

Study	Gamma 14
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So today we're going to deal with not so nice topic. Sometimes we have to deal with difficult things in life. So I didn't really do a Mentimeter poll to find out how many of you ever thought about killing yourselves? And I won't ask you to put your hands. But it's actually very, very common.

Today the study will basically look at the biblical aspects, whether what's wrong with killing ourselves. I won't be dealing with the counselling aspects because Arnold Lim will deal with the emotional counselling kind of how to talk to people. That's not my area. I'm pretty bad at it. If you have any counselling issues, never come to me. I'm a little bit more on the intellectual side, so I will give you the biblical perspectives and Arnold will come and give you the counselling, what do you do when someone wants to kill themselves, et cetera, and all that. So I won't really deal with very much of that.

Suicide is very- very common. WHO says, one person dies every 40 seconds all over the world. And not only celebrities, even Asians, there seems to be a huge number of K Pop people who are actually just killing themselves. Last week a lady called Gu Hara went and killed herself. And there been so many of them are. In 2007, U Nee killed herself. She said, *"I felt every thing is empty. I am again walking down a path to reach a destination I don't know"*. A beautiful young women, who could have the best of lives. And, there was a study done in 2009 showing a 40% of Korean actors have actually contemplated suicide.

If acting is so great, fame is so great, why is it that just under half one they kill themselves? You might as well be a normal person like me, a doctor or a school teacher, right. Seems as if the closer you are to the light, the more you get burnt. Pastors are not immune. This is Kayla Stocklein whose husband was a pastor and he preached about depression and about suicide on the passage of Elijah in 1-Kings, 12 days later on he killed himself after preaching. And the ironic thing is that there's so many pastors as the young American pastors especially who preach and speak about the Bible, about depression, and in the end they wind up killing themselves.

So Christians are not immune. Just because, you are a Christian doesn't mean you don't kill yourself. a Rick Warren went through a very heart-breaking time when his son, Matthew Warren, who fought depression over 10 years, one day actually took a gun and shot himself. Our famous Ravi Zacharias did you know he came to know Christ because he nearly killed himself? Because. His Indian parents were quite demanding. There was thing, you know, you never study, well, why are you lost in class all the time? And he took poison. And he was in rushed to hospital as he laid there apparently dying, you know he heard the gospel and came to know Christ.

Dr Barney Clark was the first artificial heart transplant recipient, and they put your heart in, and when they put the heart in, they gave him a key. The key is to turn it off. Whenever you are fed up of it, just switch it off. So that's suicide, isn't it? Oh, he didn't have to do that because the artificial heart only lasted 15 months and then God turned it off for him.

There is a huge epidemic all over the world. Looking at young people, age 50 to about 40 self-harm is basically number one. It's supposed to be one death every 20 seconds. It beats suicide, beats, war, murder, forces of nature for young people. Suicide in Malaysia is very-very common too. It's been increasing over 60% in the last 45 years, and not only that suicide does not necessarily involve you, it involves your friends and parents. So 30,000 family members or friends are affected. Befrienders in Malaysia looked at and found 36% of callers with suicide ideas, aged between teenagers and until the age of 29 years of age.

So the suicide numbers in Malaysia are basically among young people, which is the scary part. You know, you thought, old people, you know, the heart no good, take the key and switch it off, but these are young people in the prime of life with the whole life ahead of them and they're actually thinking about suicide. A Malaysian teen recently jumped to death after she put up a poll to ask people's opinion whether she should kill herself or not. And 69% voted she should kill herself, and she jumped and she killed herself, which is rather sad. Incidentally, a person who encourages or a bet somebody killing the South is liable for jail for 20 years.

The Institute of Medical Research publication 2016 showed that suicide ideation among adolescents about 6.2%. The risk factor is that you're female, you're more likely to kill yourself, but for your male, you'll have more likely killed. I remember when I was working in Ipoh as a medical officer 30 years ago, the most number of people came in who actually killed themselves were actually Indians. They came from States where they were women. And in those days what they did was they take Paraquat and Paraquat destroys your liver. I have seen so many young people, they just put flames on themselves with the burner.

