

# Luke 9:21-22

## *"Purpose in Our Pain"*

*January 19, 2025*

### 1. Intro

- a. Well, last week we stood upon one of the great spiritual mountaintops of all the Scriptures, as we looked at what it meant to say about Jesus, "You are the Christ of God"
  - i. We saw how Jesus was God's Anointed One, the firstborn from the dead...
    1. Whose death and resurrection and ascension to the throne has now enabled us to find forgiveness from our sins, and the promise of eternal life with him
  - ii. We saw how Jesus was God's Messiah, who has become our Great High Priest...
    1. Who even now is interceding at the right hand of God on behalf of you and me and all the saints of God
  - iii. We saw how Jesus was the Christ of God, who has not just become our Great High Priest, but who has become our Great Priest-King in the order of Melchizedek
    1. Christ is our great Mediator before God, but he is also the King of kings and Lord of lords, who will return one day to rule and reign over the nations
  - iv. And we saw how Jesus was the One chosen by God before the foundations of the world...
    1. For our God is sovereign over ALL things
      - a. He was sovereign in appointing the pagan king, Cyrus of Persia, to be his Anointed One in the Old Testament
      - b. And He is sovereign throughout all eternity, in appointing His only begotten Son to be THE Anointed One who will unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth
        - i. This is what it means when we join with Peter in his confession... this confession upon which Christ is building his church even still today...
          1. You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!
    2. This was the majestic peak we got to stand upon last week
      - a. But if you've been a Christian for long, you know that the life of a follower of Christ is not meant to always be lived on the mountaintops
        - i. The mountaintops encourage us and inspire us and lift up our souls
        - ii. But the reality of life is that we must then descend into the valley
          1. And here, today, this descent almost feels like falling off of a cliff
            - a. If we were the ones writing the script of the Bible, this would be the point where we would have Jesus lifting his sword in valiant courage, as he says to his disciples,
              - i. "Yes!! You guys have figured it out! Now lets go take this message to the masses, and let's storm the gates of hell!!"
        - iii. But that's not at all what happens
          1. Immediately after Peter makes the great confession, Jesus says in verse 21...

### 2. Luke 9:21-22

- a. <sup>21</sup>And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, <sup>22</sup>saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

- i. We saw a couple of weeks ago when Jesus fed the 10,000+ people in Bethsaida, that John wrote that they all wanted to take him by force and make him king
    - 1. Here was a man who could rule our nation
    - 2. Here was a man who spoke boldly and without fear against the religious leaders
    - 3. Here was a man who was capable of performing powerful signs and wonders
      - a. Let us make this man king, and we will begin our fight to win our freedom from Rome!
        - i. The crowds all had their agenda, and they intended to make it happen by force
          - 1. Now, how much more so would these fires be stoked once his closest followers began spreading the word that he is the Messiah, the Anointed One of God?
        - ii. But Jesus knew that this was NOT why he had come
          - 1. He knew that there was a much greater agenda than the one desired by the mobs
            - a. And so he strictly charged them... he COMMANDED them to tell no one that he was the Christ of God
          - 2. And then he said, *"The Son of Man MUST suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."*
3. For the rest of our time this morning, we will focus on just one small word in this verse
  - a. In English, it is the word "must"
    - i. In the original Greek, it is just the three-letter word, *dei*
  - b. Strong's Concordance defines the word *dei* as, "it is necessary, or it is inevitable... it is what MUST happen"
    - i. It goes on to say this...
      - 1. "In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of necessity was often linked to fate or destiny. However, in the biblical context, "δεῖ" is more closely associated with the sovereign will of God. It reflects the understanding that certain events or actions are part of God's predetermined plan and are therefore necessary. This aligns with the Jewish and early Christian belief in a God who is actively involved in the unfolding of history and the lives of individuals."
        - a. We saw this back in Luke 4:43, as Jesus had gone off to a desolate place, presumably to pray and to be alone with his Father
          - i. The crowds figured out where he was, and Luke told us that they would have tried to keep him there...
            - 1. They wanted him to stay with them, so they could have him all to themselves
              - a. But Jesus replied, *"I MUST preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose."*
                - i. It wasn't enough for Jesus to just stay in one town or one village
              - b. He had been sent to preach the good news of the Kingdom throughout all the towns in Judea
                - i. This was part of God's predetermined plan...
                - ii. Therefore it was NECESSARY that Jesus preach all across the land

