



Facing the Problem of Evil

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You must have been to a funeral or paid a visit to see a patient in a hospital. What do you say to the grieved in such an occasion? Probably you would have hard time finding a proper word to say to them. Several years ago, one of my students died in a car accident, and I witnessed how funeral attendants tormented the family with awful and harsh comments in her funeral such as these:

“It must have been her destiny.”

“There must have been a sin that she had not confessed.”

“It is God’s will.”

Listening to their comments, one can know how bewildered people become in the face of hardship, illness and evil. Are you also one of these people? You might have said something out of dutiful mind to give a condolence to the grieving family or patient. I must say that I have also said such foolish comments. But there was also a time when I was the one on the receiving side of such comments.

1. People at Loss in the Face of Hardship, Illness and evil

When I was bedridden with throbbing headache for months, I received visits and phones calls from many people. I cannot recall all their comments. But I remember how bewildered they were with my sickness from their comments. Comments from closed ones were especially hard to swallow.

First of all, great was my teacher’s love for his pupil. His comment was as the following; “I was shocked when I first heard you were suffering from brain tumor. But I was relieved to know it was only a headache.”

Whether it was cancer or headache, it would have been better if he offered explanation of the causality of all this pain or gave a simple comforting word. However, he didn’t give any

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interpretation of evil or advice to overcome it. He might have had high regards for my ability to figure out the meaning of hardship myself and stand up to it with wisdom and faith.

In addition, my friend's advice was shocking; "there must be a reason why you are not able to carry out study in your headache. There must be a sin that you committed but forgot to confess. It is best that you find what that sin is and repent. Otherwise, you will face a bigger punishment." His analysis on my pain is "God's punishment over my sin" or "retribution."

It was too harsh to consider it as a comforting word from a friend. Sometimes, sin becomes a cause of disease. But it would be troublesome if you pin your friend's suffering as the result of sin without a just cause. True friends are there to comfort the sick. But you can hardly call a person a true friend when he/she unjustly accuses a sick friend for not repenting the unknown sin.

There was a letter from a spiritual leader filled with God's Word. "I was heart broken when I heard your news. But I am sure and thankful that merciful God is shaping you as a pleasing pottery. I pray that you would take this as a training program to eternal weight of glory (2Corinthians, 4:17) and endure this momentary affliction with joy."

What a courageous comforting word fitting to a leader! That letter was too ideal beyond my reach in the bedridden state or was it only me to think that way? They loved me so much but they seemed to me "miserable comforters" at that moment. In the mist of that period, I decided to investigate the root of evil causing illness, suffering and death that throw loved ones into bewilderment. This essay has been prepared to renew my decision I had made at the time.

2. The Concrete Causality of Evil

There is nothing more complicated than the causality of evil. It is not only complicated but also tentative. Philosophers and religious scholars of all ages struggled with this issue. But compared to their efforts and weightiness of the subject, the analysis tends to become too superficial or speculative. My understanding of it is also at a childish level that I can only verify concrete causality of evil that everyone agrees and uncertain ones that make some people wonder.

One faces evil because of his/her own fault, sin or carelessness. It is your fault if you get into a car accident due to your violation of speed limit. If you get ulcer because of heavy drinking, you are the offender. There are many diseases, accidents or deaths people face due to their own fault, sin, or carelessness in the world. For some, retribution is death. In the book of Romans, it clearly indicates that wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Samson got his

eyes plucked out due to his carelessness.). In such a case, evil is the retribution of his fault.

"With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death. So he told her everything. "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man." When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines...Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison. (Judges 16:16-21

Moreover, innocent lives perish at the cost of other's sin. Such incidents include a pedestrian run over by a car, a walker bumping into a thief in a park, or a careless bus driver killing another. Because of someone else's fault, others face suffering or even death. You sometimes meet such incidents in your life. Historically, the first murder record was by a jealous man killing his brother; it was Cain who killed his innocent brother, Abel.

"In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him." (Genesis 4:3-8)

Furthermore, there are sufferings because we live in a fallen world. We live in a world that is spiritually and systematically corrupt. Many diseases and pain you suffer are due to corrupted and polluted world. It is the same with unjust accident, aging, sickness, and death. It does not derive from one particular person. The whole world is fallen. We suffer because we live in it. It does not only include illness but also systematic evil and economic unrighteousness. One of the incidents in the Bible shows how Naboth lost his vineyard to King Ahab by his political authority. Naboth lost not only his property but also his very life.