So it seems that the coping mechanism in the estates are not very good. Loneliness, anxiety and worry are very important risk factors. Joiner's theory is one of the theories about suicide by a professor, psychology in Florida State University is that, if you've got three factors, if they coalesce together then you're more likely to kill yourself. If you are thwarted belongingness, which means loneliness, very-very important. Did you know in the UK they did a survey recently and they found 40% of the United Kingdom people who took part who are actually lonely? You could be married and be lonely. So loneliness is a very important thing together with I'm a burden. It means I don't contribute to society. And the last nail in the coffin is that if you feel that you're a burden and you're lonely, the last one is the guts to kill yourself. I'm not afraid to die.

When you have all the three things coalesce into one then the person will press the trigger and will kill themselves. So this is important for us to understand ourselves as well as our friends.

Warning Signs:

If someone is talking about dying by suicide, feeling hopeless, no reason to live, mean people don't have to tell you I'm going to kill myself tomorrow. They don't usually do that, but they'll tell you that their life is hopeless, they've got financial problems, they're all alone, nothing is helping them or the increased use of alcohol, drugs, withdrawing from society, isolating, sleeping too much or too little, giving away prized possessions. People considering suicide display moods of depression, anxiety, shame, anger, agitation, or even relief. So these are things that happen very commonly.

Viktor Frankl who wrote about the meaning of life say,

“For the meaning of life differs from man to man, from day to day, and from hour to hour. What matters, therefore, is not the meaning of life in general but rather the specific meaning of a person’s life at a given moment.”
– Viktor Frankl

It depends on what your idol, if is your idol is finance, every time the stock market crash got people crash too. Farmers in Australia when they're hit with drought recently and they lose their farms, then they will kill themselves because they're lonely, they have a burden and then there's nothing to live for. So this is an important thing, the specific meaning of life.

1930, Mary Cushman, there was a story told by Dale Carnegie, was a young woman who was married and they went through very, very hard time. She had five children and the husband found out lost his job and got another job earning about \$18 per week. And many weeks wasn't working too because he was sick. And basically she had to take in laundry, ironing for other people, working very-very hard, they owed the grocer near the house \$50. And one day they caught one of the kids and accused her old kids of stealing from the shop because they were too hungry.

And so one day she woke up from her bed. She closed up all the windows, all the kids to lie in bed with her. As you switched on the gas and proceeded to tell the kids, you know, let's go and sleep again. The youngest kid said, mommy we just got up. How come go to sleep again. Mommy said, never mind we're going lie down again and the gas started wafting in and just at a time of gas was wafting in the radio she forgot to switch off and through the radio there was a song,

*What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer
Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer*

That song actually saved her life, because faith is so important when you've got nothing to live for and suddenly that music comes in and it gives you just that kind of hope to hang on. If you do not have any hope then you will actually kill yourself.

What is suicide?

- Elderly man despairing life jumps off a bridge.
- Soldier captured in war takes a cyanide capsular to avoid torture and hide state secrets, is that suicide. **This is not a suicide.**
- A truck driver in a truck where the brakes are out intentionally swirls off a bridge of avoid killing children and he dies. **This is not a suicide.** I think he's a hero. He's basically sacrificing his life for the sake of others.
- What about a cancer patient with six months to live shoots himself to save the family from unnecessary finance and psychological stress? **This is suicide.**
- What about terminally ill patients requesting DNR if heart failure occurs again. That means if you're lying in hospital and if the ECG shows a flat line, you could have been order don't jump

on my chest, because otherwise as doctors, we're always obligated to jump upon your chest. If you are suffering from terminal cancer or a heart failure, when you sign a DNR, do not resuscitate, is that suicide? This is not suicide. Here do not resuscitate is very important because it allows the doctors not to intervene. So what we are saying is that that doesn't really fall in the category suicide because suicide is intentionally killing yourself, well do not resuscitate means I'm not stopping you. Alright. So basically, because he's going to naturally see, everybody naturally dies something, right? If you've got cancer means God really going to die of cancer. You can't stop everybody from dying, alright, so this person is not necessarily suicide.

