



03 Degradation of the Body

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0:00:52.9 Sonja Corbitt: It's the Bible Study Evangelista Show, and I'm Sonja Corbitt, your Catholic Evangelista. We are in our Somata series, talking about the physical body and physical healing, and so far it's been pretty heady. I'll be honest, I'm not gonna apologize for that, first of all, because I know you can handle it, but secondly, this whole idea is completely revolutionizing my faith. I'm starting to see things so differently, and part of that I wanna share with you today.

0:01:23.4 SC: So we talked last week about the creation of the body, and so far in the last couple of shows, we've talked about the fact that the body is the temple of God, the temple of the Trinity, that the soul is where the Trinity, God Himself dwells in the Holy of Holies, of the soul, of the tabernacle of the body.

0:01:47.1 SC: And what's kind of cool about that is, I mean there's lots of cool stuff about it, but when we're talking about creation, all of creation, the entire universe, the Jewish people understood the entire universe, all of creation to be a tabernacle, both for God, but also for men, especially for men, for people. And I mentioned that the Garden of Eden was considered the Holy of Holies of that temple or that tabernacle.

0:02:16.4 SC: And so when you consider that both creation and the body are a type or a sort of temple, things really start to make sense in a way that for me they may not have before. And here's what I mean by that. So today's show, we're gonna talk about the degradation of the body, the fall of the body, and we know that that fall began with the fall of the angels.

0:02:52.2 SC: The church fathers, particularly Augustine, in the first couple of verses of the Book

of Genesis, when it says there, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void and darkness was on the face of the deep," they understand those two verses to actually include the fall of the angels in it.

0:03:14.9 SC: So in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, He created time and He created matter, and He created the space and the universe all simultaneously. And then suddenly the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. And so those words "light and darkness" can also mean "joy and misery", and because of that, in the Hebrew, Augustine especially saw the fall of the angels in that second verse, where in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and then suddenly the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep.

0:03:54.9 SC: And so he sees this fall of the angelic hosts, the fallen angels anyway, he sees that happening in that second verse, sort of condensed all in those two little verses. Well, it got me to thinking, our emphasis right now is on the physical body, and this is really a new thing in the church to consider faith from the point of view of the physical body.

0:04:25.8 SC: Because philosophy from the beginning was all about the intellect and logic. The emphasis was not on emotion at all, so you had stoicism, and emotion was... It was not just set aside, but it was denigrated as weak. And people lived for so few years because of disease and bacteria and things that we didn't understand before, you didn't really know the kind of impact that a purposeful stifling of emotion would have on a physical body, 'cause they just didn't live long enough to ever know.

0:05:15.7 SC: And plus they were mostly centered on trying to survive. We have all this time and peace and comfort, that gives us the ability to just kinda sit around and think about stuff, and we live for so long our bodies have finally begun to exhibit the symptoms of what happens when we don't pay attention to our emotions the way we should.

0:05:42.0 SC: So the church fathers are really, really heavy on submitting the body to the intellect again, and now I'm getting ahead of myself, but they were really big, following the Greek philosophers, they were really big on submitting the physical body and the emotions to the intellect or to logic, and I'm not saying that that's not the right... The right thing to do.

0:06:11.5 SC: I am saying though, that things like stoicism, which gosh, they were just absolutely... They refused to express any sort of emotion whatsoever because it seemed a weakness, it seemed to lack of control, so they just put away emotions all together, and we know that physically that's not good for your body.

0:06:31.6 SC: Anyway, the point though is that the fall of the fallen angels was supposed to have happened there in those first two verses, and supposedly the church fathers say that God presented His plan for creation to the angels, and that plan included that He would come to Earth in the form of a man with a Divine human nature, Divine and human nature.

0:07:06.9 SC: And the angels saw that and said, "I will not serve." That's what the church fathers say they believed happened at the fall of the angels. And because angels do not have bodies and they're not limited to increments of time with which to receive sensory information and process it, angels know everything they know all at one time.

