What Does The Bible Say About Suicide?
Message 3 in “What Does The Bible Say” Sermon Series

This morning as we resume our series on “What Does the Bible Say?”
I would like for us to consider the subject, “What Does the Bible Say
About Suicide?’

First of all let me say, if any of you have ever lost a loved one by
suicide, our hearts go out to you. Without a doubt, to lose a loved
one by suicide is one of the most heartbreaking experiences anyone
can go through in this life.

It has been said, “The person who commits suicide dies once,
but those left behind die a thousand deaths while reliving
the tragic event and struggling to understand why.”

In addition to experiencing excruciating grief, family members of a suicide
victim often deal with tremendous guilt, anger, resentment and an
overwhelming sense of failure. Most families of a suicide victim say
people related to them differently after the suicide causing them to
feel even more isolated and alone.

The statistics on suicide are staggering:

-34,000 people die by suicide each year in the United
States. That is one suicide every 15 minutes.

-Since 2000, there has been a 400% increase in teenage
suicides.

-This year 2,000,000 teenagers will attempt suicide.
That is 5,479 per day.

-Suicide is the second leading cause of death among
teenagers.

-15% of those who attempt suicide and fail will try again
within two years.
-Three times more women attempt suicide than men. But on the other hand three times more men actually succeed.

-More professionals commit suicide than others. Dentist and doctors commit suicide at a ratio of 6 ½ to 1 over the general population. Lawyers commit suicide at a rate of 5 to 1 over the general population. Farm workers have the lowest incidence of suicide among all occupational groups.

-More suicides occur in April and May than any other month. And suicides typically increase around Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years.

Why Do People Take Their Own Lives?

There are many contributing factors.

(1) The number one contributor is DEPRESSION. At least 50% of all suicide victims suffered from severe depression.

(2) The second leading contributor is ALCOHOL or DRUG addiction. The suicide rate for alcoholics is 55 times higher than the national average. The suicide rate for drug addicts is 350 times higher than the national average.

(3) Other contributing factors include:

Mental illness, unbearable loneliness, divorce, intense grief, the loss of a job, the loss of one’s honor and dignity, or chronic bodily pain.

The one common denominator in all these contributing factors is the overwhelming sense of HOPELESSNESS.
SUICIDES IN THE BIBLE

There are seven suicides recorded in the scriptures. And it is interesting, that all of them were men. Let’s take a look at these seven suicides.

(1) The first suicide recorded in the scriptures is that of ABIMILECH. Today his suicide would be classified as “assisted-suicide.” In other words he requested that someone else take his life.

Turn with me in your Bibles to Judges 9:53, 54

53 But a certain woman dropped an upper millstone on Abimelech’s head and crushed his skull.

54 Then he called quickly to the young man, his armorbearer, and said to him, “**Draw your sword and kill me,** lest men say of me, ‘A woman killed him.’” So his young man thrust him through, and he died.

(Judges 9:53, 54 NKJV)

(2) And then there is the suicide of SAMSON. Turn over just a few pages to Judges chapter sixteen.

Remember after Delilah cut off Samson’s hair, he lost his God-given strength and was captured by the Philistines. The Philistines gouged out Samson’s eyes and threw him into prison, where he was used like an animal to turn a giant millstone.

Well one day all the officials of the Philistine government were gathered at the temple of Dagon to offer sacrifices to their false gods. As they commonly did at these pagan rituals, the Philistine government officials got “stone drunk.” And in their drunkenness, the officials called for the blind and weakened Samson to be brought to the temple of Dagon to perform acts of superhuman strength. Of course their intent was to mock and humiliate Samson.

Samson asked the young man who had led him from prison to the temple of Dagon to position him between the two main support pillars of the temple.
Now let’s pick up the record in verses 28-30…….

Judges 16:28-30 (NKJV)

28 Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, “O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!”

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.

30 Then Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.

(3) Next turn with me to I Samuel 31, where we find the suicide of King Saul.

We looked at this scripture in our previous message on “What Does The Bible Say About Cremation vs. Burial.”

Remember King Saul had led his Israelite troops into battle against the Philistines. Saul’s three sons had already been killed in battle, and Saul himself had been shot with an arrow. Knowing the Philistines would kill him, Saul asked his armor-bearer to take his life. When his armor-bearer refused, verse 4 says……

I Samuel 31:4 (NKJV) Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it.

(4) The next suicide is recorded in the very next verse.

I Samuel 31:5 (NKJV) And when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him.
(5) Then turn over to II Samuel chapter seventeen, where we find the suicide of Ahithophel.

Here’s the situation: Absalom, King David's son, was trying to take the throne away from his father. Absalom called in his father’s chief adviser, Ahithophel, to get his advice on what he should do. After getting advice from Ahithophel, Absalom called in Hushai to get his advice.

To make a long story short, Absalom took the advice of Hushai, rather than Ahithophel. And VERSE 23 says…….

II Samuel 17:23 (NKJV) When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he...got him home to his house, to his city, and put his house in order, and hanged himself, and died.

(6) Next please turn with me over to I Kings chapter sixteen, where we find the suicide of ZIMRI.

