"I Have No Rest" (Job 3)

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As a society, I don't think we handle grieving well. I think there's a certain level of awkwardness that comes when people start to lament in public. We don't really know how to handle and process mourning and grieving. And, as I said last week, one of the signs that we don't handle pain well is the opioid epidemic. Just yesterday, *The Boston Globe* reported that in 2016, there were roughly 2,000 deaths in Massachusetts that were attributed to opioid use.[1] The number of suicides increases each year in the US. In 2015, the number was 44,193, which, as far I understand it, is both the highest number and the highest rate (13.75 per 100,000) since the Center for Disease Control tracked these numbers.[2]

Generally, there are few major ways that people deal with pain, suffering, grief, and mourning. One is to deny that these things are real, or that they're worth getting upset about. Another way is not to talk about these things, to suck it up and move on. A third way is to wallow in the pain and fail to see any hope, to refuse to believe that things can ever get better.

There are different varieties of each of those ways of dealing with pain and loss. That first way, of denying that there really is loss, or that evil is real, can be found in different religions and philosophies. There are forms of Hinduism and Buddhism that teach that evil is an illusion, or that we suffer only because we are not enlightened. If we would only see that all reality is one, we wouldn't be scared of death. In Hinduism, "Everything is actually part of the One, the All-Soul, the Absolute Spirit. Nothing is outside of it. Ultimately we cannot lose anything. We are part of everything."[3] Buddhism teaches that we only suffer because we desire things—whether those things are people or other objects—and attach ourselves to them. The key is not to desire those things, to become less attached to the things of this world.

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[1] Felice J. Freyer, "Nearly 2,000 Died from Opioid Overdoses in Mass. Last Year," *The Boston Globe*, February 17, 2017, https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/02/17/nearly-died-from-overdoses-mass-last-year/NdvnkZUYTQlCONAChnIivN/story.html, accessed February 18, 2017. See also Dustin Siggins, "The Opioid Crisis: Why It's Getting Worse," *The Stream*, February 18, 2017, https://stream.org/opioid-crisis-why-getting-worse.

[2] Statistics on fatalities can be found at the CDC's website: https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal_injury_reports.html, accessed February 18, 2017. In the 35-year period beginning in 1981, there were 1,147,777 suicides in the US.

[3] Timothy Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* (New York: Dutton, 2013), 40.

The idea that death is nothing to be feared is found in various philosophies in ancient Greece. The Stoics thought that death was simply the transference from one state of being to another. The philosopher Epictetus (A.D, 50–135) wrote, "[Y]ou will cease to be what you are, but become something else of which the universe then has need."[4] Luc Ferry, a contemporary philosopher, explains: "They mean simply this: . . . death does not really exist, that it is but a passage from one state to the next; not an annihilation but a different state of being."[5] Lest we think no one thinks this way today, it should be noted that people who are pantheists or New Age spiritualists believe the same kind of thing about their life force. If you've seen the movie *Avatar*, just think of what happens when Sigourney Weaver's character dies: Her body is absorbed into the planet, her life being reabsorbed into the divine force called Eywa, the deity that fills the fictional world of Pandora.

Some people think death isn't a transference from one state to another. Instead, it's just rest. The Greek philosopher Epicurus (341–370 B.C.) apparently said, "Death is nothing to us since, while we exist, death is not present, and when death arrives, we do not exist."[6] One of his followers, the poet Lucretius (c. 99 – c. 55 B.C.), wrote:

> … thou shalt sleep, and never wake again,
> And, quitting life, shalt quit thy living pain. . . .
> The worst that can befall thee, measured right,
> Is a sound slumber, and a long goodnight.[7]

And, lest we think that only ancient Greeks or Romans thought such things, consider the words of Robert Ingersoll (1833–1899), known as "The Great Agnostic." When his friend's child died, he said this at the graveside: "They who stand with breaking hearts around this little grave, need have no fear. The larger and nobler faith in all that is, and is to be, tells us that death, even at its worst, is only perfect rest. . . . The dead do not suffer."[8]

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[4] Epictetus, *Discourses*, III, quoted in Luc Ferry, *A Brief History of Thought: A Philosophical Guide to Living*, trans. Theo Cuffe (New York: Harper, 2010), 37. Marcus Aurelius (121–180), a Roman emperor, wrote something similar: "You came into this world as a part: you will vanish into the whole which gave you birth, or rather you will be gathered up into its generative principle by the process of change." *Meditations*, IV, 14, quoted in Ferry, *A Brief History of Thought*, 37.

