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*And when Jesus entered Peter’s house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him. That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”*

Matthew 8:1-17

This morning we return to our walk together through the gospel of Matthew, which we began last year on the first Sunday of May and we stopped on the last Sunday of November, for the Advent season in December and for a number of speakers and events through the month of January. As a reminder of our larger context – the apostle Matthew is one of the four gospel writers, each who gives us a unique view of Jesus’s life; each focusing on a separate aspect of who Jesus was and is. John focused on Jesus as the *Son of God*; Luke on *Jesus is the Son of Man*; Mark (by Peter) on *Jesus is the Suffering Servant*; and Matthew on *Jesus is the Sovereign King*. Matthew’s emphasis on Jesus as Sovereign King is framed within the concept of the *Kingdom of God*, which then defines various aspects of our faith in Jesus Christ - the *gospel* is the *message* of the kingdom; *disciples* are *citizens* of the kingdom; *discipleship* is the *demand* of the kingdom; the *church* is the *outpost* of the kingdom; *missions* is the *spread* of the kingdom; *devil/demons* are *enemies* of the kingdom; and *glorious return of Jesus* is the *coming* of the kingdom. The main common theme that runs throughout all these concepts is that Jesus Christ is the sovereign King who alone grants salvation. The Gospel of Matthew is an account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Sovereign King promised in the Old Testament.

As a reminder also, the context of our text for today *began* at the beginning of Matthew, as in the first two chapters Matthew gives us a record of matters which relate to the divine incarnate birth of God in the physical form of Jesus. Matthew does so to show us that Jesus was the promised Savior, born in the Messianic line of Abraham and of David. Four times in those two chapters Matthew speaks of events that fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. He also begins to point out Jesus as Sovereign King when he relates that Magi came to worship Jesus at this birth because he was the “*King of the Jews*” (vs. 2:2). In Matthew 3, Matthew introduces us to John the Baptist, whose appearance also fulfills Old Testament prophecies. John preached because Jesus had come to earth, the “*kingdom of God*” was at hand and he called people to repent of their sins in preparation for the coming of the Lord. John baptizes Jesus, and God the Father and the Holy Spirit publically testified to the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah (vs.3:13-17). In chapter 4 Jesus successfully resists Satan’s temptations in the wilderness. John the Baptist is arrested, Jesus moves to Capernaum and its here Jesus calls four of His disciples: Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Jesus then began preaching, teaching, and healing, attracting large crowds.

*And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. Matthew 4:23-25*

The first four chapters of Matthew then set the stage for Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, in which he laid the foundation of his teaching and preaching about the Gospel. Because Jesus was addressing the Jews of the chosen people of God, the nation of Israel, he used the Sermon on the Mount to articulate the relationship of His message and ministry to the Old Testament Law. Jesus corrected the misinterpretations of the law that were held and promoted by the Jewish religious leaders - by revealing to them that while they focused on external obedience, God focuses on the heart. Those words would have shocked those who heard him, as the Jews believed they got to heaven by the things they did. But Jesus taught them that no one could be saved by living up to the requirements of the law, but rather by where their hearts were with God. Salvation was not a matter of doing good works, but of faith; not a matter of externals, but by an inner character of the Kingdom of God that was spiritually-poor, sin-grieving, humbly-dependent, God-pursuing, merciful, pure-hearted, peace-seeking, joyful endurance-in-the-face-of- persecution – because Jesus Christ is God, the Sovereign King, Lord and Savior.

All throughout the Sermon on the Mount Jesus spoke about how people in the kingdom of God should live out their lives - and he warned them about the fatal consequences of not doing so. At the conclusion of His sermon, Jesus emphasized that true faith in God is not merely a matter of words, but also of actions that flow out of a heart attitude towards living out the character of the Kingdom, where Jesus reigns as King, and where his subjects joyfully trust and humbly submit and obey Him at all times in all things. Actions of trust in God must should lead to profession of trust in God. Words of faith should be verified in our works of faith. The final words of Matthew 7 describe the authority of this truth which the crowds sensed in Jesus: *“And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes”* (Matthew 7:28-29).