- b. We see this in Matthew 17:10, as Jesus is coming down off the mount of transfiguration with Peter, James, and John
  - i. They had just witnessed Jesus talking to Moses and Elijah, and then they saw Jesus transfigured as his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light
    - 1. As they're walking down the mountain, they ask Jesus, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah MUST come?"
      - a. And Jesus goes on to explain to them that indeed Elijah had already come, for John the Baptist was the one who had been foretold
        - i. John's coming had been prophesied in the Old Testament, and therefore he MUST come
      - b. This was part of God's predetermined plan...
        - i. Therefore, it was NECESSARY that John be born, and minister in the wilderness, and even to die at the hands of Herod the Tetrarch
- c. We also see this in Matthew 24:6, as Jesus is teaching his disciples about his return and what the signs of the end of the age will be
  - i. Jesus tells them,
    - 1. *<sup>4</sup>"See that no one leads you astray. <sup>5</sup>For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. <sup>6</sup>And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this MUST take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup>All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.*
      - a. Friends, there are indeed many false prophets and false saviors in our world today
      - b. There are indeed wars and rumors of wars
      - c. There are indeed famines and earthquakes in various places
    - 2. But in the midst of these realities, Jesus encourages us and tells us, "Do not be alarmed, for these things MUST take place before I come back"
      - a. They MUST take place before Jesus returns, because they are all part of God's predetermined plan
      - b. They MUST take place before the end of the age, because this is the sovereign will of God
- c. In the same way, Jesus brings us to another MUST here in our passage in Luke 9
  - i. "The Son of Man MUST suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."
    - 1. These things MUST happen...
      - a. Not because of fate
      - b. Not because of some intangible cosmic destiny
        - i. These things MUST happen, for this is the sovereign will of God!
  - ii. Peter affirms this for us in Acts 2, verses 22-24, as he is preaching to the crowds on the Day of Pentecost
    - 1. *<sup>22</sup>Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as*

*you yourselves know — <sup>23</sup>this Jesus, delivered up ACCORDING TO THE DEFINITE PLAN AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. <sup>24</sup>God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.*

a. Why was it necessary for Jesus to suffer many things, and be rejected by the religious leaders, and be crucified and killed?

i. Because this was the DEFINITE plan of God!

1. Yes, there were certainly wicked and lawless men who conspired against him, men like the Pharisees and the high priest

2. Yes, there was certainly one of his own disciples, the man Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him to these leaders for thirty pieces of silver

3. Yes, there was certainly the evil hand of the Roman Empire, whose soldiers beat Jesus until he was unrecognizable, and then nailed him to the cross

a. But ALL of this was done ACCORDING TO THE DEFINITE PLAN AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD!

i. These things MUST happen, for this is the sovereign will of God

4. We saw this in our Scripture reading at the beginning of the service, didn't we?

a. Turn with me in your Bibles to Isaiah 53, as we look at one of the great "Suffering Servant" passages in the book of Isaiah, starting in verse 1...

i. *<sup>1</sup>Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? <sup>2</sup>For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup>He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup>Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, SMITTEN BY GOD, AND AFFLICTED. <sup>5</sup>But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup>All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned — every one — to his own way; and THE LORD HAS LAID ON HIM the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup>He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. <sup>8</sup>By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? <sup>9</sup>And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. <sup>10</sup>YET IT WAS THE WILL OF THE LORD TO CRUSH HIM; HE HAS PUT HIM TO GRIEF; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup>Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup>Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.*