[5] Ferry, *A Brief History of Thought*, 37.

[6] Diogenes Laertius, *Vita* 10.125, quoted in N. Clayton Croy, "Epicureanism," in Stanley A. Porter and Craig A. Evans, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 326.

[7] *On the Nature of Things*, quoted in Kenny, *A New History of Western Philosophy*, 84.

[8] Susan Jacoby, "The Blessings of Atheism," *The New York Times*, January 5, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/06/opinion/sunday/the-blessings-of-atheism.html, accessed February 18, 2017.

Denying the reality of suffering and death is a way to deny reality. We know evil is more than an illusion. Not becoming attached to people would leave us cold. I think we know that death is more than just a transference from one state of energy to another. And even if that were true, at death we would lose that particular person, that particular arrangement of life. We know that death isn't just a long nap. Death is a foreign intruder into this world. In a perfect world, there would be no death.

So, that's one way of handling death. Another way is to say, "Suck it up! We all hurt. Be brave and move on!" In this method of coping, we hide our feelings. We may even regard having strong feelings as a weakness or an embarrassment. So, we bottle up our sadness, pretend like everything is okay, and move on. Sometimes this is coupled with other ideas. Sometimes we think that if a person is depressed or full of sorrow, it's because they've done something wrong. Or, at least, they're not doing something right. There's a tendency to try to change our circumstances so that we don't suffer. If the dog dies, get a new one. If your husband leaves you, get a new one. Or if you can't replace what you've lost, just stop thinking about it. Take medicine or drugs if you need to. Just stop moping around.

Sadly, it seems that some Christians think this is the way to handle loss. In some Christian environments, people tend to view lamentation and grieving as a sign that the person lacks faith. So, we say trite little things about always being joyful. We may even quote Romans 8:28: "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."[9] So we might say to people who are hurting: "Cheer up! This is for your good!" Just because something is for our good doesn't mean it feels good. And it's certainly not wrong to cry, to be depressed, or to lament. The same Paul who wrote Romans 8:28 also wrote Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep."

It seems to me that if we deny people the right to cry, to mourn, to grieve, to lament, then we're denying them something that makes us human. In the end, it's unhealthy. I'll mention a book that C. S. Lewis wrote later, one called *A Grief Observed.* The book is Lewis's very personal and raw reaction to the death of his wife, whom he married late in life. In the introduction to that book, his stepson explained that when Lewis mentioned his mother, he became uncomfortable. He writes, "I was fourteen when Mother died and the product of almost

[9] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

seven years of British Preparatory School indoctrination. The lesson I was most strongly taught throughout that time was that the most shameful thing that could happen to me would be to be reduced to tears in public. British boys don't cry. . . . It took me almost thirty years to learn how to cry without feeling ashamed."[10]

A third way to deal with grief is to give into sorrow, to believe that life will never get better. This is the way of despair. It's what leads people to drug abuse and suicide.

The Christian way to suffer is different from all of these. It does share some similarities. We realize that death isn't the end of the story. We do acknowledge that, according to the words of Ecclesiastes, there is

> a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
> a time to mourn, and a time to dance (Eccl. 3:4).

And we acknowledge that loss is real and a cause for lamenting. We see all of this in the book of Job.

Today, we're going to look at chapter 3. We'll see how Job laments in the wake of great loss. If you weren't here last week, I would urge you to go back and listen to last week's sermon, which is on our website. I'll sum up the story as quickly as I can. Somewhere in the ancient Middle East, there was a righteous man named Job who rightly worshiped God. He was wealthy and he had a large family. Unknown to Job, God and Satan have a conversation in heaven. Satan thinks that Job only worships God because God has blessed Job. Satan says, "Take away all those good things, and Job will curse you." So, God allows Satan to attack Job's possessions and family. Job loses all his thousands of animals and his ten children die. But Job doesn't curse God. He mourns, but he also worships. He says, "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (1:21). Then Satan attacks Job's body, giving Job a terrible skin condition that causes him to be covered in sores (2:7) and worms (7:5). Later, he says his skin has turned black (30:30). Job was in terrible pain, but he refuses to curse God, even though his wife says, "Curse God and die." But he says, "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" (2:10). And the author tells us that Job didn't sin. He did what was right. Then his three friends come to comfort him, and they sit with him in silence for a week.