"And Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern Israel? Arise and eat bread and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."... And the two worthless men came in and sat opposite him. And the worthless men brought a charge against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth cursed God and the king." So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned; he is dead."..." (1Kings 21:1-16)

3. The Uncertain Causality of Evil

There is suffering beyond our human understanding. Job falls into this category. Job lost his entire wealth in a day, lost all of his children, and was under severe pain at the point of death. Once God called him righteous person (Job 6:29). It does not mean that Job did not commit any sin or he was not a sinner. But Job and his friends did not realize that there was suffering beyond their own understanding. Later Job found out that he was in the mist of spiritual battle between heavenly God and Satan. This meaning of the battle itself was “too wonderful to understand.”

"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you."(Job 42:2-5)

Moreover, there is innocent and redemptive suffering on behalf of others. Jesus Christ was suffered without cause and sin. Jesus expressed his acute pain in words betraying God's will to save His people in the hill of Gethsemane. I am trying to make a point here that He did not commit any sin to deserve such suffering; His soul was troubled and overwhelmed with sorrow and His body was hanged on the Cross as a rebellion and a sinner even though He was innocent. He volunteered the innocent and redemptive suffering on behalf of others.

"Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."... While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. (Matthew 26:36-56)

Furthermore, there is suffering for endurance and maturity of faith. God allows suffering to train his children; "so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1Peter 1:7) James also agreed with Peter; "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and

complete, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2-4)

C. S. Lewis said God uses a “megaphone” to test those who are stiff-necked. Like marble is shaped by hammer and chisel to make a beautiful statue, stubborn and foolish people are trained by suffering. To put what he exactly said, it goes like this; “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

4. World’s Misunderstanding of Evil

How many diseases are out there? One says there are ten thousand of them, As there are as many diseases in the world, there are as many theories on good and evil. In order to avoid unnecessary argument and confusion, I will briefly state some of them.

Firstly, evil is said to be only perception or illusion. Evil is not a substance but only perception or illusion of human mind. This substantial understanding of evil, originated from “Maya” equivalent to “illusion” of Hinduism in the east, is now proclaimed in modern science. Mary Baker Eddy said, “Evil has no reality. The perception of evil must therefore be a human error.” She thinks that illness, suffering, murder, unrighteousness are not real but only perception.

Such substantial claim is possible philosophically or speculatively. In reality, however, it is impossible because of two reasons. One is that even those who proclaim falsehood of evil can not deny the reality of evil as they also get older, become sick, or have their things stolen. Secondly, substantial meaning of evil eradicates the clear line of good and evil. If it is only a substantial perception, you should not punish the rapist who raped your mother. This kind of attitude is a schizophrenic denial and escape from reality as actual suffering is termed as “illusion.”

Additionally, some proclaim good and evil have always been with us, and there is no problem with it; one should accept them as the way they are because good and evil have been struggling with each other ever since the beginning of the world. This is a dualistic historical interpretation supported by Zoroastrianism and Platon in the ancient time and currently by modern philosophers including J. S. Mill and M. Heidegger. In Buddhism, it teaches that good is followed by evil, light by darkness, life by death, These have been together facing each other ever since the beginning of time.

If you take this view point that evil is normal, you would not have any problem with illness or suffering. A. Camus, one of Existentialists, is famous for having said, “If one eliminates evil, it would only result in rebelling against God.” Evil is considered a necessary procedure for

development and improvement of society. Taking this view point, human being can become “less” evil by education and improvement but never be able to prevail evil. They would not bother to conquer evil but be content to live with illness and evil side by side.

Finally, evil is considered as a product of distorted environment, education, genes, and etc. Personality and behavior of human being is determined by environment, education, economy, and genetic factors; evil conduct can be explained by wrong parenthood, deficient genetic factors or poor environment. This determinist view wields great power by the support in the field of psychology (S. Freud) and economics (K. Marx). It suggests that regardless of our choice, good and evil are already determined by preceding conditions.

According to determinism, evil is already determined rather than made by personal free choice. In the end, all account to God who made human being or nature. This makes human kind as machinery or one of biological animals, and this logic ultimately leads to atheism. Atheism does not have any moral or philosophical criteria for evil. Dostoevsky pinned it right by saying, “If God does not exist, then everything is permitted.”

5. Christian Misunderstanding of Evil

Christianity is no less mystified by the problem of evil. It has even more critical reasons than anything else to misunderstand it. These fatal answers nurture new problems rather than solving them. It is often called ‘theodicy’ where it proclaims existence of evil is God’s will. It has its own defense.