1. Well, this is an incredibly beautiful passage about our Lord, who would suffer on our behalf

- a. But it's also an incredibly difficult passage, for it makes it undeniably clear that Jesus's suffering was ORDAINED by his Father
    - i. Verse 4 says that Jesus would be smitten and afflicted BY GOD THE FATHER
    - ii. Verse 6 says that it would be GOD THE FATHER who would lay upon His Son all of OUR iniquities
      - 1. Jesus would be the One pierced
      - 2. Jesus would be the One crushed
      - 3. Jesus would be the One chastised by God
        - a. All because it would be THE FATHER who would lay upon the Son all of OUR transgressions
    - iii. And verse 10 tells us that this was all because IT WAS THE WILL OF THE LORD TO CRUSH HIM
      - 1. It was God the Father's WILL to put His Son to grief
- b. In theological terms, this passage lays before us the doctrine of Christ's penal substitutionary atonement
  - i. Penal, meaning that is the prescribed punishment of offenders under a legal system
  - ii. Substitutionary, meaning that Christ was made the substitute in our place
  - iii. And Atonement, meaning that his sacrifice would atone for, or be the payment made for, our sin
    - 1. So let's unpack each one of these words more in depth
  - iv. First, Christ's atonement for our sin was a PENAL atonement
    - 1. There is a pretty significant misunderstanding of sin in these days, even within the church
      - a. You can often hear sin defined as "missing the mark" or simply as "messing up"
      - b. We talk about our dumb choices, or our silly little hang-ups, or our "pet sins" that really aren't that big of a deal
      - c. We shrug off these wayward tendencies, or these minor idiosyncrasies in our lives, and we write them off as bad habits that maybe someday we'll kick
        - i. But this isn't how the Bible characterizes sin, is it?
    - 2. In John 8:34, Jesus says that everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin
      - a. If you continually give in to anger and bitterness in your heart, then you are a slave to that sin of anger and bitterness
      - b. If you continually give in to the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh, then you are a slave to that sin of lust
      - c. If you continually give in to gossip, or lying, or stealing, or gluttony, or drunkenness... then you are a slave to those sins
        - i. And Jesus says that slaves have no place in the house of his Father
    - 3. But it goes beyond just being a slave to sin, doesn't it?
      - a. For, unlike our typical concept of slaves, slaves to sin actually get paid for their work
        - i. According to the Apostle Paul in Romans 6:23, "The wages of your sin... is DEATH"
        - ii. This is the payment we ALL are due, for we are ALL descended from Adam... we ALL carry his genetics within us
          - 1. And as Paul writes in Romans 5:12, *"Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because ALL sinned..."*

- iii. So why is there such an awful penalty for just “missing the mark?”
    - iv. Why are there such eternal consequences for our “silly little hang-ups?”
  - 4. Because the Bible calls these things SIN
    - a. God, being infinitely HOLY and PURE and PERFECT cannot allow sin to dwell in his presence
    - b. And therefore, God, being infinitely JUST, must punish our sin
      - i. Regardless of what our justice system says, whether they get the idea of justice right or wrong...
        - 1. We ALL live under the justice system of God
        - 2. The justice system of God says that our missing the mark is called SIN
          - a. And under God’s penal system, the penalty for our sin is DEATH... eternal death... eternal separation from God... eternal condemnation before God
5. But the incredible message of the Gospel is that God does not break the laws of His own penal system by just offering up an unconditional pardon for everyone
  - a. Rather, He upholds His own justice by providing A SUBSTITUTION in our place
    - i. You see, the Bible is clear... we can never be good enough to make up for the sin that we have committed in our heart
      - 1. We may think to ourselves, “Well, I’m a MOSTLY good person... I mean, I’ve never killed anyone or robbed a bank or committed some other atrocious evil...
        - a. So maybe if I just get to church on a regular basis... maybe if I give some money to the church... maybe if I clean up some of these little hang-ups or bad habits...
          - i. Maybe THEN God will say, ‘God job buddy! I’ll make sure Peter lets you in through the pearly gates now!’”
    - 2. Friend, it’ll never happen
      - a. The entire Old Testament in your Bible stands as testimony against the idea that you can work your way into God’s favor
        - i. Israel had the Law and the Commandments
        - ii. Israel had the Covenants
        - iii. Israel had the Temple where God Himself would dwell
        - iv. Israel had EVERY promise God had given to man
  - b. And they missed the mark... BIG TIME
  - c. Brothers and sisters, I pray that if you would learn anything from reading the Old Testament, it would be this...
    - i. That we are ALL absolutely incapable of doing enough good to earn our way out of the penalty that our sins deserve
    - ii. We are slaves to our sin
    - iii. We are dead in our transgressions
- b. BUT GOD, in his infinite wisdom, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN SOVEREIGN WILL, sent his Son to be the SUBSTITUTE in our place

