

THE HUMAN SUFFERING IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE GOD'S GRACE

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Abstract

Suffering is a legacy of the existence of the world of souls [humans] living on earth. Suffering is not imagination, not some nightmare, on the contrary is real, actual, but not academic. Suffering comes when humans are born. Humans cannot escape suffering. Suffering comes from various angles of life. Suffering comes from a broken relationship with God. Starting from the failure of Adam and Eve's relationship with God, humans began to feel suffering. Humans cannot resist the suffering they experience. The purpose of this study is to determine the cause of human suffering and its consequences, and how to overcome suffering. The author uses a descriptive method of literature and research results as follows: first, mercy is the perfect character of the deity of God. God's mercy from eternal to eternal until humans are afraid of God. Kindness is the essence of the quality of divinity, but God shows mercy on an ongoing basis through His sovereign will. Second, the source of God's mercy. The source of God's mercy is God's goodness and love expressed mysteriously. God's mercy is stated to guide someone to live righteously. People who receive God's mercy are living in godly living conditions and they need God's protection or care. Third, God's mercy cannot be stopped by humans. Instead humans can be made to not understand by God. God is free to act surprisingly, correcting human deviation. God is free to allow the test of Satan and not to tell anyone about it that was tested. God is also free to regulate

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INTRODUACTION

Definition of Suffering "Suffering" is synonymous with "pain", "anguish", "tribulation" and "adversity". C.S. Lewis said that suffering is a legacy of the existence of the world of souls [humans] [1] living on earth. The soul may become ill because of the wounds of others. There humans suffer. [2] Paul J. Lindell saw that

suffering was not imagination, not some nightmare, on the contrary it was real, actual, but not academic. Suffering comes when humans are born. Humans cannot escape suffering. Suffering comes from various angles of life.[3] Paul said:

When suffering comes to us, we are responsible for that suffering. Here the suffering of the believers [new creation] is different from the suffering before believing [old creation]. Before believing, he suffered as an unbeliever and he believed, he suffered as a believer. Suffering comes from a broken relationship with God. Starting from the failure of Adam and Eve's relationship with God, humans began to feel suffering. Humans cannot resist the suffering they experience.[4]

Causes and Effects of Suffering Paul said that the causes of human suffering there are several things as follows: because of physical suffering, suffering from war terror, suffering from natural disasters, and death, accidents or problems that come from other people. Lewis said the causes of suffering were: racks, whips, prisons, slavery, guns, bayonets, and bombs[5]. Then, Lewis said: Physical pain is by no means the hardest drop in the cup of suffering. Some forms of physical pain can be fun too. The proof, no one is worried about the "warm - nice warm - too hot - sting" process, which reminds him [that person] to pull his hand away from the heat of the fire. "If I may believe my own feelings that the slight pain in my legs often occurs when I want to go to bed because I have just traveled a long distance. Indeed I feel pain, but it does not make me suffer, but it is very pleasant. "[6] Causes and Effects of Suffering

Paul said that the causes of human suffering there are several things as follows: because of physical suffering, suffering from war terror, suffering from natural disasters, and death, accidents or problems that come from other people.[7] Lewis said the causes of suffering were: racks, whips, prisons, slavery, guns, bayonets, and bombs. Then, Lewis said: Physical pain is by no means the hardest drop in the cup of suffering. Some forms of physical pain can be fun too. The proof, no one is worried about the "warm - nice warm - too hot - sting" process, which reminds him [that

person] to pull his hand away from the heat of the fire. "If I may believe my own feelings that the slight pain in my legs often occurs when I want to go to bed because I have just traveled a long distance. Indeed I feel pain, but it does not make me suffer, but it is very pleasant. "[8] The attitude to suffering is to live in goodness because human nature is good and live in the hope of human resurrection. The result of all that is that humans get blessings: the life of the way of cleansing, to illuminate our calling, a corrective for distorted vision, helps us think of others, Affects worship, and moves people to pray.[9]

Suffering is not good for a person but when suffering occurs for someone he obediently lives in God's will. When that happens the result is that the person lives in the right direction and acts in mercy. That person is not experiencing a failed life but he is: first, living in the goodness of God. Second, living in a crime caused by human sinfulness. Third, because of God's redemptive purpose. Fourth, complex goodness that accepts suffering and rejects the contribution of sin.[10] For Lewis said:

Indeed suffering is a mystery, but it does not make a person [believer] more evil but rather makes a person better [believer] in all his actions - being righteous. Nobody suffers twice [over his ability]: beyond all time, beyond all places and he will not find composite pain in anyone's consciousness. Because all suffering is universal and everyone must experience it. As long as humans live in the world, suffering is only sterilized or disinfected evil. After humans are sterile from previous suffering, then humans suffer again because of other things [next life].[11] How to Overcome Suffering

