



# PEACE IN THE VALLEY: The Valley of Suffering

Isaiah 53:1-7, 11-12

February 24 - March 1, 2008

But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises were we healed. We have a suffering savior who walked the valley of heartache and heartbreak.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24:** Jesus walked 'the valley of suffering' within God's love, presence and guidance. He did not walk alone and neither do we. Jesus set aside time for prayer and reflection, time in which he spoke to God and listened for God's response; time in which he may simply have 'rested' in God's presence. How are you suffering today? How might you rest in God's presence?

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25:** Why human suffering? It is a part of our earthly experience. It is. Perhaps the question is not so much 'why', but 'where' to find God in the midst of suffering or 'how' to endure? What are your 'places of suffering'? Where has God been present directly and through others? How has prayer undergirded endurance?

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26:** Jesus is both example and companion. In Gethsemane Jesus asks that his suffering be taken away. "Father if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done [Luke 22: 42]. How might you pray; 'Lord, in all the circumstances of my life, may you be glorified?'

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27:** John 15:13 says "no one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. Jesus' suffering is both companionship and sacrifice. He laid down his life for all, friend and foe. His life was given in 'substitution' for our lives. Through grace and prayer, Jesus has and can make you whole. Consider that wholeness and healing are possible in the midst of suffering. How might this happen for you? How does this give you comfort and courage to walk this valley yourself with Christ as your companion?

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28:** In Galatians 6:2 Paul says that we are to bear one another's burdens. In the *Practice of Substituted Love* [Weavings, July/August 2007], Elizabeth Green suggests that we can offer "...to carry the weight of others' grief, pain and fear for a time so they can meet their challenges in a less encumbered way. Jesus does this for us, and we are called to do so for others. And ..."what if we can ask others to do the same for us?" How might you carry or share a burden?

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29:** Jesus' life and suffering glorified God. Looking past our own suffering to the suffering of those next door or a world away joins personal circumstance with a universal cry. Our prayer can become a prayer for the whole of humanity; a call for the promise of Christ's sacrifice to enfold all of us in God's mercy, grace and power. What prayer might you say today?

**SATURDAY, MARCH 1:** Jesus lived and gave his life for God. Pray Hymn #399:

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord to thee.

Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my will, and make it Thine; it shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be my humble throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store.

Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.