

## 22. Why God?

September 7, 2008

Yesterday morning, I got a phone call from a lieutenant of Pima County Sheriff's Dept. He asked me to contact one of his personnel who was diagnosed with a throat cancer which now it spreads to his lung and liver. He turned out to be a believer in Christ. We had a nice conversation over the phone. I prayed with him for God's miraculous healing upon his health, yet we asked for His will be done.

He told me that he didn't know the Lord until four years ago. His heart is fired up to serve Him and live for Him. Now he got this terrible news.

Another story:

Less than a month ago, Pastor Greg Laurie's son Christopher Laurie had a car accident on a California highway and was killed instantly. I was told that he was a very gifted graphic designer for his father's church Harvest Christian Fellowship.

Christopher was a backslider for a while but he came back to the Lord about two years ago. He was survived by his pregnant wife and a little daughter who cannot understand why her daddy is not coming back home to her anymore.

It is a general tendency for people who are going through tough times to blame God and demand answers from Him with questions like these:

"If you are a sovereign God, why did you let this kind of thing happen?"  
Or simply, "Why, God?"

It is one thing to accept a consequence of sin as some sort of a poetic justice, but being on the receiving end of a sudden disaster while you are doing what is right in the eyes of God is hard to accept. Even mature Christians can have the same question as unbelievers would when they face undeserved sufferings.

The difference between a believer and unbeliever is that the believer knows that God caused all things work together for good to those who love Him, to those who are the called according to His purpose. Unbeliever does not have that hope.

### A. ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER

*Romans 8:28 And (1) we know that (2) God causes (3) everything to work together (4) for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. – NASB*

As you can tell, I just quoted this same verse from NASB rather than NKJV. For KJV and NKJV are lacking two very important words – 'God causes'.

We will look at each segment at a time.

#### 1) We know that

The Greek word for "we know that" is 'eidon'. It describes "known fact", not wishful thinking – something we can have an unshakable confidence in, despite our circumstances or feelings.

Apostle Paul wants to remind us to trust in God and His plan in hard times. When it seems like He's a thousand miles away, we don't need to wonder or guess if He's with us. He is, and all events work together for our ultimate good. We know that He is in control, regardless of what we think or feel. So let's remember what we already

know of God through the history revealed in the Scriptures as well as our own encounters with our God through His faithfulness.

With God, no day is ever wasted. No disappointment is outside His appointment. No surprise to us ever catches Him off guard. He never gets off course, never forgets the game plan, never contradicts His overall purpose for us.

*Philippians 1:6* being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ

*Jeremiah 29:11* For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

A pastor was traveling in a train going across the Hudson River. He went to the dining car to have a dinner and had to share a table with an atheist. The atheist noticed that this pastor was reading his Bible while he was eating the dinner, New England Cod fish that has a lot of bones.

The atheist couldn't hold it any longer and he blurted out, "Do you actually believe everything in that Book Bible?" The pastor calmly answered, "Why yes, I do. All of it."

The atheist got irritated by his answer and he did his best to corner the pastor, "Are you telling me that you believe the creation garbage, parting the Red Sea and Jonah in the fish's stomach, all that? What do you do with all the problem passages that you cannot get an answer, huh?"

The pastor smiled and pointed out to his half-eaten fish and answered, "I do with those difficult passages in the same way I do with this fish. I eat the fish and leave the bone for some fool to choke on it."

I don't know everything about God's plan and the Bible. As a matter of fact, I know a very tiny portion of it. But I do know that He is always faithful and He not only makes promises, but He also keeps His promises. Never once, has He broken His promises. I wouldn't trade in what I know about God for what I do not know.

## **2) We know that God causes**

Who controls everything? God does. Not us, not nature. God orchestrates history. What a comforting thought!

If we were in control, humanity would be headed for imminent destruction. Why? May I remind you that mankind has armed itself to the teeth with a stockpile of 60,000 thermonuclear bombs that gives the human race the power to destroy our planet 17 times over. If nature were in control, our prognosis wouldn't be much better. But the Lord is at the helm of history, steering the ship toward His divine purpose.

*Romans 9:21* Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use? NIV  
God is the potter, we are the clay. The potter is in charge, and the clay is an object in process. We can take comfort that God personally handles every situation. Even when we suffer, He can make something useful of it. Be encouraged. Since God is in control, He will accomplish His purposes in our lives.

