

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW PAIN AND SUFFERING?

Scripture used: [Habakkuk 1:2-3 \(NIV\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Today, Pastor Hurmon continued the series *Explore God* with the sermon titled “*Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering?*” Much like what is happening in present day Israel, Habakkuk lived during a time when the Babylonians were attacking and kidnapping people from Judah. These acts of violence were witnessed by Habakkuk and left him to question God. God, why do you allow such pain and suffering? Why don’t you do something? Why don’t you intervene? These same questions are reflected in other places in the Bible like [Psalms 10:1 \(NLT\)](#) and when Jesus quoted [Psalms 22:1A \(NIV\)](#) from the cross. In the Bible these questions are always asked by believers, but rarely does God answer.

KEY POINTS

1. **WHY? Why does God allow such suffering and pain?** People who seek to answer this question might come to one of two conclusions: If God is all-powerful, then God can’t be good, or if God is good, he can’t be all-powerful. But through His teachings found in the Bible, God asks us to examine His character deeply so we can begin to understand.
 - a. **Our God is all powerful, but not all controlling.** In [Genesis 2:16-17 \(NIV\)](#), God commands Adam and Eve to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but He does not force them to obey this command. He opposes limits on Himself so that we can choose to love Him and obey Him in our own free will. But we can also choose to work against Him, and open ourselves to evil.
 - b. **Our beautiful world is a broken world.** [Romans 8:21 \(NLT\)](#) tells us that one day we will have freedom from death and decay, but that time has not yet come. Until then, we are subject to the bond that death and decay holds on us - cancer, terminal illness, childhood diseases, chronic pain...the evidence of death and decay in our broken world is great.
 - c. **God is doing something.** In [1 John 4:16 \(NLT\)](#), we read that all acts of kindness, generosity, unselfish love are acts of God. He is at work in our world everyday. [Romans 8:28 \(NLT\)](#) tells us that He *causes* everything to work together for our good. N. T. Wright writes, “God works all things for good with those who love him.”
 - d. **God has intervened.** The greatest intervention that God ever established was Jesus’ sacrificial act upon the cross of taking our place and paying the price for our sins. [Romans 5:8 \(NLT\)](#)
2. **WHERE? Where is God in the midst of my suffering?** In [John 11](#), Jesus was right by Mary and Martha’s side when they were angry and weeping over the death of their brother, Lazarus. He allowed them to question Him and be angry that He wasn’t there when Lazarus died. Jesus wept with them. Then He proved His power over death and decay and at His command, Lazarus rose from the dead. Jesus walked them from suffering to victory. He is with us in the same manner.
3. **HOW? How do I respond to pain and suffering?**
 - a. **Choose to trust.**
 - b. **Commit to follow.**
 - c. **Be assured.** [Revelation 21:1-3 \(NLT\)](#)

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Spend time in prayer. Write questions you have for God about pain and suffering. What do you struggle to understand? Lift the questions up to God, and as you study the verses from this week, ask God to provide you wisdom as you listen to Him.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Think back over your life chronologically. Take note of all the times God has said “yes” to you. Reflect on the times He has said “no”. How do you see God intervening and working for your good? Do you see times when you allowed a “no” to erase His many “yeses”? Thank God for the “yes” moments and for the “no” moments, and be assured that He will be faithful to you in all His answers - always working all things together for your good.
- 3) **DO** - Consider how you might be a reflection of God’s love and kindness in your family, in your workplace and in your community. How can you choose to obey God and love others? Mark your calendars for the Be Rich service day on November 12.