

4-30-17 Message
HOW MEN RECONCILE IN THEIR MINDS GOD'S LOVE AND HUMAN SUFFERING
THEY THINK IT STRANGE THAT MEN SUFFER

I Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

I Peter 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

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I Peter 4:16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

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I Peter 4:18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

I Peter 4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Intro:

One of the greatest mysteries and dilemmas of mankind and for many Christians is the question of why there is so much suffering in the world, and then how it can be that the Bible teaches that God is a loving God and still allows that suffering to take place.

As a Christian we are told:

I Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

Even though we read this, many find it hard to reconcile that our God is a God of love yet He allows pain and suffering in this life. What pain there is, some of the horrible things that people go through in this life.

Men have wrestled with this for thousands of years and they come up with various responses.

I want to share just a few of the common responses that we see in our world today.

MEN THINK IT STRANGE THAT GOD LETS US SUFFER.

As men reason through this, there are various ways men reconcile these two ideas or theological mysteries. How do we reconcile the fact that the Bible says that God is a loving God and yet we see all around us is human suffering.

- I. Some think it so strange they despair to reconcile these truths and conclude this is evidence that there is no God. They conclude that life is cruel and we live in a world where survival of the fittest is the norm and law of the universe.**

These people do not deny human suffering.

Some think it so strange. They just cannot reconcile that there is an all loving God that allows it.

So they conclude that the God of the Bible is a farce, a lie.

So they become atheists, or agnostics, or evolutionists.

Their theology says:

There is no God. Life is cruel and we live in a world where we must struggle to survive and this is all a product of the evolutionary tenet of survival of the fittest.

A. *This fares well for those who are healthy and are the fittest, and seem to be surviving well.*

The strong will justify their harsh view of life.

The strong will justify their lack of concern for others who suffer as they find ways to solve their own plight.

These are the well to do atheists who excuse their sin.
And their philosophy satisfies them because they seem to be surviving well.

In fact these people even sarcastically call religion the opium of the weak.

B. *Since in their mind there is no God, then there is no sin. This is a convenient way to justify living the way they want to.*

These are the ones who blaspheme, and whose mouths are a cesspool of ridicule, scorn, and disdain.

C. *These are people whose God is their belly.*

These are the ones who applaud that it is unconstitutional to say the Pledge of Allegiance contesting and being offended by the statement that we are one nation under God.

How is it that we must respect the opinion of an atheist, but if a Christian is offended he has no rights. If a Christian is offended that an atheistic model of creation without God is taught as fact in our public schools it does not matter that they are offended.

HOW FAR WE HAVE GONE FROM THE ORIGINAL INTENT OF THE FOUNDERS OF OUR NATION, WHO WROTE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, AND THE FRAMERS OF THE CONSTITUTION AND BILL OF RIGHTS WHICH SAY:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,

How is it this nation started with the presupposition of God and the 1st Amendment was written to protect the rights of people to believe in God and worship according to their conscience and now we interpret the constitution to protect us from the Bible and God.

We could quote what our nation originally stood for as follows:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The very first amendment to the constitution was written to protect a persons right to worship God according their conscience. The purpose of that Amendment was to guarantee that our government would not establish a national denominational church like Romanism, or the Episcopal church in England, and the Lutheran Church in Germany. But the concept was to have a country where all Christians could freely worship God. How is it that this amendment is now construed to mean that we must protect atheists from being offended at hearing about God! As if the meaning of the first amendment is we shall make no law acknowledging God, when the same men who wrote the constitution wrote the Bill of Rights and also wrote the Declaration of Independence and acknowledged God as the reason they were establishing this great nation!

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TODAY THE BILL OF RIGHTS, and Declaration of Independence WOULD BE CENSORED BY MANY COURTS IN OUR COUNTRY TODAY! BECAUSE THEY MAKE TOO MANY REFERENCES TO GOD! ESPECIALLY THAT GOD IS OUR CREATOR!

Who knew better how to interpret the Constitution then those who amended it, and of the 1st Amendment.. It seems acknowledging God is always politically correct in war or times of disaster, but when the smoke clears the Atheists come out of the woodwork!