As we step into Matthew 8 this morning, we need to consider that Matthew most likely did not write his gospel in a chronological manner, but rather he intentionally arranged the events in Jesus' life in a manner that would reveal a particular aspect of the character of our Lord Jesus. We know the other gospel writers did so, and so Matthew would not be an exception. We see that in Matthew, in the particular theme of Jesus' words and Jesus' works that he introduced in Matthew 4:23 – *“And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.”* This verse is a summary of Jesus' ministry, carried out in both *word* (teaching/preaching) and *works* (healing). We see that first in the words that follow Matthew's summary statement in Matthew 4:23, in the ministry of Jesus words, in his preaching and teaching in his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. And then, right after we hear the ministry of Jesus' words in chapters 5–7, we step into Matthew 8, where read of the ministry of Jesus' healing. In Matthew 5–7 we read of the ministry of the *words* of Jesus; in Matthew 8 we read of the *works* of Jesus.

The words for our text for today in Matthew 8:1-17 serve to undergird the *“authority”* of Jesus' words spoken of in Matthew 4:29. Jesus' words are validated by Jesus's works. Jesus speaks with authority in the Sermon on the Mount, and then He proceeds to perform numerous acts of healing and deliverance in the verses and chapters that follow. If Jesus claimed to be the Messiah by His preaching/teaching in Matthew 5-7, he validated that claim by the power of his healing in chapter 8. Because Jesus is our Sovereign King he possesses absolute authority over everything in the world. This is good news, for us who live in a sin-stricken world that is saturated with the struggle of pain and the suffering of sickness and disease. God the Father sent Christ His Son into the world to heal and redeem and restore that which has been infected and imprisoned and broken. Jesus our Sovereign King has authority over it all!

*When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them." Matthew 8:1-4*

Matthew opens chapter 8 by telling us that as Sovereign King, Jesus *has authority over the struggle of pain and the suffering of sickness and disease*. In our text for today Jesus' authority is revealed in three different ways in three different stories. In the first story in the first four verses, we see *Jesus' Sovereign authority can cleanse those who are physically and spiritually unclean*. Just after Jesus had finished preaching and teaching his Sermon on the Mount, he comes down from the mountain - and as *"great crowds followed him"* a *"leper came to him and knelt before him"* and asked Jesus: *"Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."* This word *"clean"* is a key term for Matthew, for this story is more than just about physical healing. Leprosy was about as bad you could get. It was incurable and deadly, an equivalent of cancer, except leprosy was slower and more evident - and ugly and with many sweeping implications.

*"Leprosy"*, also called Hansen's disease, is a physical disease that attacks the nerve system, sometimes to the point where the victim can no longer feel pain. Those with leprosy experience infection easily, which leads to the degeneration of tissues, organs, and limbs, to the point where limbs become deformed and then eventually fall off. *"Leprosy"* is a brutal physical condition, but in Jesus day, it is much more than that, in that it was also considered to be a spiritual disease. Once declared a leper by the priest, lepers were cut off from contact with society. They had to display marks of mourning, as if for the dead, by tearing their clothes, uncovering their heads, and covering their lips. They were required to stay a certain distance away from everyone. If someone began to approach them, or if they began to approach someone else, they were required to shout out, *"Unclean! Unclean!"* Lepers had to remain outside the community, they were forbidden access to the temple and were not allowed in the city Jerusalem.

Knowing this we can begin to grasp the significance of this first healing miracle in Matthew 8. Consider the tension that occurred when the leper, who is physically and spiritually unclean, approaches Jesus and says: *"Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."* What the leper is saying is that he does know Jesus *"can"* heal him, in that has the authority and the ability to heal him – but, is Jesus *willing* heal him? Here is where we need to understand the clear distinction between Jesus' *sovereign power* and Jesus' *sovereign will*. Both are exceedingly important, especially when it comes to praying for healing in our lives. Regardless of any struggle of pain or suffering of sickness and disease, we should never, ever doubt Jesus' sovereign power to heal. He has absolute authority over any and all sickness and disease.

