



July 2025

BE AN AMBASSADOR OF PEACE

It's sad, but I can't remember the last time when America seemed at peace. Maybe after VE Day and VJ Day, but that was before my time. Since then, it seems rare that the entire country was peaceful. Today? Yuck! People shooting at law enforcement officers of all levels, antisemitism (still), people hating the President or Governor or whomever doesn't do EVERYTHING they think needs to be done; even traffic violators are demonstrating a lack of peace. So, what does that have to do with you and me? I want to suggest that WE can be **"Ambassadors of Peace."**

Colossians 3:15 – ***"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful."***

Matthew 5:9 – ***"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."***

Hebrews 12:14 – ***"Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."***

So, what comes to mind as you read this? Maybe someone you might want to start praying for? Someone with whom you can have lunch or coffee? Let the Holy Spirit lead you, and make sure YOU are full of the ***"peace that passes all understanding."*** (Philippians 4:7).

Pastor Jim

SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN

We are probably one of the most BLESSED churches in the world; wonderful members and attendees, great employees and volunteers and, of course, a super pastor. Because of your generosity, our Church is financially stable and able to keep up with operational demands, expand our technical footprint (new cameras, live streamed services, updated website, daily devotionals, online giving, and more to come... stay tuned), as well as be able to engage talented speakers to fill in during Pastor Jim's absence. Also, we were able to share the cost of the parking lot re-paving, amongst other things.

Additionally, we are able through our Missions Program in to generously give to several charities each year. This year our Missions Director, Jacque Baker, and her team are set to give out



Dr. Jim Brown, Pastor

\$42,000 in donations, mostly North County Charities, all of it coming from you and your generosity.

All of us on the Board of Directors are extremely grateful to each and everyone of you. It makes our job so much easier because there are no worries about finance. We are looking into the future to making more improvements to our physical situation, i.e. the Conference Center, and are praying that we can count on your continued generosity.

There are numerous passages in the Bible about generosity, so here are 2 of my favorites:

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 – ***“Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER.”***

Deuteronomy 15:10 – ***“Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will BLESS YOU in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.”***

Thanks to each and every one of you for being a part of this super friendly, supportive, and fun Church.

God Bless,

Art Pedersen,

Chairman, Board of Directors

ANSWERS TO BIG QUESTIONS

from Geoff Glossop, Apologetics and Bible Teacher

DOES SALVATION COME THROUGH SUFFERING?

Life's Troubles

Last month's article included the statement, "Difficulties abound in life: with relationships, jobs, health, and day-to-day activities. Christians are not exempt from these difficulties; in fact, they may experience even more than their fair share."¹ What has a Christian done to deserve more than a "fair share" of life's troubles?

As believers, the Bible indicates that any suffering God allows us to experience on Earth will be for our ultimate good, although this benefit may not be realized until we are in His eternal kingdom. The hackneyed, well-worn verse in Romans chapter 8, "we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose,"² may be well used, but it is also absolutely true, as is confirmed by 2 Timothy 3:16.³ You can take it to the bank! Of course, if you don't love God, then this verse, as the text clearly

states, does not apply to you. Although He may still use your suffering “for the good of those who love him.”

1 Timothy 2:3-4 reads, ***"God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"***. However, the Bible also states, in Psalm 91:14, ***"The Lord says, 'I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name.'"*** From this we can see that while God's preference is for all of mankind to join Him in heaven, His will and His plan for us to spend eternity in His presence are only for those who choose to love Him.

Religious Suffering

Professor Howard Culbertson writes that suffering features prominently in most religions. The Hindu faith relates suffering to karma, brought about as a consequence of past actions, possibly in a former life. Within Buddhism, craving is identified as the leading cause of suffering, which is regarded as an inevitable aspect of existence. Islam posits that suffering is a test of faith, with those closest to Allah facing the most trials. Christianity teaches that, after the Fall, suffering is part of being human. Jesus Christ's suffering and crucifixion provide believers with a model of how to endure suffering with faith and grace. ⁴

Christian Suffering

My own view on Christian suffering is two-fold. First, I believe that God is careful to maintain a choice for us while we are on earth. We cannot be happy without the existence of sadness. There are no heroes without adversity. To maintain a balance, some suffering is a necessary part of a life where our most important single action is to choose to follow God, or not. Second, God uses circumstances to bring us closer to Him, as C. S. Lewis states in his book, *The Problem of Pain*, “pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” ⁵

As Lewis indicates in the above quote, our response to suffering is of major importance in building our relationships with God. Instead of just enduring suffering, we can lean on God, trust Him to guide us through it, and emerge closer to Him.

Suffering and Salvation

Does our suffering play a role in salvation? Not directly perhaps, but it may be a part of the circumstances that lead a person to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, which is the **only** path to salvation.

The truth is, salvation itself does come through suffering, but not our own suffering. Jesus suffered and died to pay the price for every sin that was or will be committed by each and every member of the human race for the entirety of mankind's existence. That price is paid in full. There is nothing we can do, or suffer, that will earn us a place in heaven. When our own

suffering has a divine permission, it is because God is working in us, honing us and shaping us for the part we will play in the fulfilment of His plan for mankind, both earthly and eternal.

Next: Is Love All You Really Need?

1. Got Questions Ministries, "Why does Paul call our difficulties a momentary light affliction? (2 Cor 4:17)", <https://www.gotquestions.org/momentary-light-affliction.html>.
2. Romans 8:28, NIV.
3. 2 Timothy 3:16, NIV.
4. Prof. Howard Culbertson, *How Different Religions Respond to Suffering*, Southern Nazarene University, <https://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/suffer.htm#>.
5. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, Harper Collins 2001.

FOR BETTER OR VERSE: A Calendar of Bible Verses by Month and Day

Here's a fun way to read 365 meaningful scriptures this year. One scripture a day... each day of the month has a corresponding verse for that date. As you wake up each day, read the verse designated for that day. Last month we gave you the July scriptures.

Here's your **August** list (month 8):

Romans 8:1, Luke 8:2, Romans 8:3, Acts 8:4, Proverbs 8:5, Romans 8:6, Acts 8:7, Proverbs 8:8, Proverbs 8:9, Hebrews 8:10, John 8:11, John 8:12, Isaiah 8:13, Proverbs 8:14, Romans 8:15, John 8:16, Isaiah 8:17, Romans 8:18, John 8:19, John 8:20, Proverbs 8:21, Proverbs 8:22, Proverbs 8:23, Luke 8:24, Proverbs 8:25, Acts 8:26, Romans 8:27, John 8:28, Mark 8:29, Proverbs 8:30, Romans 8:31.

ENJOY A FEW JULY 4th PICTURES



