

# **“Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?”**

## **Sermon Reflection Questions November 1, 2009**

### **Job - Week 1 of 2, Unlocking the Old Testament**

In my experience in pastoral ministry the question that I get asked most frequently is, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” This question comes up in many different forms, sometimes it is while a person is going through a very difficult time personally and they want to know why they are going through this time. Sometimes the question comes up when we see the suffering of innocent people around the world. The truth of the matter is that there are no easy answers, nor is there a single answer. We see in scripture that people suffer for a variety of reasons and we see God’s activity is different in every situation.

When we think of suffering in the Bible we probably think of the story of Job. No place in the scriptures is suffering addressed in as honest and sometimes gut wrenching form as the book of Job. We will spend two weeks looking at the suffering through the eyes of Job. The first week we will address the overall question of why there is suffering in the world and in our lives and how God works in our lives through that suffering. The second week we will focus on how to approach suffering when we experience it and how we can learn from God in the midst of our suffering.

1. I do think that the most frequently asked question about the Christian faith is “How can a good and loving God allow such suffering?”

a. Have you ever asked that question? What situation prompted this question?

b. Has someone ever asked that question of you? What situation prompted them to ask you this question?

c. What conclusions did you come to when addressing this question?

2. Read Job chapters 1 and 2 and Job 19:1-24. What were the various ways in which Job suffered?

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3. From the message I listed three basic reasons for suffering. These are listed below. In your own words describe these three reasons for suffering? When in your own life or in the lives of others have you personally seen these three types of suffering?

a. Punishment and/or consequences of sin (Numbers 12:10-12, Exodus 20:5)

b. To rid us of sin (Zechariah 13:9, Hebrews 12:5-7)

c. To increase faith, hope and intimacy with the Lord (Romans 5:3-5)

4. Also in the message we talked about the active versus passive will of God as it relates to suffering.

a. Describe the difference between the two types of suffering.

b. Read again Job chapters 1 and 2. How would you describe the suffering that Job is experiencing?

5. In the message we also looked at the positive results that come about from suffering. These are listed below. For each one of these, describe the results in your own words as well as times in your life or in the lives of others where you have seen these results manifest.

a. It allows us to identify with others in their suffering.

b. It gives God's people an opportunity to serve those who are suffering. (Job 2:11-13)

c. It can increase our confidence and trust in the Lord. (Job 19:25-27, 28:28)

6. Where are you currently seeing suffering? If it is in your own life how might the story of Job be an encouragement? If it is in the life of someone else how might you respond to their suffering?