[10] Douglas H. Gresham, "Introduction," in C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), xxv–xxvi.

But a man can only take so much, and after a week, Job explodes in a very intense speech, which we'll read today. In this section, we see how he is in despair, at the very edge of what he can handle. This is not the end of the story, of course. But it does show the emotional state that Job is in.

So, without any further ado, let's read all of Job 3:

[1] After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. [2] And Job said:

[3] "Let the day perish on which I was born,
and the night that said,
'A man is conceived.'
[4] Let that day be darkness!
May God above not seek it,
nor light shine upon it.
[5] Let gloom and deep darkness claim it.
Let clouds dwell upon it;
let the blackness of the day terrify it.
[6] That night—let thick darkness seize it!
Let it not rejoice among the days of the year;
let it not come into the number of the months.
[7] Behold, let that night be barren;
let no joyful cry enter it.
[8] Let those curse it who curse the day,
who are ready to rouse up Leviathan.
[9] Let the stars of its dawn be dark;
let it hope for light, but have none,
nor see the eyelids of the morning,
[10] because it did not shut the doors of my mother's womb,
nor hide trouble from my eyes.

[11] "Why did I not die at birth,
come out from the womb and expire?
[12] Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?
[13] For then I would have lain down and been quiet;
I would have slept; then I would have been at rest,
[14] with kings and counselors of the earth
who rebuilt ruins for themselves,
[15] or with princes who had gold,
who filled their houses with silver.
[16] Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child,
as infants who never see the light?
[17] There the wicked cease from troubling,
and there the weary are at rest.
[18] There the prisoners are at ease together;

they hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
19 The small and the great are there,
and the slave is free from his master.

20 "Why is light given to him who is in misery,
and life to the bitter in soul,
21 who long for death, but it comes not,
and dig for it more than for hidden treasures,
22 who rejoice exceedingly
and are glad when they find the grave?
23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,
whom God has hedged in?
24 For my sighing comes instead of my bread,
and my groanings are poured out like water.
25 For the thing that I fear comes upon me,
and what I dread befalls me.
26 I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
I have no rest, but trouble comes."

I wanted to read the whole chapter because it, like all the speeches that follow, is told in the form of a poem. Poems make an overall impression. Sometimes it's best not to pick apart each and every little bit of the poem. But I do want us to see a few very important things.

One, we should see how Job is in agony. In verse 23, he says he is "in misery" and is "bitter in soul." In verse 24, he says his "sighing comes instead of . . . bread." One commentator translates the Hebrew word behind "sighing" as "shrieks." He says, "The Hebrew root refers to the loud moans or wails that arise from those doing oppressive, slave labor or from a people devastated by a tragedy."[11] It's what the Israelites did when they were in slavery in Egypt (Exod. 2:23). Job was probably wailing.

He also says that "the thing that I fear comes upon me" (v. 25). He is probably referring to the death of his children. At the beginning of the story, he was so concerned that his children might have secretly sinned that he regularly offered up sacrifices to atone for whatever sins they had committed (1:5). His nightmare has now been realized. It is no wonder that he is not at ease.

Two, Job is in such despair that he wishes he had never been born. That's why he curses the day of his birth. He says, in verse 4, "Let that day be darkness!" He doesn't want "light [to] shine upon it." In the Bible, light is often associated with life, and death with darkness. Job is wishing he never existed. But it's more than that. These verses parallel what we find in Genesis

[11] John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 100.

