

LECTURE 2: Mapping Sufferers & Caregivers Biblically

4, 11, 18, 25 May 2023, 730-930pm

Class Description

We live in a broken world where suffering is inevitable because of sin, and because of the cursed condition of the world since the Fall. The shepherding God's people into eternal life with God inevitably involves pastorally caring for those who are suffering. In Lecture 3 & 4, we'll focus on specific suffering e.g. loss & grief, chronic illness, trauma and marital conflict. But now, we must first gain some biblical clarity on suffering and the sufferer. Doing this will in turn help us understand our roles as caregivers biblically so that we can offer care meaningfully and faithfully.

Learning Goals

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Think biblically about the *nature of suffering* and its place in the life of Christians, so as to avoid the mistake of giving simplistic patronising counsel and care to sufferers under your care.
- Gain better biblical understanding on how to think about the *sufferer wholistically* - as 'embodied soul' and as 'sinner, saint & sufferer'. This will in turn shape our care for sufferers.
- Begin a journey of increasing *self-awareness* as caregivers, in order to develop a faithful and godly posture that reflects the gospel, loves the sufferers, and glorifies God.
- Gain an appreciation of how God designed the *local church* to be the context through which both sufferers and caregivers are both ministered to by Him. Hence, developing a biblical framework and strategies that care for sufferers utilising the gifts God has given His local church.
- Reflect and assess the pastoral care approach of your local church.

Required Pre-Reading

- MILLER, Letters from Jack Miller: The Heart of a Servant Leader (p.26-29, 267-270)

Recommended Reading

On Biblical Suffering

- CARSON, How Long O Lord.
- POWLISON, God's Grace in Your Suffering

On Self-Awareness

- BROWN & ERRINGTON, Bowen Family System Theory in Christian Ministry.

On Embodied Soul & Local Church

- EMLET, Understanding the Influences on the Human Heart¹
- EMLET, Saints, Sufferers, and Sinners: Loving Others as God Loves Us²
- LANE & TRIPP, How People Change³
- HAMBRICK, How to Create Effective Care Teams in Your Church⁴
- WELCH, Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom
- ADENEY & HEATH, Organizing Love in Church

Homework

How has your understanding of suffering been challenged, or sharpened, or fortified by today's class? How have you predominantly view the sufferers you care for – sinner, saint or sufferer, and how has that shaped your ministry and care towards them?

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1. Suffering in the Bible

- a) **Suffer because of broken Creation**
(Gen.2:1-3, 3:1-24; Rom. 8:19-22)

- b) **Suffer because of others' sin**
(Gen. 4:8, 6:9-14; Rom.1:18-32, 5:12)

- c) **Suffer because of your own sin**
(Rom.1:18-32)

- d) **Suffer the persecution for your faith**
(2Tim.3:12, Heb.10:32-34, 11:35-40)

- e) **Suffering produces endurance**
(Rom.5:3-5)

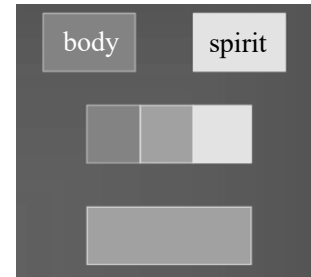
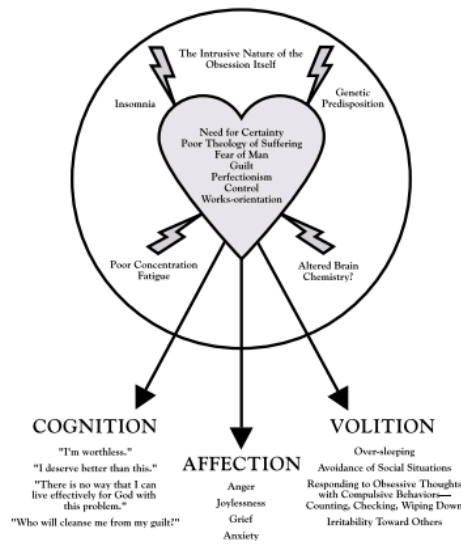
- f) **Suffering of Jesus**
(Hebrews 4:15, Isaiah 53:3)

- g) **Suffering under God's sovereignty**
(Job 13:3, 13-15, 38:2-4, 42:2-6, Hab.3:16-19, Acts 2:23)

