

Why bad things happen to God's people

Many people are asking tough questions today. I Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

Why the tsunami?

Why Darfur in the Sudan?

Why the civil wars in Africa?

Why an Adolf Hitler?

Why earthquakes and floods?

Why sickness and suffering?

I have just returned from visiting the BMW in Ambon. All over the city are destroyed buildings. I learned that 30,000 buildings were destroyed, over 25,000 homes and more than 400 churches burned down. Over 22,000 Christians were killed and the Christians lost about 50% of their villages and gardens to the Moslems. Why did this happen? Is God angry?

JOB COULD HAVE ASKED HARD QUESTIONS

No one who ever lived had more reason to ask hard questions than Job. Nobody ever suffered like Job did. He lost all of his children, his wealth and his health in a matter of two days. There is much we can learn from him about victory in life's most difficult hours. His story is one of the most incredible accounts in Scripture. It is set in the days of the ancient patriarchs, and it reveals the cosmic spiritual struggle that goes on in heaven behind the scenes of this life.

Job 1:20-22, "At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

ARE WE APPROACHING THE END?

Is Jesus about to come? Was God punishing New Orleans? What about those who are predicting the soon return of Christ? Did not Jesus warn us not to set dates? How should we Christians answer the questions people are asking everywhere?

1 Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:."

BAD THINGS DO HAPPEN TO GOD'S PEOPLE.

The Scripture also tells us that Job was a righteous man who loved God, goodness, and his family. The King James text says that he "shunned" evil, meaning that he despised it with all his heart.

SATAN IS THE ENEMY OF THE SAINTS.

In the middle of Job chapter 1, we read that Satan appeared before God and complained that Job served Him only because God had so abundantly blessed him. Satan then challenged God to come against Job and predicted that if He did, Job would turn against Him.

Instead, God told Satan,

Job 1:12, The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

In that verse, God emphasized a great spiritual truth: Satan has no power over our lives except by the permission of God. So in time, Satan took all of Job's possessions. Wealth could easily be lost in the ancient East, and so it was with Job. In one day, bandits stole all his sheep and cattle. His herds were devastated and his servants slaughtered. Then, before the day was over, all of his children were killed by a desert storm when the house they were in collapsed.

THE PROPER RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY.

Devastated by these personal tragedies, Job simply responded, Job 1:21, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised

Again, Satan came before God, and the Lord pointed to Job as an example of personal integrity. But this time the devil argued that if he could touch Job's body with illness, Job would turn against God. This time Satan struck Job with a terrible disease. Job came down with boils which covered his entire body from head to foot. He had not only lost what he loved most- his children- and what he valued most- his possessions- but now he lost his health as well.

IT MAY GET WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER.

As Job's plight worsens, we find Job sitting in a pile of ashes, pathetically scraping himself with a broken piece of pottery. He had been reduced to the trash pile of life. Can you imagine his suffering and pain? Broken and rejected, he sits there all alone.

Even Job's wife and friends could not understand his agony. His wife cried out in frustration for Job to curse God and die (Job 2:9). "Why don't you just get it over with?" is what she would have said in our terminology. "Why fight it? It's not worth it!" But Job replied, Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? (verse 10). And Job's friends, who had come to console him, eventually ended up accusing him of hiding some secret sin. Their consolation turned to condemnation and criticism. Just when Job thought things could not possibly get worse, they did... his wife and friends had given up on him.

WE MUST TRUST GOD IN THE DARKNESS.

But in all this, Job did not let his faith in God waver. In spite of his personal pain, he learned to keep on keeping on by the grace of God.

Job 13:15, " Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face.

IT IS OFTEN DARKEST BEFORE THE DAWN.

The real question for each of us to ask ourselves is, How are we doing with our problems? Has Satan ever bombarded you and gotten you down? Has he ever pulled the rug out from under your life and left you in a heap of ashes? If he has, this is no time to quit. We all get down at times. When we do get down, we get lonely and start to wallow in self-pity, feeling like nobody understands our pains and our problems.