- i. Christ was pierced for OUR transgressions
    - ii. Christ was crushed for OUR iniquities
    - iii. The Lord has laid ON HIM the iniquities of us all
  - 6. And as the Substitution provide by God under His own penal system, Christ became the atoning sacrifice for our sin
    - a. For, from the very beginning of the Scriptures, according to the justice system of God, blood is demanded in order to atone for sin
      - i. In Genesis 3, after Adam and Eve sin in the garden and plunge all of humanity into sin and death, their eyes are opened, and they realize that they are both naked
        - 1. And the Bible says that they were afraid in their nakedness
          - a. But in God's grace, He killed an animal – He shed the animal's blood – and he provided garments of skin to clothe them
      - ii. As God gave Moses and all of Israel His law, He gave them regulation after regulation, command after command, about how sin would be atoned for among His people
        - 1. If the high priest sins... a bull is to be killed, and its blood is to be shed
        - 2. If the people sin... another bull is to be killed, and its blood is to be shed
        - 3. If a leader sins... a goat is to be killed, and its blood is to be shed
          - a. Under the sacrificial system that God Himself has ordained, blood must be shed to atone for the people's sins
      - iii. But it wasn't the blood of just any old animal, was it?
        - 1. No, the animal had to be spotless... without blemish... without deformity... without scars
          - a. THIS is the only acceptable sacrifice that is to be allowed before a holy God!
        - 2. And yet, this sacrifice was not enough
          - a. Throughout it's existence in the centuries before Christ, the Temple of God would have often resembled a slaughterhouse
            - i. For the people continued to sin
            - ii. And the blood of bulls and goats was never enough
  - 7. So God, according to HIS OWN SOVERIGN WILL, sent his very own Son, not just to be the substitution on our behalf, but to be the perfect and spotless Lamb of God, who would FULLY atone for our sins!
- v. According to His own sovereign will, God satisfied the demands of His own penal system, by sending Jesus to be crushed in our place, to atone for our sins
  - 1. THIS is why Jesus said to his disciples, *"The Son of Man MUST suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."*
    - a. It MUST happen, for this is the divine plan of God the Father
      - i. As God says in Isaiah 46:8-10,

1. <sup>8</sup>*“Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, <sup>9</sup>remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, <sup>10</sup>declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish ALL my purpose...’”*

b. Friends, Jesus embraced the suffering and pain of the cross WILLINGLY, for this was his Father’s will

i. And Jesus did NOTHING in opposition to His Father’s will!

5. So why does this doctrine of the penal substitutionary atonement matter for us as Christians?

a. This doctrine has recently and increasingly come under attack, from within the church

i. There are many pastors and theologians today who are departing from this doctrine, saying that it makes God into a cosmic child abuser

1. What kind of loving Father would INTENTIONALLY send His own Son to be violently beaten and crucified?

2. What kind of loving Father would ALLOW His own Son to be wounded and pierced and ultimately killed

3. What kind of loving Father would WILLINGLY crush His own Son?

ii. Others argue that this simply goes against the logic of God’s justice

1. If God is perfectly just, then he CANNOT punish an innocent person

a. We know that Christ was innocent in every way

b. So therefore, if God punishes Christ, then God is no longer just

i. And so, according to the wisdom of this world, they reject the idea that it was God’s definite plan to deliver his own Son up to wicked men

ii. They reject the idea that Jesus would be smitten and afflicted by his own Father

iii. Ultimately, they reject the Scriptures

b. And by rejecting the Scriptures, by rejecting the idea that Christ’s suffering was ORDAINED by the Father...

i. They remove any kind of real, lasting comfort that WE might find in our own pain and suffering

1. John Mark Comer is an author who has been very quickly gaining traction in the Christian world today

a. He’s been endorsed by Lifeway, the publishing wing of the Southern Baptist Convention

i. And his books are being taught in a rapidly growing number of churches each week

b. While Comer has not yet come out directly AGAINST the doctrine of Christ’s penal substitutionary atonement, his teaching is very clearly intended to lead people in that direction

2. Comer agrees that God has a sovereign will, but this sovereign will is not a DETERMINATE will

a. God may have a desire that certain things happen or not happen, but there are four other wills at work that keep God from being able to accomplish His will

