**Rev Jen 10 on** **Suffering**

[](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CAcQjRxqFQoTCPCOuKCehcYCFUaC2wod2YgAog&url=http://www.canstockphoto.com/illustration/top-10.html&ei=Kjx4VfDRGMaE7gbZkYKQCg&bvm=bv.95039771,d.bGg&psig=AFQjCNFaq-_ttCFE4cdb20q1L2JB45sW1A&ust=1434029476876336)WHY do bad things happen to good people? IF God loves us why let us suffer? Is suffering our fault?...Is suffering sent by God to punish us?...Christian opinions differ but what does Jesus say/do?

1. God does NOT cause suffering\*. Wherever he goes Jesus heals people. Jesus takes suffering away and asks us to do this too – feed the hungry, tend the sick, lonely, poor etc (Matthew 25:40).
2. Suffering is NOT good. On the night before he dies, Jesus prays to God to take his suffering away (Luke 22:42).
3. Suffering is NOT God’s punishment\*. Jesus corrects this view: The sun shines on the good and bad. The rain falls on the just and unjust. (Matthew 5:45, Luke 13:5)
4. Suffering is NOT sent by God to test us/make us stronger.\* God, our Heavenly Father, wouldn’t give us a stone if we asked for bread, a scorpion if we asked for fish. (Matthew 7:9)
5. *Some* suffering is due to sin (people’s evil/selfish choices), *some* (like natural disasters) to the way God created the world - complex beyond human understanding (Job 42).
6. There is a time for everyone/everything to be born and die (Ecclesiastes 3) but Jesus’ death on Good Friday is NOT the end\* – it’s the way for us to eternal life with God.
7. Suffering is lonely. Jesus cries in agony on the cross: ‘’My God, why have you forsaken me?’
8. Being with those who suffer feels useless but it really matters. Mary and John are powerless to help Jesus, but they stay at the foot of the cross. (John 19:25)
9. When we suffer, when we can’t do anything, we can still pray for/care/for look out for others as Jesus does for Mary, John and the thief on the cross. (Luke 23:43)
10. In suffering Jesus still trusts God: ‘Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit’ (Luke 23:46)

\*contrary to some Old Testament verses.