- Jehovah witness refuse blood transfusions for religious reasons, and he dies of blood loss. Is that suicide? You didn't get the blood transfusion, but why didn't you get the blood transfusion? Here he has the faith to believe that it is not right for him, so no intention to kill himself.

Definition:

An act is suicide if an only if a person intentionally and /or directly causes his or her death as an ultimate end of itself or as a means to another (pain relief), through acting (eg taking a pill) or refraining from acting (eg refusing to eat) when that act is not coerced and not done sacrificially for the lives of other persons or in obedience to God

Jesus died on the cross, it was not suicide, he knew he was going to be capture, some more he go to the cross, some more he goes to Jerusalem. Is that suicide? It can't be because he's doing it for us. So here is an obedience to God. Remember he says, let this cup pass from me, He didn't want to die.

So you have got intent to die, acts of omission or commission, absence or coercion or sacrifice. These are all the elements of the suicide. So there are three positions. Some people say a true Christian will never kill themselves, Christians may do it but loose his salvation, Christians may do it but not loose your salvation. Let's look at biblical examples of suicide. Not many because Old Testament evidence of suicide is very, very rare. In fact, the Hebrews got no word for suicide, there is no word for suicide among the Hebrew. So you've got Abimelech who is one of the very nasty judge who went and killed 69 of his half-brothers and all that. So he actually raided a particular tower and in the process of attacking the people in the tower a woman took a millstone and drop it on his head.

So he got head wound and he thought he's going to die from the head wound, after all blood is gushing out. He says, I don't want to have to embarrassment to have been killed by a woman, my goodness, it'd be so shy. So he asked someone to run him through with a sword. So that was a circumstance but he was a nasty guy. So not a good person, but you know, he wanted to not die in the head by the hands of a woman. The supporter of Absalom, the one who rebelled against David. Ahithophel tried to give advice to Absalom who didn't take his advice and he got upset, he went home and hang himself, sounded quite stupid.

Zimri was one of the Kings of Israel. He was king for exactly seven days. All right, so he served the previous Kings crown and general Omri was coming to get him and he was, he put up his house on fire and he died in it. So not a nice person either. Then you've got Saul, Saul's armour-bearer and Samson. Now just look at Saul. Saul's suicide is the most important suicide that we need to discuss looking into the Bible.

1 Samuel 31:1-6 (ESV)

Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2 And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. 3 The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by the archers. 4 Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and mistreat me." But his armor-bearer would not, for he feared greatly. Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it. 5 And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with him. 6 Thus Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, on the same day together

This is the circumstance of the suicide. Some people say, look this suicide is okay because Saul was wounded. If he didn't kill himself the others will capture and torture him. We need to interpret Old Testament narratives in a different way from Pauline narratives. Old Testament tells you theological truths by stories. So you work out the meaning behind the story to see what the outcome is. Paul will tell you, don't go kill yourself. It's called didactic, it will be direct teaching. So Old Testament we use literary narratives and here are narrative analogies and they're two analogies. When you look in the book of Kings there is Saul and David put side by side together. And if you look at their lives, Saul has always been disobedient and David mainly obedient, but there was one time when he was disobedient.

So he offers sacrifice independently. He doesn't wait for Samuel to come. He doesn't kill all the livestock where he was ordered to, he is openly disobedient to God. He grasp for power where else David waits for power. He is going to be the King as a young man, God had told him, but he waited for Paul. He didn't used up that powerless. Saul was always grasping for power. Saul disrespects life. He tries to kill David on many occasions, orders the army not to eat. Basically when Jonathan accidentally breaks that order, he's willing already to kill Jonathan for breaking his command, his own son. He throws a spear at Jonathan who actually defends David and he kills the priests of Nob. So basically he's a little bit of an indiscriminate killer. He's not very good respecter of life.

David has even opportunity. He was in the same cave as Saul. He was hiding a cave then Saul came in, he could have killed Saul, but he did not killed Saul. You can see the contrast between the two people's life. So Saul was always alienated from God. In fact, he actually consults necromancers, the mediums, goes to them and consults there rather than consulting God. Whereas David will have a deepening walk with God in his life. Saul got deteriorating relationships with people. David enhances relationship with good friends with Jonathan, Mikel loves him. He even wins the trust of a Philistine King. So you can see two kinds of people here. Suicide, he's wounded in battle, he is alienated from God and won't turn to him. So therefore he has diminish respect for life, convinces him that death is the only answer because in his whole life he doesn't have much respect for death anyway.

