

“Why Do Bad Things Happen? Part -1

Sermon Reflection Questions – February 12, 2012

Sermon Series “God Questions: Real Questions – Authentic Faith”

The most frequently asked “God Question” has to be why do bad things happen? If God is all loving and all-powerful then why do bad things happen? This is a very important and delicate question as we have real painful experiences and we see real suffering in our world and we don’t want to give answers that ignore or minimize the difficulties we face. For the next three weeks we will look at different facets of this question.

1. Has there ever been a time in your life when this question, “Why do bad things happen?” was of personal significance to you, where you had a particular circumstance in your life that caused you to ask this question?
2. I mentioned in the message that there are two types of causes of bad things. The first is human actions, where people will do bad things to others. The second are “natural” causes, where bad things happen to an individual or a community without there being a human agent behind the cause. Can you think of examples of both types of bad things and explain what you see as the difference?
3. In this message we are primarily looking at the second type of “bad things”, those that are caused by nature. One important realization is that the world that we live in and know and see is not what it was originally meant to be. Read Genesis 1:20-31 about the ways things were to be in creation, also read Revelation 21:1-5 about the way things will be when God creates the new heaven and the new earth. How are these pictures of the world different than what we experience now?
4. Since the world is not as it was originally created to be, what happened according to Genesis 3:17-19 and Romans 8:18-23? How might these, and other scriptures, help us to give an explanation as why we see a variety of bad things that just seem to happen in our world?
5. The main question that comes up is then the “why” question. Why does God allow evil and suffering if He is powerful enough to stop it? Why is it so difficult to answer the “why” question? Read also Job’s understanding of why he couldn’t fully answer the “why” question about his own suffering (Job 42:1-6). How does Job’s understanding (or rather his understanding that he couldn’t understand) help us with the why question?
6. This is just the first of three weeks on this question of why bad things happen. But given what you have heard so far, how might you give some answers to someone who was exploring the faith as to why we see suffering and evil in the world?