

The Suffering of Jesus



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 17

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Luke 2:7, 22–24; Leviticus 12:6–8; Matthew 2:1–18; Matthew 12:22–24; Luke 4:21–30; John 8:58, 59; Mark 14:34; Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:33–36; Luke 22:41–44; Mark 15:38; Matthew 27:45, 51, 52; Acts 14:22; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 3:12; John 10:28; Romans 6:23; Titus 1:2; and 1 John 2:25.

MEMORY VERSE: “About three o’clock Jesus cried out loudly, ‘*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*’ This means ‘My God, my God, why have you left me alone?’ ” (Matthew 27:46, ERV).



How did sin and suffering first start? The Bible gives us good answers.

ANYTIME WE STUDY THE TOPIC OF SUFFERING, we must ask the question: How did sin and suffering first start? The Bible gives us good answers. Sin and suffering happened because angels didn’t respect the gift of freedom that God gave them. This answer leads us to ask another question: Did God know ahead of time that the angels were going to sin? Yes, but as C. S. Lewis wrote, God felt that giving the angels the freedom to choose was “worth the risk.”

Worth the risk? For what? For us, while God sits on His throne in heaven? Not exactly. In God’s eyes, freedom is so precious. That is why He made us free. God also chose to accept our punishment and suffer for us if we chose to sin. We see this suffering in the life and death of Jesus. Jesus suffered as a human. His suffering connects humans on earth with God in heaven forever.

JESUS' CHILDHOOD (Luke 2:7, 22–24)

The Bible gives us little information about Jesus' childhood. But a few verses do tell us something about how things were when He came to this earth as one of us.

Read Luke 2:7, 22–24 (read also Leviticus 12:6–8) and Matthew 2:1–18. What do these verses show us about Jesus' life as a young child? Was His life easy or hard?

Jesus was born poor. People wanted to kill Jesus even when He was a baby. The Bible helps us understand the troubles that Jesus had from an early age.

Read John 1:46. How does this verse help us understand more about the troubles that the young Jesus suffered?

Jesus is the only Person who lived on this earth who never sinned. But He lived with sinners. Jesus must have suffered deeply as a child. He was perfect. So, the sin all around Him must have bothered Him very much. We are far from perfect. We are sinners, for sure. At the same time, there are some sins that we will not ever do. We don't even want to hear about anyone who does them. When we do, we feel sad and upset. Can you think about how Jesus felt when He saw sin? He must have felt a lot of pain, for sure.

Ask: "Do the sins all around me bother me? Or don't I care?" If you're not bothered by sin, can it be because of the things you read, watch, or do? Think about it.

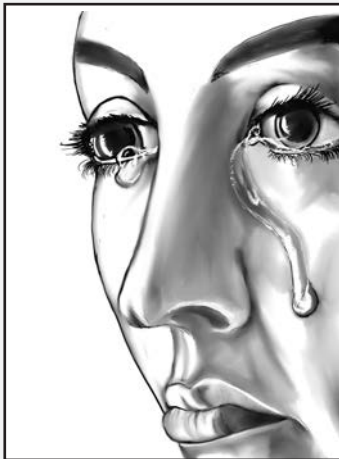


Jesus must have suffered deeply as a child.

HATED AND REJECTED BY MEN (Matthew 12:22–24)

Read these verses: Matthew 12:22–24; Luke 4:21–30; and John 8:58, 59. As you read, remember that Jesus was God. Remember also that He made the skies and the earth. Remember that Jesus came to offer Himself for the sins of everyone, too. How do these verses help us understand the pain that Jesus suffered on this earth?

People everywhere always misunderstood Jesus. They didn't understand His life, acts, and teachings. The leaders didn't understand Jesus. Sometimes the people didn't understand Him, too. Later, their misunderstanding caused the people to hate Jesus and reject Him. Think about it: Jesus was hated and rejected by the very people He came to save! Parents with disobedient children may understand a little bit about what Jesus felt. Parents understand that their children need help. The parents are willing to give everything to help their children. But the children reject the parent. The sad thing is that the parents may be the only ones who can keep their children's lives from being destroyed. This example helps us understand Jesus' own experience on earth. That experience must have been very painful for Him.



**We've all felt rejected.
We are hurt because
of what we are losing.**

Read Matthew 23:37. What does this verse tell us about how Jesus felt about being rejected? As you read, ask yourself, Was Jesus feeling bad for Himself (as we often do when we are rejected)? Or was Jesus feeling bad for another reason? If yes, what was it?

We have all felt rejected before. Maybe we felt pain for the same reason Jesus felt pain. We are hurt because of what we are losing. We feel hurt because we know what the person will lose when they reject us. Now think about how Jesus felt when many Jews hated him. Jesus knew what would happen to the people when they rejected Him. "Jesus was innocent. Because He was not guilty of doing any sin, He suffered deeply when Satan hurt Him and attacked Him."—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 3, page 129, adapted.

What can you learn from Jesus that can help you live with the pain when someone rejects you?

