

What I Learned from My Father's Death

(July 3, 2020)

On Friday, May 22, I was in Estero, Florida where my parents live. I was down there with my mom, my dad, and one of my two sisters. And we were having a meeting with a hospice representative to try and see what kind of services they could provide cuz my dad was declining. He was still lucid, he was still mobile, and we just wanted to see what kind of help they could give us if any. He hadn't decided to stop treatment for his blood disease. He was just investigating, and we were just investigating, if he decided to do that, what kind of care could hospice provide. And so, a couple of hospice reps were there in the living room, and they were describing what they could do. And my dad who had been getting treatment for this blood disease for probably about a year, we were all realizing that the treatment was really working. He had to get blood transfusions. And not to get too technical here, but it just did not look like there was a clear path ahead by which he could live with this disease, because the disease was not curable, but it was treatable. But the treatment really wasn't working.

At one point, my dad looked at this guy and said, he said, my son helped me realize that Jesus awaits me, so I think I'm ready to go be with Jesus. So, I look over at my sister, she's crying, my mom is stoic, I'm kind of in between. And at that point, my brother-in-law comes in. His name is Jim. He's married to my sister who's in the room. And if you knew Jim, he is a, first of all, he's a cancer survivor himself. Had Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma many years ago, and was stage four, yet he recovered and became a Christian through it. And he's also a weightlifter, so he is a walking triangle. And he never had a dad growing up. My dad was the only father he's ever known. And so, he walks in in the middle of this conversation, and the hospice worker looks at Jim and says, I just want you to know where we are in this conversation. Your father-in-law's decided to go into hospice.

Well, Jim walked out of the room and you could hear him sobbing in the other room, uncontrollably. So, I went in, just gave him a hug and said, it's time, Jim. He knows what awaits him. He goes, man, I wasn't expecting that. I wasn't expecting that he was just gonna decide to

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do this now. I thought he would still want to fight it. He knows what's waiting for him. And so, he wants to do this. He wants to go be with Jesus.

So, I looked at the hospice worker and I said, how much time do you think my dad has? He goes, oh, probably Wednesday. Wednesday? Wednesday? It's Friday. [This Wednesday?](#) Yeah, he said, this Wednesday. Now normally, hospice workers don't get that specific, but I'm going, Wednesday. I immediately call my wife, all three sons, their spouses, two of them are married. I said, can you come? Pop Pop may be checking out on Wednesday.

Within 24 hours, nearly the whole family was there. And we have three of them in the military. My two sons and one of their wives. And they had to get special permission to travel because the military wasn't allowing anybody to travel. And yet somehow, they got approval. And they were there about 24 hours later. And we had a wonderful week where the whole family was there. We had a couple of dinners together, then my dad had to go into a facility. And he did not die Wednesday. He lived for another month. But I was actually grateful for what the hospice worker said, because it created an immediate sense of urgency, and everybody got to Florida and spent a week there celebrating my dad's life with him and the entire family.

Now, here's one thing dad always said. And what I want to talk about is what I've learned from my father's death. Dad always said this. Nothing becomes important until it becomes personal. And if you think about that, that rings true in a lot of ways. For example, you might not think for a second about cancer, but as soon as somebody in your family gets cancer, you get cancer. Suddenly, you become an expert, don't ya? It becomes important when it becomes personal. You may not think about somebody being unemployed until you're unemployed. When it becomes personal, that's when it becomes important. You may not think about poverty, you may not think about racism, until those issues impinge on you personally, then it becomes important, because we're really self-centered creatures. The only worldview that accurately diagnoses human nature is Christianity. It says that we are depraved. We are self-seekers. That it's easy to be bad. It's hard to be good.

