

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM

*Speaker, Robert Emerson*

Study Sunday 10:00 AM

Worship Sunday 11:00 AM

Worship Sunday 5:00 PM

*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*

Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

**Preacher / bulletin editor:** Kris Vilander**Phone:** (256) 472-1065; (256) 472-1042**E-mail:** kris@haysmillchurchofchrist.org**Website:** www.haysmillchurchofchrist.orgCome study  
with us!**Servants during September:****Songleader:** Chandler (2), Dwight (9), Stanley (16), Larry (23), David (30)**Reading:** Larry**Announcements:** Marty**Communion:** Buddy, David, Lakin, Stanley**Wednesday Lesson:** Kris (5), Mike (12), Larry (19), Stanley (26)**Lawn Mowing (week beginning):**

Stanley (2), Robert (9), Larry (16), Kris (23), Billy (30)

**Singing:** Larry and Shane's (23)**Area Meetings:** Market Street (16-19)**The Bible .  
Examiner***"Examine everything carefully..." -1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB*

Volume 1

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*Pray That I Won't Waste  
All This Suffering**By Kenneth Chumbley*

It is important to distinguish between suffering and punishment. In Luke 23:39-41, a thief said of himself and another, "We receive the due reward of our deeds," but of Christ he said, "this man hath done nothing amiss." All of the crucified were dying the same horrible death, but there was something qualitatively different about their traumas—while two were in agony as punishment for their crimes, one was in anguish despite his innocence. Evil visited upon the innocent is what I mean by suffering. It is hurt that "cannot be traced to ourselves" (C. S. Lewis), which can result from moral (Lk 13:2) and natural (Lk 13:4) causes. It is such hurt—such suffering—that is behind the worst of our perplexity and

distress. It is such suffering that causes us to ask why (Mt 27:46). And it is with regard to such suffering that we most struggle to find a balanced response.

Denominational author Warren Wiersbe tells about a family friend who was hit with serious trouble. Her husband had gone blind and had then come down with an incurable disease. While trying to deal with this crisis, she had a stroke that forced her to retire from her job. Although they had many friends, they had no children. One day while visiting, Wiersbe sought to encourage her by saying, "I want you to know that we're praying for you." In response she said, "I appreciate that, but what are you praying for God to do?" This caught Wiersbe off-guard, as he

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had never been asked this question before. Trying to come up with an intelligent response, he said that he prayed for her healing and strength, and for mercy to deal with her pain. To this she replied, “Thank you, but please pray for one more request. Pray that I won’t waste all of this suffering.”


When I read this it hit me right between the eyes. In seeing her problems as an opportunity, this lady had a perspective on suffering that is thoroughly biblical, but is one, I’m ashamed to say, I have too often lacked.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 says something important here. On three occasions Paul prayed that his thorn in the flesh (a metaphor for his suffering) be removed (ironically, not only was Paul’s suffering not traceable to himself, but resulted from a blessing given him by God, 2 Cor 12:1-4,7). The Lord’s answer to this was, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” It is my opinion that Paul’s thorn (v7) and Christ’s grace (v9) here refer to the same thing. This wasn’t a case where Paul was suffering, he prayed about it, and although the Lord didn’t remove his suffering, He did send him some sort of blessing (grace) that made his suffering bearable. No, I believe the Lord is telling Paul that his thorn in the flesh was a manifestation of His grace! What

Paul called a grievance, the Lord called a gift. What Paul saw as something the Lord needed to remove, the Lord saw as something Paul needed to receive.

Christ’s answer put Paul’s problems in a radically different light. And when Paul saw them in this light, and learned that his suffering was, rightly understood, grace from his Lord (which, among other things, was meant to keep him from soul-destroying pride, v7), he started viewing his problems as something not to be wasted—and his pleading turned into praise (v9-10).

In the book *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis makes two points that are worth passing along. First, if God is truly wiser than we, it follows that His judgment may differ from ours on many things, so that what seems good to us may not seem good to Him and what seems bad to us may not seem bad to Him at all (p37). Second, given God’s wisdom, we should never doubt that when there is a discrepancy between Him and us concerning what is best for us, what He thinks and determines is always in our best interest (p39).

If we can just wrap our heads and hearts around such things, maybe we’ll learn what a waste it is to waste suffering. 

# God and Hurricanes


Louisiana was right in the path of hurricane Rita roaring with 74-95 M.P.H. winds on September 24, 2005. It wrecked many houses and hurt many people. A friend in Louisiana told me that he had made friends with a boy who had a broken collar bone and whose brother had cuts made by broken glass.

On the other hand, people who were not in the path were awed by the sight of such a powerful object. God was surely showing his power at this time.

Now please think about this. The first paragraph has talked about some terrible things while the next talked about some awesome things. Terrible and

awesome! God is much the same way. As Daniel said in Daniel 9:4, “And I Prayed to the LORD my God... and said, ‘O LORD, great and awesome (terrible) God who keeps his covenants...’”, and in Psalm 47:2 the psalmist writes, “For the LORD most high is terrible (awesome); He is a great King over all the earth.”

You know, today we think of the word terrible as meaning horrible; back in King James’ time it meant awful (awe-inspiring).

—by *Caleb Vilander (age 13)*, around January 2006. I came across my son’s homework assignment from some years ago while considering what articles might be useful for us to consider, and it seemed appropriate to share in view of the current storm. 

## Remember in Prayer

I was mistaken last week; I thought it had been relatively quiet regarding illness. Many still need our prayers: Ted Adams, Lois’ brother, broke both legs last week; Billy and Marie were both unwell, and their grandson, Austin, suffers from a long-term illness; and please continue to remember Herbert Sides.

At the time of this writing, Tim is being hospitalized for a UTI (this has been life-threatening in the past); and brethren on the coast will surely be suffering from the effects of hurricane Florence.

Please continue to pray for our brethren who are unable to meet with us: Lois Adams, Ruth Black, Carolyn Dennis, Tim and Dot Hice, Polly McNatt, and Hazel Teeples.