Now what is sad is that by denying God and making it a law that our judiciary can make no laws based on the Bible, our nation in essence is promoting a national religion of Humanism and Atheism, which is producing:

Wholesale Sexual Perversion.
Wholesale murdering of infants.
Wholesale perversion of Justice, Equity, and Judgment!

D. THE GENESIS OF THIS NATIONAL RELIGION IS EVOLUTION

In fact what propelled Darwin into Atheism was the day he thought it strange that God allowed suffering in this life.

It was after the death of his daughter in 1851, that there was a significant turning point in his life. As he saw his daughter suffer and die this confirmed his belief that a bad world is incompatible with a good God.

Also he was inspired to turn away from God many years prior as he read the teachings of a man whose name was "Charles Lyell". Charles Lyell promoted what was known as uniformitarian geology which taught a very old earth. Lyell's theories were incompatible with Genesis, which both Lyell and Darwin knew very well. Lyell actually boasted the need to "free science from Moses". This reminds me of this verse:

I Timothy 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

Randall Keynes (a descendent of Darwin) wrote a book about Darwin's family life saying: "After Annie's death, Charles set the Christian faith firmly behind him". He abandoned his training as a Anglican Theologian and claimed to have a "moment of truth", which really was a moment of rejecting the truth!

Recently a letter came to light that was written to Francis McDermott, a committed Christian. He wrote to Darwin Nov. 23rd, 1880. His letter was recently found and is going up for auction in England.. (Interesting enough the starting bid is \$70,000.) Here is what he wrote in that letter:

McDermott wrote, "If I am to have the pleasure of reading your books,"I must feel that at the end I shall not have lost my faith in the New Testament.

'My reason in writing to you therefore is to ask you to give me a Yes or No to the question Do you believe in the New Testament.'

Darwin responded curtly:

'Dear Sir,

"I am sorry to have to inform you that I do not believe in the Bible as a divine revelation & therefore not in Jesus Christ as the son of God.

'Yours faithfully

'Ch. Darwin'

How sad it is that Charles Darwin died only a few years latter.. April of 1882. Some say that he became a Christian on his death bed. I, however, doubt it because of the clear denial in this letter.

There is no doubt that Charles Darwin is the Moses of Atheistic Humanism, a humanism 101 in our nation today!

D. How sad it is that we feed the very cancer that is destroying our nation from within.

HOW STRANGE IT IS? THEY THINK IT STRANGE THAT WE SUFFER FOR OUR CAUSE..

We allowed one atheist, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, to take prayer and Bible reading out of our public schools.

Ironically, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, her son Jon Garth Murray, and adopted daughter and granddaughter Robin Murray O'Hair died a horrible death. They were brutally murdered, dismembered, and buried.

Why is it that the media is strangely silent about their end. Maybe they are afraid that some people might say this was the judgment of God against them!

How Ironic it is that O'Hair's oldest son who she used as the reason for taking Bible and prayer out of the public school became a Christian and now is preaching the faith she sought to destroy. Again, the world is strangely silent about that also!

William Murray became a Christian in 1980. Here is a sad quote that his mother made after she learned of his conversion: Madalyn Murray O'Hair says,

"One could call this a postnatal abortion on the part of a mother, I guess; I repudiate him entirely and completely for now and all times. He is beyond human forgiveness."

Madalyn, William's daughter Robin, and William's brother Jon Garth Murray were later kidnapped and murdered by former American Atheists employee David Roland Waters in 1995.

How ironic this is. It is almost as supernatural as when Paul the Apostle got saved.

What has our nation produced from our state funded atheistic educational system? People who act like animals. Rejection of marriage as God created it. Rebellious young people. Children who go on brutal rampages and murder their fellow students and teachers without remorse. We teach people they are no different than animals and wonder why they act like animals when their survival is threatened.

II. Others believe there is a God but choose to be bitter at God and excuse themselves and even justify themselves in this bitterness.

Psalms 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

Think about this, THE BIBLE SAYS,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death;

If you have sinned you deserve WHAT? D E A T H.

Lamentations 3:39 Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?

Irony of it is this: You deserve death but you are alive.