And so the only question that you and I could ever ask is: *"Is Jesus willing to heal me?"* In other words, is it God's will for us to be made well? In this particular event in Matthew 8, the answer is "yes," Jesus was willing. But that's not always a given. The apostle Paul understood that. In 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 he wrote about a time in his life when he struggled with the pain and suffering of *"a thorn in the flesh"* which God was not willing to heal him from. As Paul pleaded for God's healing, Jesus spoke to Paul and told him he would not heal him because he wanted Paul, in his weakness, to know the sufficient power of crucified and risen Jesus Christ. Paul wrote that Jesus said to him: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."* Paul then wrote: *"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Like Paul, in times of wounding and weakness, we are to trust both the power of God and the wisdom of God in our struggles and sufferings. The One who has the sovereign power and sovereign authority to heal – is also the One who has the sovereign wisdom as whether to heal. Jesus as our Sovereign King knows what will bring Him the most glory and what will bring us the most good.

In the spring of 2000, James Montgomery Boice, the pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in the city of Philadelphia, was diagnosed with cancer. When asked by his congregation how they should pray for him, he answered: "Should you pray for a miracle? Well, you're free to do that, of course. My general impression is that the God who is able to do miracles—and he certainly can—is also able to keep you from getting the problem in the first place. So, although miracles do happen, they're rare by definition. A miracle has to be an unusual thing. Above all, I would say pray for the glory of God. If you think of God glorifying himself in history and you say, where in all of history has God most glorified himself? He did it at the cross of Jesus Christ, and it wasn't by delivering Jesus from the cross, though he could have. Jesus said, "Don't you think I could call down from my Father ten legions of angels for my defense?" But he didn't do that. And yet that's where God is most glorified. God is in charge. When things like this come into our lives, they are not accidental. It's not as if God somehow forgot what was going on, and something bad slipped by. God is not only the one who is in charge; God is also good. Everything He does is good." Pastor James Montgomery Boice gave testimony here about what it means to have confidence in the sovereign power of God and to trust in the sovereign will of God. Boice died eight weeks after sharing those words with his congregation - trusting in the sovereign power and sovereign will of God. He knew Jesus was able to heal, yet He submitted to Jesus' Sovereign will.

It was Jesus Sovereign will to heal the leper. *"And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."* Note here that Jesus healed the leper by touching him. Though the leper was considered to be physically and spiritually unclean, Jesus reached down and *"stretched out his hand and touched him."* This is a symbol of Jesus' taking the leper's uncleanness upon himself. Jesus could have healed him in a myriad of different ways – but here, Jesus reaches out and identifies himself with the uncleanness of the leper in order to make the leper clean. This is a picture of what Jesus would do, ultimately on the cross, cleansing us of the leprosy of our sin that has made us physically and spiritually unclean before God. We all stand before Christ dirty and stained with the shame of sin. We all have things in our lives, either past or present, that make us feel untouchable - sins we've struggled with or sins others have committed against us. In and of ourselves, we are unclean before a holy God. But Jesus identified with our uncleanness, taking the dirt and stain of our sin upon Himself in order to make us clean by his sacrificial death on the cross. Hebrews 10:22 says: *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."* In 1 John 1:7 we read that *"if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin!"* Jesus is our Sovereign King! He has authority over the struggle of pain and the suffering of sickness and disease - and He can cleanse and heal those who are physically and spiritually unclean.

