

## NOTES

### ~ *Will of the Father: Why?* ~

#### Third Week: Why Bad Things Happen

1. Taking the 'why do bad things happen' focus off God
  - a. God doesn't tempt us or mistreat us (**James 1:12-14**)
  - b. We have free will & have made our bed
2. Why do we need hope?
  - a. We're not 'good' (Matthew 19:17 and Mark 10:18). Man disobeyed God and brought sin and death into the world. Sin/death started with Adam, but Jesus offers life (Genesis 2:15-17 & 3:6, **Romans 5:12**, & **1Corinthians 15:21-22**)
  - b. Now, we:
    - i. Live in a corrupt world (**Genesis 6:11-13** & Psalms 14:1-3)
    - ii. Must take ownership of our actions and may suffer consequences (**Romans 6:20-23** & Colossians 3:25)
  - c. And yet God doesn't want ANYONE to perish spiritually (**John 3:16** & **2Peter 3:9**)
3. But, we often:
  - a. Don't take responsibility and blame other humans, Satan, or God
  - b. Keep God from helping and we make bad choices (i.e. **1Peter 3:7**)
4. So why *do* bad things happen?
  - a. Things happen (rain and shine on everyone - **Matthew 5:44-45**)
  - b. We suffer from the consequences of others' actions
  - c. We suffer from the consequences of our own actions
    - i. Those who live by the sword will die by the sword (AKA those who drive in the car may die by the car and so forth) (**Matthew 26:52**)
    - ii. Negative effects of technology (i.e. cancer or accidents)
    - iii. Counting the cost of our covenant with Jesus (as with the martyrs) (i.e. **Luke 14:27-30**; Matthew 24:9 & Revelation 6:11; Acts 14:19; **2Co 11:24-27**)
    - iv. Bad choices or rebellion (Pharaoh, Israel and her divorce from God, etc.)
  - d. We can restrict God's ability to work in our lives (i.e. 1Peter 3:7)
  - e. God's in the process of answering prayer (Job, Joanne, and others)
  - f. God disciplines those whom He loves (**Hebrews 12:5-13**)
5. What now? We can use our unfortunate experiences, addictions, or pain as wisdom for others.

NOTES

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**Third Week: Why Bad Things Happen**

Review

Last week, we talked about how to discover the will – plan – desire – of God and understand our part in it. The key, as you should understand now, is obedience out of faith. Obedient to what? Honoring God and providing charity to our fellow humankind. We also, need to spread the good news of salvation and both disciple and be disciplined.

We'll answer the question "Why . . ."

This week, we'll answer the very tough question, "*Why do bad things happen?*" in our quest for truth and hope, which is an anticipation of future things based on our faith.

Taking the 'why do bad things happen' focus off God

I wish I could tell you that there's a "**one size fits all**" explanation or a silver bullet that would take away the pain of whatever you've gone through or are going through. But, I can't. The truth is that we separated ourselves from God, introduced death and pain, and now must live in the environment we've created.

So, while God and our Christ do often intercede on our behalf in this manmade mess, it's important that we start our conversation by taking the focus off of them and putting it back where it belongs: **on us**.

It's important to understand several things as we lay the foundation for discovering why bad things happen:

1. God doesn't tempt us or mistreat us. **[James 1:12-14]**
2. We have free will & have made our bed.
3. No one is 'good' . . . "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is **only One who is good**; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the **commandments**." —**Matthew 19:17. And Mark 10:18.**
4. Things weren't always like this.

In the beginning . . .

Perpetual cycle of birth, death, spiritual judgment & disposition

Corruption and Noah.

Free will brings consequences

Unrighteousness will bring death; right living will bring eternal life through Jesus

So, let's continue by asking "*If it wasn't always like this, what happened and why do we need hope?*" In the beginning, God created the heavens, earth, animals, and the spirit of mankind in His image. But, man (Adam and Eve) disobeyed God and brought sin and death into the world as a consequence of their actions – something we're still reeling from.

Because of their rebellion, they were relegated to physical pain and death. And because the spirit-carrying flesh would die, something would have to happen to that spirit after death. Thus began this perpetual cycle of physical birth and death and the need for spiritual judgment and disposition.

Sin/death started with Adam, but Jesus brings spiritual life (more on this later – especially next week when we really look deeply into the hope He offers).

**[Romans 5:12] & [1Corinthians 15:21-22]**

But, back to reality. Adam and Eve's rebellion introduced sin and corruption that exists today. In fact, this was the way of things in **Noah's** day in roughly 2,300 BCE. Wickedness and corruption abounded, prompting God to purge the earth after establishing a covenant with Noah and his family – 8 people in all.

**[Genesis 6:11-13]**

Did God's purging work? No. Mankind became just as wicked again.

