

So What About 2.0- Part 2: Pain and Suffering

I. ME

- A. Welcome/Online/So What about?
- B. Series
 1. Important to ask questions
 2. If this Jesus stuff is real it should be able to hold up to any question.
 3. Have to be willing to find an answer... not just reinforce opinions
- C. Series won't answer everything question
 1. Hopefully create a **framework** through which we can discover answers together.
 2. A framework that lets us explore any new questions we encounter.

II. WE

1. **One of the most difficult questions humans have to answer is why is there pain and suffering.**
 1. Every belief system has tried to answer this question
 2. Interested in a comparison? Watch last year's online.
2. I think often this is seen as THE most difficult for Xians.
 1. If God is real, all-powerful, and all loving why do we suffer?
 2. Either he's not powerful enough to do anything about suffering so not really much of a God
 3. Or he doesn't care about it and is more Devil than God.
 4. Or (what many have concluded) he's just not real.
3. Legitimate question.
 1. But it's a difficult question...
 2. We often get scared/uncomfortable when we can't think of or find an easy answer right away...

4. And therefore, often, the church ignores it.
 1. Making people feel like they aren't allowed to ask it...
 2. Or you just don't have enough faith or you've done bad things and you just lay in the bed you've made. (KARMA)
 3. Just makes the pain worse.
5. Truth is... **Pain and suffering are real and deserve a real answer.**
6. Not a new question.
 1. This is not a question philosophers came up with or atheists came up with to fight xians.
7. And this is not a question God wants us to shy away from.
 8. **God wants us to ask questions.**
 9. He encourages us to ask it!
 10. One example-600 BC **Habakkuk 1:2-4**
 11. Can you relate?
 12. Ever experienced or seen something like this and wondered why God doesn't do something?
 13. **Baby John.**
14. Pain is real. And it needs more than a philosophical answer
 1. Or a catchy saying like... everything has a reason.
 2. And honestly... real pain needs more than just having bible verses thrown at it.
 3. When you're diagnosed with cancer, or a loved one dies, a tsunami kills thousands of people, or someone hurts you through no fault of your own.
 4. There's no ANSWER that will make anyone FEEL better in those moments
 5. But maybe we can find a different way of looking at pain and looking for an answer.

15. The answer to pain and suffering must be personal b/c pain and suffering are personal.

III. GOD

- A. So our root question: If God loves us why does he let us suffer?
- B. We have to start at the beginning of the question... Is there proof that God loves us?
- C. And the answer is... you guessed it... yes
 - 16. There are millions of proofs... but the one that matters most to the question of pain and suffering is Jesus.
 - 17. **Jesus is proof that God loves you.**
 - 18. It might sound too simple and easy... so let's look at the details.
- D. Jesus existed.
 - 1. He claimed to be God
 - 2. He taught that God loved us like a true heavenly Father.
 - 3. For both of those the religious leaders hated him.
 - 4. Jesus said that he had come to rescue humanity
 - 5. He said that to do that he would have to die but would rise again in three days.
 - 6. Then he died.

- 7. Everyone thought he would do exactly what everyone does when they die... stay dead.
- 8. He didn't. Came back to life like he said he would.
- 9. Hundreds of people saw him, talked to him, ate with him.
- 10. This isn't some legend that grew over hundreds of years.
- 11. This information comes from eye-witness accounts that were written down while the eye-witnesses were still alive.
- 12. Does God love you?
- 13. No matter what happens to you or around you...The framework to look through is the historical fact of Jesus.
- E. So again if God loves us... why do we suffer?
- F. Two types of suffering
 - 1. Suffering caused by evil...people.
 - 2. Suffering caused by "nature"
 - 3. Again... Jesus answers both
- G. Why does God allow evil?
 - 19. **God allows evil b/c God loves us.**
 - 20. What?!
 - 21. God loves us enough to give us freedom
 - 22. There is no love without freedom.
 - 23. It's the basis of every loving relationship
- H. Dark side of freedom is that we are free to hurt ourselves and others.
 - 1. Sin / Evil

- I. So why doesn't God destroy evil?
 - 1. To destroy all evil he would have to either take away freedom (love) or destroy all evil doers
 - 2. So destroy them!
 - 3. You and Me
 - 4. Just as you've been hurt... you've also caused hurt.
 - 5. **We all want justice until it's pointed at us.**
 - 6. So God doesn't destroy evil b/c he loves us.

