

Life Group Lesson

Hope-God Makes Sense out of Nonsense • Week of May 17

Why do bad things happen to good people? Why is it that bad people seem to get by just fine? The psalmist pondered this: “I get nothing but trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain... So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is!” (Psalm 73:14,16) – Sometimes life makes no sense. But we are learning God makes sense out of nonsense, and some of life’s puzzling quandaries will not be solved until we sit quietly and humbly in the Lord’s presence. “...*Then I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked*” (Psalm 73:17, italics added).

Throughout history we have seen how corrupt culture and leadership can cause tremendous suffering; not to mention, indifference and silence. Why? Why, God do you allow such darkness as tribal wars, slavery, the holocaust, human trafficking, plagues, and disease? How can a viral pandemic shut down the world? And my life as I knew it...? Perhaps we can look more closely – beneath the surface – and see that God is in control and closely concerned. He has a grander purpose, “For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come (Hebrews 13:14).

Read John 9:1-7

This story in John, chapter nine (read the entire chapter if you have time) demonstrates the thought in Jesus’ day. The reason behind unexplained suffering is ‘someone sinned’.

1. First, how many times have you asked, “why am I suffering?” and racked your brain trying to figure out what you had done to deserve it?

Second, how might it be easier to endure (accept) hardship if you knew Jesus had a greater purpose *for His glory* behind it?

Read Job 1:1 and James 5:7-11

The Lord is ‘full of tenderness and mercy’ though we live in a fallen world. Job was a man of complete integrity, and yet, he suffered beyond what we can even comprehend. His three friends, though compassionate (Job 2:11-13), insisted that Job was somehow to blame for the hell he faced. There are consequences to sin. Sometimes we suffer because of choices we have made or poor choices of others in our family. But many times, as with Job, there is no concrete reason for personal suffering. God’s Word is clear, “The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose spirits are crushed” (Psalm 34:18). Sometimes the only reason is that in our suffering, God shows up!

Jesus knows what we struggle with and what we are up against. Remember God was here in the flesh, in the Person of Jesus. One day “As Jesus was walking along, He saw a man who had been blind from birth. ‘Rabbi,’ His disciples asked Him, ‘Why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?’ ‘It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,’ Jesus answered. ‘This happened so the power of God could be seen in him’ ” (vv1-3).

2. The power of God is seen when suffering people put their faith in Christ, and trust God to bring good out of the bad. When questioned by the skeptics, the former blind man summed it up this way, “...I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!” (John 9:25). How has Christ opened your eyes? How does trusting Christ make a difference in your life?

Instead of asking ‘why?’ perhaps we can learn to re-word our question:

“Lord, *what* do you want me to learn from this difficult season? *Where* do you want to take me from here? *How* can I be a blessing to someone else today? *When* I come through this, Lord, would you please help me to open my mouth and give you the glory?”

We do not know *why* we have had to rearrange our lives in these past two months. We do not know why individuals like Job have to suffer, or why an innocent baby (like the man in John 9) was born blind. But we do know that God's glory was seen through the plight of both men who refused to curse the Lord, and instead, trusted God to bring about a better ending. Let us trust the Lord. Let us pray that good will come out of this pandemic, and whatever you are facing. Job said, "I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes" (Job 42:5). It may be that it is only through our suffering that we personally see Jesus face-to-face. Let us determine to move forward with the words of Christ in our hearts. Read what Jesus says in **John 16:33** and close by praying for one another.

Hope

God Makes Sense out of Nonsense

Text: Job 19:7-27, James 5:9-11

Plain Truth

Always better to _____ God
than the _____.

One Year Bible Reading

May 17: 1 Samuel 20:1-21:15, John 9:1-41, Psalm 113:1-114:8, Proverbs 15:15-17

May 18: 1 Samuel 22:1-23:29, John 10:1-21, Psalm 115:1-18, Proverbs 15:18-19

May 19: 1 Samuel 24:1-25:44, John 10:22-42, Psalm 116:1-19, Proverbs 15:20-21

May 20: 1 Samuel 26:1-28:25, John 11:1-54, Psalm 117:1-2, Proverbs 15:22-23

May 21: 1 Samuel 29:1-31:13, John 11:55-12:19, Psalm 118:1-18, Prov. 15:24-26

May 22: 2 Samuel 1:1-2:11, John 12:20-50, Psalm 118:19-29, Proverbs 15:27-28

May 23: 2 Samuel 2:12-3:39, John 13:1-30, Psalm 119:1-16, Proverbs 15:29-30

May 16 & 17, 2020