

"HUME'S HAPPENINGS"

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Greetings brethren,

Thank you for your support, it is very much appreciated. Following is my report for **July 2023**.

QUEENSLAND VISITOR .

About two or three times each year a lady (Helen) who is a member of a Brisbane (Queensland) congregation worships with us at Eastside.

Helen comes to Launceston to visit an elderly aunt, and there is always much rejoicing by our members when Helen walks through the door.

We are so blessed at Eastside to be well known by brethren throughout Australia, and during the course of a year we have a large number of mainland brethren visit and worship with us.

Most times I do not report to you about them, but we sure do appreciate them including us in their travel schedules.

QUERIES - HOBART BROTHER .

Literally every week I am busy answering questions from a brother in Christ who is a member of the Mornington Hill congregation in our capital city.

He sends me text messages about news items that occur in Australia and around the world, and seeks answers from me from a Biblical perspective.

Just one example this month was the rape and murder of a teenager, and this brother queried as to why a man would commit such a crime and why God allows such innocent young women to suffer.

I have compiled a sermon on, "*Suffering and sin*" and made it into a Bound Lesson Booklet, in order to be able to answer questions such as the above.

I have attached this sermon to this report for your perusal . Your feedback re my sermons is always appreciated , as I need to be shown when I may not have perceived something that other brethren can see .

BENEVOLENCE BASKETS .

Each Tuesday evening when brethren come to our home for dinner before the 7pm - 8 pm Bible Class , they bring items of groceries and place them in two washing baskets .

When these two baskets are overflowing , Jackie covers them with colorful see - through paper , each with a card that says , "*From the members of the Eastside church"* (not from the Eastside church) , and we deliver them to the Principle of the school where we conduct our worship services .

The Principle chooses two needy families of his students and presents them with these grocery baskets . We donate two baskets at least two times each year .

This program has no connection with the work of the Eastside church or the treasury of the congregation , but rather is an initiative of our individual members .

After each delivery of two baskets , Jackie then buys two new baskets , places them in our lounge room where the brethren can see them , and the process starts again .

HILLWOOD FOOTBALL CLUB .

There is just three more Australian Rules Football roster matches to go before the playoff finals begin . Jackie and I have just one more Saturday of beginning work at 7 .30 am in the Hillwood Football Club's food outlet (the other two games are "away" games at opposition teams venues) .

Following the finals being completed , this football club will hold an annual dinner and trophy presentation night in a large reception centre in our city .

Each year I am asked to compere the function and the club's committee request that I lead a prayer of thanks prior to the meal (which is rare in Australian culture) .

Jackie and my involvement with this sporting club has given us countless opportunities to "sow the seed" and "preach" the gospel .

I have been privileged to have conducted four wedding ceremonies of members of the club, giving me opportunity to teach Bible lessons to an “audience” that otherwise I would never have contact with.

MY WEB PAGE .

This month, as time permitted, I began to convert my Web Page sermons and Bible Class lessons from PDF format to WORD format.

I am doing this so that anyone who downloads my lessons will be able to print, edit, cut and paste, and use all or part of these lessons as they desire.

NEW PROCEDURE FOR DOWNLOADING MY LESSONS .

1. Type <https://www.barrysbiblelessons.com.au> into the url box .
2. Click on **"Sermons"** .
3. Click on **"Subject"** required .
4. Click on **Sermon / Bible Class** required (“Download”) .
5. click on required **lesson** (in drop down box) .
6. Click on **“Enable editing”** .
7. **Read**, **print**, **edit**, **cut** and **paste** lesson as required .

LESSONS TAUGHT BY ME AT EASTSIDE IN JULY .

Most of my Bible class and sermon subjects take several weeks to cover due to the nature of the Eastside members who need constant repetition, detailed explanations, and mutual discussions among brethren re personal applications of Biblical principles in their lives .

Also, I encourage members to ask questions re anything they do not understand or even something that is a side issue to what we are actually studying at the time . Thus it is very rare for me to ever complete a lesson in one Bible class .

SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS .

- July 2 - *"The object of saving faith"* .
9 - *"The object of saving faith"* .

- 16 - *"The object of saving faith".*
- 23 - *"Confessing our faith in Christ".*
- 30 - *"Confessing our faith in Christ".*

SUNDAY SERMONS .