First of all, God is not good or almighty. “Theodicy” is a word combined by “theos” meaning “God” and “diky” meaning “definition” that tries to defend God’s justice in philosophical way. It is theodicy that defends the idea of Pierre Bayle in saying “if God is good and almighty, He should prevent suffering and evil in this world. But there is suffering and evil; therefore, God is unwilling or unable to prevent evil.”

But theodicy faces 2 dilemmas; one is that if God is just, He is impotent. Second is that if God is potent, He is not just. In brief, if God is righteous and almighty, He would not allow the righteous to suffer. C. S. Lewis summarizes it beautifully; “If God were good He would make His creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty He would be able to do whatever He wishes. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore, God lacks either goodness or power or both.”

Secondly, God is accountable for all the pain. There are people who say everything in the world is the product of God’s direct involvement so we should be thankful for the pain and

accept it as His will; if you are treated unjustly in a fallen world, you should thank God for it. This view may beautify evil as spiritual matter. We should remember that Jesus was not smiling but angry when he stood in front of the grave of Lazarus. The word 'anger' in Greek is a strong word describing a snort of a war horse getting into the battle.

Jesus did not say his friend's death was the will of God. If he did so, it would have meant that evil and suffering were good, and God would be held accountable for creating and operating evil. Such reasoning would be oppressing the truth and turning God into evil. Just because God allows evil does not mean that He is responsible for it; if God were, He would not be almighty and holy God.

Thirdly, evil is God's cruel retribution. What Job's friends said to Job in his misery was in the same line with this misunderstanding; "Don't you know that righteous don't suffer?"; "Don't you know that you harvest what you sprinkled?"; "Don't you know that you will be rewarded for good deeds and punished for bad ones?"

"Law of retribution" is unchanging law of justice that signifies God's holiness and righteousness. But you should not apply without hesitance and without a drop of grace and love. The following comments represent what have been discussed so far;

"If you were righteous, you would not be in such a mess."

"You must have done something terribly wrong to deserve such a painful suffering."

"There is no way of solving the problem if you refuse to confess the sin that you are hiding from us."

"You are held accountable for this misery and suffering."

"There is no output without input."

6. What the Bible Says about Evil

Firstly, the Bible recognizes existence of evil and its cruelty. We live in the world that denies or reduces the existence of evil and its cruelty. No, it is better put that people have hard time talking about the problem of evil. But the Bible recognizes the problem of evil squarely and considers evil as "the only existential issue" for human. This is the ethical issue that all face. Apostle Paul confesses existence of evil and its cruelty as the following:

As it is written:

"None is righteous, no, not one: no one understands;

No one seeks for God.

All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;

No one does good, not even one"

"Their throat is an open grave;
They use their tongues to deceive."
"The venom of asps is under their lips."
"Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."
"Their feet are swift to shed blood;
in their paths are ruin and misery,
and the way of peace they have not known."
"There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.(Romans 3:10-19, Romans 7:19-24)

Secondly, the Bible says the current world is abnormal and was not meant to be. Most people say that the current world that we live in is very "normal." Therefore, suffering and death in life should be accepted as the norm and considered necessary. But the Bible says that this world and human kind are "abnormal." The first 2 chapters of the book of Genesis tell the story that the beginning was different from the current world. In other words, human kind was created to live forever and was not supposed to know suffering, illness or death. But one historical incidence changed the whole. (Genesis 3:8-13)

It was the beginning of the fall of the world and human kind that God once saw as good, beautiful and normal. Chapter 3 of Genesis gives account on how God's creation was destroyed by the introduction of evil including unrighteousness, suffering, illness, aging, and death. The normal world at the time of creation has become abnormal by historical cessation and discontinuity. This is why evil is aboriginal. It did not belong to human kind or world. Evil came from human's disobedience to God.

Thirdly, the Bible says that evil is created by humankind. This world and humankind is full of evil not because God made mistake at the time of creation. It has derived from a historical incident where humankind made a free will decision to rebel against God. Suffering and evil is the outcome of abuse of liberty of our ancestor, Adam. Nobody coerced or oppressed Adam to choose evil. Environment, education method, genetic factors are not involved in this either. Eve made her decision on her own. Man preferred Satan's authority to God's grace. It is true that evil's temptation was tempting to pass by. But the culprit is not Satan but Adam who freely chose to listen to Satan's voice rather than God's.

"The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you

must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden."(Genesis 3:2-8)

7. Clues for Solving the Problem of Evil

If you accept what the Bible says about evil and its conclusion, you may find a clue to solve the fundamental problem of evil. I will summarize into 3 points from a debate of Francis A. Schaeffer.