So therefore to Saul death is the answer. Saul's grasping for control alienates him from everyone. He repeatedly violates God's command to keep his throne. Here's a man who used death to deal with this problem, so therefore killing himself fits the pattern. So he attempts to minimize the pain and alter the means of divine judgment. God has already declared that he was going to be taken. He tries to alter the costs, it didn't work. You know why, they cut off his head and they hung his body up on a pole and everybody laughed and jeered him. So they still mistreated him and they mocked him.

David kills Amalekite who said he enabled Saul's suicide

2 Samuel 1:14-16 (ESV)

David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" 15 Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go, execute him." And he struck him down so that he died. 16 And David said to him, "Your blood be on your head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the Lord's anointed.'"

The last hero who actually killed himself was actually Samson. Now this is debatable. He is a flawed hero. Even though he might not had God's intention in mind God still used him. Here is a guy where you can see the sovereignty, everything he does because he likes women. So while he's chasing the women he accidentally kills a lot of Philistines. So God uses a nasty fellow like him. He basically is just out for himself but somehow God used that. He is a very flawed judge. His flawed character leads him to catastrophes. In his death he honors God. In that sense, he is caught and then he is tied between two pillars, and one day his hair grew back and while the Philistines were celebrating at the temple,

Judges 16:28-30 (ESV)

Then Samson called to the Lord and said, "O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that ***I may be avenged*** on the Philistines ***for my two eyes.***" 29 And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. 30 And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines."

He pulled it down and everybody dies together, the kamikaze kind of killer. This is controversial because here he is a judge. His reason for his suicide was his avenge. He was not doing it for God or Israel. So there is a little bit of a mystery here, but he describes him as one of the heroes of the faith. So this part is a little bit ambiguous, whether for his reasons for or for killing himself.

Judas was never part of the 12 as it were, and he'd been never, he could've repented, but he didn't. So he couldn't live with himself, so he killed himself. So again he's obviously a bad guy.

CONCLUSION:

1. None are viewed in favorable light
2. All were responses to crises either in fact or perception. Saul and Zimri would have died in enemy hands in any event. Abimelech was mortally wounded and Ahithophel had loss of face and failure
3. All chose suicide with varying degrees of readiness or planning

There are people who didn't kill themselves, but who thought about killing themselves and Elijah when he was fresh from his victories at Mount Carmel, but very, very tired. Fell into depression

1 Kings 19:4 (ESV)

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."

That's number one. Then you've got Moses when the people tired of eating ramen every day, we want beef,

Numbers 11:13-15 (ESV)

Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' 14 I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. 15 If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness."

Again, just like some pastors who just want to kill themselves. Here is Job who went through really terrible time

Job 7:13-16 (ESV)

When I say, 'My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint,' 14 then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions, 15 so that I would choose strangling and death rather than my bones. 16 I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are a breath.

So this is suicidal ideation. Lastly we have got Jonah. Jonah was such a successful evangelists that are people who preach the gospel too came to know God and repented, and because he was so successful because he hated the Assyrians, he wanted to kill himself. If you can see down here,

Jonah 4:1-4 (ESV)

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 2 And he prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. 3 Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." 4 And the Lord said, "Do you do well to be angry?"

You notice all the people who didn't kill themselves. What they actually have with suicidal ideation is that they actually asked God. It says, God take my life. Look at here if you will kill me. Oh Lord, take my life. Even though they are down in the dumps, they never take their own life. They say, Lord you take my life. You know this. So there is a respect for life even when a Christian really gets down to really far debts they never use up that right. That right is given only to God who gives you life. So you can see they ask God to take their life. They never take their own lives. That's the important thing to learn from that.

The Greeks are not so much like. Epictetus says,

"I won't abandon old age if it preserves me whole for myself, or at least whole in the better part; but if it starts to shatter my mind and tear down its parts, if it does not leave me life, but mere breath, I will sally forth from the decrepit and tottering building."