1. In Genesis 1, God says, “Let there be light” (v. 3). Here, Job wishes that light had never shone on his birthday or on the night of his conception. In Genesis, God made the lights of the sky, the sun and moon, to mark the days and seasons and years (1:14). Here, Job doesn’t want the night of his conception to be numbered among the days of the year or within the months (v. 6). He also wants the stars to be dark (v. 9). In Genesis, God made the “great sea creatures,” which, among other animals, would be ruled over by human beings (1:21, 26, 28). Here, Job wants people to “rouse up Leviathan” (v. 8), a mythical sea creature that represents chaos and evil. In Genesis, after God fashions the world to be the way he wants it to be, he rests (Gen. 2:1–3). Here, Job says he has no rest (v. 26). In other words, Job is wishing that his life wouldn’t be created. But he seems to be saying more than that. It seems that he’s saying he wishes the whole world was never created.[12] After all, if the light never shined on his birthday, it wouldn’t shine for anyone, not just him. He’s not cursing God, but he’s cursing God’s creation.

Job is not suicidal—he never talks about taking his own life—but he obviously has some pretty dark thoughts here. One theologian whom I read this week thinks that Satan not only affected Job’s body, but also his mind, causing him to think about images of death and chaos.[13] Job clearly thinks he would be better off dead. He seems to think that there’s rest for the dead. He thinks it would be better to have been a stillborn child and have rest then to be alive.

At this point in history, people didn’t have a clear understanding of the afterlife. In some places in the Old Testament, death is referred to as “the grave,” and it’s understood that everyone goes there. Sometimes, it seems like everyone has rest there. So, in verse 17, he says:

> There the wicked cease from troubling,
> and there the weary are at rest.

Job knows, rightly, that death is the common denominator. We all die, whether we’re rich kings or poor slaves. But it’s only later throughout the Old Testament that more light is shed on the reality of the afterlife. This concept, that God gave clearer information throughout history, is called “progressive revelation.” God revealed more truth as time went on. In Daniel 12:2, we’re told there will be a resurrection for everyone who has lived, some to eternal life and some to

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[12] “Job is virtually assuming the prerogative of the Creator and doing so in order to ‘uncreate.’” Robert S. Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 59.

[13] “Not only has Satan struck at Job’s body and family, but he is subtly insinuating images of death and chaos into Job’s mind. . . . he is trying to get Job to do his work for him by allying himself with the magicians who call up the dark powers of chaos.” Ibid., 85.

condemnation. But for now, Job agrees with the Preacher of Ecclesiastes, who says, "All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return" (Eccl. 3:20).

This whole idea of someone cursing the day of his birth and wishing he were dead might seem quite extreme. But Job isn't the only one in the Bible who does this. Jeremiah was a prophet in Judah who warned people of coming destruction. He told them that God would bring the Babylonians into Jerusalem to conquer the city and destroy the temple, all because the Israelites ignored God's words and turned to worship idols. Jeremiah had a hard life. He was imprisoned and beaten (Jer. 20:2). He was told he couldn't get married (Jer. 16:2). And in the midst of these difficulties, Jeremiah protested. He said this to God, in Jeremiah 20:7:

> O LORD, you have deceived me,
> and I was deceived;
> you are stronger than I,
> and you have prevailed.
> I have become a laughingstock all the day;
> everyone mocks me.

And then, a few verses later, he says this (verses 14–18):

> 14 Cursed be the day
> on which I was born!
> The day when my mother bore me,
> let it not be blessed!
> 15 Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father,
> "A son is born to you,"
> making him very glad.
> 16 Let that man be like the cities
> that the LORD overthrew without pity;
> let him hear a cry in the morning
> and an alarm at noon,
> 17 because he did not kill me in the womb;
> so my mother would have been my grave,
> and her womb forever great.
> 18 Why did I come out from the womb
> to see toil and sorrow,
> and spend my days in shame?

That sounds familiar, doesn't it? Jeremiah was a great prophet, a man of faith. Yet he was overwhelmed and he, like Job, cursed the day he was born. He, too, wished he was stillborn.

Another example of someone who wanted to die was the prophet Elijah. After God demonstrated his power by defeating the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs. 18), Elijah must have thought

that the king and queen, Ahab and Jezebel, would turn to the Lord. But he was wrong. Instead, they wanted to kill him. So, Elijah fled into the wilderness. And he said, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life" (1 Kgs. 19:4).

In these cases, God never rebuked these men for giving vent to their feelings. He didn't deny that they were going through difficult times. He didn't say, "Suck it up!" In the case of Elijah, God sent an angel to feed touch him and feed him. Sometimes, when people are suffering, they need a hug and a meal. They need people who will sit there and mourn in silence. They don't need many words.