0:07:29.6 SC: So they knew the consequences of their choice, and they chose it anyway. The fallen angels, we're talking about. Well, the good ones too, they knew the consequences of their choice. At least they... Whatever they knew, they knew it all at one time. We'll say that. And they chose not to serve anyway.

0:07:55.0 SC: That tells me that they chose not to serve God in a human body. And I believe that that's the case, because when we see what happened after God created man, the serpent... It puts me in the mind of Rudyard Kipling's Just So Stories where you get these stories about how animals sort of got their specific characteristics.

0:08:22.7 SC: And when I think about the serpent now, that's kind of what I think of, where I wonder even if it was normal for the serpent to be in the garden, and why he was in the form of a serpent to begin with, and if that is simply stylistic, a way of expressing something scary and evil. Probably, because that's the genre here, it's presented a little bit like an epic.

0:08:50.1 SC: But what's fascinating to me is that when Adam and Eve were made immediately, the enemy comes to challenge them. He comes to challenge the human being. And so the first thing is, I have begun to realize that God's plan from the very beginning was to come to Earth to dwell with His people in the temple that He created from creation, and in the temple that He created in their bodies.

0:09:27.4 SC: God always intended to do that, He always intended to. He didn't come to Earth because He felt sorry for fallen human beings, he came to Earth because He always planned to do that from the beginning. So the body was holy from the beginning, and I think that's the thing that really irked the fallen angels, that somehow man was going to be elevated above the angels who are super intelligent, much more intelligent than human beings, because they're not limited by a body.

0:10:02.6 SC: I think that they saw at some point this elevation of human beings, people, man, humanity over the angels. And they just said, "Absolutely not. That's not happening." Especially with all of the kind of gross things that a human body does, it's so earthly, it's so bodily. You know? [chuckle]

0:10:29.1 SC: I mean, if you're an angel with super intelligence, it's gonna be weird, it's gonna be a weird thing for you to consider, and yet I heard recently that the angels envy, not in a sinful way, but they envy human beings because we are able to receive the Eucharist. And I thought that was a very interesting idea.

0:10:51.7 SC: But in rolling around this whole thought, that the human body was always meant to be the dwelling place of God, and even that human beings were always meant to be elevated over the angels, it makes more sense to me why the angels fell, and in fact, here's another little nuance to that, that I think is interesting.

0:11:14.9 SC: In the book of Ezekiel, we get this story of Lucifer and how he fell, and I got interested one day in what his name meant, and it means "Light bearer", but in the sense of a test, that Lucifer's light-bearing was meant to be used in the sense of a test, which says he was always intended to test the human being.

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0:12:52.2 SC: The fall of Satan is given to us in Ezekiel Chapter 28, it's talking about the King of Tyre, but it's understood by the church that this section in verses 12 through 16... Or actually through 19, that is also speaking of the fall of Satan or the fall of the enemy. And then also in Isaiah 14:12-15, we also see a mini telling of that same sort of tale.

0:13:33.0 SC: "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning, how you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations. For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the further sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I shall be like the most high, yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit."

0:14:02.7 SC: So it names him specifically Lucifer there in Isaiah 14:12, and as I got to looking at that, what Lucifer means, it comes also from like we get the name Lucias or Luke or Lucas, Lucia, all of those are derivatives of the root meaning "light". And this "light bearing", a naming indicates who or what a person or a thing or a place is in the Scriptures, and so that tells me that Lucifer was created from the very beginning to use this light bearing or this testing...

0:14:52.4 SC: We'll call it a gift or a role or a job or whatever, he was meant to use that from the very beginning, but it was meant to be a good thing and not a way of temptation. Which tells me also then that it wasn't so odd that the serpent was actually in the garden. What was odd is that the serpent tried to deceive the human beings. B.

