

Rejoicing in Sorrow

Introduction

We have been through a difficult month or two. Two large hurricanes back to back and one a direct hit on Sarasota. It leaves many asking questions and others doubting God's favor. I have heard some ridiculous claims from people who claim to follow Jesus and seem to be willing to speak to God's intentions regarding the storm. So I thought I should address a few things so we don't end up where God does not want us to go.

It raises questions?

Does God cause hurricanes? Answer. He theoretically can, He is God....but hurricanes were not part of His creation. but not typically. When God said, "it is good" His creation didn't even have rain yet. All natural disasters are simply that...natural consequences of a creation under the curse of sin compounded by years of man's failure to care for the environment. They are a result of tectonic shifts that occur because the creation is under the curse of sin. It includes Tornadoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, blizzards, droughts, famines and other similar disasters. God created a world where there were no natural disasters. He allows the consequences of our sins even in creation.

It is true that God sent plagues, droughts and other natural phenomena to carry out His punishment and His will. God can of course use them and direct them for His purposes. But we know that because He revealed His intentions. If He does not directly tell us we should not presume to speak for Him. We need to be very careful claiming God's intent or speaking for Him. It is one of the ways we take His name in vain. So while He didn't include them in His creation, He will direct it and use it for His purposes. Since He holds everything together, He could, if desired, calm, intensify, or direct the storm with a spoken word.

So when people ask me why a hurricane hit Sarasota, my answer is because it aligned with God's will for us; For reasons we don't have to know, God deemed that it is best that Hurricane Milton come to Sarasota and He will advance the gospel message through it.

It was God's design that His sons and daughters should forever smell the fragrance of exotic flowers, not rotting corpses. They should always enjoy the delicacies of tropical fruit and tasty dishes, not face hunger and starvation. He is the one who provides the fresh air from a mountaintop and cool sparkling water, not ugly pollution.

If God does not bring natural disasters, who does?

Well ultimately Satan. He is responsible for the sins of the world and storms are the consequence. God can give Satan permission to cause storms.

The Old Testament story of Job is a classic example of how God sometimes allows Satan to bring calamities. Job lost his cattle, his crops, and his family to vicious attacks, a killer hurricane, and firestorm. Job's friends said these disasters came from God, but a careful reading of the book of Job reveals that it was Satan who brought these evils

Why does God give Satan permission to destroy?

Satan deceived Eve, and through her he led Adam to sin. Because he had tempted the first humans—the head of the human race—into sin, Satan claimed that they had chosen him as the god of this world

2 Corinthians 4:3–4 (ESV) 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

He claims to be the rightful ruler of this world

Matthew 4:8–9 (ESV) 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

He tried to offer to Jesus what was already His. Yet Satan claimed to rule it all. Through the ages, Satan has been fighting against God, trying to establish his claim to this world. He points to all those who have chosen to follow him as proof that he is the rightful ruler of this world.

God is love, and His character is perfectly unselfish, and just. Therefore, His own character prevents Him from doing anything that is unfair. He will not interfere with man's free choice. Those who choose to follow Satan are free to do so. And God will allow Satan to demonstrate to the universe what the consequences of sin really are. In the calamities and disasters that befall the earth and destroy lives, we can see what sin is like, what life is like when Satan has his own way.

So since we are answering questions, Why did God create the devil?

Actually, God did not create the devil. God created a beautiful, perfect angel named Lucifer. Lucifer, in turn, made a devil out of himself. Lucifer's pride caused him to rebel against God and to challenge Him for supremacy. He was thrown out of heaven and came to this earth where he tempted a perfect man and woman to sin. When they did so, they opened a floodgate of evil upon the world.

Why does God not kill the devil?

Well the answer is that God uses the Devil to fulfill His purposes for us. God could have destroyed Satan when he rebelled in heaven. God could have destroyed Adam and Eve when they sinned—and started over. He should have killed you and me. However, if He had done this, He would have been ruling from the standpoint of force, rather than love.

The angels in heaven and human beings on Earth would serve Him from fear, not love. In order for love to flourish, it must operate on the principle of freedom of choice. Without freedom to choose, there would be no such thing as real love. We would simply be robots.

