

Suicide – Never God’s Option

A sermon by Pr. David Johnson

I begin my sermon today by admitting my own trepidation and limitations. The topic of suicide is neither pleasant, nor uplifting. It is painful, serious, and oftentimes complicated. Suicide comes from the darkest places of hell, and often assaults the most hurting, confused, and marginalized souls in our culture. It once carried a stigma that silenced conversation, but has in later decades, grown in practice and popularity to the point of support and encouragement. No longer a thing of shame or ridicule, it has recently become a valid end-of-life choice for many, and even a suggested obligation for some. Because of this, we must take time to discuss it.

But as I begin, I must clarify several important points:

1. I can in no way, cover this topic sufficiently in the 30 minutes I have here. It is a multifaceted issue, with numerous concerns. Some have even called it a many-headed monster which requires our attention from many angles. And I fully agree!
2. My goal during our time this morning, is to answer the many questions I’ve received recently about suicide from the pages of Scripture, not personal opinion, nor secular or cultural perspectives. We need to know what God thinks on this issue, not delve the depths of human attitudes or psychological opinions.
3. In order to stay Biblically grounded and on task, we must look at this growing epidemic apart from the emotionally charged consequences of suicide. As with abortion, sexuality, marriage, or euthanasia, many of God’s principles have suffered compromise because of one’s personal connection with someone suffering through the pathologies (diseases) of each. It is often hard to stay objective when our emotions draw us to one side or the other.
4. I won’t be dealing with exceptions to the rule. Meaning, I will be speaking of suicide in general, not every nuance or element of a given circumstance. Likewise, I will not be speaking to the minority of cases involving the mentally handicapped, or incompetent. These cases comprise the smaller share of all suicides (*though some would like you to believe that all suicide is due to limited capacity*). The majority of suicides involve the average person, dealing with common hardships and losses.

“Researchers found that more than half of people who died by suicide did not have a known diagnosed mental health condition at the time of death. Relationship problems or loss, substance misuse; physical health problems; and job, money, legal or housing stress often contributed to risk for suicide.” – Center for Disease Control

You can see three brief snapshots of percentages at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/pdf/vs-0618-suicide-H.pdf>
<https://afsp.org/about-suicide/suicide-statistics/>
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml>

And so I begin with the first Biblical foundation:

A. God is the source of all life and it is also His place to take life.

1 Sam 2:6 "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. **7** "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts.

Job 1:21 He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." (see also **Job 12:10; Job 33:4; ch. 38 - 41**)

Acts 17:25-29 (Paul on Mars Hill) ... nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; ²⁶ and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the

boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and exist (*have our being*)...

You have probably heard the classic mother’s quip or seen the meme, “I brought you into the world, and I can take you out.” We identify at the momentary frustration as we chuckle. But the truth is that God is the author and giver of life. We are simply His vessels, used for His purposes.

Life is God’s to give, and His to take away. Daniel declares that both individuals and indeed, entire nations are lifted up or brought low by the decision and decree of God (Dan. 2:19ff). Job declared in the midst of his suffering:

Job 1:21 He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

To his insensitive wife he cried out:

Job 2:10 But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?”

And to his “concerned” counselors Job promises:

Job 19:25-27 “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. ²⁶ “Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; ²⁷ Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!”

As a recent meme stated, “I trust the next chapter, because I know the Author.” Which leads us to our next point.

B. God forms each life before birth and gives it value.

Ps 139:13 (Italics mine) For *You* formed my inward parts; *You* wove me in my mother's womb. **14** I will give thanks to *You*, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are *Your* works, And my soul knows it very well. **15** My frame was not hidden from *You*, When I was made in secret, {And} skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; **16** *Your* eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in *Your* book were all written The days that were ordained {for me,} When as yet there was not one of them.

God chose many messengers of Scripture before birth:

Isaiah - Is 49:1, 5

Jeremiah - Jer 1:4

John the Baptist - Luke 1:15

Apostle Paul- Gal 1:15

In our materialistic world, we’ve become disconnected from God; autonomous in our thoughts, decisions and actions. We like to think we’re in charge, answering to no one but our own values and whims. We have been manipulated to believe, as Napoleon Hill promotes:

“You are the master of your destiny. You can influence, direct and control your own environment. You can make your life

what you want it to be.” - Think and Grow Rich

But contrary to our cultural propaganda, the Bible says:

James 4:13-15 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” ¹⁴ Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”

C. God knows the end from the beginning, I must trust and wait patiently on Him.

Proverbs 3:5-8 Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. ⁸ It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.

Psalms 37: 1-9

Isaiah 40:27-31 Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"? ²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. ²⁹ He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. ³⁰ Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, ³¹ Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

D. God calls us to hold fast to Hope, *IN OUR PAIN*.

Romans 8:18, 22-25 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us...²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Philippians 3:8-11 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

God never promises a removal of pain *In This Life*. But He does promise his presence and strength to overcome. He challenges us to keep our eyes on Him and on His intervention in our lives. He will always be there and supply the alternative we need to make it through our trials on the road to our sanctification.

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

E. God has a purpose in every pain.

James 1:2-4 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸ Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for

power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (also Rom. 5:1-5; Heb. 12:1-3; 1 Peter 1:3-9)

Our human trials or suffering are never a sentence of absolute and eternal failure. God's greatest desire for His creation is to mold us into the image of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Because of this, He often uses trouble and pain to get our attention, direct us down a different pathway, or clean out some poison that has polluted His creation. God knows our frailty, and will never push us past what he has placed within us. But he will not be our second love, or play second fiddle. As C.S. Lewis once observed:

"Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

On the contrary, Satan wants only to destroy:

John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

F. Suicide isn't the unpardonable sin, but lives in its shadow.

Matthew 12:31-32 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. ³² Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Over the years, many have struggled with suicide, considering it to be the "unpardonable sin." But that would be incorrect. Jesus Himself explains that the unforgiveable sin is the denial and refusal of God's Holy Spirit. To turn one's back on the Holy Spirit is to deny the very transforming agent that draws one to Christ, softening the sinner's hardened heart to be receptive to Jesus.

However, to choose suicide is very similar, for you are denying the very source of life Himself, the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

After all, we don't live life with only one choice before us. Every decision is a move towards one thing over another. I never have only one option in any given situation, though I may have to choose between the proverbial rock and a hard place. God will always provide an escape.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

G. But what about the Christian?

Everything within me wants to cry out, "Oh, don't worry...they're fine." But Scripture doesn't go there. There are no examples of "saved" suicides, though there are of

lost suicides. And there are many verses warning of the possible backsliding of the believer (*apostasy*), so I can't support eternal security.

But in those moments, I have to fall back on the character of God, and the many gracious promises in His Word.

Romans 8:35-39 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; ¹² If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; ¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

1 John 3:19-20 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him ²⁰ in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

So in those painful moments, all I can do is call out to God for mercy and grace for the family, and trust that the frailty of their body, did not overshadow the conviction of their soul. For in the end, my hope is in Christ, and He is on the throne, not me...Praise God.

Psalms 103:11-14 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. ¹² As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. ¹³ Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. ¹⁴ For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.