



COMMUNITY CHAPEL

AT AMES CREEK

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Sermon Notes

August 28th, 2005 • Pastor Mark McCartin

My Friend wants to know, "How Can a Loving God Allow Suffering?"

John 16:33

"In this world you're going to have trouble / you're going to have tribulation. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (Jesus)

Why suffering?

There is no neat & tidy simple answer.

1 Cor 13:9 & 12

"...our knowledge is imperfect... now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully..." (RSV)

While we don't have perfect knowledge on this issue, there are some things we can know.

1) God is _____ the creator of evil and suffering.

Genesis 1:31

"God saw all that He had made, and was very good."

Two kinds of evil:

moral evil

Romans 3:23

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

natural evil

Romans 8:22

"For we know that up to the present time all of creation groans with pain like the pain of childbirth." (TEV)

2) Though suffering isn't good, God can use it to accomplish _____.

God uses pain to draw people toward Christ.

2 Corinthians 7:10

"For God sometimes uses sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek eternal life. We should never regret His sending it." (LB)

God uses pain to shape our character.

Rom. 5:3

"We also rejoiced in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character, and character, hope."

Heb. 5:8

"But even though He was God's Son He learned to be obedient by means of His sufferings." (TEV)

God uses pain to lovingly discipline His children for their own good.

Heb. 12:10-11

"Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

God can accomplish something positive out of the negatives of life.

Rom. 8:28

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

Gen. 50:20

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

3) The day is coming when suffering will _____ and evil will be judged.

2 Peter 3:9

"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

4) Our suffering will pale in _____ to what God has in store for His followers.

2 Corinthians 4:17

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

Rom. 8:18

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

1 Cor. 2:9

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him."

5) We decide whether to turn bitter or to turn to God for _____ and _____.

John 16:33

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (NASB)

Psalms 34:18

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."