0:15:16.5 SC: Because it seems to me that Lucifer and his name, meaning "light" in the way of testing, and a test is meant to help you grow, it's meant to help you learn something. That's the difference in a test and a temptation. A temptation is meant to make you fall. A test is meant to help you learn something to add to the knowledge and the experience and the growth that you already have. It's meant for a good end. Whereas a temptation is simply meant to make you fall.

0:15:51.2 SC: And now you can see why God allows suffering to some degree, because I believe that suffering was always perhaps meant to be a way of testing, always a good thing, never painful, always a learning experience, but at the fall, suddenly this disorder entered into it, the enemy uses it to tempt us, and now it's full of pain.

0:16:24.8 SC: This learning experience that we call life, the tests that were meant to be learning experiences now come with all kinds of pain involved with them, and that pain was not something that we were ever supposed to experience, and certainly not death, we were supposed to have lived forever in the paradise of being in complete control of our thoughts and emotions and our bodies, under complete control of the soul, the spiritual image of God that guides and orders the whole human person.

0:17:07.0 SC: At the fall, once Adam and Eve sinned, then you have this complete flip of the order where now it's the body that drives everything. The body is the fleshly animal part of the human being that people have in common with animals. It's the soul that the person, the human being has in common with the angels.

0:17:30.7 SC: Humanity is somewhere in between, we're not angelic because we have a body, but we're not an animal because we have consciousness, we have self-awareness. We have a soul, a personality, a temperament. We are the only creature, the only creature that knows he is suffering and wonders why me.

0:17:53.2 SC: There's physical pain everywhere, even in the animal world, but it's the human being that knows that he is suffering and wonders why. It's the human being that questions suffering. He questions suffering in the world, he questions it to other people. He wants to know why. "Why am I suffering? Why do those I love suffer?"

0:18:13.3 SC: And it's such a basic question of humanity that it can cause us to even deny the existence of a good God, a loving God. And it does, it does cause people to deny that all the time. It may even have caused us at some point to do that ourselves. And even though suffering comes to us in the material world through other people and circumstances, it's the question that we actually ask God, "We want to know if you are God, the Creator and the Lord of the world, why do You allow suffering?"

0:18:50.9 SC: And suffering seems to evil, evil and suffering, because suffering ultimately is evil, we'll talk about that in a moment. Suffering obscures the image of God, sometimes radically. Because there are so many undeserved sufferings and so many faults and sins that go unpunished, so suffering then, perhaps more than anything else, physical suffering, we're talking about physical suffering here especially, but all suffering, suffering then, it absolutely begs the question, what is the meaning of suffering?

0:19:27.8 SC: And it shows how much care we have to take in dealing with both the question, but also the possible answers. And we know that suffering entered into the picture at the fall, sickness and disease came into the picture at the fall, but I am beginning to truly suspect in my flesh of flesh and bone of bones, I am beginning to suspect that the body was meant to be elevated all along, and what entered in at the fall with the disorder is the pain.

0:20:08.6 SC: We were always meant to be tested, the testing is meant to give us learning experiences so that the soul could grow and learn. I believe that was the plan from the very beginning. The only thing that's different is the pain involved in it. Eve was always meant to have babies with Adam, but now there's pain involved in it. Adam was always meant to work, but now there's labor and pain and almost futility involved in it.

0:20:42.4 SC: See, it's the pain and the suffering that enters into the garden, everything else was actually part of it to begin with, part of the creation of it, part of the goodness of it. The human body and the testing that goes with learning. The light bearer, Lucifer, before he fell, was always meant to offer the test, he was always meant to be a type of teacher, but now he uses that gift or that role, or that naming or that purpose to an evil end, a painful end, one that is futile. And in so doing, he causes us to fall with him when we fall into that futility.

0:21:28.7 SC: Now, I have thought about this a lot. I had a pastor once, someone I believe asked him, maybe it was in a homily that he said it, I don't know, but... And I've heard this many times, but I just remember it struck me really funny when he said it that first time that I heard it. He said that God allows suffering for the greater good.