*When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly." And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment. Matthew 8:5-13*

Here Matthew shares with us another revelation that Jesus, as Sovereign King, has authority over the struggle of pain and the suffering of sickness and disease, through the ministry of Jesus' works that validate Jesus' words, as we see *Jesus' Sovereign authority to regenerate those who are ethnically outcasts.* In this event in Jesus' life - he traveled to *"Capernaum."* It was there that a *"centurion came forward to him"* and said to him: *"Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly."*

The centurion and his servant in this story, would have been Gentiles, likely brought in for military service from somewhere outside Galilee. The centurion, as a Roman, was not only viewed as an ethnic outsider by the Jews, but also as one who was deliberately opposed God's people. This makes Jesus' response to the soldier's request shocking, because in Jesus's day a devout Jew would never speak to or go into the home, of an unbelieving Gentile. The centurion clearly knew that. He confessed that he was not worthy to have Jesus come into his home. He also seemed to know, by the sovereign grace of God, that Jesus had the authority to heal and the ability to do so, by just speaking a word without coming to his home. When Jesus hears this, he says, *"Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith."* The *"faith"* Jesus is talking about here is a *"faith"* that trusts the authority of Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:17 speaks of this *"faith"* of regeneration: *"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."* We also hear this when the centurion says: *"Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed."*

The Roman centurion knew what it was like to have authority over soldiers and servants, as Rome's authority had been given to him. The centurion perceived that Jesus had this kind of authority over disease. If Jesus says *"Go"* or *"Come"* or *"Do this"*, the sickness will *go, come and do this* - because Jesus has absolute authority over the struggle of pain and the suffering of sickness and disease. The Roman centurion's request that Jesus heal his servant by just saying a *"word"* mostly likely did not come from any prior information about Jesus, but rather about how he, as a Roman centurion, exercised his own authority. Jesus knew that; he saw the Gentile Roman centurion before him to be man who simply and humbly had absolute trust in the authority of Jesus - much more so than God's people. Jesus goes on to emphasize this by speaking of the *"sons of the kingdom"* - who would be the Jewish men and women who assumed they ethnically had a biological right to be part of the people of God - but who would be cast out of God's presence for eternity because of their lack of faith. These words would have stunned the Jewish readers Matthew was writing to in his gospel, as Jesus would be declaring that their Jewish ancestry guaranteed them nothing in eternity. They would be eternally lost without *"faith"* that humbly trusts the sovereignty and authority of Jesus. The same is true for every human being alive today. Our eternal destiny is dependent on our humble trust in the sovereignty and authority of Jesus to save us from our sins and to rule over us as the Lord and Savior of our lives. And all who trust in Jesus like this, regardless of background or ethnicity, will be welcomed by the Sovereign King at his table forever!

*And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him. That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases." Matthew 8:15-17*

In this third event in Jesus's life, Matthew again shows us that, in regards to Jesus as Sovereign King, who has Sovereign authority over the struggle of pain and the suffering of sickness and disease - he not only cleanses those who are physically and spiritually unclean, and regenerates those who are ethnically outcasts - *Jesus also restores those who are culturally marginalized.* We have already seen Jesus as Sovereign King cross the acceptable Jewish cultural boundaries of purity and ethnicity with His Sovereign authority to heal - but now he does so again by breaching the acceptable cultural boundary of *gender*, in using His Sovereign authority to heal a woman, who is the apostle Peter's mother-in-law. In Jesus' day a man's primary responsibility was seen as public, while a woman's life was confined entirely within the privacy of family. Women were separated from men in private, public and religious life. Respectable women were expected to stay within the confines of the home and if a woman was ever in the streets, she was to be heavily veiled and was prohibited from conversing with men. Those of the female gender were not speak to or touch any man that was not her husband. Women were not allowed to testify in court, which categorized them with Gentiles, minors, deaf-mutes and other "undesirables" such as gamblers and drunks. Women were exempt from the commandment to learn the Law of Moses. They could go to the Temple but could not beyond the confines of the Women's Court.