Above all, you don't need to turn God into evil in order to explain the current fallen world and abnormal circumstances. If God made evil, C. Baudelaire would be right to claim that God is evil. But God did not make the evil world and humankind like today. So He is not liable to this current abnormal environment. God is not evil as Baudelaire accuses Him as because man's cruelty, death, and sadness are the result of man's autonomous fall into Satan's deception. Men cannot blame God because men oppress the truth willfully;

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things." (Romans 1:18-23)

Secondly, hope arises in solving man's evil and fall. If man is made to be abnormal or deficient, there is no hope in searching for solution. If man's original form is different from the current one, there is a hope of recovery. God was not accountable to evil but provided a solution for man. This is where Jesus' redemptive death on the cross comes in as the answer to life.

Apostle Paul found his answer to his existential problem and confessed as the following; Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! ... There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. (Romans 7:25-8:2) Because Jesus is "holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens,"(Hebrews 7:26-17), he is the only savior who can eliminate evil.

Thirdly, man obtains a philosophical ground to fight unrighteousness, suffering and death. On this ground, one can truly stay with the suffering person and do his/her best to fight against death until the very end. Upon this, we also fight against mercy killing, abortion, child murder, homosexuality, and corruption. This firm ground will prevent confusion in worldview and ethics. Just as Jesus was angry at the tomb of Lazarus, we will fight against the evil of this world with holy rage.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might; put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, (Ephesians 6:10-18) E. Achilles was right when he said "there is no middle ground between God and evil. C. S. Lewis better described it by saying "there is no neutral ground; every square inch, every split second is claimed by God and counter-claimed by Satan."

8. Passive Ways of Dealing with Evil

The character who suffered the most in the Bible is Job from the east. He is called the philosopher of suffering because he learned wisdom to overcome unexplored evil in suffering. There are passive and active ways in dealing with the Evil.

First, it is better to stay silent. It is best you keep your mouth shut rather than babbling foolish words in front of illness, suffering or death. It is better to stay silent than hurting the grieved with inconsiderate comforting words. Do not fog God's purpose with foolish words as Job has provoked (Job 38:2, 21:5). It is better to lay your hand over your mouth than speak foolishness. Although he suffered greatly, Job stayed silent in front of God; "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth." (Job 40:4) Wise man chooses to stay silent than speak foolishness in suffering.

In silence, you may cry or lament as much as you like. It is healthy to cry when you need to and the quickest way to get over sadness. If you choose to laugh or curse at the time of crying, you will eventually cry out. Job accused God as “merciless God” for making the innocent suffer, but God accepted him. (Job 3:23-26; 6:1-3, 7:11-21; 10:1-22; 13:17-28; 16:6-17; 19:1-12; 30:1-31) Job lamented when he was on the road or in front of meal. He is blessed for lamenting in silence.

Secondly, do not fall into the trap of “the measure for measure principle.” What is known as “wages of sin,” “the measure for measure principle” or “a web of causality principle” surely exists in the world but should not be applied mistakenly. As D. J. A. Clines pointed out correctly, “there is nothing wrong with the measure for measure principle but how it is applied. God’s morality and holiness clearly exist in the world for the penalty of death. It becomes problematic when you apply it too strictly or systematically without grace or love.”

There are reasons to it. 1) Looking at restoration of Job in the end, quid pro quo certainly takes place. But God is holy and love that He does not apply it automatically or thoroughly. 2) Behind the measure for measure principle, God’s ‘echa’ (counsel) is at work together with God’s ‘mishpat’ (justice) that define divine morality. One should not take all evil as the outcome of sin or God’s retribution.

Thirdly, do not be self-conceited. Whoever goes through suffering becomes a philosopher. In the progress, one tends to become too proud or too smug. Job became daring and fearless when he found his friends speechless to his questions. “So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, burned with anger. He burned with anger at Job because he justified himself rather than God.” (Job 32:1-2) Job did not stop exulting himself over his friends, but he further ventured to consider himself more righteous than God.

Eventually, Job makes a narcissistic and pretentious statement; “I also will give my answer; I also will declare my opinion.” (Job 32:17, RSV) You may be like this smart Job who has an imposing attitude that refuses to be swayed by any persuasion. And you may be quite satisfied with yourself equipped with false proof logic and experience for every situation. But if you happen to discover your limit in dimming logic, do not hesitate to cover your petty lips.