- July 2 - *"Meaning of worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4 : 24) .*
- 19 - *"Worship in spirit" .*
- 16 - *"Worship in truth" .*
- 23 - *"A mirror for the soul" .*
- 30 - *"Suffering and sin" .*

MIDWEEK BIBLE CLASS .

- July 4 - Viktor taught from **Romans 13** .
- 11 - Viktor taught from **Romans 14** .
- 18 - Viktor taught from **Romans 15** .
- 25 - Viktor taught from **Romans 16** .

Following is a repeat of the items that form the basis of my activities each month .

REGULAR MONTHLY ACTIVITIES .

Set up school .

Jackie and I arrive about one hour early on Sunday morning along with two other members and we set up an "auditorium" in the gymnasium of the Ravenswood Heights Primary School .

"Friend day" lunch at our house for brethren and visitors after Sunday worship on the second or third Sunday in the month .

Midweek Bible Class : Continues to be at my house .

Study periods : Preparing sermons and Bible classes for Eastside's meetings .

Lesson booklets : Ongoing typing , photocopying , stapling , and binding

of new and replacement booklets for requests ,
and for display at our church meetings .

Study packs : Ongoing photocopying , stapling , and packaging of
these as time permits .

Letterboxing : Jackie and I make every effort to continue this project
on a weekly basis , but often a lack of time does
not allow this to happen .

Thank you once again for your wonderful support , please visit us if you
ever get the opportunity to do so ,

Yours in Christ ,

Barry Hume .

P . S . SUFFERING AND SIN

I have attached another one of my sermons
for you to see how and what I preach

SUFFERING AND SIN

INTRODUCTION

A . WHY DO PEOPLE SUFFER SO MUCH ?

Television and newspapers daily highlight the plight of suffering and
starving people throughout the world .

1. If someone says to you, "*I just cannot believe in your God, if He is as real and good and loving as you say, why does He allow suffering throughout the world*" ? How would you respond ?

2. The only child of two Christians is crippled by an accident caused by a drunk driver. The parents are now questioning why God let it happen to their child. What would you tell them ?

3. A neighbour is diagnosed with cancer and is told she has only six months to live. Her distraught daughter complains to you that it is not fair. What can you tell her ?

4. A Christian who is a business man is made bankrupt by a very unscrupulous partner. The Christian and his family are close to poverty stricken while the corrupt partner enjoys the "good life" in his new beach house. The Christian asks you, "*Why does God let me suffer while my partner is free to enjoy his ill - gotten gains*" ? How would you answer him ?

5. A man dives into a river to save a drowning child but drowns himself in the process. The media heralds him as a hero, but his wife wants to know why God let him drown. What would you tell her ?

B. SIN IS THE CAUSE OF ALL SUFFERING.

Ultimately, sin is the cause of all suffering, either directly or indirectly. We tend to shy away from the stark reality of this fact, but it is the only answer that comes to us from God's word.

SUFFERING AS A NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF SIN

A. SOMETIMES THIS CONNECTION IS OBVIOUS.

The homosexual who contracts AIDS or the promiscuous heterosexual who contracts venereal diseases knows that such sinful behaviour results in suffering (though most will not admit it !).

Likewise, the thief who is caught and punished, or the drunk who is crippled in a car accident, suffer as a direct consequence of their own actions.

Such suffering is merely the natural consequence of violating the biological and social / moral order of the world which God has created.

B. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

The book of Proverbs focuses on the moral order of God's creation, and is therefore filled with warnings about the natural consequences of sin.

1 : 24 - 33 11 : 19 21 : 25 23 : 29 - 30
24 : 30 - 34 26 : 27 28 : 17 - 22

SUFFERING AS PUNISHMENT FOR SIN

A. OVER / ABOVE NATURAL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

Sometimes God has sent direct punishment over and beyond the natural consequences of our sins, such as the situation with Nadab and Abihu - **Lev 10 : 1 - 2.**

Read about Achan and his family, how his sin caused Israel to be defeated and he and his family were stoned to death - **Josh 7 : 1 - 26.**

B. UZZA IS A SOBERING EXAMPLE FOR US TODAY.

God decreed that if anyone touched the items in the tabernacle they would die (**Numbers 4 : 15**), thus He instructed them how the ark was to be carried using poles - **Ex 25 : 10 - 15.**

The Israelites decided to carry the ark on a cart (instead of God's way), and this resulted in Uzza being struck dead for putting out his hand to touch the ark - **1 Chron 13 : 1 - 10.**

Such divinely administered punishment was not limited to just the Old Testament days - **Acts 5 : 1 - 11.**

SUFFERING BECAUSE OF THE SINS OF OTHERS

A. EXAMPLE OF ACHAN.

When Achan sinned, the whole nation of Israel suffered defeat in battle and thirty - six men were killed - **Josh 7 : 1 - 5**.

