Friday morning 02/10/2017 Suffering, Comfort, and Purpose (Enter Suicide)

*So I’ve been thinking about death lately (surprise, surprise). Actually, I think about it a lot. I think about it in terms of life and relationships and reality and the world and how I live my life. Is that weird? Keep this between us but I actually enjoy funerals. Is that weird? (I’ll explain why Friday) I think that life is too short, people are too important, and death is too real to play games, misrepresent reality, or attempt to be comforted by clichés.*

*That brings us to the topic of our discussion… What do you think about someone who dies before their time? What about if they committed suicide? How do you attempt to help those who are suffering through tragedy without sounding cliché or uncaring or false? After my brother in law Paul killed himself and I experienced being in the middle of this slap of reality, I came away with a thought that I have not been able to get out of my head. I saw how much the hearts of my sister and my nieces were broken and in pain. I also saw a side of Christianity that many do not get to experience. In the midst of tragedy I experienced love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, kindness, faith. It is amazing what you can see if your eyes are open.*

*Please think about this following statement and think about the implications. I will need to fill you in on a few details about Paul and his story before you make a judgment on the accuracy of this statement. After that let’s see if my statement holds up under Scriptural scrutiny. I have to leave my statement a little intentionally ambiguous because the argument would be too long and boring when added to Paul’s story which I will try to keep concise. (Paul’s confession of faith, Paul’s act of selfishness, and Paul’s life with Hannah and the girls)*

*“Imagine how much God must have loved Paul to allow us to go through a tremendous amount of grief and pain so that Paul can be eternally with Christ in Paradise.” (I will attempt to take us through my logic on this statement because I realize it does not stand on its own.)*

“Rarely does a response make something better, what makes something better is a connection.” Dr. Brené Brown (regarding grief and loss)

*Some of the competing/contributing issues in this statement and subject:*

*Predestination Free will Sovereignty Does God micromanage events/lives?*

*Scripture passages: I apologize (You all know how Scripture out of context is one of my pet peeves!). I don’t intend to imply that these Scripture passages are the definitive passages that apply to this situation. These are passages that I have been thinking about lately in context of this situation, my thought process, and death in general. I do intend that we attempt to determine to what extent they or any other passages apply.*

*I have no questions other than those I stated up above. (We don’t need no stinking questions!) Just let fly!*

Matthew 17:12 KJV But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer by them.

John 3:16 KJV For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 9:1-5 KJV And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth. (2) And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? (3) Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. (4) I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. (5) As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. John 9:35-39 KJV Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? (36) He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? (37) And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. (38) And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. (39) And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

John 11:4 KJV When Jesus heard *that,* he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. [The context of this passage is Lazarus death and resurrection]

Acts 20:22-24 KJV And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: (23) Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. (24) But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Hebrews 11:1, 3 KJV Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (3) Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Hebrews 13:5-6 KJV *Let your* conversation *be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (6) So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

John 16:33 KJV These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.