*“And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him.”* After healing a leper and a Gentile, Jesus now heals a woman, Peter's mother-in-law – by going into her house and touching her would have broken the acceptable cultural norm of the day. Jesus heals her with a simple touch – this time without saying a word, without asking for anything. We see the sovereign power of Jesus authority over disease and sickness - in that the woman is instantly healed and she immediately *“rose and began to serve him.”* Jesus sovereign authority to heal powerfully breaches any and all barriers in heaven and on earth. Matthew concludes this section of Matthew 8 by telling us: *“That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.’”* Matthew's quotation in verse 17 is from the first half Isaiah 53:4, which is a part of the prophecy of Jesus as Savior as our suffering servant in Isaiah 53, which says: *“Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”* (Isaiah 53:4a). The Hebrew words in the Old Testament for *“griefs”* and *“sorrows”* lend themselves to be translated to be *“illnesses”* and *“diseases”* in the Greek of the New Testament. In Isaiah 53 we get a clear picture of Jesus as Sovereign King, taking authority over the struggle of pain and the suffering of sickness and disease, by sacrificially surrendering his life so we might be eternally healed.

*Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.  
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.  
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.* Isaiah 53:4-6

*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.  
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.  
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.* Isaiah 53:10-12

Isaiah's prophetic words are about Jesus' sacrificial death in the place of sinners. Why would Matthew quote Isaiah 53 at the end of three events that reflect Jesus' physical healing ministry? Some might promote the belief that Matthew did so because Jesus' death on the cross affirms that followers of Christ won't have to endure disease and sickness in this world. This kind of thinking is at the core of the health-and-wealth, name-it-and-claim-it, prosperity doctrine that has infected the world we live in. This is not what Matthew 8:17 or Isaiah 53:4 is teaching us. By connecting Jesus' healing authority to Isaiah's prophecy, Matthew is showing us that Jesus, our Sovereign King, has the power of God to overcome all our pains, struggles, sufferings. In light of the larger context of Isaiah, Matthew attributes this power and authority to Jesus because – *Jesus paid the price to overcome all our sin.* That's the point of the cross. Redemptive history tells us that all suffering in the world ultimately goes back to sin, for before sin came into the picture, there was no pain, struggle or suffering. But when sin entered the world - pain, struggle and suffering entered our lives, and as a result, we live in a world marked by evil and the struggle of pain and the suffering of sickness and disease. So when Jesus came to die on a cross, He came to address the root problem, which is not pain, struggle or suffering. The root problem is sin. And Jesus paid the price with his life to overcome our sin, so that we could be free from sin's penalty.

But do the miracles mean it is God's will that Christians will no longer experience all kinds of pain, sickness, and suffering? No way! The miracles in Matthew's Gospel are intended to give us a picture of what is to come in the fullness of God's kingdom, that is, when Christ fully and finally asserts His authority and reign over the earth. But that time is not yet. In the meantime, we still live in a world of suffering and pain - and the reality is that our suffering and pain will actually increase in this world when we fully put our trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. The apostle Paul writes:

*For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake. Philippians 1:29*

*Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. Colossians 1:24*

*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 2 Corinthians 4:8-10*

*But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

Philippians 3:7-11

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Romans 8:18*

*We do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 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 Corinthians 4:16-18*

These are just few of the multitude of verses from God's Word that speak to the reality of our struggle with pain and suffering. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that because we have been saved from our sins, that we will not experience *the struggle of pain and the suffering of sickness and disease*. Instead, the Word of God tells us that *Jesus has overcome* the root of all struggle, pain, suffering, sickness and disease – which is sin. Jesus paid the price for sin to defeat sin so that we don't need to be afraid of any kind of struggle, pain, suffering, sickness and disease. Regardless of what happens in this decaying world, there is a day coming when God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, for all these things will have passed away. And he who is seated on the throne will say, "*Behold, I am making all things new*" (Rev. 21:4). As we wait for that day, we don't run away from suffering, but rather we rejoice in Jesus in our suffering, who has absolute authority over our suffering. Jesus is our Sovereign King! He has healed our souls forever. "*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us*" (Romans 5:1-5).