

*Dear God,
Why won't you heal me?
Don't you care? Why must
Christians suffer?*



Jesus heals Jairus's Daughter

I am a severe migraine sufferer, and have been for most of my adult life. How many times have I asked God to take these from me; ten thousand times- once a day for 25 years?

I have spent many hours over many days for many years throughout several decades lying in bed, writhing in pain, praying yet receiving no relief. Out loud I have asked God countless times why He would not answer my prayer. What good was it doing me or anyone else for me to be in this pain? Family outings were spoiled, plans ruined, and even going to church is often interrupted. I still get these headaches. Does that mean God doesn't care for me? I know that He has heard my prayers.

God must care for me because He sent His Son to die for me. (Would I send my son to die for Him?) He must care for me a lot! So when I prayed 10,000 times, what did God say to me, how did He answer? Why didn't I seem to hear an answer for so many years? I worded my pleading prayers every possible way that I could.

One answer to my prayers was to find a doctor that could help. Under the care of Dr. R. Michael Gallagher, one of the world's leading authorities on headaches and treatment, I have greatly improved. I still get a dozen or more migraines per month. Effective abortive medicines have become available in recent years; nonetheless, often these medications are slow or are ineffective on the worst of my headaches, which can last several days.

So what is God's answer when a Christian is suffering and praying for help? He heals multitudes of sick people. He just doesn't heal everyone. Though He has the power and authority, He doesn't for reasons we don't understand. I had a tough time with this discernment until I read "In the Grip of Grace" by Max Lucado. One chapter in this book contemplates an illness or circumstance the apostle Paul had, which is not named in the Bible, but was apparently of major discomfort to Paul. Paul's attitude was unlike mine:

^{5b}I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses...⁷To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." ¹⁰Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹¹That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:5b, 7-11 NIV.

When I read this scripture, I immediately realized how trivial my headaches are compared to the importance of eternal life. It touched me so I cried and cried, and thanked God for His grace that would allow me to spend eternity with my LORD free of ailments. Sickness, disease, and death are a result of first sin. God has no obligation for the fall of man and the price that came with the fall. But He provided a substitute to take away our punishment of death.

I shared with my mother what this scripture meant to me. Little did I know that the very same verses got her through a difficult, bedridden pregnancy 45 years earlier. My sister, Jane, was the result of that pregnancy. Jane is the one that told me of a friend, Dr. R. Michael Gallagher, who diagnoses and treats headaches. She convinced me to make the 340 mile round trips to see him. Can you see that God began answering my prayer, through 2 Corinthians chapter 12, decades before I prayed it?

Is spending a joyful eternity with God and other loved ones within the beauty of Heaven more important to you than the trivial trials of this life? God has a master plan and wants eternal life for us. But we have sinned and interrupted God's plan. So God sent His Son to pay the price of our sins so that we might be saved, if we will just accept this free gift. The Bible says:

- *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Romans 6:23.
- *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Ephesians 2:8-9.
- *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* John 14:1-3.

To accept God's free gift of salvation, pray, *"Dear Heavenly Father, I am a sinner and I have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature. I repent of my sins and accept Jesus here and now as my Savior. Jesus, save me by your blood shed for me. Help me turn from my sins. I now give my life to you. In your name I pray, Jesus, Amen."*

Suggested reading:

Lucado, Max, *In the Grip of Grace*, Dallas, TX, Word Publishing, 1996.

Epp, Theodore, *Why Do Christians Suffer?*, Back to the Bible, 1970.

Lerch, Harold, *Did God Really Say That?*, Fairfax, Virginia, Xulon Press, 2002.

Lerch, Harold, *God's People, God's Plan*, Fairfax, Virginia, Xulon Press, 2002.

Interesting points from Theodore Epp:

- Suffering is a result of sin. It is physical and mental. It can build us- witness Job- and produces spiritual growth.
- Satan hates God and wanted to drive a wedge between himself and God. Man has free will and chose to sin.
- Christ was the supreme sufferer. Although He himself is perfect, His suffering brought us hope and eternal life.
- Sickness tests our faith. If we can overcome our trials, we will find joy within.
- God permits suffering to chasten us. Chastisement can be disciplinary, corrective, educative, or preventive.
- Suffering also can be purifying, fruit bearing, perfecting, and reducing of the ego.
- Learn how to suffer, with and for Christ. We should not despise the chastening. Do not become calloused, "murmur," criticize God, or give up.

- Renew your confidence in God. Pray. Count your blessings.
- Praise the LORD, love others, and submit yourself to God.
- Glorify God!

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