0:21:51.4 SC: And that just pissed me off, because it sounds to me like then God is doing the very thing He commands that we should never do, a means to an end. Suffering is simply then a means to an end. It's an evil, but if it gets us to a greater good than, "Hey, okay, let's do it." Right? That's how I heard that.

0:22:12.4 SC: And it bugged me to death, I'm like, "You know, I just... There's something about that." And it really did provoke a lot of my father wound stuff, because it was hypocritical to me. It sounded hypocritical to me. God is gonna tell us that the essence of morality is that we should never do a bad thing, a wrong thing, even for a greater good. You can't do an immoral act and expect to have a moral outcome. That's morality 101 in the church.

0:22:46.4 SC: And yet, that seemed exactly what this pastor was saying, and the Catechism actually uses those words too "a greater good". "God can bring a greater good." And I'm like, "I just don't like that idea at all. I just don't." But recently, in rethinking this whole physical body thing and the elevation of the body, what I'm starting to realize is that it's not the means to an end.

0:23:12.1 SC: Suffering is not a means to an end. God doesn't allow an immoral thing in order to bring a morality out of it. Instead, it is like two cosmic middle fingers to the enemy, where God says, "Okay, fine, you want to inflict suffering and pain on My creation? Well, watch me elevate them higher than they would have been, if you had never done that to begin with."

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0:25:29.7 SC: When Thomas Aquinas tells us that grace builds on nature, and you think about the elevation of the nature of the human person before the fall, how elevated the human being was and God intended it to be. And we know that because Jesus coming as a Divine human was part of the plan all along from the beginning, according to the church fathers. That's what made the fallen angels fall, they would not serve a human, they didn't wanna do that. Even if He was Divine, they didn't wanna serve a human.

0:26:00.7 SC: But had the angels simply kept to their station, done what God had planned and fulfilled their purpose and their role, then human history would have plodded along and humans would have learned, and probably over the centuries that knowledge would have built like it has, a lot like it has now. But ultimately it would have built itself up to probably some sort of utopia human civilization or something, I don't know, but it would have just sort of been what He planned all along naturally.

0:26:38.4 SC: There was no grace yet, not in the sense that we're thinking that grace builds on nature, because the nature of the human person was such that they already had the eternal life of God in them, that we call "saving grace", they already had that. It was at the fall that they were separated from that. But once they fell, this is where the term "O happy fault" comes from, and where Paul says that where sin abound, grace super abounded.

0:27:09.2 SC: So once sin entered the picture, then grace super abounded. The grace that they already had by nature, was suddenly multiplied many times over because the fault was so terrible, and God was absolutely unwilling that the enemy would or could destroy His creation. I believe that with everything in me, the more I sit and meditate on this idea of the physical body, and God's plan from the beginning for the physical body.

0:27:39.3 SC: How it was meant, always, to be a temple of God, how it was always meant to be the dwelling place of the Spirit of God and how Jesus was the prototype of that. And not, from the beginning, not necessarily to save us from sin, even though obviously that's how it worked out

because Adam and Eve did fall.

0:28:02.1 SC: But oh, what happy fault that where sin abounded in the garden, grace super abounded, so that God then would elevate human beings way further above where they were even in the Garden of Eden. If you think about the resurrection of the body, if you think about the fact that men are to judge angels, I mean, what is that about?

0:28:28.0 SC: Paul says in 1 Corinthians Chapter 6, it says, "Dare any of you having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain in this life?"

0:28:50.3 SC: This was actually in the readings last week, and it's fascinating to me if we were always meant to judge angels, and now that's even more humiliating for the fallen angels, because we have fallen ourselves and we've been redeemed and they couldn't. Because the nature of an angel is that they know everything that they know all at one time, so they understood the ramifications of their rebellion in a way that the human could never have done, because the human learns in increments of time through the sensory information and input that comes through the body.

