

# Wisdom in Suffering:

Mr David Lang

Kum Yan Methodist Church

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# Introduction: Wisdom and Suffering

Wisdom for  
Living &  
Success

Wisdom in  
Suffering?

# Suffering: Areas of Life affected

○ Physical

○ Emotional

○ Social

○ Spiritual / Mental



# Some Struggle We Face

- 1. Physical sleep, backaches, arthritis. finances
- 2. High hopes for children dashed-
- 3. Watching helplessly innocent suffering
- 3. Pressure to try alternative therapy –
- 4. Faith healing, generational curses, secret sin

# ISSUES DUE TO SUFFERING

- Why did a Good God create or allow evil?
- Is God truly all good loving and powerful?
- Who or what causes one to suffer: God, Devil, Sin, or nature
- What is the solution to one's suffering? Medicine, Faith Healing, Alternative Treatment, etc

# Biblical Solutions??:

- Promise of Healing/Miracles
  - None of these diseases? Exo 15:26
  - Healing in Atonement Isa 53:5
  - Prayer of faith will heal the sick, James 5
- Promises of Answered Prayer
  - Ask, and it will be given Matt 7:7-11 cf
  - Say to mountain Matt 17:19 21:21
  - Persistent Women Luke 18
- Problem of Evil: A Good God cannot allow the righteous/innocent to suffer: Repent and Pray c.f. Job



# Book of James: Wisdom in Suffering

CONTEXT: Church attitude on Suffering/Trials

1. Count it all Joy when you meet trials (1:2)
2. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trials, for he will receive the crown of life
3. Behold, we consider those blessed who remain steadfast; -you have heard of the steadfastness of Job (1:12; 5:11a)

# Wisdom in Suffering

## James 1:1-12

1. View Trials Positively (James 1:2; 5: 11)
2. Turn to God for Wisdom on Trials (James 1:5)
  - Ask in faith, not doubt- not discriminate
  - Double-minded man- Two-faced man
  - Ch 2- Poor marginalized
  - Ch 3 Wisdom from above –not ambitious, merciful
  - Ch 4 Rich Given place of Prominence
3. Blessed -Endure/Persevere with God's (1:12; 5:11a)

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# Objection: The Christian Problem of Suffering



God is All Loving  
and Good

God is All-Powerful

Suffering and Evil  
Exist:

God is loving, but  
NOT powerful –  
cannot prevent suffering

God is Powerful but  
NOT loving-  
can remove, but refuse to

# Solutions to the Problem of Evil

## No God

- Nature and Evolution
- Human Desires, Ignorance

## Biblical Answer

- Free Will Defence
- God is also Righteous: Judgment for Sin
- Suffering serves a Greater Good

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## Greater Good: James 1:2-4:

- 2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,
  - 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.
  - 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
- 
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# Why does a Good God allow the Innocent to suffer?

- Suffering is Unpleasant but Not Necessarily Evil
  1. Pain is unpleasant but can be good-it is a gift of God: it can signal something is wrong and can be corrected
  2. God Himself experiences Pain: Sharing the experiences of God
  3. We accept suffering now for the greater good in the future
    1. Athletes; Study; Army, Builders, Pregnancy and Childbirth
    2. We even look back at suffering and changed our perspective, - proud of our sufferings



Character cannot be developed in  
ease and quiet. Only through  
experience of trial and suffering can  
the soul be strengthened, ambition  
inspired, and success achieved.

