

Tough Questions – Why Does God Let People Get Away With Being Bad?

Hey, Tim Perry, pastor of Spiritual Discovery at Christ Community Church coming at you with Week 37 of Tough Questions.

Well, we've all been reading through the Book of Job and one of the questions that keep coming up in Job is the issue of innocent suffering. Job puts an interesting spin on this part of the way through the book when he looks around him and he wonders, "God, do you let bad people get away with being bad?" So let's see what Job has to say about it and then I'll have a few thoughts for you – Job 21:4:18:

- 4 "Is my complaint directed to a human being?
Why should I not be impatient?*
- 5 Look at me and be appalled;
clap your hand over your mouth.*
- 6 When I think about this, I am terrified;
trembling seizes my body.*
- 7 Why do the wicked live on,
growing old and increasing in power?*
- 8 They see their children established around them,
their offspring before their eyes.*
- 9 Their homes are safe and free from fear;
the rod of God is not on them.*
- 10 Their bulls never fail to breed;
their cows calve and do not miscarry.*
- 11 They send forth their children as a flock;
their little ones dance about.*
- 12 They sing to the music of timbrel and lyre;
they make merry to the sound of the pipe.*
- 13 They spend their years in prosperity
and go down to the grave in peace.*
- 14 Yet they say to God, 'Leave us alone!
We have no desire to know your ways.*
- 15 Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
What would we gain by praying to him?'*
- 16 But their prosperity is not in their own hands,
so I stand aloof from the plans of the wicked.*
- 17 "Yet how often is the lamp of the wicked snuffed out?
How often does calamity come upon them,
the fate God allots in his anger?*
- 18 How often are they like straw before the wind,
like chaff swept away by a gale?*

Have you ever felt like Job? Not only does suffering raise a question of "God – where are you in my life and do you love for me and do you care for me?" But we also start looking around at other people especially people that are bad people,

wicked people, people who don't even care about the things that we care about. And we begin to wonder, "God – are you up there – are you real? Do you know how to punish the right people or do you just punish good people? God what is up with that?" That's a cry that we all hear.

Well, God does allow suffering in our lives to help us keep our life in perspective. And if God does that, He's got some very important reasons for doing it. God doesn't always give everybody what they deserve and sometimes He gives us stuff that humanly speaking we don't deserve because God has a right to do that. God isn't going to always let the wicked get away with their wickedness. There's going to come a day when He calls all of humanity to account for what we've done, for what we've said or what we've left undone.

The writer of Psalm 73 brings some insight that Job could have benefited from. The writer of Psalm 73 is a guy called Asaph and Asaph was puzzling over the same thing. When he looked around him, he saw that it seemed like wicked people prosper and God doesn't even care. They don't care about God and they still seem to prosper, and then he says that all of this was oppressive to me – just like Job is saying that this is just wearing me out to think about it. Until, says Asaph, I went into the House of the Lord and then I understood their final destiny.

So when you think about the ultimate frame of reference for a person's life, we can't just think about the part of their life that we can see. You know Job – when he was going through his trial, felt like that trial was going to define his whole life, but it turns out in the end that it didn't. Well the same thing is true about bad people who seem to get away with being bad, we can look at a part of their life and say, hey look – they're prospering – they're doing just fine without God. But it's only a fraction of the picture – even if they live their whole life and they have a stunningly successful life and they earn a lot of money and they have a lot of reward in their life, at the end of the day, they are going to be brought into judgment before God. If they have the same kind of attitude that Job is talking about – "leave us alone God, what have we to gain from relating to you? Why should we pray a single prayer to you?" Then at the end, they are going to get what they deserve – they're going to get an eternal existence where God's excluded from their consideration.

Well, if you've had some thoughts about that – if you've ever wondered why does God let bad people get away with being bad, give me a few thoughts. Hit on the link down there and let's talk about it.

This has been Tim Perry, pastor of Spiritual Discovery at Christ Community Church. Thanks for listening.