August 13, 2023

Q and A: Your Questions, God’s Answers – Part 5

**Why Does God Allow Suffering?**

**Ps 44:23-24/Jer 15:16-18/Hab 1:13**

* This is God’s Word.
* It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction.
* It has God for its author,
* salvation for its end,
* and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.
* It is the supreme source of truth
* for what we believe
* and how we live.

**“The age old question…why do bad things happen to good people? And the opposite…why do good things happen to bad people?”**

**Wake up, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Get up! Do not reject us forever. Why do you look the other way? Why do you ignore our suffering and oppression? Psalm 44:23-24**

**When I discovered your words, I devoured them. They are my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God of Heaven’s Armies. I never joined the people in their merry feasts. I sat alone because your hand was on me. I was filled with indignation at their sins. Why then does my suffering continue? Why is my wound so incurable? Your help seems as uncertain as a seasonal brook, like a spring that has gone dry.” Jeremiah 15:16-18**

**Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves? Habakkuk 1:13 (NIV)**

**A nationwide survey asked, “If you could ask God only one question and you knew he would give you an answer, what would you ask?” The number 1 response was “Why is there pain and suffering in the world.” -George Barna Research**

**Possible Reasons for Suffering**

* **God does not exist.**
* **God exist but is powerless.**
* **God exist but doesn’t care.**
* **God allows free choice.**

**The problem is we made wrong choices and it introduced evil into the world.**

**Two Types of Evil**

* **Moral evil.**

**For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Romans 3:23**

**“Some were fools, suffering because of their sins and because of their evil.” Psalm 107:17 (TEV)**

* **Natural evil.**

**For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Romans 8:22**

**The Results of Suffering**

**We decide whether suffering will turn us bitter or better.**

**“As I visited people whose pain far exceeded my own…I was surprised by its effects. Suffering seemed as likely to reinforce faith as to sow agnosticism.” -Phillip Yancey**

* **God can use suffering to draw people to Christ.**

**“God whispers to us in our pleasure. He speaks to us in our conscious. But He shouts to us in our pain. Pain is God’s megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”**

**-C.S. Lewis**

* **God can use suffering to develop our character.**

**Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. Romans 5:3-4 (NIV)**

* **God can use suffering to discipline us.**

**…God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. Hebrews 12:10-11**

**Punishment is retribution for misbehavior in our past. Discipline is the loving way in which we correct someone’s behavior so their future will be better.**

**Our Response to Suffering**

* **Remain positive.**

**“And we are always happy, even in times of suffering.” 2 Cor. 6:10 (CEV)**

**I choose my attitude!**

* **Remember my suffering is not the end.**

**Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. Romans 8:18**

**“Our suffering is light and temporary and is producing for us an eternal glory that is greater than anything we can imagine.” 2 Cor. 4:17 (GW)**

* **Respond to the Suffering Savior.**

**He was despised and rejected by people. He was a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering. He was despised like one from whom people turn their faces, and we didn't consider him to be worth anything. He certainly has taken upon himself our suffering and carried our sorrows, but we thought that God had wounded him, beat him, and punished him. Isaiah 53:3-4 (GW)**