**Parasitism & Theodicy, part 3**

**Finding Meaning in Suffering**

Script

[1] Parasitism & Theodicy, part 3—Finding Meaning in Suffering

[2] In parts 1 and 2 of Parasitism and Theodicy we have explored explanations for the presence of evil in the world.

[3] We have looked at two kinds of evil: moral evil and natural evil.

[4] We have discussed how natural evil-- / which is partly imposed by God / and partly cause by Satan’s usurping of dominion over this world--calls us to acknowledge our limits and depend on a God who is wiser than we are and sovereign over both us and Satan.

[5] We know that eventually God will recreate our world without parasites or evil of any kind.

[6] But until then, how do we find meaning and comfort during suffering and death?

[7] This presentation will share personal insights from Stephen Bauer’s article in *Always Prepared*

[8] Imagine a small child who suddenly needs surgery. He doesn’t understand why his parents, who have protected him and cared for him are now letting strangers poke, prod, and hurt him. He does not have an understanding of the bigger picture, so is not yet able to understand why his parents are allowing this to happen to him or that it is in his best interest.

[9] In the same way, we know and see only a fraction of the bigger picture that God sees. / Like the small child, we have neither the experience nor the wisdom to understand why God allows certain things to happen.

[10] The first step in finding meaning in suffering is to acknowledge how small our box is—/ how limited our knowledge is when compared with the big, eternal picture that God sees. / Once we acknowledge our limits, we realize there are mysteries beyond our understanding.

[11] Now imagine a student learning to fly an airplane. / Let this rectangle represent the student’s limited knowledge and skills.

[12] In order to teach important lessons, the flight instructor may allow the student to exceed his or her limitations-- / but only within the limits that would allow the flight instructor to still recover the situation.

[13] A good flight instructor would never allow the student pilot to go so far outside of his or her limitations that the instructor would be powerless to correct the situation.

[14] Now think about a human being with certain limitations. / God knows that life is not possible outside the limitations He has designed. / In order to teach valuable lessons, God may allow me to exceed my limitations

[15] but like a good flight instructor, He would not willingly allow me to go where He can no longer recover the situation.

[16] Notice an important difference in the illustration that relates to the problem of suffering and death. In the example of the student pilot and the flight instructor, an important limitation is death. / The flight instructor steps in to prevent mistakes that would result in death, because he is incapable of recovering the situation. For us, death is an uncontrollable catastrophe, / but for God, death is a manageable problem that He can use. Because death is not a problem beyond God’s ability to recover, He does not always step in to prevent it.

[17] How can it be loving for God to allow death? God will not let a situation endanger our eternal welfare against our will, / but because death helps us acknowledge who we are as limited creatures in need of God, / He may allow suffering and even death to confront us and push us towards corrections compatible with eternal life—because He has the power to recover us from all that and more. / And He won’t give us up without a fight.

[18] Although suffering and death were never part of God’s original plan for us, / He makes use of both the greater limits He imposed / and Satan’s volitional activity as disciplinary tools to help us bottom out so we will look up to Him and be saved eternally