**EVER WONDER WHY?**

**“Why Did God Let It Happen?”**

Sunday, April 24, 2022

**WE Slide 1 GREAT EASTER!! We had one person indicate salvation, you can still let us know. THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!!**

**“WHY DID GOD LET ‘IT’ HAPPEN?” Have you ever asked that question? We all have those events- people we love dying too early in life, in too painful of a way, loss of a job, loss of a relationship, seeing the innocent suffer/die, wars, natural disasters, etc.** Can’t address the individual “ITS” in a Sunday morning message but I’m always available during the week to see what God has to say about your individual “IT”. **What we can do is lay a foundation for understanding the purpose of suffering and how we can GROW through the suffering of our individual circumstances.** The Bible is a book filled with pain/suffering and in it we find the answers to why and how to GROW through pain/suffering.

**In asking “Why Did God Let It Happen?” we’re really asking, “If God is loving and good, like the Bible says He is, why does He allow pain and suffering into our lives?”** People have asked that question ever since sin entered the world and with it the pain/suffering that comes with sin. **There was no pain/suffering prior to Adam and Eve sinning. Slide 2**

**GREEK philosopher Epicurus (341-270 BC) who developed a philosophy built on science rather than religion, 2300+ years ago reasoned:** If God knows about our suffering (all-knowing), cares about our suffering (all-loving), and can do something about our suffering (all-powerful), then there shouldn’t be any suffering! **He goes on to say because suffering exists, God must not exist.** Here’s the problem- that’s man, starting with man and thinking that man’s comfort is the end goal for man. **Too often that’s where people today, including many Christians, start when it comes to suffering in our lives.** But when it comes to suffering we have to start with God because He’s the one who created us and the one who is allowing it. **So why did God create us?** Once we understand that then we can ask, why does He allow pain/suffering to exist?

**TODAY: Turn to the OT prophet of Isaiah, pg 725, where God tells Isaiah why He created mankind.** We’re going to start with Isaiah 43:7. **Slide 3-4 Why did God create us?**

**GOD**

1. **WHY GOD CREATED US, Isaiah 43:7, 10**
2. **To Know Him Personally, Isaiah 43:7**
3. **We struggle with this, but** God is the greatest/best being to ever exist and so knowing Him is the greatest/best thing we as created beings can experience so He created us to know/enjoy Him.
4. “for My glory”- in general it means to show, reveal who He is- His character, attributes, purposes.
5. God reveals Himself to us, not just through the Bible, but by interacting with us in our lives.
6. He reveals who He is when we allow Him to meet our mental, emotional, physical, spiritual needs as we respond to life His way.

**IT’S IN OUR PAIN/SUFFERING that we are most aware of those needs and God’s presence.** We’ll talk more about this in our 2nd point- Why God Allows Pain/Suffering. **For now God goes on to say in vv. 10-13** **Slide 5-7.** Once we know Him the responsibility is to make Him known to others.

1. **To Make Him Known to Others, Isaiah 43:10**
2. “You are My witnesses”; one who confirms something before a court
3. As we go through our suffering the way God says to go through it, others see Him at work in us.
4. We can testify, because we’ve personally experienced Him at work in us, as to who He says He is and what He says He wants to do in/through our lives.

**God also says He created us to serve Him, Slide 8**

1. **To Serve Him- “And My servant whom I have chosen.”**
2. God is not our servant who is obligated to make our lives comfortable because that’s what we want.
3. As servants we manage whatever He allows into our lives the way He says to manage it.
4. His way is the best way and will allow us to know Him the best.

**God summarizes why He created us at the end of v. 10. Slide 9**

1. **To Know, Believe, and Understand that “I am He.”**
2. To know, have trust in, and see the truth of who God is at work in our life
3. **What truth?** That God is the only self-existing personal God and therefore the only One worthy of our trust.
4. Most often it is through pain/suffering that we learn who God is because it’s in pain/suffering that we are most aware of our need for God and recognize His presence/power as He meets our needs.

**So that’s why God created us- ultimately to know Him personally and make Him known. So where does pain/suffering come into play? Why does He allow it?** 1st because He loves us. **Slide 10 What? How can pain/suffering be loving. This goes back to knowing Him personally and the free will He’s given us.**

1. **WHY GOD ALLOWS PAIN/SUFFERING TO EXIST**
2. **Because God Loves Us**
3. God who has free will freely chose to create and love us.
4. God created us in His image, meaning He gave us free will too- to freely choose to love Him.
5. He doesn’t want robots who respond to Him because they are programmed to do so.
6. He doesn’t force us to love Him because forcing someone isn’t love, it’s abuse.
7. Having free will means we can choose to love God or not love God.
8. Having free will means we can choose right, God’s way, or choose wrong, our way.

**Look at this short verse that summarizes where pain/suffering come from, Romans 8:6 Slide 11-12**

1. “mind… flesh”- choosing to do life our way brings death- pain, suffering.
2. Pain/suffering happens because people choose to do life their way starting with Adam/Eve all the way down to us today.
3. **Sin permeated nature** so we have sickness/natural disasters, permeates us so we make bad choices.
4. So really the only way to get rid of pain/suffering is to either remove our free will, or to remove us.

