

God and Evil

Part 5 of Building a Life With Christian Ethics

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In a world where evil, pain, and suffering is seen everywhere, the common question in many hearts is, "Why?" Jesus made the point very clear regarding pain and suffering in this life:

John 16:33 *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*

Sometimes we need to remember we may not know the *full* answer to things:

Romans 11:34 *"FOR WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD? OR WHO HAS BECOME HIS COUNSELLOR?"*

Isa. 55:8 *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD."*

- While we cannot fully know the mind of God and His complete plan, He *has* given us *some* things- some points of light to help us in this darkness

1. God Didn't Create Evil or Suffering

Why didn't God create a perfect world without suffering? He did! *Read Gen. 1:31*. So where did evil come from?

- God the Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit) created man in His image for relationship
- He placed man in the garden with the command (not to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) and the choice of obedience and a relationship, or not
- But, in Adam, humans rejected God

Resulting in two main types of evil seen today:

A. Moral Evil - Rom. 3:23 All have sinned and we see the results daily

B. Natural Evil - Rom. 8:22 The earth itself is cursed from sin

2. God Can Use Even My Suffering

Rom. 8:28 *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."*

- This is not a verse promising only good things for Christians
- It is a promise that says "all things" - good and bad things

Heb. 12:2 *"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross"*

- Jesus endured some hard times and trials and suffering

- Yet he endured the cross because He trusted God was using it for a great purpose!

3. Pain and Suffering Will End and God Will Judge Evil

A lot of times you'll hear people say: "If God has the power to eradicate evil and suffering, then why doesn't He do it?" And the answer is that because He hasn't done it yet doesn't mean He won't do it.

Note: It's kind of like picking up a novel, reading half-way through, and putting it down and saying, "I don't like how that finished!" It's not finished yet.

2 Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*

Be patient. Know God will judge and end the suffering, but also in the meantime more are able to come to Him now...

4. The Best is Yet to Come

2 Cor. 4:17 *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"*

Questions:

1. Being honest in your self-evaluation, have you ever hurt someone and cause them pain and suffering through your words or actions? Is it then reasonable to say "God, why did you let it happen?" Why or why not?
2. Has there been times when you have been able to see how God has used your suffering? How did He?
3. How does it help us to remember the best is yet to come? Can you, like Paul, consider your pain and trials as "light" and "temporary?"

Prayer: *"Father, thank You for salvation. Thank you for being our Creator and that all you made was 'very good' and there was no bad-ness, or evil. I acknowledge that mankind sinned against You, and in so doing, introduced sin into this world. Thank You that one day, You will again restore everything and execute perfect and righteous judgment. Thank You also, that You are working all things for Your good and for Your plan - even my suffering. Help me to trust You more through this life, looking forward to the day we are with You, in Jesus' name, amen!"*