When people are struggling through grief and suffering, they need to be allowed to voice their laments. They need to be allowed to cry. Grieving is a common theme in the Psalms. Sometimes, the Psalmists wonder what God is doing. They ask, "How long, O Lord?" (Ps. 6:3; 13:1; 79:5; 89:46; see also Rev. 6:10). Consider the darkest Psalm of all, Psalm 88:

1 O LORD, God of my salvation,
    I cry out day and night before you.
2 Let my prayer come before you;
    incline your ear to my cry!

3 For my soul is full of troubles,
    and my life draws near to Sheol.
4 I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
    I am a man who has no strength,
5 like one set loose among the dead,
    like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom you remember no more,
    for they are cut off from your hand.
6 You have put me in the depths of the pit,
    in the regions dark and deep.
7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
    and you overwhelm me with all your waves. *Selah*

8 You have caused my companions to shun me;
    you have made me a horror to them.
I am shut in so that I cannot escape;
9 my eye grows dim through sorrow.
Every day I call upon you, O LORD;
    I spread out my hands to you.
10 Do you work wonders for the dead?
    Do the departed rise up to praise you? *Selah*
11 Is your steadfast love declared in the grave,
    or your faithfulness in Abaddon?

12 Are your wonders known in the darkness,
or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

13 But I, O LORD, cry to you;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
14 O LORD, why do you cast my soul away?
Why do you hide your face from me?
15 Afflicted and close to death from my youth up,
I suffer your terrors; I am helpless.
16 Your wrath has swept over me;
your dreadful assaults destroy me.
17 They surround me like a flood all day long;
they close in on me together.
18 You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me;
my companions have become darkness.

I think God has given us these Psalms in order to show that it's okay to give voice to our grief. It's okay to cry out to God in our depression, in our mourning, and in our hurt and suffering and disappointment. It's even okay to complain. What's important is that we cry out to God in faith.

There is a great tradition of lament in Christianity. Consider the words of C. S. Lewis in that book I mentioned earlier, *A Grief Observed*. After his wife died, he asked,

> [W]here is God? . . . When you are happy, so happy that you have no sense of needing Him, so happy that you are tempted to feel His claims upon you as an interruption, if you remember yourself and turn to Him with gratitude and praise, you will be—or so it feels—welcomed with open arms. But go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence.[14]

Later in the book, Lewis writes, "I have gradually been coming to feel that the door is no longer shut and bolted."[15] But as he was in great pain, mourning the loss of his wife, he wrestled with God. Job and Jeremiah and others did this. And, as we'll see, so did Jesus.

The Christian worldview invites lamenting because things as they are now in this world are not the way things should be. Job's groaning is a microcosm of the groaning of the whole creation. God made a good world, but sin entered into it when the first human beings failed to trust God. When they disobeyed God, God put a curse on the world as a partial punishment against sin. The apostle Paul writes, in Romans 8:20–22:

[14] Lewis, *A Grief Observed*, 5–6.
[15] Ibid., 46.

> [20] For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope [21] that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. [22] For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

God, temporarily, subjected the whole universe to futility because of sin. But he did that to show that world of sin is not the way things should be. He did that to punish sin, but also to drive us to the One who can pay the penalty for our sin. He did this so that one day "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption." But that day hasn't come yet. Until then, we will deal with painful things, and it's healthy and right to cry out to God, to weep and lament.

We know it's okay to do those things because Jesus did that. Think of the famous story of Lazarus, Jesus' friend. Lazarus died and Lazarus's sisters, Mary and Martha, were mourning. When Jesus saw them, he wept. He was disturbed and angry at the fact that there was death and mourning and weeping in this world. Now, that didn't mean that these things were beyond Jesus' control. After all, in that story, Jesus intentionally delayed coming to Lazarus. He could have healed Lazarus, but he didn't. Jesus let Lazarus die. But then he came and brought him back to life, to demonstrate the glory of God, to show God's power over death, to foreshadow Jesus' own resurrection, and to foreshadow that day when Jesus will return and everyone who is united to him by faith will be resurrected to eternal life. Jesus was in control of the situation, but still he wept. He shows us that it's okay to mourn. It's okay to weep. It's okay to cry out to God.