Sometimes we suffer because we are associated with other people who are sinners, because we live in a sin - filled world. E.G. Drunk drivers, murderers, rapists, thieves, and greedy people etc.

B. MANY WILL SUFFER BECAUSE THEY ARE "GOOD" PEOPLE.

The more righteous one is, the more they will attract all the "attentions" of evil doers who will try to conform the righteous person to their evil ways and failing that they will try to destroy them - **1 Pet 3 : 16 - 17** & **4 : 3 - 5**.

It was because Job was a righteous man that he drew Satan's attention, resulting in Job's suffering - **Job 1 : 1 - 22** & **2 : 7 - 8**.

Until God brings the final judgment, good people will always suffer innocently at the hands of unrighteous people - **Matt 5 : 10** & **1 Pet 2 : 19 - 23**.

CONSIDER SUFFERING TO BRING REPENTANCE FROM SIN

A. GOD'S "MEGAPHONE".

C. S. Lewis said, *"pain is the megaphone God shouts through when He wants to get our attention"*.

Sometimes God allows suffering, not as punishment for our sins, but rather, to wake us up and get us to repent of our sins.

God brought upon Israel famine , drought , crop disease , plague and invasion by enemies to try and get them to repent of their sins - **Amos 4 : 6 - 11** & **Lev 26 : 18 - 33** .

Such suffering is partly punishment and partly warning , just as when a parent disciplines a child .

Whether such punishment is suffering or a warning to repent of sin depends largely upon how we respond to it .

If we harden our hearts , it is just punishment . But if we are softened and repent , we have then turned what might have been punishment into a gracious warning from our Father , remembering that , "*Whom the Lord loves He disciplines*" - **Heb 12 : 6** .

Our suffering may even serve as a warning to others to turn from their sin - **Lk 13 : 1 - 5** .

SUFFERING TO KEEP **US FROM SIN**

A. SUFFERING MAKES US STRONGER .

God may allow us to suffer just to enable us to be able to resist some of the temptations we will face in the future . Suffering strengthens us , it builds character , determination , and endurance . It makes us humble and obedient . This is why Israel suffered hardship in the wilderness for forty years - **Deut 8 : 1 - 6** .

That is why Paul's thorn in the flesh remained with him (**2 Cor 12 : 7 - 10**) , and Jesus Himself learned obedience from the things which He suffered - **Heb 5 : 8** .

James says that trials produce endurance , which in turn makes us "perfect and complete" and ultimately equips us for a crown of life - **Jms 1 : 2 - 4** & **12** .

B. WHAT ABOUT BABIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO DIE ?

Even the deaths of children and other innocents may be partly explained as a prevention of sin . Jeroboam's son died and received a decent burial because he was the only decent member of the family , thus he was delivered from the calamity that was to overwhelm the rest of the royal house - **1 Kings 14 : 12 - 16** .

This same principle is likely part of the explanation for the death of children in wicked nations such as the Canaanites destroyed by Israel. Such children were actually being delivered from an inevitable life of sinful paganism.

C. WHAT ABOUT DAILY PAIN AND HEALTH PROBLEMS ?

In this same category we may perhaps classify certain more trivial pains and sufferings that come to us in the normal course of daily life. Pain from disease reminds us that we live in a corruptible, sin-cursed world (**Gen 3**) in which all things will eventually pass away on the final day - **Rev 20 : 11 - 21 : 5**.

Thus we take warning not to trust in ourselves or the physical, but to look beyond this life to the next. Much of our pain and suffering should serve to remind us of our mortality as the result of sin, and encourage us to remember sin is our enemy and how much trouble it has caused.

At the same time it should make us all the more grateful to God for His graceful provision in Jesus Christ that we may overcome sin and attain a home with Him in heaven where there is no more sin or suffering.

SUFFERING FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS

A. JOSEPH AND PAUL ARE GREAT EXAMPLES.

Sometimes a righteous person may not suffer merely from the deeds of others, but rather on behalf of others, even when that person knows they are sinners.