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE (Mark 14:34)

“He said to them, ‘My heart is very sad. I am almost dying! Stay here and watch’ ” (Mark 14:34, WE).

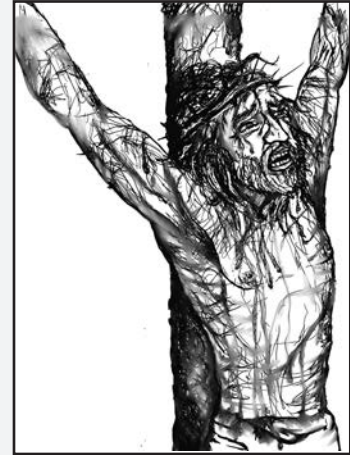
Whatever pain Jesus suffered in His 33 years here on earth, none of it compared to the pain He suffered in His final hours before He died on the cross. Before anyone sinned, God planned for Jesus to become the offering for our sins (Ephesians 1:1–4; 2 Timothy 1:8, 9; Titus 1:1, 2). Now that plan was happening.

Read Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:33–36; and Luke 22:41–44. What do these verses tell us about Jesus’ suffering in Gethsemane?

“Jesus stepped away, just a little, from His followers. But He did not go too far away so that they couldn’t see or hear Him. Then Jesus fell on the ground. Jesus felt that sin separated Him from His Father. The separation was so big that Jesus shook with pain. But He did not use His power as God to escape this suffering. As a man, Jesus must suffer for man’s sin. As a man, Jesus must suffer God’s anger against sin.

“Now Jesus had an experience He never had before. Maybe better than anyone else, Zechariah explains what Jesus suffered at that time: ‘The LORD All-Powerful says, “Sword, wake up and strike [kill] the shepherd, my friend! Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will run away. And I will punish those little ones.” ’ Zechariah 13:7, [ERV]. Jesus was the substitute for man. As his substitute, Jesus now suffered God’s punishment against sin. Jesus saw what God’s punishment meant. Before this time, Jesus helped people by going to God for them. Now Jesus deeply wanted someone to go to God for Him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 686, adapted.

Think about what happened to Jesus in Gethsemane. God already started to put on Jesus the sins from everyone. Try to make a picture in your mind of that heavy experience. God has never asked any human before then or since that time to do what Jesus did. What does this story about Jesus tell us about God’s love for us? What hope does God’s love give you?



“As his [man’s] substitute, Jesus now suffered God’s punishment against sin.”

JESUS ON THE CROSS (Mark 15:38)

Dying on a cross was one of the most terrible punishments the Romans gave to anyone. The cross was the worst way to die. So, we can feel sorry for anyone who died on a cross. Most of all, we can feel sorry for Jesus. He didn't do anything wrong!

We must always remember that Jesus came in a human body the same as ours. He was beaten. He was whipped. Nails were hammered into His hands and feet. As Jesus hung on the cross, His own body weight pulled Him down against the nails and tore at His deep cuts. The pain must have been awful! This was a terrible death, even for the worst criminal. But Jesus was innocent of any crimes. So, it was not fair at all that He should die on a cross.

What happened during the time Jesus died? How do these things show us that more was going on than most people there understood at the time?

Matthew 27:45 _____

Matthew 27:51, 52 _____

Mark 15:38 _____



Jesus was innocent of any crimes. So, it was not fair at all that He should die on a cross.

For sure, much more was happening in this story than just the death of an innocent man. The Bible tells us that God's anger against sin, our sin, was poured on Jesus. Jesus on the cross suffered a holy God's holy anger against sin, the sins of all humans. So, we can be sure that Jesus suffered something far more painful than any human can ever know.

Jesus suffered for you personally on the cross. What hope and comfort does His suffering give you?

THE SUFFERING GOD (Philippians 1:29)

We may as well get used to it: we will suffer until the Second Coming. We suffer when we choose to sin. The Bible does not promise us anything different.

Read Acts 14:22; Philippians 1:29; and 2 Timothy 3:12. What do these verses tell us about suffering?

For sure, we will suffer in this life. At the same time, we must remember two things.

First, Jesus our Lord suffered worse than any of us ever have or will. At the cross, Jesus “took [accepted] on Himself our troubles and carried [suffered] our sorrows [the same painful experiences we have in life]” (Isaiah 53:4, NLV). When we suffer punishment, we don’t suffer for anyone else. But Jesus suffered for everyone. He who never sinned became “sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21, KJV). Jesus suffered in a way that we, as sinners, can’t begin to understand.

Second, as we suffer, we need to remember that Jesus suffered for us. That is, we must remember what God promises to give us because of Jesus’ offering for us on the cross.

Read John 10:28; Romans 6:23; Titus 1:2; and 1 John 2:25. What do these verses promise us?

