

You asked for it: *How does a good God allow bad things?* (WEEK 3) Gabe Cleave

ABC/313:

- **A**sk more questions, **B**ring in the Bible, **C**alm yourself
- 3 things to remember, 1 question to ask, 3 explanations to offer

3 Things to Remember

- 1) This question is the most common question that people wrestle with when it comes to God
 - a. A recent national poll was taken that asked the question “If you could ask God only 1 question and you knew he would give you an answer, what would you ask?” The most common response was “Why is there pain and suffering in the world?”
- 2) This is more personal than it is philosophical

First, we need to acknowledge that the question “How does a good God allow bad things?” is a question that a lot of the time has its roots from a negative personal experience.

People aren’t asking so much “why a good God would allow bad things to happen” as much as they are asking “why did God allow ___ to happen to me?”

- 3) There is no easy answer to this question

To give a flippant answer to this question is irresponsible at best, but it can even be harmful.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)— Romans 12:2 (NLT)

“God is too good to be unkind and He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart.” -Charles Spurgeon

1 Question to Ask

How do you know what is good and what is bad?

We believe inside of us that there is a way things are supposed to be and this is not it. There is a moral law inside of us that tells us what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad...

“My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line... - C.S. Lewis

The Answer to that Question: Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NLT)— 2 Peter 3:13 (NLT)

Because God created us for eternity and because His original plan was for us to live in a world where there is no evil, no suffering, no pain, no sadness, anxiety, depression or regret, when we experience those things here on Earth now it actually points us to the reality that there is a God that created us for eternity with Him in a perfect place called heaven.

3 Explanations to Offer:

- 1) Bad or evil allows for free will to exist

- a. God is love and you can't have love without choice. God doesn't want robots serving Him, he wants people who choose to love Him loving Him.
- b. This is the reason that evil and suffering exist...ultimately because we chose to disobey God.

Genesis 1 & 2: This is not the way God originally wanted it. Instead of living in a world that God created we are now living in a world that we created...evil, suffering and bad things are a consequence of that.

- 2) God uses the bad
 - a. Some of the greatest lesson you will learn in life come from your suffering and not from your happiness.

"We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world....
-C.S. Lewis

Genesis 50:20 (ESV)—James 1:2-4 (NIV)

- 3) Look to the cross
 - a. The greatest evil and the greatest suffering took place on the cross when Jesus took everything bad...everything evil and every bit of suffering on Himself and absorbed it.
 - b. But the greatest evil that has ever happened turned out to be the greatest good for mankind.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)—Romans 8:18 (NIV)—Revelation 21:1-4 (NLT)

For Small Group Discussion: What stood out to you the most from this week's sermon?

Opening Question: What is the best thing that has happened to you that you did not deserve?

Main Point: God allows things to happen for a reason. Whether or not we understand His reasons, we must remember that God is good, just, loving, and merciful.

Read/Tell the Story: Job 1 & 2

Head:

- What (or who) caused Job's suffering?
- What did Job do wrong in this story?
- How did Job respond when he found out his family had perished?
- How did Job's friends initially respond to his suffering?

Heart:

- When have you been tempted to blame God for the painful things in your life?
- How do you deal with hard things in life that just don't seem to make sense?
- Who were good friends for you in those challenging times? What did you need from your friends and/or family during that time?

Hands:

- Job's friends ended up trying to "figure out" and "fix" Job's pain. What has brought you comfort through the hard times?
- When have you had the opportunity to walk alongside someone going through hard circumstances? What was actually helpful for them?
- How should we respond to others who are struggling? (Having the "right answer" isn't going to fix it)

Supporting Scripture: Luke 18:19, 2 Cor. 1:3-5 & 4:16-18, 1 Peter 2:20-23, Prov. 3:5-6, Rev. 21:1-2



Sermon Series Resources: <https://bit.ly/RLcurrentseries>