

Why, God, Why?"

Wrestling with the questions of evil, suffering, and God

9/4	<i>Questioning the Suffering God</i>
9/11	<i>The Problem with the Problem</i>
9/18	<i>Why does Evil Exist?</i>
9/25	<i>What not to say when someone asks "Why?" and What to do.</i>
10/2	<i>Moving from "Why" to "What now"</i>
10/9	<i>Testimonies of grace and Q & A</i>

Intro:

- *How Does God get flowers for His garden?*
- *We can be well intentioned, but when we try to answer the unanswerable we tend to do more harm than good.*
- *Three things to point out when tempted to "spiritualize" the "Why" question:*
 - *We can't end a person's grief with our words alone.*
 - *Clichés tend to hurt more than they help.*
 - *Warning of the hubris of claiming to know what God is doing and why*
- *Quick Review of previous weeks:*
 - *Can't answer every "why" question, but provide foundation to address issue*
 - *This is not the best world God could make, but the best way to get to the best world.*
 - *God made evil potential, by our choice to go against God and His good we make evil actual.*
 - *Evil must be addressed both in society, but also within each of us.*
 - *The God we question is the God who entered the world of suffering and who asked the question of "Why" Himself upon the cross.*
- *No cookie cutter answers for every situation and dangerous when we attempt*

I. Good and Bad Explanations we give from Scripture for "Why"

- *God is Punishing You! (Luke 13:1-9; Gal 6:7-8, Jn 9:1-3)*
 - *Link consequence to behavior (Karma vs Reaping)*
 - *Defense Mechanism*
- *God is Teaching You. (Hebrews 12:6; Jonah 1:4-12)*
- *Satan is After You! (Ephesians 6:12; 1 Pet 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 2:18)*
 - *Paul's Thorn in the Flesh (2 Cor 12:7-10)*

- *This is All Part of God's Plan (Psalm 33:10-11, Luke 13:34-35, Jer 18:7-10, 1 Sam 15:11, Ex 32:14)*
 - *Blueprint Theology vs Warfare Theology*
 - *Knowing vs predestined*

II. Bad Things We Say to Sound Spiritual (Bad theology, bad timing)

- *Proof Texting clichés and the Google gurus*
- *God took them home*
 - *Causing our death vs welcoming into His Kingdom*
- *God needed another angel (flower, etc)*
- *It was just his time to go*
 - *Blueprint vs free choice*
- *God never gives us more than we can handle (1 Cor 10:13)*
 - *Trials vs Temptation*
- *God will bring good from this*

III. What Should We Do?

- *Be There (Job 2:11)*
- *Be Silent (Job 2:12-13)*
- *Be Listening*
- *Be Like Christ*
 - *Jesus and Lazarus*

Conclusion:

- *WWJD, WHJD, WIJD, WWJD*

"God had one Son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering."

-Saint Augustine of Hippo

"Jesus did not come to explain away suffering or remove it. He came to fill it with his presence."

-Paul Claudel

"Sometimes the greatest sermon is silence. A suffering person doesn't need a lecture, he needs a listener."

-Billy Graham

"Four things go together: silence, listening, prayer, truth."

-Hubert Van Zeller