



# Links Players

## Suffering - Christ's Sustaining Presence

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18, ESV)*

The late Peter Alliss was a professional golfer with more than a few accomplishments. It might surprise some that he had thirty-one professional victories and eight Ryder Cup appearances.

As we all know, after his playing days, he turned to color commentary with the BBC and ABC. Here are a few of his gems: After Tiger shot 81 at the 2002 Open, Alliss remarked, "It's like turning up to hear Pavarotti sing and finding out he has laryngitis."

When Alliss saw a player in trouble, he frequently commented, "He is in a spot of bother." As in golf, so in life, we often find ourselves in a "spot of bother."

On another occasion, Alliss astutely observed, "Golf is a reflection of life, and so the game is an enigma wrapped in a mystery impaled on a conundrum." Indeed! Life is often an enigma, mystery, and conundrum, especially when we suffer.

When we suffer, the default cry of our hearts is usually, "Why me?—Why now?" Like the original disciples in the boat battered by strong winds and taking on water, we find ourselves crying out, "Don't you care?" (Mark 4:36-41, ESV)

So, what do we discover about suffering in Christian Scripture? For one, the world is broken! Put more simply, the world is not what it once was before Adam sinned (Genesis 1-2), and it is not what it will be after Christ's return (Romans 8:18-25).

Second, once we get our minds around that, we know that suffering manifests itself in all sorts of ways in a broken world: physical and mental illness, natural catastrophes, political tyranny, unjust judges, crooked businessmen, and the tyrant of all tyrants: death.

When Scripture discusses suffering, it never dodges the reality and pain these various kinds of suffering cause. But it always looks forward in hope to a day when "all things are made new" (Revelation 21:1-4).

This is not to suggest that Scripture addresses all the specifics of every personal situation, but thinking about suffering from a Christian perspective provides a wide range of comforting answers. Not the least of which is this: Christ will always be "with you" and "in you" by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 14).

Knowing that Jesus is with you, for you, and leading you to an irreversible and eternal future where there are no broken hearts is the hope that anchors the soul in times of suffering.

If you find yourself in a season of suffering, cling to Christ in prayer, meditate on the truths found in Scripture, and, like Paul, imagine the "glory that will be revealed to us."

**Prayer: Father, may I sense your nearness and lovingkindness during these dark days!**

### READING - Romans 8: 18-25; Revelation 21:1-4; John 14.

**1.** We all go through "slumps." Those seasons where nothing you try works. How do you manage those? Discuss among yourselves those things that help you endure.

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**2.** How does Romans 8:18-25 help us navigate the dark nights of the soul?

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**3.** In John 14, Jesus has much to say about "trouble times." Discuss some things you learned or were reminded of while reading this chapter.

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