

III. GOD CAUSES EVERYTHING.

-- DISCUSSION Q'S: --

INTRODUCTION

The Good News of the gospel is NOT that God stops us from making dumb decisions, or that He will fix what we break; it is that He has promised to continue to work for our eternal good no matter how many short-sighted choices we make along the way.

DISCUSSION

What's the most annoying thing someone has ever told you during a difficult time?
What's the best wisdom/reaction you've received during a difficult time?

EXPLANATION - Read Job 40:1-9

Job never knew the exact reasons behind his suffering, as we often don't today. How does that make you feel? Hopeful? Frustrated?

APPLICATION

What does it mean when we say God has an asymmetrical relationship to evil and suffering? What evidence of this is there in the story of Job?
From what you know about Job's story, what do you admire about his reaction to suffering? What do you dislike?

MISSION

What did Christ have to gain from dying on the cross?
What does it mean to love God for who He is? How can we learn to do that?
How can we respond to suffering in a way that points others toward Jesus?

Read Matthew 18:23-35.

HOMEWORK:

Do you relate to anyone in this parable?
What was the hardest thing you have ever had to forgive?



stupid summer

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TODAY'S VERSES:

MY NOTES:

Romans 12:15

Romans 8:28

Job 1:8

Job 38:2

Proverbs 19:2-3

Job 1:21

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UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

ourelement.org/events



EKIDS! BAPTISM CLASS
August 11, 12:45p

NEWCOMER PARTY
Friday, August 16th, 7p

MOM'S DAY OUT
Lompoc Aquatic Center
August 17, 3-6p

BAPTISMS
September 1st, 1p
Signup to be baptized:
<http://goo.gl/CHfIGt>

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-- SERMON NOTES --

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

All throughout the scriptures, God's provision for His own children is spelled out in exalted and fervent language. It reaches back into the past to include His eternal purpose and its implementation in the love and sacrifice of Christ. It moves into the present to proclaim God's keeping power, and reminds us that there is nothing in all creation that can keep God from His people.

Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Some commentators try to make "all things" the subject; others include God as the subject, but even without God being named, there could be no thought in Paul's mind that all things by themselves worked for the good of believers. The entire chapter protests against any such impersonal notion.

All things is deliberately general and suggests that problems we face, while they seem painful, are turned to good account by the sovereign operation of God on our behalf. The beneficiaries are those who (on the human side) love God and (on the divine side) are called according to God's purpose.

This does not mean that God makes people do all things. All things working together does not mean that God causes all things.

- God did not cause Lucifer to rebel.
- God did not cause Eve to eat the fruit.
- God did not cause David to sleep with Bathsheba.
- God did not cause Cain to kill Abel.
- God did not cause the crowd to cry out for Barabbas.
- God did not coerce the Roman soldiers into killing Jesus.

God used all of those moments to bring about His greater good, but He did not cause the sin.

Romans 8:28 doesn't mean that the pain in someone's life, or the progression of a disease is a good thing. It means that no matter how bad things get, God's ultimate and eternal purpose in our life WON'T be stopped.

From these passages we learn that fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the prelude to sharing with Him in His glory. God sent His Son in our likeness (Romans 8:3) that we might eventually be like Him. The likeness will be complete except for the fact that glorified humanity never, of course, becomes deity.

We must start to distinguish between what God allows and what He causes, what God permits versus what He prefers. Tragedy happens many times because we make dumb, self-centered decisions. Our decisions have consequences. Picking the wrong stock can ruin your retirement, picking the wrong manager can ruin your business.

Proverbs 19:2-3 Desire without knowledge is not good, and whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way. When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the Lord.

The Good News of the gospel is NOT that God stops us from making dumb decisions, or that He will fix what we break; it is that He has promised to continue to work for our eternal good no matter how many short-sighted choices we make along the way.

We are called to stay in a relationship with a God we can't control and embrace the mystery of not knowing why we are suffering, which helps us to love God for Him alone. This is why a theology of grace is central to suffering. If you build your life on things, things will make you who you are and suffering will pull you away from who you were meant to be.

But, if a life is built on God, you can LIKE your health, like your money, like your job, like your friends, but the ultimate status is God's love in the midst of suffering, and that can pull you deeper into the source of your joy.