And by the way, I want to thank Jim Wallace last week for filling in for me, because the day my dad died, I was supposed to do a podcast with our mutual friend, Vada Hedgeman. And just a few hours before that podcast, my dad died. So, I called Jim. I said, Jim, you want to do the

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interview with Vada? He said, sure, send me your notes. So, I sent him my notes. And, of course, Jim didn't need my notes. He can talk about this issue himself. But one thing I had in the notes was something that Thomas Sowell I've heard say. Thomas Sowell, you may know, is an African American economist. He's in his 80s now. Brilliant guy. Conservative in his viewpoint. He said this. He said, "you would be more upset if an accident caused you to lose the tip of your little finger than if you heard a million people in China were murdered today". Yeah, you would be, wouldn't you? Yeah, I would be, wouldn't I? Yeah, because we're self-centered creatures, and unless something becomes personal, it's probably not going to become important.

Same thing is true with apologetics and evidence for the faith. So many parents don't even know what it means. But as soon as their kid goes off to school and the kid calls home and says, Mom, Dad, I don't believe in God anymore, suddenly they want answers. Suddenly, they're there on our website. Suddenly they're ordering our books. Because it really doesn't become important until it becomes personal.

Now Jesus, tell us tells us to care about these things, because we won't if we stay cocooned in our safe little world. We're not going to care about poverty, we're not going to care about racism, we're not going to care about apologetics, we're not going to care about issues that are important until they become personal. So, Jesus and the apostles say you need to care about these things.

Now, many of us don't care about death either. But seeing someone close to you die personalizes death. It gets your attention like no other death does. I hear about deaths all the time. Doesn't get my attention until somebody close to me dies. But death should always be important, but somehow, we delude ourselves. We think we're bulletproof before it happens, but 100% of us die. And as CS Lewis said, the percentage cannot be increased. So, what can we learn when someone close to us dies? So, I'll just tell you what I learned right after the break.

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What did I learn from my father's death? My name is Frank Turek. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist on the American Family Radio Network. Website is crossexamined.org.

I'll tell you several things I learned from my father's death. He just died last Friday, 26th of June. Suffering and death certainly help us seek God. I mean, think about this. If we didn't suffer, or we didn't die, we would be what we would consider to be self-sufficient. We wouldn't need God. We wouldn't think there was any need for God, unless maybe you just to ask him to give us certain things when we needed them, but there's no ultimate problem if we're never going to suffer, we're never going to die. So, it helps us seek God. You know, some people say, well it helps some people turn away from God. Well, if they're turning away from God, if they're mad at a being that doesn't exist, how can that be? Why would you be mad at God and claim there is no God?

Reminds me of the debate I had with Christopher Hitchens, who was a brilliant man, But he seemed to be mad at God. I ended both the debates saying, Christopher Hitchens...actually, you could sum up his position in one sentence. Here it is. There is no God and I hate him". He was mad at God. Well, you can't be mad at a being that doesn't exist. That would make no sense. So, even if you're mad at God, you're in some way getting closer to him, because at least you're acknowledging he exists. But suffering and death can help us see God. It certainly can expand your soul, as well.

Remember, I was helping my dad with some tasks, you know, that normally you don't have to help somebody with. You know what I mean? And he said, you shouldn't have to do this. No son should have to do this to his father. I said, dad, thank you, because you're expanding my soul. Don't think I'm just helping you. You're helping me, as well, because it forces me to serve somebody else. And my nature is such that I need to be forced, that it does just doesn't naturally come to me. It doesn't naturally come to many of us. It's much easier to be selfish than it is to be selfless.

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And of course, Paul talks about this in Second Corinthians. Second Corinthians 4 (vs. 17-18) is one of the great passages on suffering and Paul ends it by saying, For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. Greater weight of glory. CS Lewis wrote a whole book, The Weight of Glory. You enhance your capacity to enjoy God when you go through pain, suffering, when you serve others, because you're becoming more like Jesus. You're enhancing your capacity to enjoy what you were meant to know and that is God Himself through Christ.

You go through difficulty it makes you a more Christ-like person. You help somebody else it makes you a more Christ-like person. And when you do go through difficulty, you're better able to enjoy the reward. Just like an athlete who trains insanely for an event and then he wins the event. He, by going through all the difficulty, all the training, enhanced his capacity to enjoy the reward. If he just, you know, checked into the race and didn't train and somehow won by a fluke, he wouldn't have the same kind of capacity to enjoy the reward, as if he went through all the training and sacrifice to do it. And so, suffering and death helps enhance our capacity to enjoy God, because we become more like Jesus, and then we can enjoy the reward more after going through the difficulty.