9. Active Ways of Dealing with Evil

You can start by insulting those who speak rubbish. Friends who came to see Job spoke either “perfectly reasonable” words or “nonsense.” When you hear these words, you become quite angry. So it is better to burst out by giving back “healthy reproaches” or “honest

rebukes.” You may find good samples from Job 12:1-4; 13:1-12; 16:1-5; 16:18-17:2; 17:6-16; 30:1-8 and etc. Here are some great samples among them:

“You whitewash with lies; worthless physicians are you all,” (Job 13:4)

“Miserable comforters are you all!” (Job 16:2)

“I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs.” (Job 30:1)

“A base and nameless brood, they were driven out of the land.” (Job 30:8)

Then there is no other way but to depend on God. There may be thousands of ways in dealing with the Evil. But they are useless unless you wholeheartedly depend on God and obey Him. You should recognize that God’s thought is different from yours. We should pay a close attention to his declaration that all creatures were created by His ‘echa’ (counsel, plan) (Job 38:2, 42:3); “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” (Job 38:2)

We should be very aware of the fact that God’s way of ruling the world is beyond our knowledge; his way is unfathomable and inscrutable. Humankind knows not all but so little in the origin of the world (Job 38:4-15), the provision of universe (Job 38:16-40:2), and the ecology of animals (Job 38:39-39:30). Therefore do not dare to act up to God as if you are smarter than Him with little what you know.

Finally, do whatever you can with available treatment and put revolutionary effort to it. There are many thankful words as well as not-so-thankful-at-all comments coming from friends when you are in sickbed. A few of them are quite fatal:

“Do not waste all your money to treatment but leave some for your children’s sake.”

“Do not try to heal your illness but live along with it until death.”

“It is unfaithful to trust in medicine. How could God cure someone who is unfaithful?”

Be careful when you hear these words and go on with your ways in finding good traditional home remedies and modern medical practice to prolong your life. I had an occasion to stop by at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota and bought a book “The Doctors of Mayo.” From the book, I found what these doctors went through to conquest illness, pain and death in this world renowned cancer clinic.

Francis A. Schaeffer, who was the founder of L’Abri where I am working at, had his laryngeal cancer treatment for two and half years in Mayo Clinic and wrote a monumental book, “The Great Evangelical Disaster.” In his last days, he asked to bind himself to the chair to prevent himself from bending over while he was lecturing to college students. He did not fight with his cancer in word only. He used all possible means to struggle against cancer and

is now with the Lord.

Conclusion

There is no brave man in the face of sickness, suffering and death. Reaction may differ from person to person; some may boast as if they are know-it-alls, but we are all afraid in the end. So here is my advice to you. Take a humble and honest attitude like a brave person. A brave person is someone who dresses for action like a man (Job 38:3) and is humble; He/she is willing to admit that he/she is "small," (Job 40:3-5) A true brave person or honest seeker knows how to confess "I am of small account (NRSV)" or "I am unworthy (NIV)" like Job. Please keep in your mind that God is with you even in His silence. He may seem to be absent or hidden in our mist of suffering and pain, but He is surely with you at the time of despair.

C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 1940: The proper good of a creature is to surrender to its Creator. However, the human spirit, hardened through "millennia of usurpation", will not "even begin to try to surrender self-will as long as all seems to be well with it." Thus, the function of pain, on the lowest level, is to shatter the illusion that "all is well", to plant "the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul". "We may rest contentedly in our sins and in our stupidities", but "pain insists on being attended to."

It is unreasonable to agree with M. Tsevat's claim that no retribution is provided and God is "demoralizing" or "amoral" or "disinterested piety." Especially you should be careful with Tsevat's statement that God who speaks in the book of Job is not a just god or an unjust god but only God. (cf. Chang Hak Hyun, *Study on the Book of Wisdom from Old Testament*, pp.118-119)

I will briefly recount what I read from the book describing stories of Dr. Mayo and his sons in how they fought with various cancers; 1) Although Dr. Mayo received a doctor's license, there was little calling for his service among settlers in the beginning. He was often called "horse fixing doctor" by settlers and endured high hand and insults from them. However, it did not stop him from getting on a horse to pay a visit to a patient in the middle of the night when he was called. 2) He was misunderstood by patients' families and fellow doctors when there were sudden deaths among his serious patients. But he never ceased to study and research for better treatment. 3) Mayo Clinic became a world renowned clinic for cancer now. But in the beginning, he received cold shoulders when he presented new surgical techniques on gastroenteric disorder in seminars held in metropolitan cities including New York. 4) Doctors offered medical examination and surgery service only until the number of patients reached hundreds so that local hotels could make profit in selling guest rooms. Nowadays, hotels offer facilities such as patient rooms, surgical rooms, and cafeterias to the clinic.