C.S. Lewis said that suffering can be overcome if we have a high enough understanding about God and love. We need to think that God exists to serve us. That is not His role. We are here to serve Him. He is the first party while we are the second party. Therefore, we should not measure His justice in the way He treats us. The scale is

too small. After all, we should not measure His love according to the happiness we feel.[12]

According to Song Jesus is the answer to the crisis of life in the world that engulfs all aspects of life including the striking difference between the differences of the rich and the poor. Not Jesus but life in this world has many problems, and Jesus makes human existence come alive. That is, life as physical existence (bios) and life as spiritual (zoe) is a unity of life (nephes).[13]

Here, theology starts from the heart of God caused by human suffering and pain. Suffering experienced by humans touches the heart of God. So, to overcome that suffering, God offered Jesus Christ to suffer so that Jesus could emulate human existence to escape the world crisis. Here Jesus was destined to assume the sin (existence) of that human so that Jesus Christ changed himself into a human being and lived in the world.[14]

GOD'S GRACE

The meaning of generosity

In Hebrew, the common word "generosity" is used as "chesed". However, what is a pretty deep expression is "rachman" pointing out that there is "tender mercy". LXX and Greek PB use the word "eleos" which is designed for God's mercy.

According to Pink, Psalm 136: 1: "O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever" is the perfect character of the Lord. The psalmists call on the righteous to praise the Lord. God is present and communicates with mankind for His mercy: His "great" (I Raj 3: 6), "plenteous" (Ps 86: 5), "tender" (Luk 1:78), "abundant" (1 Pet 1: 3). The grace of God endures forever to the fear of man. (Ps. 103: 17). The psalmist says: "I will sing aloud of Thy mercy" (Ps. 59:16).[15] Pink further says:

God never ceases to give His mercy, because generosity is the essence of divine quality (Ps 116: 5), but God shows generosity through His sovereign will. This pure sovereignty is determined by the preservation of the generosity of God (Rom 9:15). Here, man is positioned not as a weak creature until God shows his grace but vice versa. ... The real grace is that God sends Jesus to all people (Luke 1:78). Jesus' generosity was done by God to bestow spiritual mercies on His chosen people.[16]

The Source of God's Grace

Berkhof says that those who receive Allah's grace are in a state of bliss and they need God's protection or care. The source of God's grace is goodness and God's love is revealed mysteriously, irrespective of their deserts. Berkhof further said :[17]

In the grace of God it is stated to guide a person to a righteous life. Mercy is "bountiful" (De 5:10; Ps 57:10; 86: 5). In PB it is often called "alongside the grace of God" especially in the "greetings" section of Paul's Epistles (1 Tim 1: 2; 2 Tim 1: 1; Titus 1: 4). Mercy shows the fear of God (Ex 20: 2; Deut 7: 9; Ps 85: Luk 1:50). The grace of God is given to all His fields of work (Ps 145: 9) including opposition to justice.

Mercy is a statement of God's goodness that His creatures need. Lewis Sperry asserts that: Statement of God's grace: first, that grace is placed in the righteousness of "the Father of mercies" (2 Cor 1: 3). And man is invited to approach him by grace (Heb 4:16). Second, Divine mercy was manifested to the Israelites through the land of the Covenant (Isa. 54: 7). Third, the grace of God calls the sinners to salvation for nothing (Rom 9:15, 18; 1 Tim 1:13)... Sinners are not saved by the personal declaration of God but they are forgiven and as a righteous group in judgment (Rom 3:26). So, God is rich in His mercy.[18] For Pink, God's generosity is the source of God's goodness. So, first, if God is good starts with His mercy. The goodness

of God is a gift, in which He gives freedom to His creatures as free beings. He gives life to his creatures. creation. Second, God's goodness is His generosity that separates people from sin.(19)

God is not bound by human design or man's understanding of himself. What God is doing is independent of His will and His own nature, with no guidelines to adjust.(20) God cannot be rejected by man. Only God can limit human beings and God can help restore human condition in the face of suffering.(21)

Fundamentals of God's Grace

Pink summarizes the principles of God's grace as follows: First, the generosity of God is universal, extending not only to all people, believers and unbelievers, but also to all His creations. "God is gracious in all His works (Ps. 145: 9). Secondly, God's grace is special to the human race and helps them to escape from sin.

Man communicates with God in every need of his life: "for he maketh the sun to shine on the evil and the good" (Matt. 5:45). Third, the sovereignty of God is the mediator of the path to salvation.(22)

So, God's mercy cannot be stopped by humans. Instead humans can be made to not understand by God. God is free to act surprisingly, correcting human deviation. God is free to allow the test of Satan and not tell anyone about it that was tested. God is also free to set the time when and how he will intervene.