Also, impending death helps us to repent. I kept taking my dad back and forth for treatment before hospice and I remember one time he was repenting for everything he thought he ever did to me, or, you know, every sin he ever committed. That was over 40 years ago. He just had to get it off his chest. He wanted to repent. His heart was very soft. When you know death is staring you in the face, you want to make everything right. And he was an insomniac. He would wake up in the middle of the night and be agitated and think he had to make something right that he couldn't make right.

I said, dad, you got to put all that under the cross. Jesus died for everything you or I have ever done or ever will do. We just repent and we receive forgiveness. We feel guilt, because we are guilty. But we are guilty, and there's a solution to that guilt, and that is Christ's sacrifice. Also, I can certainly tell you this, death urges us to stop talking about the weather, but what really

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matters. That's what we talk about. The best conversations that my dad and I ever had were in the last six weeks of his life.

And why do you have to wait for that? Sometimes you don't know when a loved one's gonna die. I mean, that's one advantage of a terminal illness. You can tie up every loose end you ever wanted to tie up. You're not going to leave anything unsaid. At least you hope not. But what happens if somebody...we had a friend whose husband just died instantly last week. An accident. Gone. We're not bulletproof. Death urges us to talk about the real issues in life.

But we shouldn't have to wait for that. Proverbs 14:12 says, "there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death". We think we're just going to go through our lives and, la-de-da, everything's going to go just fine. Oh, death. Yeah, that's gonna happen, but that's an abstraction. That's way far off. I don't need to worry about that. Now, Jesus said, what good will it be for someone to gain the whole world yet forfeit their soul? Or, what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? Matthew 16. Yeah, there's a way that seems right to us. We should just gather a whole bunch of stuff and get a bunch of toys and get really comfortable, because that's really what life's about. Really? Your soul might be asked of you tonight.

Also, as the writer of Ecclesiastes, Solomon said, death helps us realize that God has set eternity in the human heart. He set eternity in the human heart. Despite the fact that we sometimes think we're bulletproof, and we don't want to talk about death, in the back of our minds, we're thinking there's something more to life than just this, isn't there. In fact, it was Denzel Washington who said, and this is a common phrase, it didn't originate with him, but he said, you will never see a hearse towing a U-Haul. You can't take it with you. The Egyptians tried to take it with them and all they got was robbed. Yet we spend a lot of our time just trying to get stuff.

Also, for me, seeing my father decline, I mean, he went probably from 190 pounds to maybe 130 when he died. That death amplifies the conviction in my mind, anyway, I hope yours as well, that the world is fallen, and that people should not degrade or die. They shouldn't. There's something in our hearts we know is wrong. This should not happen. God didn't set it up this way. We introduced it when we sinned. There's something wrong with the world.

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Now, God can use death, obviously, for good. These are some of the good things that come out of death. In our fallen state, death is the one way God limits evil. Imagine if someone like Hitler couldn't die. You know, you couldn't end evil. So, death actually has good outcomes, even temporarily. In some instances, God can use death to limit evil. But we have this conviction, at least I do, I would imagine you would, as well, that this world has fallen and yet people shouldn't really die. They're too valuable. And if you say people shouldn't die, you're actually agreeing with the central teaching of Christianity.

In fact, if Christianity is true, people don't really die, they just change location. My father got a promotion out of this life to the next life. You say, if it's a promotion, why don't we all do it. Because we're still here to fulfill His kingdom. We still have time here on Earth, until God calls us home, to fulfill His kingdom. To fulfill his great commission. We don't take ourselves out; God does. And when it's time he'll do that. In fact, the night before he died, I was praying with my son and wife. I said, let's pray that God takes dad soon. Twelve hours later he did. We didn't think it would happen that soon. In fact, I was going to head down to Florida the next day or two, because we thought he had longer, but it's what he wanted. And so, he's with Jesus now.

