

*If God Exists, How Can He Allow*  
***Suffering & Evil***  
*Part 7*



# *Where We've Been*

## *FIRST FIVE WEEKS:*

*Traditional Christian Explanations of Suffering*

*Free Will and the Question of Suffering*

*Looking Past Free Will to God's Sovereignty*

*Biblical Explanations of Natural Disasters*

*Other Biblical Explanations for Suffering*

*Sequencing Our Observations*

*What Should Our Response Be To Suffering?*

## *LAST WEEK:*

*Responding to Your Questions*

# *Where We're Going*

## *TONIGHT:*

*Phillip's*  
*Wrapping Up ~~Your~~ Questions*

*Wrapping Up Our Series on Suffering*

## *NEXT WEEK:*

*Worship Night*

*Verses on Women in Ministry*

## *NOVEMBER 8:*

*Women In Ministry – Dr. Sarah Sumner*

## *Responding To Your Questions*

*Should we simply accept that God allows suffering because we have all sinned?*

- *Maybe.*

*Do we have the right to complain about suffering?*

- *Depends on what we mean by "right."*

*We all understand the idea of "good verses evil." Should this idea be changed to "good through evil"?*

- *In part.*

## *Responding To Your Questions*

*Why doesn't God do more to stop suffering?*

- *We don't know how much suffering He prevents*
- *If He stopped some suffering, where would that end?*
- *To eliminate suffering is to eliminate sin/consequence*

*Why doesn't God do more to punish evil?*

- *God actively punishes evil, but . . .*
- *God has reserved ultimate judgment and punishment*

*We all understand the idea of "good verses evil." Should this idea be changed to "good through evil"?*

- *In part.*

## *Responding To Your Questions*

*If God knows what will happen, why is God not culpable for the evil or suffering that takes place?*

- *Knowing something will happen does not make God culpable for the fact that we chose to do it.*
- *Allowing something to happen does not make God culpable for the fact that we chose to do it.*
- *God allows us freedom to choose evil.*
- *God rarely\* acts to overwhelm our choice.*
- *God's moral will can be thwarted.*
- *God's overall sovereign will cannot be thwarted.*

*Is it wrong for us to simply accept that God allows evil without knowing why?*

- *No, but . . . for the sake of others: 1 Peter 3:15*

# *Responding To Your Questions*

*What purpose did free will serve in God's plan?*

- *Only God knows for certain*
- *For us to choose to love God freely (most cited answer)*
- *For the love between the Father and the Son to be replicated to people and among all people*

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:*

*Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.*

*Philippians 2:5-7*

# *Responding To Your Questions*

*What purpose did free will serve in God's plan?*

- *Only God knows for certain*
- *For us to choose to love God freely (most cited answer)*
- *For the love between the Father and the Son to be replicated to people and among all people*

*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.  
And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*

*1 John 3:16*



# *Responding To Your Questions*

*What purpose did free will serve in God's plan?*

- *Only God knows for certain*
- *For us to choose to love God freely (most cited answer)*
- *For the love between the Father and the Son to be replicated to people and among all people*

*As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love. . . .  
My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*

*Greater love has no one than this,  
that he lay down his life for his friends.*

*John 15:9,12-13*

# *Responding To Your Questions*

*What purpose did free will serve in God's plan?*

- *Only God knows for certain*
- *For us to choose to love God freely (most cited answer)*
- *For the love between the Father and the Son to be replicated to people and among all people*

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."*

*Matthew 16:24-26*

# *Responding To Your Questions*

*What purpose did free will serve in God's plan?*

- *Only God knows for certain*
- *For us to choose to love God freely (most cited answer)*
- *For the love between the Father and the Son to be replicated to people and among all people*

*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

*John 17:20-24*

## *Closing Comments*

- 1. Let us be humble and very hesitant to ascribe a reason for suffering.*

*Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.*

*Luke 1:1-5*

## *Closing Comments*

- 1. Let us be humble and very hesitant to ascribe a reason for suffering.*
- 2. Let us be willing to be silent and present in support of those who suffer, and to love to the point of laying down our life for others.*

*When Job's three friends . . . heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. . . .*

*Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.*

*Job 2:11, 13*

## *Closing Comments*

- 1. Let us be humble and very hesitant to ascribe a reason for suffering.*
- 2. Let us be willing to be silent and present in support of those who suffer, and to love to the point of laying down our life for others.*
- 3. Let us not be passive in accepting evil and suffering.*
- 4. Let us be careful not to recreate God into our own image.*
- 5. Let us help to reconstruct and not simply deconstruct.*
- 6. Let us be thankful for every gift in this life the Lord has given, and to enjoy His present grace and mercy.*
- 7. Let us keep in mind that this world is not our home.*

## *Closing Comments*

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

*Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*  
*2 Corinthians 4:16 – 5:5*

*7. Let us keep in mind that this world is not our home.*



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