



## Asking for a Friend

### PART 3: HOW COULD A GOOD GOD ALLOW EVIL?

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#### Sermon Notes

Text: Romans 8

#### Intro:

The Argument:

- If God is all-good, then he would want to end suffering and evil
- If God is all-powerful, he would be able to end suffering and evil
- If God is all-knowing he would know how to end suffering and evil
  - Suffering and evil exist; therefore, an all good, all-powerful, all-knowing God must not exist.

The argument is both philosophical and emotional in nature, but comes with two major challenges:

**Challenge #1** - The problem of evil might actually point toward the existence of God, rather than away from him.

“When I was an atheist, my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? What was I comparing the universe with when I called it unjust? Of course I could have just given up my idea of justice by saying that it was nothing but a private idea of my own. But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too, for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my fancies.” ~C.S. Lewis

A world without God is still faced with the problem of evil, yet without the spiritual resources of God’s comfort, power and promises.

**Challenge #2** - God might have a good reason to allow evil to persist for a time

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Just because we can’t think of a reason for every experience of pain and suffering, doesn’t mean God doesn’t have a good reason to allow it.

#### 1. Pain is Temporary

Romans 8:18, 22-23 - The birth of a child is painful, but the arrival of the child makes the suffering worthwhile.

The whole Bible is the story of how God is dealing with the problem of pain and evil.

#### 2. Pain has Purpose

Philip Yancy, *Where is God when it hurts?*

The loss of pain receptors in leprosy patients leads to greater damage.

Pain may merely be a symptom of the deeper diseases of sin and death. How would the world know it needed a saviour unless the earth manifested its need for one?

#### 3. Pain has Produce

James 1:2-4

Genesis 50:20 - Joseph gained a position of influence and saved his people not in spite of his suffering, but *because* of it.

Romans 8:28

2 Corinthians 4:17

#### Conclusion:

Isaiah 53:4-5 - Jesus took up our pain and bore our suffering.

“...we still don’t know what the answer is. However, we now know what the answer isn’t. It can’t be that he doesn’t love us. It can’t be that he is indifferent or detached from our condition. God takes our misery and suffering so seriously that he was willing to take it on himself.” ~Tim Keller

Bethel Church Penticton - Sunday January 21, 2018 - Pastor Dave Funk

## Life Group Discussion

### Warm up:

1. What stood out to you about Sunday's message? Did you learn anything new or helpful?
2. Do you see the problem of pain and suffering as more of a philosophical problem or an emotional one?

### Study & Discussion:

1. Read Romans 8:18-30. What does this passage tell us about suffering? Are there any promises in this passage? What do they mean? What does verse 28 mean to you?
2. Do you think that pain could have a purpose or that it could produce something good? Do you have any personal examples? How do we deal with pain and suffering when there are no clear indications that good has come from it?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-18. What does this passage say about suffering? Why do we "not lose heart"? (v. 16). What does v. 18 mean practically?

### Application:

1. The Christian who is not in a season of suffering should look for those who are and find a way to bare their pain. Is there someone in your life who could use a friend to take on some of their suffering? Could your Life Group do something together?

### Prayer:

- Pray for opportunities to answer questions people have about your faith.

### Other Requests

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