

Pastor's Pen

Why, God?

Romans 8:28-29 – And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

When tragedy hits, one of the first questions that come out of a believers' mouth is "Why?" Why would a good God let this happen? Why would an all-powerful God not stop the evil sin-cursed affairs of this world? Why would God let me feel so much pain? Why won't God just take away this pain? Some may use this line of questioning to question God's very nature, but many others are trying to understand God further in light of their life experiences. When a believer finds themselves at this point, they have two options. They will either go to the Scripture or go to their feelings, fallen human opinions, and self-glorifying thoughts for answers.

Apart from Scripture, one is told they "deserve better," or that either God is not in control or maybe that He does not exist or even that He does exist and is actually bad Himself and is at fault for the tragedy. Apart from Scripture, the truth is replaced with a lie and a lie never really gives an answer. Instead, it leaves one even more hopeless. Seeking a reason apart from Scripture will lead one to multiple shifting opinions that will result in a constant search for answers.

In Scripture, we find many passages that speak on trials, tragedies, and loss. James talks about trials helping the believer grow in maturity (James 1:2-18). Job reminds us that God has a bigger plan during a tragedy, one that ultimately has a morally commendable reason (Job 42). In Romans 8:28-29, we discover that morally commendable reason. In this passage, Paul claims first, "...all things work together for good..." This indeed does mean all things and includes things we deem both good and bad. All things work together for some morally commendable reason, but Paul does not just stop there; he also gives the reason in the following verse. He states, "For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..."

This means the good that all things work together for is to be remade to be just like Jesus. The good reason for bad happening in this world is that it forms real Christians into being more and more like Jesus. This is the greatest good both for God and for us that His image-bearers be just like His Son.

Another and maybe the most critical example of God allowing something bad to happen because He has a morally commendable reason, was the example of Jesus dying on the cross. It was a terrible thing that Jesus, who was completely innocent, took the wrath of God for truly guilty people. There is a good reason though that believers can take that innocent record themselves so that they can dwell with and enjoy God forever. May we preach to ourselves the goodness of God both on the mountaintops and in the valleys of this short life.

Your shepherd,

Pastor Jamie

Quote of the Week

"Remember that sorrow is a safe companion for a pilgrim who walks much astray, until his heart is well broken. May all your tears flow in a heavenly channel, and every sigh waft your soul nearer to Jesus!"
-John Berridge

Grace Gems

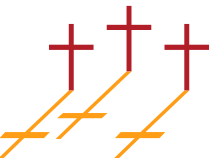
The following excerpt was taken from an online article written by Tim Challies, titled "Would It Be Okay For Me To Be Angry With God?" found at his blog challies.com.

It felt like a test—a test of my faith, a test of my convictions, a test of my love for God. Soon, very soon, after I learned that my son had died, I received a message from an old acquaintance. Her intentions were good—she wanted to offer consolation. But her instructions were suspect—she wanted me to rage against God. Paraphrasing one of her favorite authors she said "It's okay to be angry with God about this. It's okay to tell him exactly how you feel about him right now. Let him have it. He doesn't mind."

My instincts rebelled against her counsel, but for just a moment I wondered. I didn't feel anger in my loss, but should I? I didn't resent God's sovereignty in taking my son, but might that be appropriate? Already I was leaning hard on God for comfort, but should I now also press against him for blame? In that very moment a verse of scripture, a mere fragment, flashed into my mind. "Curse God and die." In this case it was not a human demanding it of another as Job's wife did of her husband. Rather, it was the Holy Spirit's reminder of what it would mean for me to raise my fist to the sky.

That's not to say we can never be angry. It's not to say we must be completely impassive in the face of grief, sorrow, and suffering. On this note John Piper helpfully distinguishes between anger at a thing and anger at a person: "Anger at a thing does not contain indignation at a choice or an act. We simply don't like the effect of the thing: the broken clutch, or the grain of sand that just blew in our eye, or rain on our picnic. But when we get angry at a person, we are displeased with a choice they made and an act they performed. Anger at a person always implies strong disapproval. If you are angry at me, you think I have done something I should not have done."

And who am I to be angry at what God has done? Who am I to disapprove of what he has permitted? Who am I to conclude God has done something he should not have, or to even suggest the notion? I might be angry at what I do, or what you do, or what John Piper does, but all of us are sinful, all of us are foolish, all of us are wrongheaded, all of us make mistakes, all of us sometimes bring harm even when we attempt to do good. We might very well have done something we ought not to have done. But not God. He only ever does what is right and what is good. He only ever permits what is best. He is so for us that no action he takes would ever ultimately be against us.



Weekly Gatherings



Bible Classes

New Testament
Sunday School
Sunday Morning @ 9-9:45 & 10-10:45



Weekday Meetings

Mondays | 7PM
Men's Zoom Bible Study



Job Study

Wednesdays @ 7PM
Teaching Series (Online Only)



Build the Body Teams

If you would like to serve on a BtB Team and forgot to sign up, please contact the team leader at the appropriate email address.



Youth Study

Wednesdays @6:30PM
Youth Study
AWANA @6:30PM-8PM



Service Times

Sunday Service 8:30AM & 10:30AM
Children's Church @10:30AM

Giving from service on 01/24/2021

General Offering 5,464.68
Building Fund 765.35
Uganda 100.00

Total \$6,330.03

Attendance 163
Online 29

Build the Body Ministries

Women's Ministry-women@ghbcva.org
AWANA-awana@ghbcva.org
Outreach Ministry-outreach@ghbcva.org
Worship Ministry-worship@ghbcva.org
Men's Ministry-men@ghbcva.org
Children's Ministry-children@ghbcva.org
Youth Ministry-youth@ghbcva.org
Prayer Team-prayer@ghbcva.org
Maintenance-maintenance @ghbcva.org
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Grace Harvest Baptist Church

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