Remember 'free will'? It gives us the freedom to do what we *ought*, but also gives us the freedom to do what we *ought not*. What we'll learn throughout today's discussion is that free will brings freedom but also consequences.

Sometimes, the consequences can be good – such as the eternal life when we choose that path through right living and our relationship with Jesus.

Sometimes, the consequences may be undesirable – as with the consequences of the environment we've created or the judgment and spiritual death most will suffer at the end of this age. **[Romans 6:20-23]**

God still desires relationship

As upset as God has gotten on occasion at mankind, He still desires a relationship with us: first with Adam, then with Noah, and then with Israel through Abraham and Moses. Finally, the Christ has been the conduit for that relationship for the entire world once and for all.

God gave His son & desires that none should perish

In fact, God loved us with that actionable love we talked about so much that He gave His only son to die as a final sacrifice for sinful behavior for all who'll follow Him. And, although there'll be a judgment and final consequence for those who don't follow Jesus, God is anxious for no one to perish at that time if possible. **[John 3:16] & [2Peter 3:9]**

Accepting responsibility and recognizing the source of trouble

There can't be forgiveness or healing, though, if we don't accept responsibility for our actions or place blame where it truly belongs. For instance, some people will **blame God** when things don't go their way. They forget that we're imperfect people living in imperfect and manmade cultures. Others will **blame Satan** for when things go wrong, forgetting that he can do nothing to true followers of Jesus (unless allowed to by God as in the case of Job). Sometimes, people will blame their misfortunes on Satan in a different way: "I must be livin' right cause Satan's after me!"

We have free will and make our own bad choices

The truth is that we make our own bad choices or suffer consequences of our actions or from those of others. And, we can keep God from interceding on our behalf. Remember that we're not robots and have free will. Our relationship with God and our Christ is a serious covenant – a two-way relationship.

Relationship with God/Christ = serious covenant

**[1Peter 3:7]**

A little pleasure now, a lot of pain later; a little pain now, a lot of pleasure later

Rain falls on righteous and unrighteous; sun shines on both as well

We suffer because of others

Drunkards; thieves; addicts

We suffer because our own actions

We now know that mankind, through Adam and Eve, is responsible for willingly separating from God. This separation brought sin and death into the world where it hadn't previously existed. Childbirth would be necessary and in pain. Humans would have to grow or raise their own food. Those enjoying wanton pleasure in the flesh will face extreme pain in end-of-the-world judgment, and those wanting to be obedient out of their faith would experience a little pain in the near-term for great pleasure later.

Let's take a closer look at these different scenarios.

**First**, the rain falls on the righteous and unrighteous, and the sun shines on both as well. **[Matthew 5:44-45]**

This means is that we are all subject to fortune and misfortune; blessings and catastrophe. Some wicked people will prosper – often because of deceit and injustice. Others will suffer from natural disasters or the bad choices of others despite their righteousness.

**Second**, we suffer from the actions of others. All have free will, including those who intend to harm us or who live carelessly. But we know this – otherwise, there'd be no need for judgment and consequences by God at the end of our age.

People will drive drunk and take lives. Some will steal and cause poverty and hunger. Others will, out of their anger or addictions, harm their loved ones.

**Third**, we suffer from our own actions at times – intentionally and unintentionally.

Those who live by the sword will die by the sword

All kinds of risks

Technological challenges (cancer causes, genetic mutation, energy risk)

Counting the cost of discipleship

God's divorce from Israel

- Those who live by the sword will die by the sword (AKA those who drive in the car may die by the car and so forth) **[Matthew 26:52]**

The significance here is that we introduce risk through our lifestyles. People who drive or ride in cars run the risk of being maimed or killed in accidents. Those who jump out of perfectly good airplanes may be killed in falls. Sportsmen may be killed or seriously injured and so might those of us who participate in national or local defense.

- Our **technological** advances create much risk. The incredible increase in cancer occurrences is most likely related to chemicals and carcinogens we pollute our air, water, and food with. Genetic engineering may help increase crop and livestock bounty, but it introduces the risk of human mutation and illness. People who live close to high-power electric lines often suffer deformities or serious illness. God didn't force us to employ electricity, vehicles, or chemical or genetic engineering and yet we blame Him when we reap the consequences associated with our lifestyles.

- True followers of Jesus will suffer tribulation because of their faith. We **MUST** count the cost of discipleship! **[Luke 14:27-30]** & **[2Co 11:24-27]**

Israel's relationship with God was a covenant not unlike the marriage covenant. In fact, when Israel continually disobeyed Him – was an unfaithful bride as He put it – He divorced her. Yes, that's the language used.

Salvation covenant

May experience  
punishment as a result  
of our bad choices

Pharaoh

God's divorce & the  
Assyrians then  
Babylonians

Today, true followers of Jesus have entered into a covenant with Him. This is the salvation relationship given to the entire world. But, we can't make that decision lightly. Contrary to the Christian culture prosperity gospel or tendency to turn God into a lucky lotto ticket or magic genie, our relationship might bring short-term struggles as we chart a new course toward right living and Jesus. But, the investment if you want to call it that will be well-worth it. Why do you think so many people have willingly suffered for the Gospel of Jesus?