- J. That makes sense... so what about natural disasters?
 - 1. If God is loving, why does he allow natural disasters, diseases, meaningless accidents that kill millions?
 - 2. Honest answer... I don't know... we don't know... BUT let's use the framework of LOVE.
 - 3. We know b/c of the historical fact of Jesus that God DOES love us... loves the world.

- K. So we can know everything he does and allows is b/c he loves us.
 - 24. We might not understand, ever...
 - 25. But **just because we can't imagine a good reason for God to allow suffering doesn't mean there isn't one.**

- 26. Baby shots.**

- 27. And since God loves us... we know that he has a good reason.

- 28. **Autumn-** If you knew what I know you would have *asked* me to do what I did.

IV. YOU

- 29. Jesus is the answer to all questions of pain and suffering

- 30. Does God understand what I'm going through?**
 - 1. God doesn't just know our suffering... God knows what it is to suffer.
 - 2. Jesus Example- Death, Disease, Injustice, Torture, hunger, loneliness, being misunderstood by family and friends, etc.

- 31. Am I suffering b/c God has left me?**
- 32. Matthew 28:20b.**
- 33. Pain makes you feel alone... isolated.
- 34. Jesus says... if you are my follower you are never alone.

- 35. Why doesn't God do something about all the evil and pain and suffering?**
 - 36. He did.
 - 37. Jesus took the pain of sin and death so we don't have to
 - 38. What would you do to take away the pain of your child?
 - 39. Give it to me I'll carry it
 - 40. Dad in car with bee.**

- 41. Jesus' resurrection is proof that suffering and death are not final.**

- 42. So what is he waiting for... **2 Peter 3:9**
- 43. Often pain can be a reminder that this life is short and none of this will last forever.
 - 1. It's a way for God to get our attention to get us to ask bigger questions and search for the answers only he can provide

- 2. C.S. Lewis- "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to arouse a deaf world."**

44. See he doesn't just say... well your life will suck but someday you can go to heaven.
45. **God gives our pain meaning and purpose.**
46. He uses it for his ultimate good
47. Jesus gives a better answer than, "Everything happens for a reason."
48. Every painful experience you go through is being used to make something unimaginably better and greater.
49. Through Jesus pain and suffering are never in vain.
50. We might not see it in the moment... but God is using our pain and suffering to create something beautiful.

51. Romans 8:28

52. So If God loves me why does he let me suffer...

53. B/c of Jesus we can say...

54. **"God loves me. I am not alone. My pain has a loving reason. It is not pointless. It will be used for a good I might not be able to imagine right now."**

V. WE

55. Every belief system and philosophy has tried to answer the question of pain and suffering.
56. But pain is not philosophical, it is not just an illusion of our senses.
57. It is real. It is always personal.
58. The only answer that redeems our pain and suffering, that gives it purpose, and meaning and value... has to be personal
59. Jesus is the only one who offers a real, look you in the eye honest personal answer.
60. He knows it, he's experienced it, he will redeem it, and he will end it.

61. Rev. 21:4

62. The answer to pain and suffering is personal because the answer is a person.

Questions

1. What is something from this message that stands out to you? Maybe it's something you agree with or understand differently. Why do you think/feel this way?
2. What are some things that have helped you move through times of pain and suffering? What has NOT helped?
3. We often think our pain and suffering is a result of God's anger and punishment. Read John 9:2-3 Luke 13:1-5, John 9:2-3, and John 16:33. How would you answer a friend who asked you, "Why am I going through this? Is God mad at me?"
4. What are you currently feeling pain and suffering from in your life? How can your group pray for and support you?