In the days when Israel was divided into the northern and southern kingdoms, the people of Israel, the northern kingdom, chose a man named Omri to be their king. Well Zimri, wanted to be king, so he started a counter-revolution to try to over-throw Omri. Seven days into this counter-revolution, King Omri led his troops to the town of Tirzah where Zimri had established his own palace.

Picking up the record in verse 18 we read…….

I Kings 16:18 (NKJV) It came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died.

(7) That brings us to the most familiar suicide in all the Bible, and that is JUDAS ISCARIOT. Please turn with me to Matthew chapter twenty seven.

Matthew 27:3-5 (NKJV) Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” And they said, “What is that to us? You see to it!” Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.
All of these accounts are tragic indeed. Regardless of whether it was a good man, like Samson or the most wicked of all men, Judas Iscariot, suicide is a terrible tragedy.

But this brings us to the key issue we want to consider regarding suicide and that is:

**What Does The Bible Say About The Eternal Destiny of Someone Who Commits Suicide?**

In order to answer that question, we must first ask, “Was the person who committed suicide a Christian or a non-Christian?”

If the person who took his or her own life had never accepted Jesus Christ, their eternal destiny will be the same as everyone else who leaves this world without Christ. They will be eternally condemned.

Jesus said in.........

Mark 16:16 (NKJV) “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

But what if the person who committed suicide was a Christian? Will they lose their soul? Will they forfeit their eternal life?

There are several matters from the scriptures to consider.

(A) First of all, we must consider Christ’s teachings on the **UNPARDONABLE** sin.

Please turn with me to Matthew the twelfth chapter.

Matthew 12:31,32 (NKJV)

31 “Therefore I say to you, **every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men**, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the **age** to come.
The Roman Catholic church teaches that suicide is an unforgivable sin because once a person takes his or her life they can’t repent of their terrible act.

But what does the Bible say? Look at verse 31 again……

“Therefore I say to you, EVERY SIN (repeat) and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will NOT be forgiven men.”

SUICIDE is a sin! Suicide is a terribly tragic sin! But suicide is NOT an unpardonable sin.

(B) Secondly, consider the MERCIFUL nature of God.

Please turn with me to Psalm 103……..

Psalm 103:11-14 (NKJV)

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,
   So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

12 As far as the east is from the west,
   So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

13 As a father pities his children,
   So the Lord pities those who fear Him.

14 For He knows our frame;
   He remembers that we are dust.

In ROMANS 9:15 the apostle Paul writes: For He says to Moses, “I will have MERCY on whomever I will have MERCY, and I will have COMPASSION on whomever I will have COMPASSION.”

If you and I truly believe that God’s grace and mercy is great enough to forgive all sins, then we must also believe that God’s grace and mercy is great enough to forgive the Christian, who in a moment of hopeless despair, chose to end his or her own life.
(C) Thirdly, we must consider the ALL-KNOWING nature of God.

Please turn over to Romans 11:33,34............

Romans 11:33,34 (NKJV)  Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! “For who has known the mind of the LORD! Or who has become His counselor?

When someone takes his or her own life, we are left with all kinds of “why” questions.

-“Why did they do it?”
-“Why didn’t I see it coming?”
-“Why didn’t they get help?”
-“Why would they do this to their family?”

While those questions will haunt the loved ones left behind for the rest of their lives, God knows what was in the mind and heart of that person who took his or her own life. And therefore the judgment of that individual who committed suicide must be left in the hands of God.

(4) And fourthly, we must consider God’s promise of no CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Turn back a couple of pages to Romans chapter 8....... 

Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

8 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

By going to the cross, Jesus took the condemnation for our sins upon Himself. By His blood, you and I have been cleansed of all of our PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE sins, and “There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Does that promise include the Christian man or woman, who in a time of severe depression or a time of despair and hopelessness, chose to end his or her life? Again, it goes back to the unending grace and mercy of God!
As we close I want to share some final thoughts. To say that God can forgive someone of suicide is NOT in any way......shape.......or form to mean that it is OK to consider suicide as a viable option for the Christian who finds himself in a seemingly hopeless situation.

II Corinthians 5:10,11 tells us that all of us as Christians will have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of our lives. That judgment will not be to determine our eternal destiny, but to determine our eternal rewards.

If a Christian chooses to end his or her own life, there is a very real possibility he or she will forfeit their eternal rewards.

As Paul says in I Corinthians 3:14,15 (NKJV) If anyone’s work he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH THE FIRE.

We must suicide for what it truly is........

    Suicide is one of the most SELFISH, most SELF-CENTERED acts one can commit. To take oneself out of this world is the most cruel thing one can do to family and friends who are left behind to cope with such a tragic loss.

As Christians, we are not promised that we will be spared pain or suffering or sickness or disease in this life. But God has promised to “never leave us or forsake us” no matter how hopeless our situation may seem to us.

(POEM----”The Weaver” on next page)
The Weaver

My life is but a weaving, between my God and me,
I do not choose the colors, He worketh steadily.
Oft-times he weaveth sorrow, and I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper, and I the underside.

Not till the loom is silent, and the shuttles cease to fly,
Will God unroll the canvas, and explain the reasons why
The dark threads are as needful in the skillful weaver's hand
As threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned.

He knows, He loves, He cares,
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives His very best to those
Who leave the choice with Him.

-anonymous