world. Perhaps the most difficult problem for any theology or philosophy is that of suffering. Certainly it is a problem for one who believes in a good and loving God. Why is there so much suffering in this world? How are we to understand some of the inexplicable things that happen in our lives? How are we to believe in a good, loving and sovereign God with all this pain going on? I don't have a pat answer that will explain all the bad things that happen, but there are truths that can help us at least have some perspective on suffering. And oddly, God's wrath is a part of the answer.

Romans 1:18 says, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men." There we see again the wrath of God. But there is something very important about that statement that is easy to miss. It says not God's wrath *was* poured out or *will be* poured out on wicked people, but that it *is* being poured out. It is present tense. It is happening right now. How is God pouring out his wrath on people? I don't see the earth opening and swallowing ungodly people. I don't see them being struck by lightning or hit by some hideous incurable disease. The answer is in verse 24. "God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another." Here's how God pours out his wrath: he gives us what we choose and lets us reap the consequences of it.

God is good. If a person chooses to reject him, what is that person choosing? He is rejecting good and choosing evil. If a person chooses evil, should we be surprised if he gets evil? But how did that work with the Assyrians? They rejected God's rule in their lives. As a result they became cruel and violent. Every nation around them had tasted their inhumanity. So God poured out his wrath on them. He let them experience the consequences of their choice. Their violence caused other peoples and nations to hate them and to want to be rid of them.

Eventually those people delivered to them the very violence that they had chosen. They got the consequence of their choice. If you continually bully and abuse people, you should not be surprised if someone stronger shows up to bully and abuse you.

But what does this have to do with suffering? We have to go all the way back to the time when evil entered this world. The story is the familiar one from the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve decided they wanted to go their own way and pursue life without God. They chose evil. So God, being good, let them exercise their free will, meaning he let them have the evil they wanted. Unfortunately for us, the evil they chose drastically skewed creation itself so it became a broken place full of evil and suffering. That's the message of Genesis 3. Romans 8:20 says, "The creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it."

I mentioned that in July Laurie and I are planning to visit Carissa and Michael in Mississippi. Suppose that we go there and when we arrive I find myself greatly dismayed at the fact that it appears the temperature is 212 degrees, boiling point, and the humidity is so bad I get wet just standing still. Would it make sense for me to say, "Why is this happening to me? What did I do to deserve this? Mississippi is punishing me for some reason and it's not fair." If you go to Mississippi in the middle of July you'd better expect that it will be hotter than...a lot of places. It is hot and humid. Accept it. If you live in a creation that is cursed and broken because humans introduced evil into the system and this is the natural consequence, then you should not be surprised if suffering happens. We simply have to accept that this is part of life in a fallen world because it is the consequence of choosing evil. It is evidence of the wrath of God.

There is something you need to remember about wrath. Why do parents give children consequences for evil choices? Do they seek to get back at those kids? Do they just want to inflict pain on them? No, they give the kids consequences because they love them and want to teach them. They want to protect them from choosing something that will hurt or even destroy them. God does the same thing. The reason that he is pouring out his wrath on this world and has given us the evil, broken world we have chosen is because he wants the pain of it to turn us back to him! In his book, *Celebrating The Wrath Of God*, Jim McGuigan wrote, "God's curse is his holy love flowing toward humanity in redemptive anger. It's the holy Father...chastising us because we are in mortal danger." The suffering of this world is God calling us to himself.

CONCLUSION

THANK GOD FOR HIS WRATH AND HIS GOODNESS

Would you call this world fair? There are so many things that are wrong and that never get righted in this world. It is incredibly good news that God is a God of wrath, because it means he is going to fix it all. This is our hope, that there ultimately will be justice. If you've ever been wronged by someone and been unable to do anything about it, this is your

solace. That person will answer to God, and that is great news. There was a guy I and my roommates when I was single tried to help. We let him stay in our apartment and fed him. While we were all out he called an accomplice who came and they stole everything we had that was worth anything. He had specifically gone to a church to set this up because he knew he could prey on Christians. The police knew who he was because he'd gotten out of prison three weeks earlier for doing the exact same thing. I don't know if Dennis Robertson (that was his name he said) was ever caught and punished. He may have thought he got away with something. Well, Dennis, bad news for you, God is a God of wrath, but that's great news for me. I can leave Dennis to God, and God will deal with him. This is cause to rejoice! Give thanks that in his goodness and grace God has made a way for you to escape the eternal wrath we have all earned. He has poured out his wrath on his Son to save you.

LEAVE ROOM FOR THE WRATH OF GOD

Remember Romans 12:19. We are to leave room for the wrath of God. In other words, let God handle this. God will be fair, infinitely more fair than either you or me, and his wrath will be effective, infinitely more effective than either you or me. You are driving and some guy in a pickup truck driving at the speed of light comes weaving through traffic like a maniac. He cuts you off forcing you to brake and swerve to avoid a collision so you give him a beep with your horn. In response he gives you that famous one finger salute. You feel the anger well up and you say, "Why I oughtta...leave you to the wrath of God!" Do you see how much more peaceful you will be, how much more peaceful all of your relationships will be because of the wrath of God?

LET THE SUFFERING REMIND YOU OF YOUR HOPE

We live in a broken world. When we experience the hurt of this world whether in our own lives or in the lives of others we need to let it teach us two things:

First, we need to see this as medicine. I am far too tied to this world. I like it here, and I want to be very comfortable here. What I wish is that God would just give me lots of good stuff in this world. But God knows that while I think I want that, actually that's a recipe for the death of my soul. What I need is him. What I need and long for is the home that I was created for. You were made to live in a world that is not broken like this one, that is not twisted by disease, death, and the selfishness of the human race. *I need to take that medicine and recognize it is trying to make me seek true health, which is to seek God and look forward to my true home.*

Second I need to let it remind me that this is the result of choosing to go our own way. God lets us have our way, and we get the evil we have chosen. Every time I start to choose to go my way, not God's, the pain of this world should remind me, this is what it produces. Always.