



Apr. 27/28, 2019

Great Question – If God is good, why is there pain and suffering?

Review

Main Points

Ask the group: What were your initial thoughts, reactions, and comments?

1. Why it's a good question
2. Why answers don't work
3. Why a person does work

Reflect – Questions

1. **Suffering.** Whether global, local, or personal, what comes to your mind when you hear the words “pain” or “suffering”? What things do people have trouble making sense of or reasoning through?
2. **Why it's a good question. Read Psalm 62:11-12.** Joe reminded us of the difference between “meaningful” and “meaningless” suffering. Unlike other “gods,” our God is strong and loving. If God is good and loving, why is the world full of pain and suffering. Do you have examples of when it's hard to make sense of God being all powerful and all loving?
3. **Why answers don't work.** People outside of religion (see the quote from Dawkins below) and inside of religion (like Job from the Bible) try to explain away the pain and suffering, but people innately long for a better way because, deep down, we know there is a better way.

Richard Dawkins: “The universe that we observe has precisely the [suffering] properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.”

Read John 9:1-3: Note that some suffering happens without explanation.

4. **Why a person does.** Think to answers that people try to give to hardship, like “Something good will come from this.” Answers aren't sufficient because we long for more than answers; we long for someone to be with us. God doesn't give just an answer; he gives a person — and a person does help. John 3:16, Romans 5:8, and 1 Cor. 6:14 (power & love, together).



Respond

Whether believers or not, people are seeking to make sense of how the loving and powerful God of the Bible can exist alongside of so much suffering and pain in the world. What can you and I do to help others make sense of this age-old dilemma?

- Be slow to explain away hardships, particularly personal ones.
- Be available and present, offering a listening ear as your friends or family journey through hard times.

Pray

Go around as a group and ask for prayer requests.

Announcements

Considering Christianity // Sunday, May 5 & 19

A safe space to answer questions about the Christian faith. May 5 is a night for those questioning Christianity, so invite a friend and plan to join them then. May 19 is a night for our church family and friends to bring their own questions. More info online.