0:29:33.8 SC: So the human person is limited in ways that angels were never limited, and if it's true that we were meant to judge angels from the very beginning, how much more humbling and humiliating for the fallen angels will it be to be judged by redeemed human beings. I don't know, I'm still meditating on this and chewing on it and fleshing it all out, but it... [chuckle] No pun intended.

0:30:01.7 SC: But it seems very interesting to me that Lucifer's name was Lucifer from the beginning, which means that testing stuff, which means testing then was always meant to be part of the plan, which means that learning was always meant to be part of the plan. So learning then is not a bad thing, it was part of the creation.

0:30:21.8 SC: The only difference is when the angels fell and they tempted the human being to fall as well, what entered was pain, what entered was suffering, what entered was sickness and death. That's what entered, but I truly believe that everything else was really part of the plan. So that when it says that God allows suffering or evil for the greater good, what they're actually saying is not as a means to an end, but for a greater good than what have been if there had never been suffering.

0:30:57.1 SC: Which means your soul is greater because of your suffering than it would have been had you never suffered, both physically and emotionally and in every other way. And that absolutely, I don't even know what to think about that, because if that is true, then how thankful we should be for our suffering. Yes, it's painful, but I mean, it's our own middle finger to the enemy.

0:31:26.0 SC: When we get to heaven and we have conquered everything that the enemy has tried to throw at us throughout our lifetime. All the harassment, all of the abuse, the trauma, the suffering, the physical sickness, the tiredness, all of the things that we endure as human beings, and how painful it is because of the fall of Adam and Eve, because of the temptation of Lucifer who fell.

0:31:51.3 SC: When we can stand up in Christ and say, "By grace, I made it. And not only did I make it, but I am more than a conqueror. I determined to stand firm, I determined that I would not bow down." Can you imagine what that will feel like? Now I know that that happens through grace, and I'm not saying we do it on our own, but can you imagine what a victory that is in the hands of an almighty God, in the face of a mortal enemy like Satan?

0:32:28.5 SC: All of these human beings in all of their weakness, who have allowed the love of God to elevate them above their suffering, to even learn to cooperate with it in their own redemption and that of other human beings. Can you imagine the victory that you will feel, at not only your own, the graces that you cooperated with on your own, but also every human being who did so. Can you imagine what that will be like?

0:33:02.8 SC: I mean, what a celebration, and it has truly changed my entire view of suffering. It's not something simply to endure, it was the pain of it was never meant to be so. That's the part that the enemy added through the fall. But the testing of it and the learning of it was always part of the plan, if I'm right, and if that's true, then the suffering is artificial. [chuckle] It's the suffering that's artificial, everything else is pure.

0:33:34.8 SC: So when the church says that God allows suffering for the greater good, they're not saying a means for an end, they're saying that you are a greater good for your suffering than you would have been had you never had it. Now, I realize that that sounds bizarre when we're talking about things like child abuse, human trafficking, I mean the evil of all the evil that human beings can perpetrate on one another.

0:34:04.3 SC: But somehow, if you look at it in a collective way, somehow God allowing these sorts of terrible evils is meant to raise the collective holiness of the human person over a period of time, because we know now that God allows suffering for redemption. We know that first of all, from Job, who was a prototype of Christ, the Messiah, because Job, his friends tried to give him the current party line, which was, "If you suffer, then you have done something to deserve judgment and justice. Suffering is a matter of justice. If you're suffering, you deserved it."

0:34:50.0 SC: But God defended Job in that and showed that it was actually a test. And Job is actually one of the oldest books of all of the canon of Scripture. In fact, some people think that it was actually the first book. It's that old. So if that's true, then from the very, very beginning, Satan was approaching God to test Job.

0:35:13.3 SC: And the suffering, the pain of that was excruciating, almost unbearable, but that's how the enemy turns us away from the thing that would teach us. It's the suffering that makes it unpalatable. It's the suffering, the pain of it that makes it unbearable.

