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# advance in the word – God and suffering – 03/07/19

**God and Suffering**

Ever ask God, “Why?” Well, you’re in good company with folks like Isaiah, Moses, David, John the Baptist and Jesus. It is not sinful to ask God questions nor to be blunt with God about how you feel about a certain event. However, be ready for God to be blunt with you. God does not give a clear verbal statement on why suffering exists nor why He allows evil. This is hard to fathom because we are confident God is all powerful and He is not only good, but He is perfectly Good. Jeremiah has a bone to pick with God and His justice (12:1-4). Why do wicked people prosper and seem to live in ease? God responds in a way that is typical for Scripture, and questions Jeremiah. Paraphrased, God says “You think things are bad now, just wait for what is coming. If you can’t handle this how will you handle the immense suffering and the tidal wave of evil to come?” Not really an answer. But in the passage (Jer. 12) lies the idea, “Will you trust me?” Suffering is not eliminated through an equation. The answer we want is if I only do this + this + this then suffering will be no more. God is a mystery. He seems to ask us to embrace our trials which He allows (not that He causes it) and trust. Embrace this mystery.

Whatever anger rises up within us do to an injustice we have felt remember that ultimately, we are angry at God because He could have done something to prevent it. But He didn’t. It is okay to tell God how you feel about it (Jeremiah seeming perturbed says, “I want to plead my case with you! I would like to speak with you about your justice.” 12:1). When you and God have your candid discussions, use it as a time of growth but don’t stay there. Trust Him. After all, He is perfect in love, power, knowledge, justice … do you really think He’s wrong or has made a mistake in allowing an evil or a suffering to take place? Questions are natural responses from godly people. Look at these instances: Mark 15:34; Matthew 11:2-3; Psalm 73; Habakkuk 1:2-3; John 6:66-71; Job 38:1-5, 40:1-6, 42:1-6. Note God’s response to their question of “Why?” The Gospel is God’s final answer to suffering and evil. Jesus suffered to solve the problem of suffering. Jesus grew up always having his birth questioned as being illegitimate; he lived in poverty, he knew hunger, at times he was a refugee, he was homeless, rejected by his own family, slandered, abused, and murdered. He knows suffering and is given the name Emmanuel because he will be with us in our suffering. In this world you will suffer. Jesus rose from the dead so he conquered death and suffering. Death and suffering do not have to have the last word in anyone’s life unless they let it. Furthermore, there is a beauty in suffering because it is a tool God uses to shape us into His likeness. Embrace this mystery, you won’t find an equation to solve it.