

Good God: Trusting Jesus Through It All

March 18 & 19, 2017
Valley Church

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Week 1 – The BIGGEST Question

Introduction:

- Why do bad things happen to “good” people?
- How could a loving God allow so much suffering to exist?
- If God is so powerful, why does the world seem out of control?

When We Ask These Questions, We are Making Five Core Assumptions:

- #1 – There are objective _____ in life
- #2 – There is _____ of some kind in the universe
- #3 – Human beings are supremely _____
- #4 – Life really is _____ living
- #5 – We are _____ of finding and profiting from answers

The Story of Joseph...

A victim of hatred and jealousy. Sold into slavery. Disconnected from family.
Unjustly imprisoned. In the end, Joseph replies...

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. Genesis 50:20

The Cause of Bad and Evil

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10

Today's Big Idea: 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

For Paul, there was some tangible aspect of experiencing Christ's power that was directly linked to the degree in which he was consciously dependent up the grace of Jesus. The way to real strength is through raw weakness.

SMALL GROUP Q'S

Personal Life:

1. According to Scripture, suffering is an unavoidable consequence of the fall of creation into sin. However, some would say that this reality seems to be of little help in the midst of a severe trial. Have you found that to be the case personally? Explain...

Ponderings:

2. If you are at least somewhat familiar with the Biblical storyline, what are some of the famous “suffering” stories in Scripture and have any of them helped you in the midst of hardship?
3. Some forms of suffering come into our lives through little or no fault of our own (think Joseph, Job, Ruth, etc.). Other forms of suffering are consequences of our own choices (think Abraham, David, etc.). Is it more difficult for you to trust in God’s compassion for you when you’ve brought suffering upon yourself as opposed to when it’s not your fault? If you, why do you think this dichotomy exists in your mind? If not, why not? Explain...
4. Think through the five assumptions mentioned in the weekend message. Again the premise is that when we question God’s goodness, we are making the following core assumptions:
 - *There are objective values of good and evil in the universe*
 - *The universe is logical and orderly in some way*
 - *Human beings are of supreme importance in creation*
 - *Life is fundamentally worth living*
 - *It is possible to find answers that will help us live with hope*

Are there any of these that you take issue with? Explain...

5. Instead of looking of pre-prompted Scriptures, this week you are encouraged to share a promise or passage from the Bible that has helped you persevere through hard times. In sharing, be honest. If your experience is that the Bible has *not* brought much hope to you at this point in your journey, feel free to share that honestly as well...

Promptings:

6. Conclude your group time by being real. If you are willing, briefly share about one thing you are suffering or struggling with right now – and ask for prayer from the group. The problem could be spiritual, emotional, mental, relational, physical, etc. No judgment allowed – only confidentiality, safety and prayer...