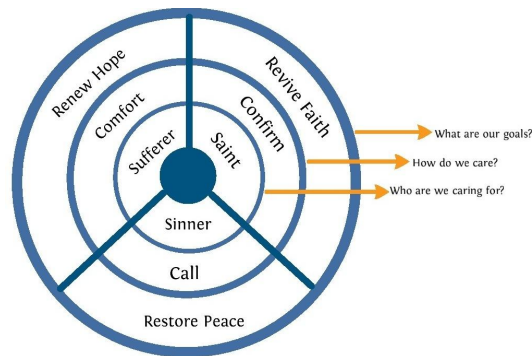
- h) **No more suffering**
(Revelation 21:1-4)

2. Mapping the Sufferer Biblically

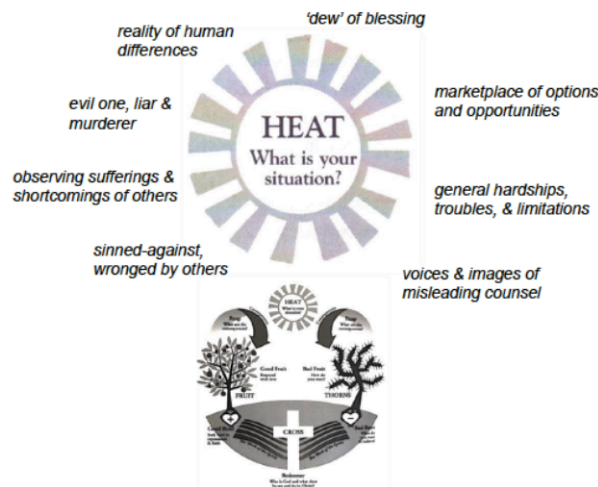
a) Embodied Soul¹ (Psalm 63:1)



b) Sinner, Saint & Sufferer² (James 1:19-21, 1:2-3, 4:4-10)



c) 'Heat' in Lane & Tripp's 3 Trees³ (Psalm 88, James 1:1-15)



d) Sufferer in Christ's Body (James 5:13-20)

3. Mapping the Caregiver Biblically

a) Caregiver's Self-Awareness

- i. I.R. = F (me, others)
- ii. Sinner, Saint, Sufferer
- iii. James 4:1-4, Luke 6:43-45
- iv. Letters of Jack Miller (p.26-29 & 267-270)
- v. Bowen Family System Theory (p.280-287)

b) Caregiver's Posture

- i. Fundamental Posture of Humility & Love (Eph.4:1-2)
- ii. Posture of Collaborative Prayerfulness (Jas.1:2-8)
- iii. Posture of 'Serpents & Doves' (Matthew 10:16)
- iv. Relating as 'fellow Sinners, Saints, Sufferers'
- v. Relating to Those Suffering (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
- vi. Relating to Those with Difficult Personalities (Mat.7:3-5)

c) Caregiving in Christ's Body

- i. James 5:13-20
- ii. 1 Corinthians 1:12-27

d) Caregiver's Role, Team & Support⁴

Care Team	Nature of Care/Situation	Nature of Team
Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common situations e.g. bereavement, new born, post-surgery, parents away. • Logistical e.g. meal roster, rides arrangement, grocery, laundry, equipment sourcing i.e. 'Do not drop the ball' so that relief is achieved e.g. meals delivered. • Compassion i.e. regular check-in to 'just listen' & 'be there', prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-based, non-professional, friends helping friends. • Voluntary, caregivers & recipients agree. • Often within existing community or bible study groups. • Actively supportive, not advisory, provide relief • Short-term, duration established early, easily formed/dissolved • No need training or expertise, just empathy, commitment, compassion
Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis e.g. suicidal ideation, sexually-violated, bereavement, diagnosed with terminal cancer, divorce. • Hard choices need to be made e.g. legal, medical, safety, social. • Privacy matter, information involved more private • Heavier emotional weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need careful selecting and orienting of crisis team. • With hard choices, crisis team provides support and acts as sounding board, not decision-maker • Know how to honour privacy • External experts and jurisdiction may be involved e.g. medical professionals, legal advisers, social workers, law enforcement.
Crisis with Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistant to help e.g. abusive husband • Competing ideas within those involved e.g. tough love, long-suffering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamics of informal coalitions to be understood by caregiving team • Not to fix the situation, but to create a context where person receiving care is freed to take healthy steps. • Good documentation • Need team preparation and training.

e) Caregiver's Self-care