

**Sermon Notes: SUFFERING**

August 28, 2022

David A. Renwick,

National Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC

**Romans 5:1-6**

<sup>1</sup>Since we have brought into a right-relationship with God by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. <sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

<sup>16</sup>So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal “burden”: glory beyond all measure. <sup>18</sup>Because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

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**The Problem**

- a.. If God does not exist, or is not good or all powerful – then suffering in a chaotic universe might be expected
- b. Why would a loving all-powerful God permit suffering?
  - i. God chooses to give humans choice, not making us puppets on a string
  - ii. God chooses to make the universe immense and exciting
  - iii. An immense and exciting universe is inescapably dangerous to small creatures (think Niagara Falls)
  - iv. Significant alternatives must exist for human choice to be significant

**The Solution**

1. God will bring suffering to an end when a new day will dawn  
2 Cor 4:17-18; Rev. 21:4
2. God is at work in suffering, right now, for us, redeeming it for good.
  - a. Rom.5:1-2. Through Christ’s suffering we can be reconciled to God
  - b. 2 Cor. 4:16, Rom 5:1-4. Through our suffering God refines our character
3. God does not ask of us what God himself will not do  
Rom.5:6, Heb. 4:15 In Jesus God suffers as one of us, for us, and alongside us.

**A Covenant of Closure Between the Reverend David A. Renwick and National Presbyterian Church**

In recognition of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between the Rev. DAVID RENWICK and National Presbyterian Church, this covenant of closure is formed.

This covenant acknowledges that Pastor Renwick is no longer our pastor and that his/her pastoral care will no longer be provided to members of this congregation.

This covenant acknowledges that the members of this congregation will not seek out Pastor Renwick for pastoral care.

This covenant acknowledges that Pastor Renwick rejoices in the congregation he has pastored and now makes the transition to no longer be their pastor but to be their faithful supporter in prayer and supplication.

This covenant does not require that the pastor cast aside friendships with individuals in the congregation. The pastor is simply no longer the pastor of the congregation.

The covenant is established in recognition that the congregation must transcend the needs of any pastor or the discomfoting circumstances of a particular pastoral transition. *The congregation must form a pastoral relationship with the next shepherd called by God to watch over them. Their new pastor must be accepted and supported for the good of the community.*

The burden of responsibility for ensuring a healthy transition lies primarily with the professional behavior of the pastor who is departing. This transition demands empathy and maturity from all parties—the former pastor, the new pastor, the session, and the members of the congregation.

All affirm this covenant establishes the new relationship between the congregation and the pastor. The policy does not expire with the passage of time but remains in effect in spirit even if the pastor is permitted to renew regular ties with the congregation.

We affirm this covenant of closure representing the cessation of our pastoral relationship.

*We give thanks to God for our time as pastor and congregation and now affirm our trust in the provisions of our Lord for our respective but separate futures.*

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Pastor Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Clerk on behalf of Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Representative on behalf of National Capital Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_