There is no pleasant way to die. So why are we shocked as we come nearer to the end of our lives we suffer the typical aches and pains.

People want to feel justified in being bitter and angry.

For some reason they think themselves justified.

They are not foolish enough to say there is no God.
But they place themselves as being God's judge.

These people are quick to judge and make judgments.
Yet in making these judgments they condemn themselves.

THINK ABOUT THIS:

These people know there is a God, creation, etc.
Then they acknowledge there is a right and wrong.
And then they set themselves up as the standard of what is right and wrong.

Romans 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

I have heard people say things like.

Me and God ain't on speaking terms, and then go on to share some calamity that happened to them.

FINALLY THERE ARE SOME WHO RIGHTLY SEE THINGS FROM THEIR BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE.

EVENING SERVICE

As we consider our text once again tonight.

I Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

I Peter 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

We need to realize that it is not a strange and unusual thing that we as Christians should suffer in this life. Especially as we consider that our Lord and Savior suffered for us.

Why are we surprised that this life will not be a bed of roses for us? Tonight we should consider the proper attitude we should have to trials and problems that we may face in this life.

III. We should not think the sufferings of this present life strange, but we should accept by faith what answers God gives in His word the Bible about suffering in the will of God.

WE NEED TO ACCEPT BY FAITH THE ANSWERS GOD GIVES IN THE BIBLE:

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We need to believe and trust in God even through trials that we do not understand. This is where faith kicks in. Faith believes his promises. We need to be careful that we do not let the chastening of this present life turn us bitter against God.

HEB 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

How many have allowed a root of bitterness to creep up in their lives because of the suffering we experience?

1. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT PAIN AND SUFFERING HAS BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THIS WORLD BECAUSE OF THE FALL AND SIN:

Genesis 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

Lamentations 3:22 It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

Lamentations 3:39 Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?

Story of the fellow who stole a car and drove it for close to a year. One day a lady went through a red light a hit him, and he called the police to have her arrested.

So it is with many of these people who complain about their suffering. Their character is evident in crisis.

They forget they are under the condemnation of death because of sin.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Because of our Lord's mercies we are not judged immediately because of our past sins. God is longsuffering and kind, and gives us time to repent and come to him. Because there is a worse suffering that we may face some day if we do not get saved.

Jesus put it this way.

MAT 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Our Lord takes no pleasure in sending anyone to hell. He wants everyone to be saved. But salvation can not come until we repent and receive Him

Suffering in this present life is one of the key things that God allows in our lives in order to draw us to himself.

2. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT IF WE BY FAITH TRUST IN GOD THROUGH SUFFERING GOD WILL BRING GOOD OUT OF IT ALL

GOD HAS MANY MANY REASON FOR SUFFERING AND SOME REASONS WE MAY NEVER KNOW.

Suffering Can Come Upon Us As Chastening, but not always. Sometimes we bring it upon ourselves because of the way we live. Smoking. Drinking. Stealing. Etc.

Sometimes we suffer because of someone else's sin, but not always.

A preacher friend by the name of Joe Thompson was brutally murdered by a disgruntled young man. He is an example of how we may suffer because of someone else's sin.

Sometimes we suffer for our own learning, discipline, teaching.

Athlete must suffer to win. Good coach goes hard on his players.

Drill sargent puts soldiers through boot camp for their own good.

ONE COACH HAS WISELY SAID, NO PAIN NO GAIN.

Sometimes we suffer as a Christian to be like Christ in this world.

II Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Sometimes we may never know why the suffering comes but God wants us to trust him through it all.

Robert Ketchum Rom. 11:33:

God is too kind to do anything cruel.

Too wise to make a mistake.

Too deep to explain himself.

Late Dr. DeHahn:

The most cheerful people I have met, with few exceptions, have been those who had the least sunshine and the most pain and suffering in their lives. The most grateful people I have met were not those who traveled a pathway of roses all their lives through, but those who were confined, because of circumstances, to their homes, often to their beds, and had learned to depend upon God as only such Christians know how to do.

