

Response to Evil and Suffering

Text : **I John 3: 10-18**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. Believers are faced with many questions, but the most difficult to deal with is the problem of evil and suffering.**
1. *“If God is really all-powerful, why does He allow so much evil in the world ?”*
 2. *“Why would a loving God allow people to suffer ?”*
- B. These questions cannot be answered to the satisfaction of unbelievers.**
1. They are predisposed to reject God.
 2. They view God only through physical eyes. (*They try to reduce God to man’s level.*)
- C. Even believers have a hard time grasping and accepting some of God’s actions.**
1. Abraham tried to talk God out of destroying Sodom. (**Gen. 18**)
 2. David was angry because God struck down Uzzah. (**II Sam. 6:8**)
 3. Jonah did not want Nineveh to be saved.

With this lesson we wish to observe how God would have us respond to evil events which come upon us from time to time.

I. It was never God’s desire for there to be evil in the world.

- A. When God created the world, He created it free of evil.**
1. As each phase of creation was completed, God confirmed that **“it was good.”**
 - a. **Gen. 1: 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25**
 - b. **Gen. 1:31- God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.**
 2. God is totally good; **therefore**, He could not be the source (creator) of evil.
- B. God placed man in the best place on earth and walked with him there.**
1. God himself **“planted”** the garden of Eden. (*Garden was pure – no evil*)
 2. God is holy so He cannot come in contact with evil.
- C. In the form of a serpent, Satan brought evil into the world.**
1. Satan’s motive was to deprive God of His creation.
 2. Evil in the world is a consequence of Satan’s actions in the garden.

II. Evil happening in one's life does not necessarily indicate God's displeasure.

A. There are judgments in time.

1. A "*judgment in time*" is a disciplinary act of God brought on a living person/s.
2. For Example, the nation of Israel was sent into captivity because of sin.
3. Because of pride, King Herod was struck dead by God. (*worms*)

Acts 12: 21 On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and *began* delivering an address to them. **22** The people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" **23** And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.

B. The theory of retribution is refuted by scripture.

1. The primary teaching of the book of Job is a refutation of retribution.
 - a. The evil that befell Job did not come from God.
 - b. Job was oppressed because he was righteous. (*given opportunity to glorify*)
 - c. God did not reveal to Job the reason he was suffering.
2. Jesus refuted the theory of retribution :
 - a. **John 9: 1-3** As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. **2** And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" **3** Jesus answered, "*It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ...*"
 - b. **Luke 13: 4-5** Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were *worse* culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? **5** "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

C. Man has no way of knowing the source of or the reason for evil events.

1. Bad things happen to all people ... good and evil alike.
2. Christians accept life as it comes and trust God.

Rom. 8:28- And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (*This world is the beginning, not the end.*)
3. Like Job, Christians are judged by their response to evil.
4. **Every evil presents the Christian with an opportunity to glorify God.**

III. In addition to responding in faith, the Christian must respond in love.

A. The Christians religion is founded on love.

1. Christians exist because God loves us. (*He created us in the flesh and in Christ.*)
 - a. **John 3:16**
 - b. **I John 4:10-** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
2. Christians are those people who requite God's love for man.

I John 4: 19- We love, because He first loved us.
3. Love is that which distinguishes Christians from the world.

John 13: 35- By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

B. As Christians we express our love for God by loving others in tangible ways.

1. Remember our text :

1. **I John 3: 16-18** We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. **17** But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? **18** Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.
2. **James 2: 14-17** What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? **15** If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, **16** and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? **17** Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

C. By nature, Christians look for opportunities to do good.

1. It is in taking full advantage of our opportunities, that we harvest good for ourselves.

Galatians 6: 9-10 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. **10** So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
2. Like our Lord, we must place an urgency upon doing the works of Him who sent us.

John 9: 4-5 We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. **5** While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

IV. Christians seek to do good for others out of a desire to glorify God.

A. Jesus ordained that all His followers be actively bringing glory to Him.

Matt. 5: 16- Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

1. Our good works are to be visible and observable.
2. The glory for the works of the servants must go to the Master.
3. The life of the Christians is observed whether to God's glory or to His shame.

Titus 1:16- They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

- a. The deeds we do speak louder than the words we speak.
- b. Evil lives make us worthless to God.

B. God's purpose for Christians on the earth includes responding to needs.

1. It is in doing good that we fulfill God's purpose for us in Christ.

Ephesians 2: 10- For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

2. When Jesus purchased Christians to actively do good for others in HIS name.

Titus 2: 14- who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

- a. The Christian is eager to do good deeds.
- b. The Christian's sanctified life points the glory to the one who possess him.

C. In order to be a faithful elder, teacher or preacher of the gospel, one must teach the brethren to be eager to do good any time it is needed.

Titus 3:14- Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

1. This command is for ALL who are God's people.
2. Good deeds are to be prioritized according to need.
3. Those who are not active in doing good are "unfruitful."

V. Christians are willing to sacrifice to help those in need.

A. In the N.T. church people sacrificed to care for each other.

1. **Read ... Acts 2: 44- 45**

2. **Read ... Acts 4: 32-37**

B. Giving to the needs others often requires sacrifice.

1. **Read ... II Cor. 8: 1-8**

2. Via the Ephesian brethren we are instructed :

a. **Eph. 4:28- He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.**

b. The motivation for our industriousness is to be able to share and to assist.

3. This same command is repeated to the Ephesian elders in :

Acts 20: 35- "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

CONCLUSION :

A. There will always be evil in the world. (events & people)

B. Evil affects all people ... good and bad alike.

1. Every disaster effects some good people.

2. Introspection is always good, but evil does not mean you are being judged.

C. How we respond to evil reflects our character :

1. It demonstrates our faith in God.

2. It demonstrates the measure of our love.

D. Our response to evil events enables us to glorify God.

1. We are the representatives of Christ on the earth.

2. Seeing us is the only view of Jesus people will get.

**** What is OUR response to the current disaster telling people about God's compassion for those who are suffering as a result of it ?**

INVITATION :