God wants us to choose Him because we love Him and have the free will not to. Love requires free will. God chose to preserve our freedom of choice and to rule by love. He chose to allow Satan and sin to run their course. He would allow us and the universe to see where sin would lead. He would let us see the reasons for making the choice to serve Him in love.

Free will and justice means that I must have the choice between two clearly distinct alternatives. God didn't stack the deck in His favor, in fact He made it harder to choose Him.

Does God send calamities to kill sinners?

Let me share a truth with you that you may not realize. God does not love believers more than nonbelievers. He does not love Billy Graham and Mother Theresa more than Hitler and Charles Manson. God's love is unconditional. He is not out to get sinners. He poured all of His wrath out on Jesus.

Everything now is about helping people make a salvation decision in their own free will. Some mistakenly think that God always sends calamities to punish sinners. This is not true. Jesus commented on acts of violence and natural calamities that happened in His day. In Jesus' day there were two events in the news, both had people suffer and die. One event was that the Tower of Siloam collapsed and killed 18 people and the other involved Galileans that Pilate had killed. Look at what Jesus says....

Luke 13:1–5 (ESV) 1 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

These things happened because in a world of sin there are calamities and atrocities that take place that would not happen in a perfect world. It does not mean that everyone who dies in such calamities is a sinner nor does it mean that God causes the calamity. It is often the innocent that suffer the consequences of living in this world of sin. Jesus just notes that we should repent so that if we die in a similar manner we are not in Hell.

Matthew 5:45 (ESV) 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

But didn't God destroy wicked cities like Sodom and Gomorrah?

The destruction of these wicked cities was an example of the judgments that will come upon the whole world at the end of time as a result of sin. In His mercy, God allowed His judgment to fall on Sodom and Gomorrah so that many others might be warned. This does not necessarily mean that when an earthquake or a tornado or a tsunami strikes that God is pouring out His wrath in judgment upon cities like San Francisco, New Orleans, or Sarasota. We live in a sinful world and disasters can strike at any time.

Some have suggested that natural disasters are perhaps the beginning of God's final judgments upon the wicked. One should not rule out the possibility that sinners are receiving the consequences of their rebellion against God, but we cannot correlate particular disasters with divine retribution against specific sinners or sins. To do so means that we are speaking for God. These horrible events may well be simply the result of living in a world that has fallen so far from God's ideal.

Where is God when all this happens? Do not good people pray for safety?

When disasters happen, the real point is that they could happen to any of us at any time. It is only because God is love that one heartbeat follows another. He gives life and love to all. Every day, billions of people wake up to fresh air, warm sunshine, delicious food, and comfortable homes—because God is love, and He showers His blessings on the earth. We have no individual claim on life, however, as though we had created ourselves. We must acknowledge that we live in a world that is subject to death from a variety of sources.

3. Why doesn't God protect His children when these storms come? If He loves us why does He allow us to be injured or killed? Or asked another way. Why do bad things happen to good people.

Well the first thing to know is this....there are no good people. Don't forget how God describes you and me in our natural state.

Romans 3:10–18 (ESV) 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." 14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

On our best day, all of us deserve death and to burn in Hell.

Romans 3:22–23 (ESV) 22For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 2:9–11 (ESV) 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

God shows no partiality....He will use the life of His children if it means a lost sinner might be saved. God is far more interested in everyone spending eternity with Him than He is to make our lives wrinkle free on earth. In fact it is the opposite. Jesus said those who follow Him will suffer.... Because our eternal lives are expendable for His purposes. We surrendered our lives to be sacrificed for Him in any way that He sees fit.

If God supernaturally protected His followers than people would claim to follow Him for what He gives them rather than for who He is.

Imagine if when storms came, they only touched non believers and believers were bullet proof. Then people would claim to follow Christ for what He can give them. That was the problem in Jesus day. People wanted the miracle but not Him.

That is our problem still today. Many want the promise of heaven, but they don't want to surrender to Jesus in relationship. If believers were somehow untouchable, they might base their faith on the promise of protection rather than the promise of the Cross.

So God allows everything to potentially happen to everyone.

So a Hurricane has hit Sarasota. God has allowed it and God is using it to advance the gospel. So what are we to do? And that brings us to our paradox this week.