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[music]

0:36:36.4 SC: It's the pain of suffering that had the true purpose behind it, and that perhaps is the enemy's goal through giving us that kind of evil. Because evil in a philosophical point of view, evil is the absence of the good that is proper to a thing. So what is the good proper to a human body?

0:37:00.4 SC: The good proper to a human body is that it live forever in health and life, and safety and strength and virility, vitality. That's what the ultimate good of a human body is meant to be, to live forever in that state. The absence of that good would be any sickness, any disease, any injury, and finally death.

0:37:24.0 SC: All of those things then would be considered and evil because they are... They subtract from the good that is proper to a thing. And so suffering then, the pain of suffering, the suffering is the pain of the lack of something, the lack of the good proper to a thing. And so the testing in the Garden of Eden had there been no fall, would have been a constant progression of learning experiences that built on the capacity of the human person to grow and learn. To continue to grow and learn and develop.

0:38:01.4 SC: Now though, because suffering and evil has entered, it's based on learning what to do with the lack of something, which ultimately is meant to re-order us back to God who is our source, so that we can constantly draw on that love that a human being needs to live and grow and develop.

0:38:20.9 SC: See, that primary human need for love is, it's biological, it's physical. We can't do without love, we can't grow without love, we can't develop without love, we have to have it. The chemical, the oxytocin, dopamine, serotonin, those love chemicals are necessary to the physical and physiological development of the human person. We must have that.

0:38:44.5 SC: That's part of what was broken, is that constant connection to that source of love that feeds the growth and the development of the human person, and so that's the suffering that we struggle through here on Earth, is trying to connect to authentic love that can help us grow and develop the way we're supposed to.

0:39:05.3 SC: Especially when we grow up in families of origin that have no idea what authentic love is. So we have to re-orient ourself, we have to learn what authentic love is, then we have to know where to get it. We spend our whole lives doing this, trying to learn what authentic love is and is not, and then trying to learn where to get it, which is only from God, that's the only place we can get it.

0:39:25.9 SC: But the whole point is simply to restore the relationship that God had in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, which was meant to fuel their constant learning and growth. So now then, God is using the lack of that love, the evil that has been introduced by the fall and the sin of Adam and Eve, that lack and that evil, God is using it to elevate us even further than we would have been elevated had we never experienced the pain of suffering.

0:40:01.7 SC: I just... Oh my gosh, I can't explain to you how that makes my head explode. That somehow I am better for the pain inherent in my suffering, because not only have I learned the thing that I'm supposed to learn through it. If I have, I'm not saying I have. But if I have learned the thing that I'm supposed to learn through it and become purified, which is one of the two meanings of suffering according to the church.

0:40:27.2 SC: The first is purification and redemption for the person, the individual, my own purification and redemption. And then the second meaning is apostolic, the redemption and purification of the other. So first, I am purified through my suffering and then I can offer suffering on behalf of another person.

0:40:49.7 SC: So if that's true, then my suffering individually and personally, whatever that is personal to me, the pain of getting through that and growing and being purified, means that somehow I'm also able to cooperate in the purification and the edification of the other, other people. An apostolic meaning, an apostolic purpose now.

0:41:12.3 SC: So it's not just about me, it's also about others, and my own suffering has elevated me personally higher than I could have been with even out the suffering, without the pain of it. God has used it to elevate me and elevate you higher than you would have been had you never experienced the pain of suffering. I don't know about you, but I just think that is the biggest two eternal middle fingers to the enemy that I can even contemplate.

0:41:42.0 SC: No wonder it talks about Jesus being the King of Glory, the victor over sin and death, because of Him and His sacrifice, He has elevated us in grace beyond the point that we could have ever reached had we never fallen, which is why the church calls that "the happy fault". And Paul says, "So should we sin then that grace should abound?" And then he says, "Absolutely not, certainly not."