### 3) We know that God causes everything to work together

What does apostle Paul say here? Certain things, some things or even most things? With our limited logic, we say, "I am sure that there are actions and consequences that God cannot or will not use for our good. Adultery, for example. Or child molestation? Or what about the Hurricanes Gustav that hit the Gulf Coast a few days ago? Certainly He would have a hard time squeezing any good out of those tragedies."

Sins, natural disasters – we tend to see these as our enemies. But God often uses them to turn us toward Him. God hates sin, but once it has been committed, He can use it for good. God hates death and pain, but He can use it to have a powerful, positive influence on people. Yes, God can and does use all things for our good.

We may not see the good in it right away – or ever in this life. We may not be able to put all the pieces of God's puzzle together. But because we are in Christ, we can assess all of life as somehow beneficial to our maturity in Him.

The Bible says that God causes everything to work together. Then why is it for us to be concerned about God's providence? Here are three reasons:

- **Selfishness**

When God allows difficulties in our path, like financial troubles or personal loss, our first response is usually, "Why me, Lord?" Not that we really want to know His reasons or how our suffering might glorify Him. Rather, we want to know why He's blocking our way or why He doesn't choose someone else. It's a cry for Him to get out of our way so we can "do our own thing".

- **Control**

We cherish our lives and dreams, and the thought of relinquishing the control of those things to others – especially God – frightens us. Let's face it. All of us like to be in control, so that we can do everything exactly the way we want, not necessarily the way God wants.

- **Pride**

"God has given us free will, so why shouldn't we use it?" we ask. "We're not puppets on a string! We've got minds of our own!" True. But we are dumb sheep who need the guidance and discipline of a Good Shepherd who will lead us in the way that's best for us and for His purposes. That's humbling and a blow to our "I-can-do-it-on-my-own" mentality. Sheep without a Good Shepherd is about to lose his life or get lost completely.

Sodium and chlorine, individually they are harmful to human if they get injected to inside of human body. But when these two elements become one, it turns out to be sodium chloride which is table salt that enhances the taste of foods. Just like the things that happen in our lives can be very harmful alone. But when it gets mixed with God's plan, they work together for us.

### 4) We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Notice, the verse doesn't say that all things will feel good. It doesn't say that they will seem good. It doesn't even say that all things are good. But it does tell us that they will work together for His children's good.

And it's important to note that this promise applies only to Christians. This is a necessary limitation to those who put their trust in Him.

Ultimately, we have to trust that God loves us and wants the best for us. We're "called according to His purpose." He didn't save us and then leave us to fend for ourselves. Our redemption, our whole life, fits into His eternal plan. Knowing that will keep us from seeing hardship as a random mess. If we doubt His benevolence, doubt will creep into every trouble we face, plaguing our spiritual lives.

Faith is the antidote to doubt. And while the Bible tells us to walk by faith and not by sight, we should not walk as though we were completely blind. Our faith is not blind. We have the proof of Christ who lived in the flesh and died on the cross to redeem us while we were still living in rebellion against God. He suffered more than we ever will, and He did it because He loves us. His purpose is good – good for us as well as for His glory.

*Mark 4:35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side.'*

Here we find an interesting story in which Jesus invited the disciples, some of whom were seasoned fishermen, to join Him on a little boat trip across the Sea of Galilee. But on the way over, they encountered a radical storm.

Now the question would arise, "Did Jesus know that a storm was coming?" The answer is yes. In fact, you might even say that it was a part of His curriculum that day. It was all part of teaching the disciples to believe what they claimed to believe.

We don't want to make light of what these disciples were experiencing, because I'm sure this was a very harsh storm. Several on board had seen many storms on the Sea of Galilee. So it had to be a very difficult storm for the disciples to be so gripped by fear.

According to Mark's Gospel, the waves were breaking over the boat and filling it with water. The disciples were very afraid, but they didn't have to be. Jesus had made a significant statement they apparently had forgotten about: "Let us go to the other side." And when God says, "Let us go to the other side," it means you will get to the other side. He didn't say it would be smooth sailing. He didn't say it would be an easy trip. But He did say, "Let us go to the other side."

Often we are gripped by fear and cease to think logically when we forget God's Word to us. That is exactly what happened to the disciples. But Jesus was on board with them, and He was there to see them through.

## **B. APPLICATIONS**

**1) While we face the storms of life, they are allowed by our God to transform us into being more like Jesus. Remember it.**

**2) It is Jesus' promise to us that He is with us all the time. Count on it.**

*Hebrews 13:5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

**3) Since everything is under God's control, don't say to one another, "Good luck." Say, "God bless you."**