The grippers are usually, (I have observed), those who enjoy excellent health. The complainers are those who have the least to complain about, and those dear saints of God who have refreshed my heart again and again as they preached from sickbed-pulpits have been the men and women who have been the most cheerful and the most grateful for the blessings of almighty God

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Conclusion: WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE TO THIS MYSTERY?

Every Christian has the blessed hope of our Lord.

Romans 8:17 (WE ARE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Example:

My old secretary Mary Warner: for all the Physical problems she had suffered.. she was always an encouragement to me.

My father in law Hank Accardi suffered with Multiple Myeloma cancer: For all that he suffered he could still bring a smile to your face.

I'm thinking of Selwyn Schmitt: Used to bring a pillow to church. He was in so much pain it was hard for him to sit, but I never recall him missing church because of it!

Which group of people will you belong to:

1. Most here this morning are believers.
Very few of you are unbelievers.
2. But some may become part of the bitter crowd.
All because they let a root of bitterness creep up in their lives!

Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

3. We all should be the Bible Believing Crowd.

Then we can say with the Apostle Paul:

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

CONSIDER OUR COMISSION TO BE LIKE CHRIST

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Think about this:

When people say, what kind of loving God would let people suffer?

Think of this:

I Peter 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

I Peter 2:20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

I Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

Christ suffered. He knows what it is to suffer. He gave his life for us.

When we think it strange concerning the fiery trials we should realize that our Lord entered into this world.

He entered into this world of suffering.

Paul said it this way.

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Hebrews 12:4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Have we suffered like He suffered?

I am thinking of a man I went to visit in the hospital, he was suffering, and would soon die. When I came to see him he had gotten bitter at God. When I asked to pray with him he turned his back on me. How sad it is he turned, he didn't turn his back on me, he turned his back on Christ.

The Bible says, why do we think it strange that we would have to suffer in this life when God did not spare his own son from suffering. He entered into our suffering. And someday with His stripes we will be healed.

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and jointheirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

II Timothy 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

I Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

I Peter 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

We have come a long way from the mentality of those early Christians who when they were beat for witnessing of Christ they rejoiced.

They rejoiced that they were worthy to suffer for Christ.

Acts 5:40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

Acts 5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

Acts 5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

DO WE REJOICE WHEN WE SUFFER? NO, WE GRIPE.

When Paul was beaten and cast in jail we read this:

Acts 16:23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

Acts 16:24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

Acts 16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

What a difference that was, to what we have today in our Christian circles.

I remember years ago we used to visit the nursing home every Sunday. There was a little lady at the nursing home who used to be a faithful member of the Hickory Street Baptist Church. Her name was Mrs. Cunningham. She was Welsh, and no doubt was a by product of that great 1904/1905 Welsh revival many years ago. We would stop in and see her and say Mrs. Cunningham how are you doing? She said I am doing great. We would always say, where are you going to go when when you die.. She would always say I'm going to heaven.. And we

would always give a hearty AMEN! Then we would say would like us to sing a song for you and she always said sing What a Friend I have In Jesus. Every Sunday it was the same. There she lay, both legs amputated, bed ridden, could hardly move, yet always smiling, always having the joy of the Lord, always encouraging us and ministering to us. Where you going Mrs Cunningham when you die.. She would smile and say .. WELL TO HEAVEN, OF COURSE. and we would all Amen!

I don't see that very often in Christians today. We have lost the ability to Rejoice in suffering. We have lost the ability to count it all joy when we fall into diverse temptations. We need to get our first love back!

Every Sunday we would say the same thing, where you going to go Mrs. Cunningha? She would say with a smile, I'm going to heaven. Sing for me WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS, and then we would always give a hearty AMEN! AMEN! Every week the same thing.

They one Sunday we had a large group of Bible College Students with us and We said, How are you doing Mrs Cunningham and she smiled and said I am doing great. I said to her are you going to heaven some day and she smiled and said with that old Welsh accent, Well you know I've got friends in both places, and a young college student friend gave a hardy Amen! and I elbowed him as she gave us a mischievous smile with the hospital sheets tight to her neck. And then we sang to her "WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS." In fact that is my last recollection of Mrs. Cunningham. Today I am sure all her suffering is over and she is with her precious Friend, Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.