When the world looks in at our response to this storm....They should see followers of Jesus who are sorrowful and at the same time....joyful.

Sorrowful yet always rejoicing

How exactly does that paradox work? We think of rejoicing coming from great experiences. Yet God tells us that we are to rejoice always. In all circumstances. It is almost as if our rejoicing is not impacted either way by what happens to us. That is what God wants us to look at today.

It has been a tough week with Milton. Many are devastated....losses are great....The worst hurricane in 100 years. Some lost their lives. Sorrowful yet always rejoicing....hmm.

We know that in this life we will experience hours and perhaps days of grief and pain, but we also know that our heavenly Father provides mercy and comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:3 (ESV) 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

Jesus the Son of God is "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" and is our interceding High Priest at the throne of grace. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter who dwells in us and ministers to us. We are comforted that we may be able to comfort others. In the school of sorrow, God's people can learn many valuable lessons that cannot be learned any other way.

Think about these verses

Psalm 126:5–6 (ESV) 5 Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! 6 He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

Psalm 13:2 (ESV) 2 How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

Psalm 116:3 (ESV) 3 The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.

Lamentations 3:32 (ESV) 32 but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love;

Nehemiah 8:10 (ESV) And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

John 15:11 (ESV) 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

John 16:21–22 (ESV) 21 When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

Romans 12:12 (ESV) 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

2 Corinthians 6:10 (ESV) 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;

Philippians 4:4 (ESV) 4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

Let's meditate on three words in Paul's brief statement and see how this paradox points the way to Christian joy—no matter how painful our circumstances might be. God teaches us through Paul that we are to be sorrowful but always rejoicing. Sorrowful, Rejoicing Always.

Sorrowful

Paul wept over the people of Israel and prayed for their salvation. He also wept over the worldly professed Christians in the churches. And clearly Paul had more than his share of sorrows, the greatest of which was his "deep concern for all the churches"

2 Corinthians 11:28 (ESV) 28 And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Having pastored two churches and listened to many pastors, I can appreciate Paul's burden for God's people. Sorrow itself is not sinful unless it becomes so excessive that it paralyzes us or makes us do foolish things. Sorrow can make us selfish when it ought to make our hearts tender so that we seek to encourage others. We say that he did that because he feels sorrow for himself.

When Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthian church, he was certainly experiencing sorrow. The church in Corinth was divided, and some of the members were questioning Paul's apostolic authority. He was encouraging the Gentile churches to give generously to the offering he was receiving for the poor saints in Judea, but the church in Corinth was delaying their giving and accusing Paul of taking their money for himself.

In order to save the lives of the believers in Jerusalem, Paul had to change his plans for visiting the Corinthian church and this had greatly upset some of the members. It seems that, no matter what God's servants do, there is always somebody in the church who misunderstands and starts criticizing and causing trouble.

In spite of what the health and wealth preachers tell us, Christians are not protected from suffering and sorrow. After all, the goal of the Christian life is likeness to Christ and He was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief". Paul experienced "the fellowship of His sufferings" even as he experienced the joy of the Lord. Instead of protecting us from battles and burdens, following Jesus Christ introduces us to problems and conflicts that occur only in the lives of believers.

John 16:33 (ESV) 33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Jesus compared our sorrows to the pains of a woman giving birth. This analogy tells us that our pain is not forever and that once it accomplishes its purposes, there will be joy. The same baby that causes the pain also causes the joy!

Psalms 30:5 (ESV) 5 For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

In Gethsemane, Jesus faced the shame and agony of the cross and was overwhelmed by sorrow; yet the Father heard His prayers and strengthened Him. Just as life brings us day and night and summer and winter, so it brings us pain and pleasure and joy and sorrow.

If all that you have is sunshine, you will soon be living in a desert. If all that you have are storms, you will soon be living in an ocean. Our loving Father balances for us the experiences of life so that we may mature and learn how to face difficulties courageously.

Because of Adam and Eve we are offspring of fallen people with sinful natures. The body we live in and the world we inhabit are both part of a fallen creation that will not be delivered until Jesus returns to establish His kingdom. God is working out His divine plan and we are not able to explain all that He is doing, but we do know that He loves us and plans for us what is best. As the familiar song says, "I know not what the future holds, but I know Who holds the future."