In fact, my mom and sister went to his room shortly after his death and she got me on FaceTime. She said you want to see him? I said, yeah. There he was. Just pale. Just a corpse. I said, Sue, he's not there. See, he's gone. He's not there. Where is he? That's the end of life? Really? This isn't an argument. It's just an intuition. You really think that personalities, that people that you love, just go out of existence forever? In fact, atheism denies what you, in your heart, know is true. You know your loved ones are sacred, that they're objectively valuable. They're not just sacks of chemicals. My dad wasn't just a sack of chemical. You're not just a sack of chemical. Your loved ones are not just sacks of chemicals. But that's what you have to believe, if you're a materialistic atheist, or if you're even an atheist who believes the immaterial realm. There's no purpose to life. We're just overgrown germs. We're just accidents. There's no real meaning. There's no difference between your father dying or your father living 100 years, in the end,

This is true of all of us; that we're all special. When Christopher Hitchens died, as you know, I had a couple of debates with Christopher. I loved Christopher. He was a fun guy. Had a little bit of private time with him. Most Christians, for some reason, liked Christopher. I think I know

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why. And his wit was just wonderful. And when he died, I wrote an article about him called, Christopher Hitchens: Evidence of a Divine Being. And here's how I ended it. Well, first of all, I said, look, Christopher was so brilliant and so likable that he could read technical manuals and keep an audience enthralled. Anyway, here's how I ended the article. You can get it on our website, crossexamined.org.

I said, "I don't see how anyone who knew Christopher Hitchens could think that a man with such admirable qualities and talents was nothing more than a collection of chemicals, the product of unintelligent processes. Christopher's intellect, wit, courage, passion, and immense personal charm are evidence to me of a divine being. A divine being who loves human freedom so much that he would even allow the gifts He bestows to be used against him. The gifts he gave to Christopher, of wit and rhetoric, and charm, to be used to say God doesn't exist." I don't have enough faith to believe that people are just sacks of chemicals, that there is no life beyond this. I think we have evidence there's life beyond this, but even intuition tells me there's life beyond this.

You're listening to Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. More on this in just two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

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Welcome back to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. One way that I think you can get a real sense of the closeness of God, obviously is when you do go through difficulty. But you can also get a sense when you go to Israel. We're heading there in September and it's a VIP trip. If you go to our website, crossexamined.org, click on events or the big banner, you'll see. And we're only taking a small group over there. If you want to be a part of it, we're stay at the best hotels. We're gonna go to the best spots. We're going to go places you can't go with another tour, because our guide is Eli Shukron, the Israeli archaeologist who excavated much of Jerusalem and much of the City of David. He has the keys to places other people don't have keys to, so you want to go with us.

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Check that out. And in February, we're going to do the Mount Sinai tour. And we think Mount Sinai is in Saudi Arabia. You can check that out, as well.

If you have questions for the program, type in your email address box hello@crossexamined.org. Hello@crossexamined.org. And I'll try and get to them in a future program. I also want to mention that Summit Ministries is completely virtual this this year, due to the Covid situation And I teach via zoom on that now, and so do many other apologists, philosophers, theologians. You should really avail your young people of Summit Virtual. Go to summit.org, that's summit.org, to get great worldview, philosophy, apologetics, and theological training, that will help them in high school and in college and beyond. So, check that all out there.

I want to go back to what we were talking about before the break. I was talking about Christopher Hitchens being evidence of a divine being. I think all of us are evidence of a divine being. And my father, you, me, we're all evidence of a divine being. And to be an atheist, you have to deny what intuitively seems correct. You have to deny that our loved ones are sacred. You have to just say they're just sacks of chemicals. You have to deny that life has any real enduring meaning, that what happens really matters. You have to say none of it really matters. You have to deny there's a right way to live life and a wrong way to live life. If you're going to be consistent, you have to deny that murder is wrong, you have to deny that racism is wrong, and you also have to deny that burning down someone else's property is wrong. I mean, you have to deny everything; that torturing babies for fun is wrong, if you're going to be consistent.