- We may experience direct punishment as a result of rebellion as was the case with Pharaoh or Israel in her divorce with Israel. Remember, we're not robots. We live in a world corrupted by us and have the free will to choose our own path. However, there can be consequences for rebelling and turning from God.

For instance, the head of Egypt – Pharaoh – rebelled against God during His freeing of the Israelites from captivity. The Egyptian ruler and his people suffered many plagues and much death before the exodus was done.

Israel rebelled against God about 700 years later, doing all kinds of evil He had warned them against. This included worshipping other gods, sacrificing their babies, prostitution, etc. After giving them multiple chances to turn back to Him, God finally 'divorced' Israel and allowed them to be killed and dispersed by the Assyrians and later the Babylonians.

We can block God's ability to work

Fourth, we can restrict God's ability to work in our lives as we discussed in 1Peter 3:7. Understand that our relationship with God and our Christ is a covenant – a two-way spiritual union where we seek to please them through our actions and they along with the Spirit of God save us from the judgment to come. They also comfort, guide, and teach us along the way as we have that expectation of Jesus' return and our gathering after this short life.

Our priorities should be God's

Should we believe that God and Jesus are **good luck charms** that will arbitrarily rescue our flesh out of the mess we've created? Or give us all kinds of stuff because we think that's what they're here for? Heaven forbid!

There are certainly times when God, our Christ, the Spirit, or God's angels intercede on our behalf. But, our priorities should be God's and our actions and thoughts should be on Him and His creation, looking for ways to help and not be self-centered. Instead of blaming God for things that go awry, we thank and bless Him for the things that work and glorify Him.

Hands & feet; as much about this world as the next

And, we're meant to be the hands and feet of Christ in our quest to honor His commandments. So it's as much about this world as the next . . . In fact, we're told to bear one another's burdens in our fulfillment of the 'law of Christ' (Galatians 6:2).

We can block God's ability to work

But we can cause ourselves to block intercessions, healings, and blessings during those times when God would like to execute them. How?

- Lack of covenant with the Christ.
- Disobedience by not treating God appropriately or our fellow man charitably as we've discussed (i.e. 1Peter 3:7).
- Refusal to set aside time through prayer, study, and meditation to allow our spirit and that of God's to communicate.



God may be in the process of blessing us or answering prayer; Job

In other instances, God may be in the process of answering prayer or blessing us. A very good example of this is **Job**. God's faith in him was so great that he allowed Satan to try him for a short time. Job's reward for being steadfast was incredible. He regained his health and became wealthier than before by several multitudes.

God disciplines whom He loves

Another great example is with my wife, **Joanne**, who had to be released from one job so God could bless her with the job she'd been seeking for some time.

Finally, God disciplines those whom he loves. **[Hebrews 12:5-13]**

Like body or mind strength training

This is akin to the process a bodybuilder may go through to tear down the weaker body in order to make it stronger. Without pushing the limits physically, we'll never grow stronger. The same holds true for exercising our mental abilities or psychological and emotion strength. So, we have a choice to make when adversity strikes: use it for good or let it get the best of us.

How should we respond?

It's well and good that we know why bad things happen, but it's more important to ponder how to respond during those times.

Minimize risk

- Minimize risk from our manmade world. Drive safely, don't abuse drugs or alcohol, stay emotionally, mentally, and physically healthy. Fellowship with Godly people and stay out of risky situations.

Learn and apply lessons

- Learn lessons from each situation and improve your life. This will allow you to become better aligned with right living. It will also allow God to effectively discipline you in an effort to make you stronger or prepare you for whatever He may have in store for you in life or in ministering to others.

Use what we learn to help others

- So, you can decide to use what you learn to help others. Think of the witness and healing power of someone who has overcome addictions or other adversities!

## Summary

In **summary**, bad things happen because we've separated ourselves from God and created an environment full of risk and corruption. Now, we must live with the consequences although God does often indeed intercede on our behalf and help. We can minimize the risk of bad things happening and better-enable God's help through:

- Obedience to God/Christ
- Right living
- Prayer and study
- Benevolence

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. —James 1:12-14.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned —Romans 5:12.

For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. —1Corinthians 15:21-22.

Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth." —Genesis 6:11-13.

Rom 6:20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. —Romans 6:20-23.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. —John 3:16.

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. —2Peter 3:9.

You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. —1Peter 3:7.

But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. —Matthew 5:44-45.

Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword." —Matthew 26:52.

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ —Luke 14:27-30.

Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. —2Corinthians 11:24-27.

and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.” It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. —Hebrews 12:5-13.