

QUESTIONING JESUS

Week 2: The Question of Evil

Key idea:

The evil and suffering seen throughout creation are the real consequences of human sin, but our Good, Sovereign God will overcome them through Christ to bring eternal blessing and joy to all who love Him.

Key text:

Romans 8:18–25

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Key points:

1. The responsibility for the evil and suffering seen throughout creation lies in human sin, not God or nature.
2. The possibility of sin and consequent evil is inherent in the gift of free will for those made in God's image.
3. God is both fully Good and totally Sovereign, and He will ultimately judge sin and evil and reverse the effects of the fall.
4. Beyond all doubt, the question of evil and suffering is difficult for Christians. There are things we simply can not explain. But for the atheist, the question is not difficult, it is impossible and devoid of all hope.
5. We can have hope in the face of evil and suffering because God will overcome sin, evil and suffering, He will work all things to the good for His people, and in Christ He has entered into our suffering and walks with us.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's text and teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. Why is there so much evil and sin in the universe? Did God originally make things this way? If not, how did they become this way?
3. If the problem of evil and suffering in the world can be traced to human sin, then is God really Sovereign? How can He be Sovereign and still allow us to make real choices with real consequences?
4. Many Christians try to solve the problem of evil by sacrificing the Sovereignty of God - there is nothing He can do since our free will is ultimate. What is the problem with this line of reasoning? If this is true, what guarantee do we have that righteousness will prevail in the end?
5. Why is the problem of evil impossible and devoid of all hope for the atheist? If there is no God, is it possible to conceive of objective good and evil? If not, how can we even speak of "evil" and "suffering"?
6. When personally faced with evil and suffering, how can we have hope? How does Paul offer hope in Romans 8:18, 24-25?
7. Paul promises us that God works all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). How can this give me hope and comfort when I am suffering or being afflicted because of the evil choices of someone else?
8. How is the Gospel, and especially the death and resurrection of Christ, a source of comfort in the face of evil and suffering? Have you personally experienced comfort from the Gospel in the face of personal evil and suffering?

Resources for Further Study:

[Be Thinking](#) - Problem of Evil

[If God is Good, Why Is There So Much Evil in the World?](#) - sermon by Tim Keller

[Why Does It Have To Hurt?](#) - by Dan McCartney

[The Problem of Pain](#) - by CS Lewis