Hang onto the Promises of God.

Job's greatest source of strength was this: He believed in the promises of God. He knew in the depth of his heart that he could trust God to be true to what He had promised and bring him through his troubles. There is absolutely nothing that can occur in our lives that God has not promised to see us through.

In Psalm 121:1-2 we read, " I lift up my eyes to the hills--where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth"

Rely on the Provision of God.

A promise is only as good as the one who makes it. Our hope is not just in the promises of God but in the Person of God Himself. He is the one who stands behind His promises.

There is an old spiritual which says, "He's got the whole world in his hands." And indeed He does. God is the creator and sustainer of life.

Job was able to endure life's calamities because he had a Provider who was greater than His provisions- God Himself. Job was not trusting in his riches; he was trusting in his God. He was not

relying on his friends to see him through; he was relying on the provision of his God to meet his needs.

NOTHING IS TOO HARD FOR THE LORD.

True faith will face any disaster with the confidence that God will see us through it. The Bible promises us,

I Corinthians 2:9, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him".

God knows exactly what we need and when we need it. He is the great Provider of all our needs, but He wants us to learn to trust Him to make provision for us.

Never give up

As a young Christian, I heard a preacher tell a story that teaches us to persevere through life's difficulties. He told the story of two frogs that were hopping through a barn where a farmer was milking a cow. When the farmer finished, he got up to care for one of the animals and left the bucket of milk sitting on the floor of the barn.

The two frogs came upon the bucket and wondered what was inside. One suggested that the other hop into the bucket to investigate.

"I'm not going alone," he replied. "Very well," responded the other frog, "I'll jump in if you will."

Well, they both took a big leap and landed in the milk. At first, they were splashing around and having a great time until they realized they couldn't get out of the pail. Then, as they began to tire from swimming around, one of the frogs said, "We might as well give up. We're never going to get out of here!"

"Oh no," said the other frog. "We can't give up now. We have to keep on trying."

"Not me," said the first frog. "I've had enough. I'm going to give up." Down he went into the milk and drowned.

The other frog kept splashing and kicking, splashing and kicking, until finally, to his amazement, the milk began to curdle, and after a while it became a plug of butter. Then the frog hopped from the top of that plug of butter and jumped out of the bucket.

Remember, a child of God never gives up. He keeps on kicking because he knows God is in control. And God will always make a way out for those who trust Him and never give up."

Realize the Price Has Already Been Paid.

We can learn to endure the problems of life because the price that is necessary for our deliverance has already been paid. God knew that we could never save ourselves. He also knew that we could never pay for our redemption. Therefore, He paid the price for us. You see, becoming a Christian is a free offer of God's grace, but the cost of our salvation isn't cheap. It cost God the sacrifice of His dear Son, who died for our sins that we might be set free.

In a very real sense, God paid for our salvation. I believe it is time we realized what Jesus did for us.

Isaiah 53:5, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities".

Keep your Eyes on your Redemer!

Job understood that his ultimate destiny was not the ashes or even the grave. Despite all his troubles, he said in Job 19:25-26, " I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;

Love Lifted Me

I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore
Very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more
But the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry
From the waters lifted me, now save am I
Love lifted me! (even me!) Love lifted me! (even me!)
When nothing else could have
Love lifted me - Repeat

All my heart to Him I give, ever to Him I cling
In His blessed presence live, ever His praises sing
Love so mighty and so true merits my soul's best songs
Faithful, loving service, too, to Him belongs
Love lifted me! (even me!) Love lifted me! (even me!)
When nothing else could have
Love lifted me
Repeat

Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves
He will lift you by His love, out of the angry waves
He's the Master of the sea, billows His will obey
He your saviour wants to be- be saved today
Love lifted me! (even me!) Love lifted me! (even me!)
When nothing else could have
Love lifted me
Repeat