Joseph told his brothers that the things he suffered had been for their good (**Gen 45 : 1 - 8**), and Paul rejoiced that his imprisonment had led to a more fervent proclamation of the gospel - **Phil 1 : 12 - 18**.

B. WHAT ABOUT US TODAY ?

We should be very reticent to explain our own suffering in this way because such a willingness to suffer on behalf of others is very rare (**Rom 5 : 7**), but if and when we do suffer for others, we then become truly like Christ - **Col 1 : 24**.

Our suffering also equips us to relate to the suffering of others, thus we can empathise and sympathise with others in pain, being equipped through our own experiences of suffering to counsel others who suffer similarly - **2 Cor 1 : 3 - 4**.

SUFFERING

TO GLORIFY GOD

A. OUR ATTITUDE TO SUFFERING IS CRUCIAL.

Whatever the cause of our suffering, Christians can transform it to a higher purpose if we patiently endure it. We can show that the power of God is greater than the power of Satan.

We can use the suffering that comes as a consequence of sin as an occasion to triumph over sin and thereby glorify God - **1 Pet 4 : 12 - 16**.

B. NOTE SOMETHING WE MUST ALWAYS CONSIDER.

The above reasons for suffering are nearly always intertwined, seldom can suffering be explained by just one factor.

MISCELLANEOUS CONSIDERATIONS

A. THE SUFFERING / SIN CONNECTION IS OFTEN NOT CLEAR.

Often the suffering we experience is so far removed from the sin that precipitated it, so indirect, that we fail to see the connection.

The fact that suffering does not seem to be distributed among people in any clear or reasonable relation to their individual sinfulness causes us to doubt that there is any connection.

E. G. Sinners who are a picture of health and devout Christians who are eaten up with cancer. Or motor accidents where an innocent child was killed and the drunk who caused the accident left unharmed - **Ps 73 : 3 - 9**.

We know that most of our own sins have not been followed by any clear and immediate punishment (**Eccl 8 : 11**) but in such cases we should thank God for His longsuffering with us - **2 Pet 3 : 8 - 10** .

Thus we say to ourselves , *"maybe some suffering is the result of sin , but surely not all suffering can be explained this way"* .

B . WHAT ABOUT THE BLIND MAN IN JN 9 : 1 - 2 ?

Jesus said that his blindness did not result from his own sins nor from his parents sins as the disciples had presumed (**vs 3**) , thus the case of this blind man should certainly warn us against oversimplified explanations for suffering .

But if we use this case to try and prove that there is no connection between sin and suffering , we miss the point completely . The fact is , those disciples had very good reason to suppose that somebody's sin caused the man's blindness .

They knew from scripture that David's son died because of his parents sin - **2 Sam 12 : 13 - 14** .

They would have recalled that Jesus Himself had healed a paralytic with the words , *"Your sins are forgiven you"* - **Lk 5 : 17 - 26** .

They would have remembered Jesus telling the lame man by the pool of Bethesda , *"Do not sin any more , so that nothing worse may befall you"* - **Jn 5 : 5 - 14** .

This connection between sin and suffering is also implied again in **Jms 5 : 15 - 16** .

C . SUFFERING IS THE RESULT OF SIN !

I repeat , therefore , the assertion that suffering is caused by sin . But the case of the blind man reminds us that not all suffering can be explained by such a direct principle as the disciples tried to apply .

Thus we must always keep in mind and consider some of the more indirect ways in which sin brings suffering .

CONCLUSION

A. SUFFERING WILL ALWAYS BE PART OF OUR LIVES .

Because sin is either directly or indirectly the cause of all suffering, then suffering in some form or another must be a part of our existence as long as this sin - corrupted world lasts .

While allowing us our own free will, God cannot end suffering except by bringing the world to an end. This is what God has promised to do, and in the heavenly kingdom to come there will be no more sin, suffering, or corruption .

As Christians, we rejoice because we have such a place prepared for us - **Jn 14 : 1 - 3** .

We trust in God that, "*all things work together for good to those who love God*" - **Rom 8 : 28 - 39** .

B. SOMETHING TO ALWAYS REMEMBER .

Remember, it is not what happens to us that is so important, but rather what happens in us. Suffering will and must come our way, what really matters is how we respond to it.