0:42:12.6 SC: However, it is true that in some mysterious way, God is able to draw greater good out of the evil that the enemy tries to perpetrate against you, and He uses the pain of your suffering to cloud its true purpose, to make you fall under it, to make you despair under it, so that you can't clearly see the victory that is yours in it at the end.

0:42:42.7 SC: Because ultimately, no matter how much you suffer in your body now, you will receive a resurrected body at the judgment if you remain in grace upon death. We will all receive a resurrected body. We will live that eternal life, that quality of eternal life with God in that resurrected body and it, that beatitude which means "bliss", we will experience that bliss, both physically and emotionally and mentally in heaven.

0:43:11.7 SC: We don't lose our minds when we die, we don't lose our personalities, we don't lose any of that experience or that memory, we don't lose anything. We gain everything back, plus grace upon the resurrection. Jesus is proof of that, and Mary is proof of that. Because Jesus is Divine human, but Mary is human-human, and if Mary is elevated by the assumption, because Christ was elevated by the ascension, then we are also meant to be elevated by resurrection.

0:43:45.2 SC: So our bodies then, as I've said over and over, our bodies are as holy as the intellect, as the emotion, as the spirit and the soul. The soul is the immortal part, the body will die temporarily, but it is a doorway to the full elevation of the flesh too. The flesh is meant to be

elevated, it always was meant to be elevated, it always was meant to live forever, but now there's been this parenthesis of sin and suffering and evil and death that we have to move through, both individually and as a human race, we have to move through the plan, knowing that it was good from the beginning and that the enemy lies about our suffering.

0:44:34.2 SC: That our suffering can actually elevate us higher than we would have been had we never experienced any sort of suffering, and that the testing that occurs throughout our life was always meant to be that way. It's not a consequence of the fall, it was always meant to be that way so that we could learn and grow individually. Not because there was a lack, but because that was the plan.

0:45:00.7 SC: Now we lack the love that nurtures and feeds growth, physical, mental, spiritual, emotional. Love feeds growth, if you don't have love, you don't grow. So we have to learn through our suffering, we have to learn what is authentic love and what is not. We have to tap into that authentic love, knowing where to get it, which is God Himself. He's the only... He's the only inexhaustible reservoir of authentic love. He is the source.

0:45:31.5 SC: Other sources, relationships, those kinds of things, they're good, but they're not inexhaustible, they're created. God is inexhaustible and uncreated. You can't get... You couldn't get enough love from Him to ever satisfy you, that's why your need for love is insatiable.

0:45:48.0 SC: So once we've learned where to draw from, then we can begin the growth in earnest and add grace on to that, add the graces of conquering sin and suffering and evil, that God adds to it, to elevate us even further. Suffering then, this is why Paul says, "I rejoice in my sufferings because I fill up in what is lacking in the body of Christ."

0:46:16.4 SC: The body, he is filling up what is lacking in the body of Christ, because Paul's suffering has become redemptive for all. He has suffered individually in penance and learning and purification, he has suffered for himself, now he is suffering on behalf of the whole. The whole body. And this is why the church says, "offer it up" because you're contributing to the elevation of the whole body.

0:46:43.0 SC: And suffering then, the pain of it, that's the artificial part. You were always meant to learn things, but now you learn it in pain. [chuckle] Whereas before we could have learned it without the pain. But thanks to the enemy, now we learn it in pain. We give birth and pain, we labor in pain, pain is what was introduced and the disorder. Now we have to learn how to re-order and get back to the proper order, and once we've learned that, then we've been purified.

0:47:09.2 SC: The purification is over once we have the proper order and it's operating properly, where the soul orders the body and controls the body. Once that happens, that's the right order, that's the order it was in to begin with. Once that happens, not only can we then grow ourselves, because we have grown, that is a growth, but once we've learned that, then we can contribute to the growth of the whole body. It's that important.

[music]

0:47:51.2 SC: Thank you for listening to the Bible study Evangelista show. Find out more at biblestudyevangelista.com.