As a result of God's Grace

As a result of God's mercy, according to Thiessen, God treats all His creatures with gentleness, affection, and blesses them abundantly. "God is good towards all people, and full of grace towards all that He has made ... The eyes of all people await You, and You also give them food in due time; You who open your hands and are

willing to fill all that lives "(Psalm 145: 9, 15-16).[23]

THE RELATION OF SUFFERING WITH THE GOD OF GRACE

Because of God's mercy, God has a plan for human life. Generally mercy is placed in the morals of God. God has moral standards and that standard is a big one. Whereas God's mercy is the smallest part of God's moral standard. Thiessen sees, for example, that God's mercy is the smallest part of God's great moral qualities. The moral nature of God contains moral elements in the divine nature.

The moral nature of God contains moral elements in the divine nature divided into: holiness, truth and justice, and goodness. But it is different for Louis Berkhof that God's mercy is not shared [equal] with God's love, God's mercy, God's grace, and God's truth. Or, according to Thiessen, that God's mercy is in God's goodness.

God's grace is part of God's goodness. If God is good it means that God is also full of mercy. Goodness is divided into: God's love, God's mercy, God's mercy, God's grace, and God's truth. But, for Berkhof, that God's mercy is a very important aspect of God's goodness and love. While God's goodness lies apart (alone) with God's mercy. However, God's mercy works together with God's grace and long suffering in relation to one another.[24]

Lewis Sperry supports Thiessen's opinion that God's mercy is a part of God's goodness. Indeed, God's mercy is separated from other moral attributes of God, but God's mercy is inseparable even with God's love and grace.[25]

Thus, it is clear that God's mercy is closely linked to human suffering. Both are God's moral standards. God's moral standard means that mercy and suffering work together when God establishes human suffering as part of life.[26]

CONCLUSIONS

From the description above, the author can conclude some of the following meanings: Suffering First, suffering is a legacy of the existence of the world of souls [humans] living on earth. Suffering is not imagination, not some nightmare, on the contrary is real, actual, but not academic. Suffering comes when humans are born. Humans cannot escape suffering. Suffering comes from various angles of life. Suffering comes from a broken relationship with God. Starting from the failure of Adam and Eve's relationship with God, humans began to feel suffering. Humans cannot resist the suffering they experience.

Second, the causes and consequences of suffering. The cause of human suffering there are several things as follows: because of physical suffering, suffering from war terror, suffering from natural disasters, and death, accidents or problems that come from other people. The result is that the person lives in goodness because human nature is good and lives in the hope of human resurrection. The result of all this is that humans get blessings: the life of the way of cleansing, to illuminate our calling, a corrective for distorted vision, helping us think of others, Affects worship, and moves people to pray.

Third, suffering is not good for a person but if it happens to someone he obeys lives in the will of God. When that happens the result is that the person lives in the right direction and acts in mercy. That person is not experiencing a failed life but he is: one, living in the goodness of God. Two, living in a crime caused by human sinfulness. Three, because of God's redemptive purpose. Four, complex goodness that accepts suffering and rejects the contribution of sin.

Fourth, how to overcome suffering. Suffering can be overcome if we have a high enough understanding about God and love. We need to think that God exists to serve us.

That is not His role. We are here to serve Him. Therefore, we should not measure His justice in the way He treats us. The scale is too small. After all, we should not measure His love according to the happiness we feel.

MERCY

First, mercy is God's perfect character of God. God's mercy from eternal to eternal until humans are afraid of God. Kindness is the essence of the quality of divinity, but God shows mercy on an ongoing basis through His sovereign will.

Second, the source of God's mercy. The source of God's mercy is God's goodness and love expressed mysteriously. God's mercy is stated to guide someone to live righteously. People who receive God's mercy are living in godly living conditions and they need God's protection or care.

Third, God's mercy cannot be stopped by humans. Instead humans can be made to not understand by God. God is free to act surprisingly, correcting human deviation. God is free to allow the test of Satan and not to tell anyone about it that was tested. God is also free to set the time when and how he will intervene.

Fourth, the result of God's mercy is that God treats all His creatures with gentleness, affection, and abundantly blesses them.

Relationship of Suffering to God's Grace

First, because of God's mercy, God has a plan for human life. Grace is placed in God's morals and has moral standards but God's mercy is the smallest part of God's moral standards.

Second, God's mercy is part of God's goodness. If God is good it means that God is also full of mercy. Goodness is divided into: God's love, God's mercy, God's mercy,

God's grace, and God's truth. Third, God's mercy works together with God's grace and long suffering in relation to one another. Mercy and suffering work together when God establishes human suffering as part of life.

