

9-11-24 – Why Do (Seemingly) Bad Things Happen?

9-11. Burned into our memories. Shock. Grief. Anger. Changed our lives.

We all wrestle w/ questions: "Is God really good?" "Does God really have my best interest at heart?" "Why is life not fair sometimes?" "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

These aren't questions to ask in the midst of XXX- b/c no answer will suffice at that time. But after the funeral . . . after the new job . . . after the impact of the illness . . . after . . .

We're more in a place where answers can be rec'd. Heart can only hold so much at 1 time.

Jesus knew that - told disciples He would be going away... they were in anguish. He said:

"There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now." **Jn. 16:12.**

Let me share what the **Bible** teaches are reasons why bad things happen to good people. Doubt this is complete - here are 5 reasons that may give you understanding:

**** God is sovereign; over all. Perfect.** There is no evil / sin / wrong in Him.

"For You are not a God who delights in wickedness; no evil can dwell with You." – Psalm 5:4

a) Does God **allow** bad things to happen, or send them? Both.

"I form the light and create the darkness; I bring prosperity and create calamity. I, the LORD, do all these things." - **Is. 45:7**

b) People have free wills... 9/11 shows us that. But God may also invite calamity into our lives – **when He does – it has a purpose.**

- God invited Satan to consider **Job**. (more in point 2)
- God sent the **flood** in Noah's time. Why? Evil abounded.
- God allowed **Israel** to fall into the hands of Babylon:
- **"For I was angry with my chosen people and punished them by letting them fall into your hands. But you, Babylon, showed them no mercy. You oppressed even the elderly."** - **Isaiah 47**. Babylon faced consequences.

c) If something is allowed or God-sent, it's for a **righteous purpose.**

Let's look at 5 Purposes: (God – thru H.S. - can show your reason)

1. A problem may happen as an opportunity to show God's power.

John 9 – "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 works of God might be displayed in him."

- a) Jesus rejects idea that all suffering must be a punishment for sin.
- b) Just b/c we go thru suffering - God is not angry at you.
- c) Look for Gods power to be displayed in the midst of affliction.

2. Affliction may happen so our genuine faith can inspire others.

- a) **Job.** Chs. 1-2 reveal to Satan & Job's wife that Job served God out of genuine love, not because it resulted in God's blessings.

⁸ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

⁹ "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. ¹⁰ "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹ But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

¹² The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

- b) When calamity happened, Job mourned, but worshiped. Said: "the Lord gives and takes away." **But "did not sin by blaming God."**

⁹ His wife said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!"

¹⁰ He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

- c) Job had questions, he asked "Why" - but throughout, he talked of God's power and greatness.
- d) **Result?** Job's faith brought his friends closer to God. And us.
 - **Paul - prison** – words that last.
 - If we turn away from God in the midst of our affliction, we tell those watching us that Christianity isn't the answer.
- e) God wants people to love & serve him **b/c He is worthy of praise, not b/c it pays** to do so... **life will have problems.**
 - Our **challenges** are opportunities to **demonstrate our true faith.** (anyone can praise God when life is perfect / blessed)
 - **My father's** ministry was purposeful. Many children died.
 - My own life – when family treat unfair – God is enough.

3. Affliction may happen in our lives to **remove pride**.

- a) Affliction reminds us we aren't self-sufficient; need to rely on God.
- b) Paul had a "thorn in the flesh" – God didn't remove it.

2 Cor. 12:7-9 - "I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. ⁸ Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. ⁹ Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness."

- c) It's easy to serve God – be involved in God's work – and see God do great things & think we're responsible. **He's great, not me.**
- d) Humility is a necessity for serving God in best way possible.

Peter. 5:6 – "So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." We shouldn't exalt ourselves.

Matthew 23:12 – "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

4. Affliction may happen to **refine us**. Broad Category.

- a) Affliction authenticates the realness of what we say we believe.

- **1 Peter 1:7** – "These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world."
- Words are easy. **Genuineness** of faith shows in **times** of trial. Storms of life. . . curse God or still praise? W/o Grief - **comfort**
- You'll never **know God can solve a problem** 'til you have one.

- b) **Romans 5:3-4** & **James 1:3-4** says our tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance **matures us** & builds our character. Going thru those times gives us hope.

- Our struggles **build** our **strength of character**. Turtle.
- Our struggles **build intimacy** with God.
 - **Job 42:5** – "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you."
- Our suffering also **helps us stop sinning** – refining process.

- 1 Peter 4:1-2 – “For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin. ² You won’t spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.”
- Over & over, Israel suffered captivity, loss in battle, and would come to their senses, “we have sinned.”

► **Trials/storms bring us closer to God & refine us to be more like Him**

5. God allows affliction to show others what being the **body of Christ** means

1 Cor. 12:24-26 – ²⁴ “...God has put the body together . . . ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it;”

- a) We’re all the body of Christ. We need each other. A suffering Christian **needs to experience** the **love of Jesus** through the **compassionate actions** of other believers.
- b) We’ve all experienced grief . . . universal. We know these feelings. And as Christians, we know comfort + hope.
 - **2 Cor. 1:4** – “He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.”
- c) Suffering allows believers the **chance to express Christian love** to those in need... for 1 part of the body to have concern for another.
- d) **PSJ** just experienced this opportunity.
 - The impact is immeasurable. To see genuine faith+Godly love in the storms of life is one of the best witnesses we can offer.
- e) God may allow affliction to strike a member of the body of Christ for the greater purpose of witness.
 - In this life, you will have problems. . . God still loves you.
 - God’s people will come together to show that love.
 - Storms of life bring us together. . . for a purpose.
 - We learn thru affliction what can’t be learned any other way
- f) May God give us spiritual eyes to see - ears to hear - feet to walk towards - hands to help those who are suffering. Reach out/ ask.