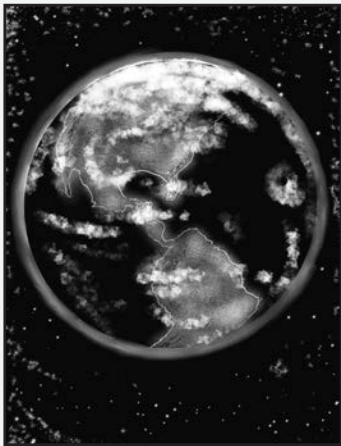
Whatever we suffer in this life, we can stand perfect in Jesus right now. How is that possible? Jesus accepted our punishment on the cross. So, by faith we have the promise of everlasting life. Thanks to Jesus, His perfect life, and His perfect offering, a better future awaits us. Thanks to Jesus, we will live forever on a new earth. Sin will be no more. Suffering and death will be destroyed forever. God promises all these things to us because of Jesus and everything He suffered for us. We have so much to be thankful for because of our Savior!



**Thanks to Jesus,
His perfect life, and
His perfect offering,
a better future awaits us.**

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Gethsemane,” pages 685–697, and “Calvary,” pages 741–757, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“Three times Jesus said that prayer. Three times His human side pulled back from giving Himself up as an offering for our sins. But now our Savior sees a vision of the whole history of humans. He sees that sinners will be destroyed if no one helps them. Jesus sees that humans are helpless. Jesus sees that sin is powerful. Jesus sees the pain and suffering of humans. Jesus sees that humans must die. So, He makes His decision. He will save humans no matter what price He must pay. Jesus accepts that He must spill His blood to save us. Because of Jesus, millions of people will have everlasting life. Jesus left the courts in heaven. There, everything is clean, happy, and full of glory. Jesus left all that glory to save the one lost sheep. That is, Jesus came to save the one planet that sinned by breaking God’s law. Jesus will not reject that work. He will become the sin offering for the people on this earth. He will offer Himself for people who chose to sin. Jesus’ prayer now changes. He prays only that He will do what God sent Him to do: ‘My Father, if it is possible, don’t make me drink from this cup [death on the cross]. But do what you want, not what I want’ [Matthew 26:42, ERV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 690, 693, adapted.



“Jesus came to save the one planet that sinned by breaking God’s law.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How does it help us in our sufferings to know that God Himself suffered more than any of us ever can suffer? What must we remember about sufferings?
- ② Review the things that Jesus suffered. What were the tests that Jesus took and passed for us? How are these tests the same as the ones we take? How are they different? What can we learn from Jesus about how He behaved and acted during His times of suffering?
- ③ What are some of your favorite Bible promises? How do they help you when you suffer? Share the promises with the class.
- ④ What important Bible truths did you learn this quarter? What questions did you have that got answered? What questions do you have? How can we help each other find answers to the questions?

PART 13: GETTING READY TO SEE JESUS!

The evil spirits no longer talk to Father. Father believes that Jesus won a big fight against Satan on the day Father got baptized. That is why Satan tried so hard to keep Father's baptism from happening.

Peace fills the family home now. Mother helps in the church and continues to sing in the choir. Junior is 17 and finishing high school.

Father is 43. He shares his story in churches all over Brazil. Many people who hear it give their lives to Jesus. 16 people in the city of Caori gave their lives to Jesus after they heard Father's story. Caori is the city where Father first made his decision to accept Jesus as his personal Savior.

Father gives all the praise to God. He says, "The Holy Spirit changes people's lives, not me. I see the Spirit working on their hearts as they listen to my story."

Father also sells Bibles. He gave a Bible to his mother, his older sister, and his two younger brothers. He also prays for them. His mother stopped worshiping in the Candomblé temple long before Father got baptized. When she learned evil spirits tried to kill her son, she wanted nothing more to do with them.

Father is filled with joy. He loves his new life in Jesus. Father continues to pray and read the Bible every day. He remembers 1 Peter 5:8, which says, "Control yourselves and be careful! The devil is your enemy, and he goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to attack and eat" (ERV). Father also remembers Jesus' warning: " 'When an evil spirit comes out of a person, it travels through [across] dry places looking for a place to rest, but it finds none. So, it says, "I will go back to the home I left." When it comes back, it finds that home still [continues to be] empty. It is all neat and clean. Then the evil spirit goes out and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself. They all go and live there, and that person has even more trouble than before. It is the same way with the evil people who live today' " (Matthew 12:43–45, ERV).

But Father is not afraid. "The devil has no control over me now. That's what I preach in every church I visit."

Father wishes with all his heart for the day when he will meet Jesus face to face. "I pray that Jesus won't give up on me. I also pray that I won't give Him up. I pray that I stay loyal and obedient, too. May God help me to stay strong in faith until the end. I have hope that I will see Jesus come."

Your 13th Sabbath Offering will help build eight churches in South America. Four of these churches will be built in Brazil, where Father (Eduardo Ferreira dos Santos) and his family live (see picture).

INSIDE Story by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



"Control yourselves and be careful! The devil is your enemy, and he goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to attack and eat" (1 Peter 5:8, ERV).

