

*If God is so good and so great,
why does life hurt so much?*

An introduction to the problem and purpose of pain

- I. The problem of pain
 - A. June 13, 1982: A story
 - B. Pain presents a...
 - 1. Personal problem
 - 2. Theological problem
 - a. C. S. Lewis
 - b. Peter Kreeft
 - c. Summary
 - C. How different philosophies deal with the problem of pain
 - 1. God does not exist. Atheism
 - 2. God is not all powerful. Dualism, Rabbi Kushner
 - 3. God exists but cares very little about what is happening in the world. Deism
 - 4. Pain is an illusion. Christian Science
 - 5. God exists. He is great. He is good. Pain is real. Christianity (Judaism, Islam)
 - D. Important convictions/realities
 - 1. The Bible is God's word.
 - 2. God is sovereign. Nothing happens apart from His sovereign will.
 - a. Sovereign will
 - b. Moral will
 - c. Individual will

3. The pain in our lives always has purpose.
4. Pain is real, but paradoxical.

What is hurtful, may be helpful. What seems bad, may be good.
What seems evil, may be

II. The Purpose of Pain

- A. #1: God calling us. Pain as God's megaphone

"God whispers to us in our pleasures...but shouts in our pains. It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world." --C. S. Lewis

- B. #2: God shaping us. Pain that develops our character. James 1-24; Roman 5:3-4

"Sometimes God lets us walk through the dark valleys because that's where the fertilizer is." --Barbara Johnson

- C. #3: God correcting us. Pain that disciplines us. Hebrews 12: 5b, 10b; Haggai 1:5-6

God is our heavenly Father, not our heavenly Grandfather.

- D. #4: God judging us. Pain that punishes us. Genesis 19:24; Numbers 16:32; James 44:23; Romans 1:24-28

- E. #5: God humbling us. Pain that makes us rely on God and His grace. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; 2 Corinthians 1:8-9

"God is often obliged to destroy all our own earthly chariots before He can bring us to the point of mounting into His..." --Hannah Whitall Smith

- F. #6: God positioning us. Pain that accomplishes a greater good. Genesis 50:20; Acts 8:1; Acts 18:1-3; Philippians 1:12-14

- G. #7: God tenderizing us: Pain that increases our compassion for others. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

- H. #8: God displaying us. Our response to pain as an example for others. James 5:10-11; Job 13:15; 1 Peter 2:21-23

- I. #9: God shining through us. Pain for God's glory. John 9:3; Job 1:21b

- J. #10: God re-directing us. Pain that focuses us on the eternal rather than the temporal. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; Romans 8:18

“My own experience is something like this...C. S. Lewis

- K. #11: God protecting us. Pain (death) that spares us from evil. Isaiah 57:1
- L. #12: God taking us home. Pain that gives us rest and reward. Isaiah 57:2; 2 Timothy 4:8; Philippians 1:21

III. Practical tips

- A. Barbara Johnson: “When grief is the freshest...”
- B. Four misplaced viewpoints to avoid.
 - 1. “What pain?”
 - 2. “If only your faith were stronger...”
 - 3. “Repent, you sinner.”
 - 4. “Pain is not God’s will in any sense.”
- C. The five dimensions of pain
 - 1. Spiritual
 - 2. Physical
 - 3. Emotional
 - 4. Social
 - 5. Financial
- D. The five (emotional) stages of dealing with death and dying (grief)
 - 1. Denial
 - 2. Anger
 - 3. Bargaining
 - 4. Depression
 - 5. Acceptance

IV. The end of pain

A. The great transition

B. A new order of things

1. New heaven, new earth. Revelation 21:1

2. No more death, mourning, crying or pain. Revelation 21:1

3. New bodies. 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

C. The Great Story begins

D. Conclusion