i. The first is just the idea of human free will in general



1. Because God created us as rational human beings, with the ability to choose and to make our own decisions, many times our will will counteract God's will
    - ii. This idea is made more specific in the second will that he describes, the will of those who CHOOSE to do evil
      1. It is those who CHOOSE to hurt us, or slander us, or persecute us who are causing the pain and suffering in our lives
        - a. It isn't God's will that these things happen to us, but because of bad people, these things inevitably will happen
    - iii. The third will that Comer describes is the will of Satan, as he is actively opposing God and seeking to cause harm to God's people
      1. Again, God doesn't want us to suffer, but Satan often thwarts what God wants
    - iv. And then the fourth "will" that Comer describes is simply the will of chaos, or random chance, or what many would just say is bad luck
  3. God has His own sovereign will and His own desires, but unfortunately, there are all of these other wills competing against what He wants
    - a. My friends, not only is this NOT biblical... but it also fails to give us any kind of comfort in our pain
- c. If our pain and suffering in this life is simply because bad people choose to do bad things, and God is helpless to do anything about their actions...
- i. What possible comfort can we get in the midst of those circumstances?
    1. Think about Joseph's story in the book of Genesis
      - a. His brothers chose to wrong him by selling off as a slave
      - b. Potiphar's wife chose to wrong him by falsely accusing him of trying to rape her
      - c. The cupbearer chose to wrong him by forgetting about him in Pharaoh's dungeon
        - i. And yet, in all of these circumstances where people chose to wrong Joseph, Joseph somehow seemed to maintain his hope in God
          1. How was this possible?
            - a. The answer comes to us in Genesis 50, when Joseph's brothers fall down before him in fear and trembling, thinking that Joseph is going to have vengeance upon them, and he instead says,
              - i. <sup>19</sup>"Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. <sup>21</sup>So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones."
        - ii. Joseph found his peace and comfort in the fact that God was sovereign over ALL his suffering, and that there was PURPOSE in his pain
      2. Or think about the Apostle Peter, when he is standing there in the courtyard of the Chief Priest, as he denies Christ three times before the rooster crowed, and then Christ lifts his head up and looks Peter in the eye
        - a. In that moment, why did Peter not follow in the footsteps of Judas?

- i. In his great anguish and guilt and shame, why did Peter not go and hang himself alongside Judas for giving into Satan's lies and influence?
  1. The answer comes in Luke 22:31-32, as Jesus is preparing Peter for this moment, and he says to him,
    - a. <sup>31</sup>*"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup>but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."*
    - b. According to the evil within his own will, Satan demanded to have Peter, that he might sift him like wheat
      - i. But it was JESUS who said to Satan, "I will allow it."
      - ii. And by Jesus ALLOWING Satan to sift Peter, Peter's faith was eventually strengthened
      - iii. And in his strengthened faith, Peter would turn and strengthen the faith of others
  2. Peter turned back to Christ, knowing that God was sovereign over ALL his suffering, and that there was PURPOSE in his pain
3. Or think about the Apostle Paul, and the thorn in his flesh
  - a. In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul talks about how he was caught up into heaven, where he was given all sorts of visions and revelations... visions and revelations that would cause most people to want to boast about
    - i. But in verse 7, Paul says, *"So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited."*
      1. Did you catch what he said?
        - a. This thorn in his flesh was a messenger of Satan
        - b. And yet it was given to him to keep him from being conceited!
          - i. Friends, just in case you were wondering, THE LAST thing that Satan wants to do is to keep God's people from being conceited!
        - c. This messenger from Satan certainly harassed Paul, but the messenger was given to accomplish GOD's purposes...
          - i. That Paul might remain HUMBLE
      - ii. And when Paul pleaded with the Lord three times to remove the thorn, and God told him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness..."
        1. It was then that Paul found his contentment
          - a. He could be content in weaknesses and insults
          - b. He could be content in hardships and persecutions
          - c. He could be content in all calamities that others might write off as chaos or random chance or bad luck
        - iii. He could be content in all of these things, knowing that God was sovereign over ALL of his suffering, and that there was PURPOSE in his pain

- ii. Brothers and sisters in Christ, this is where we find our peace and comfort in the dungeons, as Joseph did
- iii. This is where our faith is strengthened and we are able to strengthen the faith of others, even when we fall to Satan's arrows, as Peter did
- iv. This is where we find our contentment amidst any calamity we might face, as Paul did
  - 1. When we realize that God is just as sovereign in our pain as He was in the pain and suffering of His Son, THEN we will be able to look for God's purpose in all of it
    - a. When Jesus began to tell his disciples of all of the pain and suffering that he was about to encounter, he told them that this was what MUST happen
      - i. For this is what His Father had ordained
    - b. Friends, as you encounter pain and suffering and trials and hardships in your life, may you also say, "This is what MUST happen."
      - i. For this is what my Father has ordained
      - ii. And EVERYTHING He ordains is for MY good, and for HIS glory!