

Why Does a Good, Loving God Allow Pain & Suffering in the Life of His Children?

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Prologue

1. Different kinds of pain: physical, mental/emotional, spiritual. Sometimes last...
2. Sometimes self-inflicted, sometimes imposed on you. Why does God allow...?
3. Short answer to this Q: for learning purposes → transformative learning
4. Today, we will address this question and use the book of Job...
5. The Q of PS in the context of the Providence of God had been a perennial Q & subject of discussion over centuries.
 - a. It's a question that takes diff forms (why do bad things...). Does God ordain every details of our life including PS or only redeem it? The answer is yes!
 - b. You find people on both side of the fence on this.
 - c. The Q is more than just a Philo or Theo Q...it is extremely practical
 - i. It is about making sense of PS in light of God plan & how to react to it when it comes to our life
 - ii. At the end of the day, the Q is: will it make me or brake me, better or bitter. Are you going to trust God or not in the journey of PS?
6. So much to say about the topic & book of Job, we cannot possibly cover...
 - a. Only cover some reasons God allows PS
 - b. I am assuming you are familiar w/ book of Job and the double backdrop of the story here.
7. So, let's pray

Introduction (let's starts)

1. Can we learn apart PS?
 - a. No, we cannot
 - b. There are **certain things** that we can only learn through PS. This is part of life growing up...
2. We see this necessity in the life of Jesus!
 - a. PS was a regular part of Jesus life.
 - b. We read of Jesus:
 - i. Is 53:3 "man of sorrow, familiar with suffering"
 - ii. He 5:8 "although he was a son, he learnt obedience from what he suffered" → Jesus needed to leant obedience....and PS were part...
 - c. So, if necessary for Jesus, then necessary for us. If good enough for Jesus...
 - d. Something true also for Job, David, Paul, the church and us
3. There is a Δ between Books Knowledge vs first hand experience Knowledge
 - a. Books fills the mind (should not) but first hand exp transforms the heart
 - b. I can attest to this personally
 - i. When you face intense PS, it gives you a jolt that brings you to reevaluate life, Yself, purpose, etc.
 - c. PS brings humility, new perspective, new vantage point on life, empathy, it produces some effect nothing else will do

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4. Sometimes, PS is the only way God can get our attention & speak
 - a. CS Lewis famous quote: "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world"
 - b. He wants to speak but we are not listening.

So, if PS allowed for learning purposes,

What did Job learnt through PS, what was the final result/purp of his intense exp?

The answer to that question is found in Job 42:1-6

- a. The purpose & result was a first hand, personal, intimate encounters with the living God
- b. We read in Job 42: 5 → read
 - i. My ears have heard of you, but now...
 - ii. Job relationship w/ God shifted from a 2nd hand exp of God to a 1st hand exp: "hear of you" vs "my eyes have seen you"
 - iii. In the past, the focus was knowing God from others, but now it was directly
- c. This encounter is described from Ch. 38-42 where God took Job through a "tour of the universe and creation" in question form to question him on a few things and test his K and see if Job should really question God's justice
 - i. We don't know in what form this encounter took place (vision, in spirit or what) but Job was able to hear the Voice of God & understand clearly what God wanted to tell him

In this encounter, Job learnt 4 things

1. That God is very personal, a personal God

- d. Just covered that, but just want to add...
- e. Job learned we can know God personally & immediately, through His Spirit, not just through hearing from peers, other people, books, sermon
- f. Job prayed and God answered him personally. We can experience the same thing...
- g. It is possible to meet w/ God, by faith, on a daily basis and have a 1st hand personal intimate two way street relationship w/ him.
- h. This is what happened in chap 38-42

2. That God is a caring God: he deeply cares for his creation & by implication

Job himself

- a. Job discovered that God was not careless, passive or indifferent toward his prayer & his case even though this is what he came to think and feel
- b. Job was a blameless & upright servant of God (Job 1: 1)
 - i. Yet he went through tremendous PS

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1. Relational (family), physical (boils), emotional (accusation), spiritual (lost touch w/ God)
2. Was seeking understand/God w/o any answers up to ch.38
- ii. In the midst of PS, not uncommon to feel/think God is distant, silent, absent → devil loves to take us for a ride
 1. Job even came to the point of thinking God was unfair & unjust towards him Job 34:5, 40:8
- c. Then God took Job on this “tour of creation” and started to ask him few questions: 38:1-4:
 - i. “where were you when...?”
 - ii. “do you K this or do you K that?”
 - iii. “can you do this or can you do that?”
 - iv. → see list
 - v. If God cares for the raven, surely he does care for Job, you, me
- d. Through this tour, Job understood God was actively, personally and intimately involved in his creation, and in the operation of the universe, and the life of his creature....including Job himself too
- e. God is involved like a good father/mother does for their children, even when sometimes allowing PS to enter their life for a greater good to be achieved.
- f. That we feel or perceive God does not care is a work of deception Satan loves us to think. What are we going to believe about this in the midst of PS?

3. Then he found humility & repentance in light of God’s revelation of his care & and involvement in his creation

PS is in a way designed to bring us to a place of humility & repentance

- a. What is the benefit of humility in an age of arrogance & pride?
 - i. A least 2 fold: it gives a proper angle on life & reality. It helps seeing Yself in proper relationship w/ God, others, etc. not above or below
 - ii. It invites God’s grace into our life: parable of tax collector, James: humble Yself before God and he will lift you up
- b. Repentance on the other hand, brings a heart renewal and pave the way to faith
- c. Twice during this tour of the universe, Job came to humility & repentance
 - i. Job 40:1-5
 - ii. Job 42:1-6
- d. In other words, Job realized 2 critical things about God & himself:
 - i. Wow! I don’t know anything
 1. Who am I to question God’s goodness and justice
 - ii. God is not only almighty, but he know what he is doing even though he does not always reveal his purpose
 1. Maybe there are consideration in the mind of God I am not aware
 - iii. This leads us to the 4th lesson Job learnt through PS

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4. Learnt to accept his situation and trust God no matter what!

- a. Through his encounter w/ God, Job was never told why he was going through PS, neither when it would end. But that did not matter
- b. Through this tour of creation, Job came to know and understand
 - i. that God not only cares, that he is good and just,
 - ii. that he is in charge/ in control and that nothing escapes him in the operations of the universe, including his own situation
 - iii. God knows what he is doing even though he does not always reveal his purpose.
 - iv. Job doesn't necessarily need to understand but only to trust God
- c. As a result, Job learnt to trust God no matter what and accept his situation

Conclusion

1. Because of his PS, Job not only was able to encounter God in a special way, but though his story recorded in the book of Job, he became a source of comfort, hope, encouragement, and guidance for countless people and for the course of history.
2. W/ PS there is always an short term purpose and long term purpose
 - a. You see that in the life of different character in the Scriptures
 - b. Joseph is a good example of that.
 - c. As a result, who know what God can do beyond you with your experience of PS and how it could change and positively influence for decades to come the life of other, our city or even our nation
 - d. God can always redeem something bad into something good
3. Let's pray

Benediction

In Isaiah 41:13, there is this beautiful promise to Israel that applies to us

Isaiah 41:13 New International Version (NIV)

13 For I am the Lord your God
who takes hold of your right hand
and says to you, Do not fear;
I will help you.