

Sunday 4/7/2024 – Why Do Bad Things Happen

The bible is full of people who ask tons of questions, have their doubts, are seeking clarity, and there are many times where they are flat out confused! That’s what I love about this book is that it is filled with people like you and me trying to find themselves in the midst of God’s story. So yes your questions are ok and God is not turned off or dissatisfied with you because you have questions. What I hope that we all discover is that the more questions we ask and the more research we do, the more that it pushes us towards God and our relationship with him. The question we are going to look at today seems to still be the most popular question we all wrestle with, which is...

Why does God allow pain and suffering in the world?

One of the best examples of this is from a prophet in the old testament named Asaph. He asks some very honest questions and it’s written about the middle way in our bibles. He is essentially similar to a worship leader asking why these things happen?

Psalm 73:11-14 NLT

“What does God know?” they ask. “Does the Most High even know what’s happening?”

Look at these wicked people—enjoying a life of ease while their riches multiply. Did I keep my heart pure for nothing? Did I keep myself innocent for no reason? I get nothing but trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain.

Jesus even told us this when it comes to what we will face and go through on this earth...

John 16:33 NIV

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

And the truth of scripture teaches us that none of us are actually good...

Romans 3:23 ESV

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

The only good one in the world is Jesus, who came and lived a perfect life as a sacrifice for how bad we are. So really the only person who was good who had something bad happen to him, was Jesus, and he volunteered for it, because of his love for us, which means that he is ultimately the one who did something good for those who were bad. God suffered for us! And because of that suffering made us good with God, so even though we may go through hardships here on this earth, we are promised that God is there with us through all of it, and has given us a way to be in relationship with him again through our bad choices, and a home in heaven one day where things will be completely different.

Hebrews 4:14-16 NIV

Since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

No matter what our situations he can relate and also he can work in those moments as well. Our pain and suffering isn’t wasted. Jesus said this to his disciples as they were wondering about someone they observed suffering...

John 9:1-3 NIV

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” 3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.

God can also use our pain and situations. We can draw close to him during those hard times. Popular scholar said it this way...

God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

— C.S. Lewis, **The Problem of Pain**

Even though bad things happen, God is still good and can work good in any situation.

That is the ultimate promise of our faith and those things will be no more, one day. And that is the hope that we secure ourselves in the midst of our pain and suffering here on this earth. But we only know that and hold on to that if we have placed our faith and trust in Jesus.

Rev. 21:3-4

They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

I want to share with you what happened after Asaph questions, cried, and complained out to God, just a few verses later he says this...

Psalm 73:16-17 NIV

When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.

Psalm 73:26 NIV

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

He began to understand that even though he couldn’t make sense of it all, even though he had seen and experienced things he didn’t quite understand, he knew God was still Good and that there was a better future and plan ahead. God was still his strength to get through it all!