Not only is fallen creation groaning, but our Savior groaned when He was ministering on earth. At the tomb of Lazarus, when Jesus saw His friends weeping, He "groaned in the spirit and was troubled". He knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, but that did not stop Him from entering into the pain of the two sisters and their friends.

Romans 12:15 (ESV) 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Paul learned that by seeing how Jesus lived it.

When pain and sorrow come to people who do not know Christ, they usually turn to the world for help, which means distractions of one kind or another—alcohol, narcotics, entertainment, overeating, excessive shopping, and so on

Our life experiences depend upon the foundation we have formed, and if life is without faith in the Lord, it might fall apart.

The unbeliever asks, "How can I get out of this?" but the child of God asks, "What can I get out of this?" The steady faith of the Christian in days of difficulty is a great testimony to the unbelieving world. Times of difficulty can also be times of discovery, not only of our own needs but also of God's gracious supply

The Holy Spirit helps us in our praying "and makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered". In that same chapter, Romans 8, Paul tells us that each believer groans within, longing for the new glorified body that we will have when we see Jesus.

All of our difficulties are allowed by God to shape us and to advance the gospel.

The human experience is one which at times is full of sorrow. We live in a fallen world and Satan has incredible influence on us. And yet we share another experience as part of life.

People ask me....Why does God allow bad things to happen to me? I thought He loves me.

The answer is that things...events...are not actually good or bad in and of themselves. We label them but God doesn't. If something goes our way we call it a blessing. If it goes against us we blame it on God or Satan. But God says that everything that happens to is for good.

Romans 8:28 (ESV) 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.

If you are a believer in Jesus then you can be assured that everything God allows in your life is for His ultimate Good. You may not consider it good....but God does...that is why He allowed it.

Rejoicing

We have so many reasons to rejoice, even when the days are dark and the nights are long and lonely. God is our Father, Jesus is our Savior and our interceding High Priest, and the Holy Spirit is our Comforter. What more do we need?

The Bible nourishes us, guides us, and supports our faith with promise after promise. God's throne is a throne of grace, not of judgment. Our Christian friends love us, pray for us, and encourage us. The adequate grace that we receive from the Lord we can share with others who

are hurting, even as they share with us. We we are exhausted God's power still flows through us to others.

Happiness depends primarily on happenings, but joy in the Lord goes far deeper. It is not based on what we are doing but on what the Lord has already done for us.

Nehemiah 8:10 (ESV) And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Joy is not something we manufacture ourselves; it is one of the fruits of the Spirit that we cultivate as we walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit. No matter what sorrows invade our lives, we can be joyful in the Lord. This does not mean that we bury our sorrows and pretend they do not exist, for that approach only makes things worse

When we talk to the Lord, we tell Him how we feel, and we acknowledge that we need His grace and wisdom. We thank Him for the blessings He sends that give us joy, and we trust Him to do it again—and again.

From Prison, Paul wrote to the Colossians.

Colossians 1:24 (ESV) 24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake,

From Prison he also wrote...

Philippians 2:17–18 (ESV) 17 Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

His correspondence was saturated with joy! Paul realized that his situation in prison opened doors of opportunity that he might not otherwise have, and the blessing God was giving would benefit the churches who were praying for him. In times of sorrow and pain, we must not focus only on ourselves but also on others. Like Jesus on the cross, we must pray for others, encourage others, and care for others.

When times are difficult, anyone can spread sorrow; but it takes a Spirit-filled Christian to share the joy of the Lord when it would be easy to complain and get sympathy.

But our joy must be "in the Lord" and not be an act we put on to fool people. If it comes from the heart, it is real; if it comes only from the lips, it is phony. Notice the source....Joy of the Lord...that joy that we have spoken of that is a fruit of the Spirit that only floods your heart when you abide in Him. You can fake your joy...but you can't fake Joy of the Lord.

I have cared for many people in the hospital and in hospice whose joyful courage sent me away praising God. I wanted to be a blessing to them and they beat me to it!

So our lives are full of sorrow and full of great rejoicing...but there is a third word that we must examine.