Now, of course, many atheists say, oh no, I believe in objective morality. They just have no way to ground it. They have no way to justify it. And yet, it's quite obvious, intuitively, that if you're going to say something is not right, you're assuming something is right. Well, what makes something right if there's no God? Just you your opinion? Why your opinion and not somebody else's opinion? Why? Why your opinion and not say, a KKK member's opinion? Or why your opinion and not Hitler's opinion? If there's no standard beyond humanity? I mean, if you say something's unjust, you're assuming something is just. If you say something is immoral, you're assuming something is moral. If you say racism is wrong, you're assuming non-racism is right. If you say something ought not happen, you're assuming the opposite ought to happen.

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So, when I, or you, or anyone says that life shouldn't be this way, we're actually thinking of a standard. We're thinking of how things ought to be. And if they really ought to be a certain way, then there must be some fixed objective standard by which we make that judgment and there must be an objectively good personal being who has established the oughtness or purpose for this life. If there is no such being, then we're just left with human opinion. You, me, my dad, Christopher Hitchens, anybody in the universe has no meaning. There's no right or wrong way to live life.

Yet, none of us can live that way. Just turn on the news. Everybody's claiming some sort of moral wrong is being done. Well, if there's a moral wrong being done, there's got to be a moral right out there. What is that moral right? God has given us an objective reason for living in a certain way, in order to know Him and to make Him known, and then to do good works to further his kingdom. These goals are not just my opinion or your opinion. They're objective goods, defined by God's good nature. And all of these intuitions that we've been talking about, what are these intuitions; morality, purpose, meaning, design, eternity, all of these intuitions exist because God has written them on our hearts.

And part of this discussion leads me to an argument that CS Lewis originally made called, The Argument from Desire. And in, Mere Christianity, here's what he says. He says, "creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for these desires exist. A baby feels hunger. Well, there's such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim. Well, there's such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire. Well, there's such a thing as sex. If I find, in myself, a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

Now, ladies and gentlemen, this argument doesn't mean that you'll necessarily get what you desire. I mean, people desire food, but they die of hunger. Right? All Lewis is saying is that, if there are real natural desires, the object of that natural desire does exist. And there are things that we long for that this world doesn't fully satisfy. So, Lewis is saying, the best explanation is that I was made for another world, because this reality has purpose to it. We're made for another world. And in fact, some might say, well, that's not really true. I'm perfectly happy now, or I'm not perfectly happy now. I'm not perfectly content. But if, you know if I had a million

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dollars, or I had \$10 million and a Learjet, and a new mistress every day, that would make me happy.

This is Peter Kreeft now. I'm reading from a Peter Kreeft piece on this. Peter Kreeft is a philosopher, a theologian from Boston College, and he has amplified Lewis's argument from desire. And he says, some people may say that I don't observe any hidden desire for God, or infinite joy, or the mysterious X that is more than Earth can offer. And if you just gave me \$10 million, a Learjet, and a mistress every day, I'd be satisfied. And what Kreeft says is this. Go ahead, try it. You won't like it. It's been tried and has never satisfied. In fact, billions of people have performed, and are now performing, trillions of such experiments, desperately seeking the ever elusive satisfaction they crave. For even if they won the whole world, it would not be enough to fill one human heart. Yet they keep trying, believing that, if I only had this, or I only had that, or if next time...

Now by the way, this is what we call idols. We think to ourselves; this is me speaking, not Kreeft. If I only had that I'd be happy. If I only had her I'd be happy. If I only had that I'd be happy. If I only achieved this goal, I'd be happy. That's what we mean by idolatry. No, you won't. Kreeft says, this is the stupidest gamble in the world, for it is the only one that consistently has never paid off. It's like a game of predicting the end of the world. Every batter who has ever approached the plate has struck out. There is hardly reason to hope the present ones will fare any better. After trillions of failures, and 100% failure rate, this is one experiment no one should keep trying.

And here's what CS Lewis in, *The Weight of Glory*, says about this. He says, "if we consider the unblushing promises of reward promised in the gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures fooling around with drink, and sex, and ambition, when infinite joy is offered to us like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum, because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." CS Lewis in, *The Weight of Glory*.