**But God doesn’t do that because He uses our pain/suffering for a greater purpose. Slide 13** Romans 8:6 says the “mind set on the Spirit”- the one who chooses to do life God’s way brings life/peace, the conditions necessary for growth. **Rather than get rid of our free will or us all together, He chooses to use our pain/suffering for our growth which is what Paul talks about in vv. 28-29.** Look what He says. **Slide 14-16 God has a purpose in our pain…**

1. **Because God Has a Purpose in Our Pain**
2. God is the greatest/best being ever, so to become like Him would be the greatest/best thing to happen to us. **Here’s the deal…**
3. Allowing/causing pain, when done by one who loves us, can be the most loving thing to do.
4. Parents- discipline, bring some form of pain, to correct wrong thinking/behavior, form well-adjusted adults.
5. Coaches discipline, hard practices, pain, develop stamina, teach the correct way to play, championships.
6. Doctors, they may not “love” us but they certainly don’t hate us but they’ll cause the pain of surgery/rehab because they have something better in mind- a body that functions well.
7. **Slide 17** God uses pain/suffering to conform, mold, train us to become like Jesus Christ.
8. “be like Jesus”- that’s an awesome privilege; perfect placed confidence, compassion, wisdom, strength!
9. He wants us to grow to spiritually maturity, be like Jesus in this painful world, **Slide 18-19** 1 Peter 4:1-2

**As I said at the beginning I can’t get into each specific painful circumstance we may be dealing with, though I am always available to talk individually.** Maybe you’re going through something right now and all this foundational truth doesn’t matter to you- you just want some relief. **Pastor friend- “Times of suffering you don’t ask “Why?” you ask “Who?”- who can comfort.** I want to close with what God says about “Who can comfort?” **When we’re in our pain God gives us HIMSELF- no pill, no angel, no substitutes- He Himself.** **Slide 20** Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2 that God, Jesus, knows our pain as He suffered for us on the cross. **Slide 21-23 LADIES BIBLE STUDY GOING THROUGH 1 PETER- BE THERE!**

1. **WHAT GOD GIVES US FOR OUR PAIN/SUFFERING**
2. **Himself- He Knows Our Pain, He Has Suffered, 1 Peter 2:21, 24**
3. Jesus, God the Son, His suffering for us really happened- don’t minimize what HE went through.
4. It was truly unfair and of greater intensity then anything we’ll ever experience.
5. He exercised His free will perfectly, always choosing to do life God’s way.
6. He chose of His own free will to take God’s wrath for all the times we chose to reject Him/His ways.
7. As man He suffered the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual pain that comes with God’s wrath for our sin.
8. He did that for you to draw you into a relationship with God and for God to give your life/pain purpose.

**That doesn’t even speak to the suffering God the Father experienced watching God the Son suffer.** Let’s not sterilize the truth of the crucifixion or minimize it- it was a horrific, painful, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual death. **Knowing He knows what human suffering feels like should cause us to run to Him in the midst of our suffering and trust Him to be who we need.** Like a child who is hurting/injured runs to their parent for comfort we need to run to Jesus and allow Him to be our comfort. **Look quickly at these promises God gives us if we’ll come to Him. Slide 24-25**

1. **God Promises to Be a Present Help in a Time of Trouble, Psalm 46:1**
2. **God Promises Us Grace and Mercy in Our Time of Need, Slide 26-29 Hebrews 4:14-16**
3. **God Promises Peace- the God of Peace Himself will guard our hearts and minds, Philippians 4:6-9 Slide 30-34**
4. God’s peace doesn’t necessarily remove the suffering but calms the heart/mind down so you can respond as God desires.
5. We can only personally experience God’s promise IF we respond as He tells us- no ½ ways!

**And the last one which has to do with MAKING HIM KNOWN once we’ve known Him. Slide 35-36**

1. **God Will Comfort You and through You Comfort Others, 2 Corinthians 1:3,4**

**Slide 37 Do you want God, who understands your suffering, to be there for you, to personally give you what you need to go through and GROW THROUGH your suffering? If so, AS THE BAND COMES UP let me challenge you to start by entering into that relationship with Him.** Let’s look at our TAKEAWAYS. **Slide 38**

**YOU TAKEAWAYS**

1. **One not in relationship with God- Make Jesus the God of your life- A.B.C., mark it on your card.**

**Slide 39**

1. **Make Jesus the God of your life. What? We say He’s our God but in the midst of suffering we tend to face it how we think we should face it.** You’ve been given God’s Spirit, God’s Word, and God’s family to GROW you through your suffering so obey your God and go through it as He says to.

**NEXT WEEK: Why Should I trust God? But for now LET’S STAND AND CLOSE WITH THIS SONG.**

**PODCAST: Why Did God Let It Happen? Grab some coffee, pen, paper, and find out why.** Isaiah 43:7, 10; Romans 8:6, 28-29; 1 Peter 4:1-2; 1 Peter 2:21, 24; Psalm 46:1; Hebrews 4:14-16; Philippians 4:6-9; 2 Corinthians 1:3,4