Epictetus is saying while I am okay, all right, but once my life start to shatter, my mind is torn down, I will leave this decrepit and tottering building, which means if he becomes too demented and too ill, he's going to kill himself. So this one of the Greek philosophers.

Cicero for Romans says,

"When one's circumstances contain a preponderance of things in accordance with nature, it is befitting to remain alive; when one possess or sees in prospect a majority of contrary things, it is befitting to depart from life"

So he weighs, in my life a lot of plus I stay alive, a lot of negative I better kill myself. So this is secular thinking at a time.

Augustine of Hipoo, one of the church fathers says,

- We do not kill ourselves because of the duty of self care or self love
- As a Debt of love we owe others
- It is a refusal to trust God if we kill ourselves
- Unwillingness to endure suffering like Job
- Excludes the possibility of repentance

Whatever sin it is, you cannot repent because you already dead. That's what he says.

So it is murder because it's a irreversible permanent destruction of life, which is the most precious possession an individual can ever have. It is an assault on the image of God.

Genesis 9:5-6 (ESV)

And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. 6 “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

We do not kill ourselves simply because life belongs to God. It is a gift given to us, and we are made in the image of God, striking the image of God whether it's your fellow man or yourself is striking at the heart of God. That is the basic Christian understanding.

The other psychological understanding is that suicide affects the community

- Suicide deprives the community of the moral service to others that life can be endured
- Suicide deprives the community the opportunity to teach others how to die, how to face life , how to live well and how a wise man understands the connection between good and evil
- Suicide leaves the community with a morally unhelpful memory of the person who committed suicide..which could hurt those left behind who are trying to live well as individuals and in community with others

So every time you see someone kill themselves, it is estimated there are about every 1 person killed is that there are about 33 who suffer. When someone dies it actually devastates to all the people around them. It really discourages them. That means it tells them life is not worth living. You'll find that in schools when one or two children start to kill themselves, that the others will follow because it's a morally upsetting example, you devastate other people and you miss out the opportunity to teach people how to really live and live worthwhile life. So suicide is not just about you, it's about the community.

Suicide is also due to bad theology. When something bad happens to people and then they say, why me, instead of all people why me. You know what? God will turn around and say to you, why not? Why not you? Isn't it? Why? Why must chickenpox hit the other fellow but not you, that's the whole idea of bad theology. Why God is impotent on concern or we are essentially good, and so do not deserve evil? Say why me? It means I don't deserve, isn't it?

But if you look carefully, this is Harold Kushner who wrote this book, best bestselling book called When Bad Things Happen To Good People, and this is how he looks at suffering. He says,

God does not want you to be sick or crippled. He didn't make you have this problem and He doesn't want to go on having it but he can't make it go away. There are some things that too hard even for God

Fate...not God sends the problem ...and in the knowledge that we are not alone , that God is on our side ,we manage to go on

Harold Kushner is a Jew, actually he is thinking that you know in life is like fate, bad things happen to good people like everything happened, but God understands your pain, why you're suffering God stands next to and says, it's okay, sorry, I can't do anything, but it's okay. That is basically wrong theology because you got a empathetic but powerless God. Here fate controls even God. There are some societies who doesn't believe in fate. The other idea is that we are essentially good, all of us are good. So therefore we don't deserve anything bad.

Nif you look theologically, this is what Paul has to say.

Romans 8:18-23 (ESV)

or I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Paul tells us that we live in a fallen world. When we live in a fallen world, the whole of creation groans, so bad stuff will happen to good people. Why are you so special that bad stuff don't happen to you just because you're a Christian. So the theological outlook is that, why not you? There is no such thing as you don't deserve bad things. We are in a bad situation because of sin. So the accountability for stewardship while life remains. This is Ecclesiastics which gives you a lot of wisdom,

Ecclesiastes 11:8 - 10 (ESV)

So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity. 9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. 10 Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

Ecclesiastes 12:1-3 (ESV)

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"; 2 before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, 3 in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed,

Beautiful poetic language. He is telling you, you should remember your creator in your days of youth, which means remember, means you must act in a manner that actually reckons that your life is short, because one day when the evil days will come, the years draw near, you will say I have no pleasure. Means as you get older, less and less shock. That's why some of the old people always travelling all over the world because there are very few things that make them happy anymore and then if you look at this

beautiful language, I have no pleasure in, before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darker, it means your eyes are going off. Then it says, and the clouds return after the rains, it is depression, when the keeper of the house tremble and the strong man, mean you are bend over and the grinder cease, which are your teeth. This is a description of what happens when you're old. There are come to the time when these things happen, but when you are young you must remember your creator in the days of your youth, which means there's accountability for the stewardship while life remains. But Solomon is very wise. He knows these things will happen.