Yeah, we think what this world has to offer us is going to satisfy, ultimately, and it doesn't. God has set eternity on our hearts. So, when we see someone die, we're thinking, is this really it? Now, as I say, we could give evidence here, as we've done before for the resurrection, that

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Christianity is true, and Jesus tells us about the afterlife, and so do the apostles, affirmed by miracles. We could go down that road to get real evidence, real proof, but this intuition is what I'm talking about here today.

In fact, if you think about things that happen to you...maybe they don't happen to you, maybe they just happened to me, who knows. But I call them glimpses of heaven. You see a beautiful scene, the Grand Canyon, a beautiful mountain, a sunset, and you're taken to almost another world. And it's almost like you want to hug the mountain, you want to hug the sunset, you want to try and become part of it. You can't quite explain what it means, or what you're feeling, but you know it's a glimpse of something greater than actually what it is. It's like the heavens declare the glory of God. You're gonna go, wow, this is amazing. There's something beyond this. This is an effect of the ultimate cause of this.

In fact, when I see a beautiful scene...Now, sometimes I don't even take pictures anymore because, maybe I'm just a bad photographer, but you just can't communicate it in a picture. You can't get anywhere near it. Or you have a joyous time with friends. You know those times you get together with friends that are kind of spontaneous and you just had a wonderful time? You weren't expecting it. And then you try and duplicate it again. It's hard to duplicate. Or the smell of flowers, in the sense you smell in spring, whether it's fresh cut grass, or flowers blooming, or just a fresh rain. It takes you somewhere else. The beauty and majesty of the heavens. The bond and contentment that comes from self-giving love. There's something beyond that. There's the transcendence and euphoria you feel when you hear certain kinds of music, or you triumph a certain way. It's a pointer to something else. It's a glimpse of heaven. It's good, but it's not completely satisfying. There's something beyond this life.

Lewis puts it this way in, *The Weight of Glory*, again. He says, "the sense that in this universe we are treated as strangers, the longing to be acknowledged, to meet with some response, to bridge some chasm that yawns between us and reality, is part of our inconsolable secret. And surely from this point of view, the promise of glory in the sense described becomes highly relevant to our deep desire, for glory means good report with God, acceptance by God, response, acknowledgement, and the welcome into the heart of things. The door on which we have all been knocking all our lives will open at last."

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The moment my dad took his last breath, the door he'd been knocking on all of his life was opened. Paul says, "no eye has seen, or ear has heard what God has prepared for those that love him". There's an intuition. There's something beyond this life. We have this desire. And I think it will be fulfilled. There's evidence for it. But there's also an intuition and I'll talk more about that right after the break.

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Welcome back to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek and the American Family Radio Network. Today I'm talking about what I've learned from my father's death, who died last Friday. And we're just talking about the argument from desire that CS Lewis made famous. Peter Kreeft has also written on it. And there's some intuitive nature to this, that I think makes sense, that there is something beyond this life, because the desires we have are not completely fulfilled in this life. Now, some say well, that's just wishful thinking. Well, I think there's also evidence that there is something beyond this and therefore that intuition we should trust. Of course, the scriptures talk about this.

And as I said earlier, I think we can give evidence that the scriptures are true. Perhaps the peak of the entire Bible is Romans chapter eight. I'm going to read sections of Romans chapter eight. Now this is where Paul is leading up to our ultimate glorification. And he says, "for I consider that our present sufferings". Alright, let me stop right here. You lose someone close to you, this is a present suffering. He says, "18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to

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frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God."

A bondage to decay. We're running down. I saw my dad degrade. I don't even have to look at my dad. I'm degrading. I'm 58. I can't do what I used to do physically. We're degrading. We're in bondage to decay, yet, we're waiting to be liberated. The entire creation is waiting to be liberated and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. Paul says, "we know that the whole world has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time".

How do you think he knew that, by the way? The whole world has been groaning. He's got it right. "23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."

My dad was asking to go three weeks before he went. Why can't I go would be with Jesus now? One night, sitting on his bed with him; had to be three in the morning because, you know, he had a sleep disorder. He didn't sleep well. He would, he would get up and wander around the house and I just didn't want him to fall. So, for a while I was sleeping on the floor next to his bed. One night he fell out of bed right on me. I was holding him up with my hand as he was coming over. He wanted to go be with Jesus, but we're waiting patiently.

