

# Why, God, Why?"

## Wrestling with the questions of evil, suffering, and God

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

### Intro:

- "Did God know Satan would be Satan and if so, Why create him?"
- As we study, keep in mind:
  - Not all answers questioned, but we lay foundation to address issues
  - Live with the tension of an Omnipotent and loving God with reality of evil
  - This world is not the best possible world, but the best way to get to the best possible world.
  - God knew that we would eventually choose against Him, and that he would suffer the most for our choices. (Rev 13:8)

### I. What is Evil and Did God create Evil?

- Does evil have a beginning or has it always existed?
- Evil and Free will choice
- Evil potential vs. Evil actual
- Evil is the deprivation of some good that ought to be there
  - Evil is the absence of good (darkness, cold)
  - Evil is the corruption of good (rot, rust, bruise)
  - Evil is the enemy of good (cancer)
- God is not the author of evil but the author of love which means the potential for evil.

### II. Evil before creation

- Lucifer to Satan (Ezek 28:11-19, Isa 14:12-15, 1 Tim 3:6)
- The "Snowball effect" of choices
- Rebellion in Heaven (Rev 12:3-9) and impact on us

### III. Evil begins in our world

- God creates "good" man with only one restriction. (Gen 2:15-17)
- Why place the tree in the garden?
- Serpent plants the seeds of evil (Gen 3:1)
  - Cast doubt and misquotes God
  - Why go to Eve and not Adam?
- The Serpent deceives (Gen 3:4-5)
  - Be like God?
  - Know good and evil? What evil?
- Impact of Evil
  - Relationship with God (Hid themselves due to nakedness)
  - Relationship with each other (Blame game)
  - Relationship with Creation (Curses pronounced)
    - Moral evil vs. Natural evil
- God's answer (Gen 3:15)

### IV. Our Choices in regards to Evil

- Do we recognize the role we play in evil?
- What are we doing to combat evil in this world?
  - Prayer of St. Francis (UMH #481)
- What has God done and what is He doing?
  - Redeemed evil (Rom 5:10-11)
  - Removing evil (Rev 20:10)
  - Repurposing Evil (Rom 8:28)

"Many have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil. I am content to observe that there is evil, and that there is a way to escape from it, and with this I begin and end."

-John Newton

"Now God can create free creatures, but He can't cause or determine them to do only what is right. For if He does so, then they aren't significantly free after all; they do not do what is right freely. To create creatures capable of moral good, therefore, He must create creatures capable of moral evil."

-Alvin Plantinga

"God created free beings, beings endowed with the terrible power of retreating from reality into nothingness if they so willed—for, once again, evil is privation, nonbeing, emptiness—and Satan is simply the first of those beings to choose this path."

-Gerald Vann

"To ignore evil is to become an accomplice to it."

-Martin Luther King, Jr