Life is about not joy, it is about suffering and happiness are part of the life. So while you have youth remember your creator. And then the important thing is the last verse,

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (ESV)

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

So accountability of steward is for life is basically while you have life. It is not whether you enjoy or not, it is about whether you obey God and honour God with your life.

Revelation 14:12-13 (ESV)

*Here is a call for the **endurance of the saints**, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their **deeds follow them!**"*

So it's not that when you are here on the world, whether you have a good time or bad time, illness or riches, but your deeds, what do you do with your life? Because those deeds follow you into the next world, that is what is important, the stewardship of life while it remains.

There is a story told of a young woman who actually lost her husband and a daughter in an airplane crash and then somebody while she was grieving, someone wrote her a note. And the note said,

God must really trust you to bear these things, for his glory

When a friend of her found this note, the friend was upset, you know how can you blame God for all this? As if God put you through all that, no God doesn't do that. And the young lady turned around and said, if you take this away then I might as well take a gun to my head and blow it out. Because there must be some purpose to this suffering. I lost my husband, I lost my daughter, but there is a reason that despite this pain, when God says to me, why not you? I buried and I glorify God in this pain, and that is the reason why I don't take a gun and blow my head off. If you can see that then you move away from suicide. If this is not true then you might as well take a gun to your head and blow it out.

I remember the story of Joni Erickson, when she was lying on her bed when she had fractured the spinal cord and she was suffering. Next to her on the other bed was a young woman who was about a young teenager also, who, who was very badly ill suffering from a muscular dystrophy disease. So she was actually wasting away and all that. And hardly anybody visited her. Nobody came. Everybody knew Joni Erickson but nobody visited her. And she was a Christian Young woman. And Joni always asked herself the question, what's the purpose? You suffer, suffer alone, can't share the gospel with anybody, nobody can glorify God, I mean through looking at her she is just suffering for the sake of suffering?

What she actually learned later on that even though that lady is suffering and is alone, it is the angel. It is the spirit world that sees a young woman holding up her faith, even though in going through some mindless, purposeless suffering and still honours God. That is the secret, otherwise she would have killed herself. So we need to find some purpose in suffering and for a Christian this is so important,

what a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege for us to bring everything to Jesus in it.

And that same woman, Mary Cushman, which you heard that song. The rest of the day, she opened up the windows, switch off the gas and started counting all the blessings, the five children God gave her the will, all healthy. Mary Cushman actually lost her home. They became homeless after that, but somehow God brought her through, five children grew up, got married and she found the light at the end of the rainbow, but she could have killed all of them that day.

Sin of suicide is just for one flash of a minute and you could have deprived yourself of a lifetime of glory to God. So suicide is indeed a nasty thing.

People who commit suicide do not go to heaven. This is the Catholic church, the Catholic church divides the sins that you have into two kinds of sin, venial sin and mortal sin. Venial sin is complain about things, gossiping. Mortal sin is you kill yourself. So the Catholic church says that if you commit a mortal sin, you don't actually go to heaven but there are some verses here,

Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

You are saved by God through Jesus Christ, not by your works, it is by grace.

Titus 3:4-7 (ESV)

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life

So we're not saved by how well we have walked, we are saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. In Romans Paul says,

Romans 8:37-39 (ESV)

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So suicide is a sin, there is no doubt. It is absolutely a sin. But the person is not measured by that one sin in his life at the end of his life, he is saved by Jesus Christ. I think most suicides are due to mental illness and mental illness is sometimes is due to imbalance of chemicals within your brain, and it is an illness than anything else.