

**Thank you, again, Walter York!  
Speaker for today**

**Suffering as a Christian**

*If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, and of God, rests upon you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.* 1 Peter 4:14-16

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**April Birthdays**

3 Amanda Hoffman 6 Susan Hudson 16  
Alana Hudson 23 Shannon Hudson  
30 Aaron McCollum 30 Margaret Graddon

**April Anniversaries**

19 Bill & Kena Brown

# Indio Informer

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**The Suffering of the Righteous**

By Tim Dooley

When we are suffering, it is common nature for us to ask, “Why?” (Psalms 73). “Why is this happening?” “Why won’t it go away?” “Why did God allow this to happen to me?” Sadder even are those who, on such occasions, blame God and turn their backs on Him and walk away. Paul gives some great advice and perspective in the beginning of 2 Corinthians concerning our attitude toward suffering.

First of all, he says that when we suffer and are comforted by God then we are able to comfort others who are suffering (1:4). It is important to remember that living Christian lives is predicated upon our emptying of ourselves (Matthew 16:24) and serving others (Matthew 25:31–46). He wanted the Christians at Corinth to comfort the man who had repented and confirm their love toward him (2:7–8).

Secondly, we gain strength through our ministry, for God and toward others, to “*faint not*” (4:1).

Thirdly, the greatest comfort comes through the ministry of preaching and sharing the gospel of Jesus and while doing so Paul says, “*We are troubled...but not distressed...perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed*” (4:7–9).

Considering all that Paul had been through it is amazing that all was but “*light affliction,*” but that it worked for “*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*” (4:17). How are we using our suffering to serve God and others?

**Regular Meeting Times**

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.  
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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## What About Sickness, Death, & Suffering?

By Doug Dingley

Sin, sickness, death and suffering were never a part of God's desire for His human creation. In the beginning, He created a beautiful garden that was completely free from all of those horrific evils. Indeed, it was very good (Genesis 1). It was so good, so perfect, and so pristine in fact, that the pure and sinless, eternal God and Creator of the entire universe walked freely therein, along with His beloved creation (Genesis 3:8).

But although God so loved and provided them with every possible blessing they would ever need in order for them to remain eternally joyful, fulfilled, and sin, sickness, death and sorrow free, true love is always a choice. Thus God, in His great and infinite wisdom, knew He must allow His beloved and much-blessed creation to make their own choice, as to whether or not they wanted to truly love Him in return. Did they truly love Him enough to trust Him, and hence trust Him enough to obey and remain loyal to Him, or not? That was the test, the choice, the decision and the question, which He knew He must allow them to fully and freely make and answer for themselves. So; God stood back, allowed the devil to make his play, and Adam and Eve to make their choice (Genesis 3). As we know, it was an epic fall. They chose to love, trust, listen to and obey Satan, instead of their Lord God and Creator. Hence, sin, sickness, death and suffering entered the world as a result, driving a deep wedge of division between their pure and sinless Creator, and His now unholy and sin-stained creation (Genesis 3:22-24; Isaiah 59:1-2).

But even then – despite their lack of love for, trust in, and obedience to their almighty and all-loving God and Creator – He did not stop loving them... not for one moment. Despite the fact that due to their own chosen disobedience they would now have to live in a world far less wonderful and much more painful than He had ever planned, purposed, or wanted for them in the first place, He promised His now-fallen and sin-stained creation that He had a plan in place to give them yet another chance to be with Him forever (Genesis 3:15), if they would but simply choose to love, listen to, and trust and obey Him this time.

Each and every day, we are given the same exact choice as Adam and Eve were. God still loves and provides for us more than we can ever imagine (John 3:16; Romans 8:28-32). And so, the

question is not does God love us, but do we love God – according to His definition? Jesus said, *“If you love Me, you will obey My commandments”* (John 14:15; see verses 21-24). Do we love Him, enough to listen to and obey, only Him (Matthew 4:10)? Have we obeyed the gospel – God's commandment to be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Acts 2:38)? Are we daily listening to, learning of, and walking in, obedience to and with the Lord our God? Or, are we choosing to love, trust, listen to and live for someone else, resulting in eternally more death and suffering?

## Should We Prevent Suffering?

By Kevin Cauley

Our culture is driven by an unhealthy desire to prevent all negative consequences. Someone might object and say, “What's so wrong with that?” It's a good question. Many people buy into the notion that all suffering is morally evil. Is it? What about the athlete who trains and suffers so that he/she may compete? Is that morally wrong? What about an overweight person who diets, enduring gnawing hunger pains because he/she knows it is good for his/her health? Is that morally wrong? What about a person who works long hours with great exertion under difficult conditions so he may take a month's long vacation in Hawaii? Is that morally wrong? These cases show that suffering is not morally evil in and of itself; it depends upon the purpose of the suffering.

Now, consider this notion. What if most suffering really embodied such good purposes? That is, it contained within it a dignifying and benefic effect. Would we look at it as evil? Or would we view it as we do the suffering athlete, the hungry dieter, and the hard-working vacationer? This is the heart of what the gospel teaches about suffering. Consider Paul's words in Romans 5:3-5: *“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”* God permits suffering to improve us if we let him. If we don't, however, it follows that suffering degenerates. So, what does this say about having faith in God? *“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”* (Romans 8:28).