Of course, he did that on the night when he was betrayed and arrested, the night before he died. In the garden of Gethsemane, "he began to sorrowful and troubled" (Matt. 26:37). He said, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death" (Matt. 26:38). He was "in agony" and "his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). And, on the cross, as he was in great pain, as he felt the punishment that we deserve for our sin being poured out on him, as he felt the alienation from God that we deserve, he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsake me?" (Matt. 27:46). Job must have felt abandoned. He was a righteous man who suddenly had all kinds of bad things happen to him, with no explanation from God. Jesus, who knew what was happening to him, still felt abandoned. He experienced hell on earth on the cross so that all who put their trust in him won't experience hell for eternity. Jesus shows us what it is like to suffer in faith. Even when God's people suffer, they may feel agony and pain. They may feel like they are abandoned.

Of course, the story of Christianity doesn't end with a fall into corruption and sin. It continues with Jesus' redemption of his people. And it ends with God's restoration of the whole world, so that it is purged of all evil, including death. This is our great hope. It is then that we will have true rest (Heb. 4:9–11). In fact, I think the only to handle suffering head on, without pretending it's not there or it's not real, is to understand it in the story of Christianity and to know that there is hope. One day, everything will be made right.

That brings me to the third thing I want to talk about, which is rest. Job said, "I have no rest" (v. 26). I think that one of the reasons why we suffer in this world, why we feel ill at ease, is because God uses our pain and our restlessness to bring us to himself. There's a wonderful poem by George Herbert (1593–1633) called "The Pulley." Let me read it one stanza at a time. It starts this way:

> When God at first made man,
> Having a glass of blessings standing by,
> "Let us," said he, "pour on him all we can.
> Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
> Contract into a span."

Herbert imagines that God had a "glass of blessings" to pour onto man, all the world's riches. Then God started to pour them out, one by one:

> So strength first made a way;
> Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.
> When almost all was out, God made a stay,
> Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
> Rest in the bottom lay.

God poured out strength and beauty and wisdom and honor and pleasure. Almost all the riches were poured out. But then God paused, seeing that one treasure remained, the treasure of rest.

> "For if I should," said he,
> "Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
> He would adore my gifts instead of me,
> And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
> So both should losers be.

God thought twice about giving that last treasure to mankind, because if he did, his creatures would "adore my gifts instead of me." God knew that if he gave his creatures everything, they would have no need for him.

"Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast."

God withheld rest, so that man's weariness might lead him back to his Maker. It's as if God lowered all kinds of gifts down to mankind on a pulley, but he kept one thing back, rest. And it's this weight that God uses as leverage to pull us back to him.

Of course, that's just a poem. It's not Scripture. But there's something to it. If we never had pain or suffering, would we seek after God? C. S. Lewis wrote, in *The Problem of Pain*, "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."[16] God uses trials to get our attention.

We live in a restless world and we will be ill at ease, restless, and weary, until we find our rest in Jesus. That's exactly what the great theologian Augustine (354–430) wrote in his *Confessions*: "You stir men to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."[17]

If you feel restless in this life, know that there is a good reason. The world is not as it should be. It is broken. It is under a curse. This happened because human beings have turned away from their Creator. And it is only by turning back to our Creator that we can find rest. One day, God will recreate the world to be a world of rest. And the reason he can do that is because his Son came and paid for the sins of all who will live in that world. The people who will populate that world are those who believe Jesus is their only hope, who follow him. We can find our rest in Jesus because he underwent great restlessness on our behalf. He was ill at ease on the cross so we can be at ease for eternity.

Until that day, our weary souls can find rest in Jesus. He is the one who told us, "Come to me, all who labor and heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Jesus is the one who said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4).

That doesn't mean that Christians don't face pain and suffering in this life. They do. And we can learn from the example of Job and Jesus. We can weep, mourn, wail, lament, and protest. But we must do this to God, in faith that he will fix things. We must wrestle with God, but in

[16] C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 83.
[17] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.

faith. And we must allow each other to do this. This church should be a people who weep with those who weep. But we weep in hope, knowing that after a long night, no matter how dark, comes a great, brilliant morning. As Paul says elsewhere,

> [16] So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. [17] For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, [18] as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal (2 Cor. 4:16–18).