Why? | Part 1

Lesson 7

Romans 5:12; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Galatians 6:7;

Philippians 3:10; Hebrews 12:5-6; 1 Peter 4:12-19

January 7, 2024

Why Did God Let It Happen?

INTRODUCTION

"Why God? Why?!" Most of us grow up believing that if we "live a good life," things will go well for us. When things don't go well, we wonder how a loving God can let bad things happen. We believe that "bad things happening to good people" is incompatible with a loving God.

But Jesus never promised that. He promised that if we follow Him, we will suffer, and that makes sense. If the very Son of God was humiliated, scourged, and died a horrific death on the cross, then why would we expect to have a comfortable life when we follow Him? We should be only surprised if there is no suffering.

This week's scripture describes suffering "according to God's will". (1 Peter 4:19) To not obey Jesus to try to avoid suffering would be a sin.

Let's realize that suffering for the sake of Jesus means that we're doing something right. Suffering for the purpose of suffering is worthless, but suffering for Jesus means that we are doing His will, and we are exalting Him in glory.

Memory verse: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."—James 1:2-3

Pray, and read the passages listed above. What questions or observations do you have about them?

OBSERVATION: What do the passages say?

1.	How did death enter the world? (Romans 5:12)
2.	What does a person reap? (Galatians 6:7)
3.	What allows a Christian to comfort others? (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
4.	Who does the Lord discipline? (Hebrews 12:5-6)
5.	How should Christians respond to suffering because of Christ? (1 Peter 4:13, 16)

INTERPRETATION: What do the passages mean?

1. Compare the different kinds of suffering that Christians experience (i.e., suffering due to sin vs. suffering for Christ). Compare the sources of these sufferings. What do we learn from these different kinds of suffering? (Romans 5:12; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Galatians 6:7-8; Philippians 3:10; Hebrews 12:5-6; 1 Peter 4:12-19)

2. What does our suffering for Christ have to do with Christ's suffering and his work on the cross? That is, how are they connected? (1 Peter 4:11-14)

3. Why should we respond with joy and faithful commitment when we suffer for Jesus? (1 Peter 4:16, 19)

4. What value is gained when a Christian suffers for Christ? (Galatians 6:7-8; 1 Peter 4:12-19)

APPLICATION: How do the passages apply to your life?

1. How do you tell the difference between suffering because of your sin and suffering for Jesus? How does each affect your joy and your prayer life?

2. When have you suffered because you followed Jesus? Why should this not surprise you? (1 Peter 4:12, 14, 16-19)

3. Suffering for Jesus is sometimes called a "refining fire" that separates gold from the impurities that are attached to it and leaves the gold purer than when it went into the fire. Reflect, and pray about a recent time that you suffered for Christ and had to depend on Him completely. Then write down 2-3 ways that your relationship with Christ changed. For example, how did this experience change your trust in Jesus? (1 Peter 4:19)