



GOD IS _____

Part 5: God is Cruel?

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“Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?”
– *Epicurus (341-270 BC)*

Common Approaches to the Question of Pain and Suffering

Ignore – Deny – Enlighten

Deserved Retribution

Impugning Moralism

Cynicism

1. If God is all-powerful, loving, and perfect, then...
2. A perfect, loving God would create a universe that was without suffering, but...
3. The universe contains evil and suffering. Therefore, God does not exist.

A Biblical Approach to Pain and Suffering from Job 1

¹In the land of Uz, there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.

Job was living a righteous and exemplary life.

⁷The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.”

⁸Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”

⁹“Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. ¹⁰“Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

¹²The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.”

Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Job is crushed by a wave of pain and suffering.

²⁰ At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹ and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”

²² In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

In dealing with pain and suffering: *(excerpted from Pastor Timothy Keller)*

Avoid the pat answers

Accept living without an answer

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Anticipate a greater and final answer

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. – Romans 8:18

Next Steps:

Invite Someone to Easter

Easter is one time of year when unchurched people are open to attending church. But not many will come without a personal invitation. Today in the Commons, pick up an invitation for each person you plan to invite to Easter. Invite people face-to-face to join you at CTK and give them the invitation card as a reminder.

Classes, Communities and More: CTK Life

Pick up a copy of the spring edition of CTK Life today in the Commons. It’s packed full of information about classes, communities and more ways to get connected in authentic Christian community. You’ll also find details of several changes happening at CTK.

Small Group Questions

- 1) Which of the common approaches to the question of pain and suffering have you come across in your life? Are there others you would add?
- 2) Everyone encounters pain. How has pain affected your soul? Has it pushed you away from God or toward God?
- 3) What do you believe is God’s relationship to pain?
- 4) What’s your take on the conversation between God and Satan? Does it anger you? Is Job just a pawn? What does it teach you about the character of God?
- 5) Do you believe it’s possible to live and endure pain without an answer? What would you call that?
- 6) How can we pray for you right now?