The text goes on to say, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We don't know what to pray sometimes but the spirit intercedes for us. And then Paul says, "we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[i] have been called according to his purpose." He doesn't say all things are good. He said, all things work together for good. Well, if all things work together for good, even suffering, pain, death, can ultimately work together for good, because God who is outside of time can redeem all evil things.

And so, if you're going through difficulty now, you may not see a good coming from it, but God can. God can see the ripples that go forward into the future that result from the pain and

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suffering you're feeling right now. And he can bring that together for good in your life, if not in this life, certainly in the next life.

But again, going through difficulty can enhance your capacity to enjoy God. Paul makes this seem so certain in this text. Here's what he says right after that. "29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."

It's an unbroken chain here. It's an unbroken chain. If you are a believer, you can be certain that you will be glorified, and your sufferings will ultimately lead to good. And then here's the peak in my view of the entire Bible. "31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

Let me pause here for a second; read that again. "He did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all." Want to stop right here and say, if you have doubts about Christianity, or you have doubts about God working for good in your life, I submit to you that a God who suffers and dies for his enemies, that would be me and you and everybody on the earth, because we're all sinners. A God who suffers and dies for his enemies can be trusted with any unknown we have. This is the greatest story ever told for a reason, because it really happened and it's amazing. In fact, when we say it's amazing, we're implying there's a standard. The standard known as love, that the God of the universe which subject himself, in a human nature, to torture, to take the punishment for the creatures he created, who rebelled against him. He would take their punishment on himself and then impart His righteousness to them.

The story of Christianity right there. Any God who would, who would do that can be trusted with any questions that we can't answer, or any doubts that we have. And Paul says in Romans eight, " 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or

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nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." He's quoting from the Old Testament.

Then he says, "37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[k] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." For me, that's the peak of the entire Bible.

Now, Paul being the great intellect that he was, of course, led by the Holy Spirit, as well, could have immediately gone and said, "therefore, in view of God's mercy, present your bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God". He doesn't do that. That's chapter 12. He takes a detour for three chapters to talk about Israel. Chapter nine is Israel's past, chapter 10 is Israel's present, and chapter 11 is Israel's future. Because he knows that skeptics are reading his book, his letter to the biggest city in the world, Romans, and he says, well, Paul, if all this stuff is true, why don't some of the Jews believe this. You are a Jew, why don't why don't other Jews believe this? And he answers all that in 9, 10, and 11.

And then he says, (Rom. 12:1) "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God". There is no greater love than to present your body as a sacrifice. That's what Jesus did for us. And if you're out there and you're thinking, well, I believe in love, but I don't believe in God, then it's not objective. Who says your idea of what love is the right idea? Why do you seek the good in somebody else when you don't even know what the good is? There's no way to define what objective good is unless there's an objective standard beyond us. I submit to you, you have to steal from God to say doesn't exist, because you're trying to live and steal principles that only make sense in a theistic worldview, when you're trying to say that no God exists.

Now, as I've said earlier, I think we can show through evidence that the scriptures are true. But I think there's also an intuition that the Christian worldview is true, and you could get the witness of the Holy Spirit, as well, that will confirm that. Now I could know Christianity is true, but that doesn't mean that I could also show it. I have to give you objective evidence to show it's true. But knowing it's true can come from these intuitions and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

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And one of the things I've learned in dealing with my dad's death, is that death is not the end. Death is a new beginning. It's an end for us right now, but it's actually just an interruption. It's an interruption because we have eternity impending when I rejoined him. And it was great to have my dad for 58 years. That's a long time. I mean, he was 84, and he knew it was time to go, and he went. And I'm looking forward to joining him. I hope you're looking forward to joining Jesus and your loved ones, as well. To do that, you just need to accept what Christ has done. Put your trust in Him, and then go live for Him.

Thanks for all your prayers, folks, over these past couple of months. I felt them, my family has. Please pray for my mom as she goes forward. And I'll see you here next week. God bless.

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