Always

According to the communications experts, "always" and "never" are two words we need to keep under careful control. Only the Lord knows what people always or never do and say

But Paul was an inspired apostle who often used "always" in his letters. In 2 Corinthians he uses "always" six times, so let's study these verses in three categories and discover what "always" has to do with rejoicing and sorrowing.

2 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV) 14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

We are always triumphant in Christ

The picture here is that of the "Roman triumph" parade that honored a commander-in-chief whose army had won complete victory over the enemy on foreign soil and had slain at least five thousand enemy soldiers. The commander gained new territory for Rome and brought home not only captives but valuable spoils. Paul sees in this parade a picture of what Jesus Christ accomplished in His death, burial, and resurrection; for Calvary was a complete victory over the devil

Jesus is always triumphant (2 Cor. 2:12–17) and we are triumphant through Him; but we must follow Him and obey orders, for He "leads us in triumph."

2 Corinthians 4:9–12 (ESV) 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.

We are always living through Christ's death and resurrection

If we know that Christ died for us, we can trust Him and be saved. But if we also know that we died with Christ, we can have victory over the old sinful nature that wants to drag us down. Paul's testimony was, "I have been crucified with Christ"

We died with Christ so that we can overcome the old nature, and we arose to walk with Christ so we can serve Him in victory. Paul led a life filled with danger and wrote "in deaths often" (2 Cor. 11:23), but he had died to the old life and thought only of living for Christ regardless of the dangers involved

2 Corinthians 5:1–8 (ESV) 1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ...5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Always of Good Courage

Confident of what? Confident of being with Jesus in heaven if and when we die!
Confident of having a new glorified body! The English word "confident" comes from the Latin con ("with") and fide ("faith"). "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (v. 7).

Philippians 1:21 (ESV) 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

We thank God for those courageous men and women who blazed the missionary trails, willing to lay down their lives for the sake of the gospel. . No matter where the Lord sends us, we can be confident of His care.

2 Corinthians 6:10 (ESV) 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

We are always rejoicing. we discussed this one earlier.

2 Corinthians 9:8 (HCSB) 8 And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.

Always have sufficiency in all things and at all times

What a statement! It beats any guarantee that the wealthiest and most powerful person in the world could make. We have all grace, not carefully measured out but abounding. We always have all sufficiency in all things, and we can draw upon all the abundance we need for every good work God calls us to do

All grace! Always! All sufficiency! All things! Every good work! We need not worry about life or death, poverty or pain, loss of resources, or having to face any challenge the Lord presents. All of the alms belong to us!

Philippians 4:19–20 (ESV) 19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

One of the best definitions of peace I have ever read is, "Peace is the possession of adequate resources."

There is no reason why God's people should worry when their Father in heaven has given them such incredible promises. And the promise of Philippians 4:19 measures the supply "according to His riches in glory." Not "out of His riches," for then the supply might dwindle; but it is "according to His riches." The supply will never be used up!

Paul's Ephesians letter is our "bankbook" with its emphasis on the riches we share in Jesus Christ: the riches of His grace ; the riches of His glory ; and the unsearchable [boundless, fathomless, exhaustless] riches of Christ

Paul writing from Prison and attacked by his own church...tells us to always walk in triumph...always walk in your salvation...always with good courage...always having all that we need to do His work... always giving thanks in all circumstances and yes...Always rejoicing.

Closing

We are going to experience storms in life. We are going to feel helpless because we are. Everything that ever happens to us is good in God's eyes. We may not understand it, but we can be assured that God is working in our pain, our suffering and in every circumstance in our lives.

God never wastes pain....If he makes you go through something He must have a really important reason. Your trial is moving someone into or closer to eternity. In fact, it is likely that someone had to go through a trial to get your attention....and open your heart to Jesus. The mess, the message, and the messenger.

Because we live for a purpose higher and greater than ourselves...we can rejoice always in our suffering. Knowing that

2 Corinthians 4:17–18 (ESV) 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.

When we focus on lives on what is spiritual and eternal....the experiences on this earth become a necessary end to a greater good. As Spiritual beings reborn in Christ, we can live above our circumstances. We gave our lives to Christ to use as He deems best. We should not be shocked when He does so.

1 Peter 4:12–13 (ESV) 12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Translated...Rejoice always....in every circumstance and particularly in suffering because it is in suffering that you and I become most like Christ. Let's pray.