— *Helen Keller* —

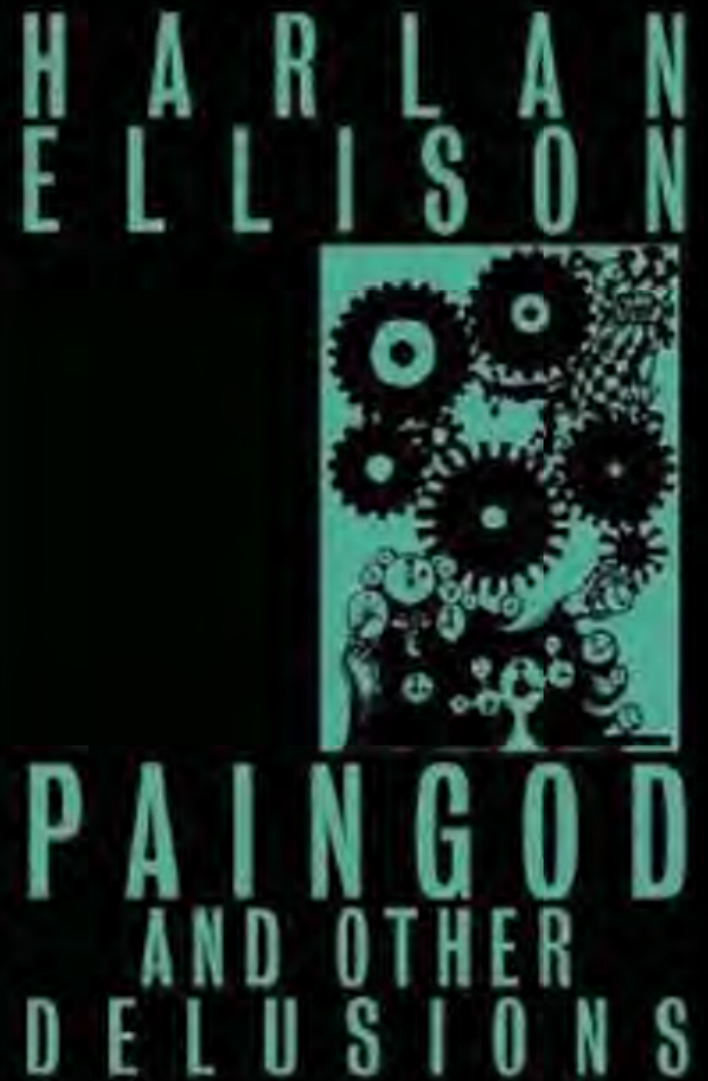
**AZ** QUOTES

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE  
WE HAVE KNOWN ARE THOSE  
WHO HAVE KNOWN DEFEAT,  
KNOWN SUFFERING, KNOWN  
STRUGGLE, KNOWN LOSS, AND  
HAVE FOUND THEIR WAY OUT OF  
THOSE DEPTHS.

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

I know that pain is the most important thing in the universe. Greater than survival, greater than love, greater even than the beauty it brings about. For without pain, there can be no pleasure. Without sadness, there can be no happiness. Without misery, there can be no beauty. And without these, life is endless, hopeless, doomed, and damned adult. You have become an adult.

-Harlan Ellison, *Pain God and Other Delusions*,  
Salem Massachusetts: Pyramid Books, 1995.



# Biblical Purpose of Suffering

1. Develop character (James 1:3-4)
2. Testing (revealing) of our faith (1 Pet 1:7)
3. Discipline (Heb 12:11)
4. Humility & Dependence on God (2 Cor 1:9)
5. That we can comfort others (2 Cor 1:4)
6. Fellowship with Christ in his suffering (Phil 3:10)
7. Develop community and interdependence (1 Cor 12:26)
8. To accomplish God's purpose (Rom 8)





## Our Three Children

Justina- 1991-2022

Timothy -1993-2000

Titus, 1996 - ?