REFERENCES

- [1]. "Suffering" synonym with "pain", "anguish", "tribulation", and "adversity".
- [2]. C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1994) 88.
- [3]. Paul J. Lindell, *The Mystery of Pain* (Jerman: Editions Trobisch, 1982) 12. But it differs from the opinion of M.M. Thomas, *The Christian Response in the Asian Revolution* (London: 1966) 12 sees in contrast what Lewis and Paul thought. Thomas did not see suffering metaphysically. Instead, he understands it as something that exists among people in the form of poverty, as an unjust social structure, which gives rise to the situation of the oppressed. This suffering is getting worse, because the people themselves - for example in India - are fatalistic in their oppressed position. This was proven during the period of Western domination when the people believed that domination by Western imperialist power belonged to Providentia Dei.
- [4]. Ibid.
- [5]. Paul J. Lindell, *The Mystery of Pain* 20-21. Bdk. Ralph W. Sochman, *The Meaning of Suffering* (Malang: Gandum Mas, tp. Th) 1-19 says that human suffering is divided into two, as follows: first, suffering that can be understood by humans such as: sin, individual mistakes, shared suffering, caused by enemies Second, suffering that we cannot understand such as: fate or fortune (Eccl 9:11; Fate (fortune) likes a trained mind and does not rely on faith. For example in gambling, gamblers usually emphasize "fate" for indeed or lose.) , accidents, and God's destiny (An inevitable event that occurs due to the workings of nature without human intervention or without caused by human neglect. Which is classified as God's destiny events such as: earthquakes, lightning, storms).
- [6]. C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1994) 89. Compare with Ralph W. Sockman, *The Meaning of Suffering* (Malang: Wheat Mas, tp. Th) 23 says that Suffering is a pain as a tone of feeling that is the opposite of pleasure. Unpleasant circumstances in all forms and levels.
- [7]. Ibid., 20.
- [8]. Paul J. Lindell, *The Mystery of Pain* 41-48.
- 9) Ibid. 110.
- 10) C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1994) 117. Lewis said that pain does not leave germs that are poisonous or that live continuously. When it's over, it's over, and the natural result is joy. After making a mistake, someone not only has to negate the error. After sinning, a person not only takes away his temptation, but must return and repent of sin itself. In each case, "deletion" was requested. Pain requires such "erasure". Maybe, someone has to cure the disease that caused it, when it's over, then the pain becomes sterile.
- [11]. C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1994) 36. C.S. Thought Lewis was also part of Ralph W. Sockman's support, *The Meaning of Suffering* (Malang: Wheat Mas, tp. Th.) 22. However, M.M. Thomas, *Man and the Universe* 95 see differently. He said that the only choice humans can make to avoid alternative self-destruction in freedom

(conquering messianism) and survive through resignation to "spiritual" rest that is not free, according to Thomas, is to accept the messianism of the suffering servant. Therefore, we need to recognize the crucified Christ as the only Lord of life - the "new pagan situation" in the world today. However, Christians are called to show their help in repentance openly, so that it can become a community of witnesses who serve the life pattern of this suffering servant.

[12]. C. S. Song, "Jesus Christ – The Life of the World – an Asian Meditation" *East Asia Jurnal of Theology*, Vol.1 No. 1 1983, 117.

[13]. C. S. Song, *Third-Eye Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979) 119.

[14]. Ibid., 118.

[15]. Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993) 14.

[16]. Ibid. 15.

[17]. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: W.M. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1976) 72.

[18]. Ibid.

[19]. Lewis Sperry, *Chafer Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1980) 1: 207.

[20]. Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God* 14.

[21]. W.S. LaSor, dkk., *Pengantar Perjanjian Lama* 2 140.

[22]. Werner H. Schmidt, *The Faith of The Old Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983) 248. Allah Mahatahu (Mzm 147: 4-5; Yes 40:13-14; Ibr 4:13). There is nothing hidden from

God. God transcends all knowledge in the world. God sees everything (Am 15: 3), knows everything (Ps 147: 4; Mt 10: 29-30). Know everything about humans: the human mind (Ps. 44:21; 139: 2), human matters (Ps. 139: 4), human work or the human condition (Ps. 139: 3; Rev. 2: 2,9,13,19) , human suffering (Ex 6: 4), human needs (Mt 6:32), human worship (Ge 22: 11-12; 2 Chron 16: 9), human weaknesses, and the whole human existence he created.

[23]. Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God* 14.

[24]. Henry C. Thiessen, *Teologi Sistematika* 131.

[25]. *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: W.M. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1976) 72.

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