

Tough Questions

How Can a Good God Allow So Much Evil and Suffering?

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / April 14, 2019

The Bible hits suffering head on and Christianity is the only world religion that truly addresses suffering by stepping right into it. See **Genesis 1:26-31**, **Romans 1:21-22, 28-32**, and **Romans 8:19-23**.

I. So Why Does Evil and Suffering Exist?

It exists because as free moral agents we chose to sin and still choose to sin against God and other people.

The presence of evil is not an argument against Christianity, instead it proves the point that there is something really wrong with human nature as it is now.

Matthew 15:19 “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

II. Does the Existence of Evil Disprove the Existence of a Good and All-Powerful God?

A. This Universal Outrage Over Evil Actually Establishes the Existence of a Good God

In order to call something good or evil you have to have an underlying standard of right and wrong. Because we are created in His image and have His law or standard of right and wrong written on our hearts we're outraged over the reality of evil and suffering.

This outrage is a continual reminder and testimony to the fact that a good God exists. There can be no objective evil unless there is objective good and there can be no objective good unless God exists.

The shadows prove the sunshine. You can have sunshine without shadows, but you cannot have shadows without sunshine. The very existence of shadows testifies to the presence of sunshine.

God is that sunshine that allows us to see the horrific shadow of evil in our world. So, without the objective, moral standard of good from God you have no real basis for calling anything good or evil.

B. The Existence of Evil Does Not Require the Reduction of God

The Bible teaches that God is good and all-powerful, but for purposes that we cannot fully understand, has allowed evil and suffering to exist in our world.

The reality is that God created man and placed him in a glorious world, free from suffering. Man then rejected God by sinning and rebelling against Him- throwing himself and all of creation into chaos so that now man suffers enormous amounts of pain.

But God, despite our rejection and rebellion against Him, sent His own Son so that we could live again and so that this world could be set free from the curse and chaos of sin and suffering.

III. If God is Good, Why Hasn't He Stopped Evil or Done Something about It?

A. To Eliminate Evil God Would Have to Eliminate Us

Evil is what people do! The fact that the first human beings chose to rebel against God also throws this entire creation under the curse of sin and suffering which is why it groans with tsunamis, earthquake and natural disasters that wipe out thousands of people.

God did not create us or this world for any of this, but did He did create us in His image as free, moral agents who could make choices of our own and we chose to rebel against God.

B. God Chose to Send His Son into this World to Redeem Us and to Rescue this World from Its Groaning and Chaos

The cross of Jesus Christ is the ultimate answer to the question of suffering and evil because God chose to take on Himself the full brunt of our evil.

Only Christianity has a God who steps into our suffering to not just suffer with us, but to suffer for us.

When you look at the cross you see a God that is so committed to ending the suffering and evil of this world that He would lay aside His rights as God and step down into our very mess Himself and pay the ultimate price for us.

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

This verse could be literally translated, "But God is constantly proving His own love to us because while we were yet sinners, Christ in behalf of us died."

The death of Jesus stands for all-time as how God has proven His love for us.

C. The Pain and Evil of Suffering Often Drives Us to God

While the 'problem' of evil and suffering has caused many to question the existence of God, the same 'problem' has caused untold numbers of people to run into the very arms of God because of it.

So often suffering and pain awaken us to God and refine us for God.

IV. So, What Can We Do Now?

A. Don't Pretend to Have All the Answers

At the end of the day, we don't have a simplistic solution that answers every angle of this question, but we do have a Savior and a Gospel message that steps right into it.

B. Cry Out to God in the Midst of Your Pain

- Psalms of Lamentation [**Personal Lament:** Psalms 3, 4, 5, 7, 9-10, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 36, 39, 40:12-17, 41, 42-43, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 69, 70, 71, 77, 86, 89, 120, 139, 141, 142 **Corporate Lament:** Psalms 12, 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 90, 94, 123, 126, 129]

C. Trust God is Working in Ways You Cannot See

- Romans 8:26-30
- Job 38-42 [esp. 42:1-6]
- “God limits, orders, and controls all things for His glory and our good.”

D. Know that God is With You in It

- Romans 8:31-39