# Justina

- Born 1991; Bubbly & Bright, Musical
- Degeneration started at 5.
- Loss of Memory, IQ,
- Talking, singing
- Different Seizures
  - Absence; Atonic, Gelasitic
  - Grand mal
  - Status Epilepticus
- Frequent falls- visit to A&E



## Early Stages



## Losing of Abilities

- Walking, standing -wheelchair bound
- Eating, drinking & swallowing of saliva



# Progression of illness

- Scoliosis over 90 degrees
- Frequent Pneumonia
- Problem Breathing
- Use of BiPap (ventilator), supplement o2
- Hyper extend neck
- Turn blue - requiring frequent resuscitation



# Round the Clock Care

- Tracheostomy & Gastrostomy care
- Suctioning, various physiotherapy & positioning
- Personal hygiene & toileting
- Follow-up neuro, ENT, Lung, orthopedic, eye,



# Later Development

- Frequent stay at ICU
- Very Severe Spasms
- Auto-immune : rashes in eye, face, body.
- Apnea: Ventilator & Ambu-Bag
- Fractures –skull, knee
- Digestive system -





Final Days

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

*Justina Lang Yizhen*

CALLED HOME TO THE LORD ON SUNDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY 2022, AGE 30



ONLINE MEMORIAL SERVICE  
TUESDAY 1 MARCH 8PM

# Timothy

- Born 1993
- Early reader, swims, & plays violin
- Degeneration at 7
- Learning difficulty.
- Frequent falls.
- Asthmatic,
- Seizures,





### Departed at 10 Year Old (2004)

- Problem swallowing and eating
- Choke in church camp at Johor, Malaysia
- Kulai Hospital: Heart Stopped, Resuscitated
- Coma and transferred to Singapore NUH
- Died July 2004
- **Diagnosis:** Niemann Pick Type C

# Titus's Early Degeneration



- Choking on Saliva
- Frequent Suctioning
- Frequent Pneumonia
- Scoliosis 90 degrees
- Bedridden
- Sleep Apnea -Night Ventilator
- Seizures

# Later Problems

- Breathing Difficulty & Sleep Apnea
- Hyper Extent Neck
- Tracheostomy
- Frequent Infection
- Frequent Seizures
- Lung failure





Life goes on



**SPECIAL NEEDS P...**

Join us to hear a father's journey in caring for two children living with a rare fatal degenerative disease. How did he cope? Where did his search for answers lead him? How does he make sense of his pain? What sustains his joy today?

**REGISTRATION**

Please text Hannah at 9862 9774 or email [hannahl@sbc.edu.sg](mailto:hannahl@sbc.edu.sg) latest by 18 Aug.

**Mr David Lang** graduated from Singapore Bible College in 1988 and served as a pastor for 3 years in Fochow Methodist Church. In 1997, while writing his dissertation, his six-year-old daughter started neurological degeneration that needed round-the-clock care.

...sequently, his two younger children also started degeneration. His second child Timothy passed away at the age of 10. His children were eventually diagnosed as having Niemann-Pick Disease, Type-C, also nicknamed 'The Alzheimer's of the young'. Mr Lang currently teaches at the college and enjoys weekends with his family.



David and his family wishes to express their heartfelt thanks to everyone who has made this possible. May God bless all of you !

Update posted by [Colin Yim](#) On May 05, 2019

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God may have put us thru' the fire, but he has surrounded with his people who for me ring to shield us from the direct blast of the fire.





Bedridden and terminally ill people do not have to lie in bed waiting to die, with the support of the church and the community, we can provide meaningful and joyful experience for them that they can look forward to.

# Book of Job: Suffering, Sin and Wisdom



- <https://www.sbc.edu.sg/suffering-and-sin-jobs-lamentations/>

# God's Speeches

- Cycle 1
  - Creation & Universe
  - Creatures: Mountain Goats, Donkey, Ostriches, Horse, Hawks
- Cycle 2
  1. Behemoth
  2. & Leviathan



## Job's Two Responses to God

### Second Response:

<sup>2</sup> "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. <sup>3</sup> You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. <sup>4</sup> "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' <sup>5</sup> **My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.** Therefore I despise myself and repent/**am comforted**) in dust and ashes."  
(42:1-6 NIV)

(Job 42:5 repented or comforted? See Gen 38:12)

# Job's Vindication

- “After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has (Job 42:7 NIV)”



# Some Bible lessons learnt



- It is OK to cry out to God
- Not all Suffering due to Sin
- God can provide strength
- God's Presence is a source of Comfort

