

Why Is the World so Messed Up?

...THE WHOLE CREATION HAS BEEN GROANING... — ROMANS 8:22

Week 4

How many of you are dealing with an issue of doubt-inducing pain?
How many of you consider this a doubt-inducing question?

1. If you had the power and ability to prevent someone's death, would it be wrong to do nothing?
2. Think of someone you really care about. How much pain on a scale from 1 to 100 would you allow that person to suffer if you knew you could prevent it?
3. If God exists, has ultimate power, and loves me, how much pain should he allow me to feel before he stops it? Why?

Our World Is Messed Up...

My story of September 11, 2001 & the Mafia guy
"Life is pain! Anyone who tells you differently is selling something." Wesley to Buttercup in *The Princess Bride*



Why?

The easy-church answers:

1. It's all because of **SIN**.

[GOD TO ADAM]: Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

Genesis 3:17

2. It's a result of **God's Judgment**.

Stop and think! Does the innocent person perish? When has the upright person been destroyed? My experience shows that those who plant trouble and cultivate evil will harvest the same. They perish by a breath from God. They vanish in a blast of his anger.

Job 4:7-9 NLT

3. **Something Good** will come of it.

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Genesis 50:20

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

These answers are true but not satisfying. Why does God **ALLOW** suffering?

Some say: Either God doesn't **exist**,
isn't **strong** enough, or isn't **good**.

But what if suffering **isn't bad**?

The hard-to-accept answers:

1. It's to give us **perspective**.
our suffering (and even death) isn't that big of a deal.
God's plan is WAY bigger than our view of things.
God is concerned about other people as much as me and there are more of them.
2. It's to make us **grow** (Hebrews 12:7-11, p. 835).
3. It's to **bring us to him** (Amos 4:6-11, p. 639).

The Most Profound Truths About Suffering

1. God isn't **finished**.

Rubik's cube

...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Revelation 21:3-4

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

2. God **suffers with** us.

See Romans 8:28-39, p. 785

GREG BOYD ILLUSTRATION

God hasn't yet removed suffering and pain, but he continues to walk in it with us.

IF GOD EXISTS, IS ALL POWERFUL, AND IS GOOD, MAYBE SUFFERING ISN'T THAT BAD!