



# **WHY** is there so much **PAIN** in the world?

Sunday Bible study  
10:05am • December 20, 2020

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# I Need An Answer

“Why is there so much pain in the world?”

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## Introduction

**One of the “untouchables”** of the ancient world is on his knees in front of Jesus. Then he's face down in the dirt. The man has leprosy, a disease that not only disfigures the sufferer but perhaps even worse, it isolates him from his community and even his own family and friends.

This man is on his knees. You can only wonder how long he's watched his children grow up from afar or how long he's lumbered through life shouting “Unclean!” to keep every other soul at a safe distance. How long has it been since he has known the feel of another person's skin against his own? No wonder he is on his knees, then flat on his face before the Lord. It's a good place to be.

You can almost hear the gasp of the crowd at what Jesus does in response. It wouldn't seem worth mentioning if you didn't understand the horrific effects of leprosy, the terror of the disease, and the dreadful withdrawal of human contact. But all three gospels that carry this scene detail the spontaneous reaching of Jesus' hand.

*He touched the leper.*

Why? The gospels only answer that Jesus was “filled with compassion.”

Where is God when it hurts? Hurting right along with us. And in the Word of kindness and peace, crossing the gap from living God to dying substitute for sinners, is where God is found. (Mark Paustian, *More Prepared to Answer* p.113)

*Let's each and all read **Mark 1:40-45** to ourselves.*

<sup>40</sup> A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

<sup>41</sup> Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" <sup>42</sup> Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

<sup>43</sup> Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: <sup>44</sup> "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." <sup>45</sup> Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

### **Any questions prompted by this section of God's Word?**



List some of the more recent "pains" which have gained your attention and concern:

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What is it that "bothers" you about such pains?

"What I would do if I were God" ...

# Pain Awareness

## ➤ Dr. Paul Brand discovery

“The damage leprosy patients do to themselves they do because they lack the warning signals that a healthy pain network in the human body provides. They live in a painless hell.”

Is it possible that we could praise the living God for pain? If so, why ... what are the “benefits” of pain?

STILL ... who would argue that pain sometimes rages out of control in our world, far beyond the boundaries of its healthy, “biological” function?

**When this happens ... which question can humans hardly avoid asking?**

## Where to Begin?

Christian author, Philip Yancey, “**The opposite of disappointment with God is disappointment *without* God.**”

**What’s Yancey “getting at”?**

Watch out for “well intentioned, yet off-base theories ...

**EVALUATE** Rabbi Harold Kushner’s words of “comfort” (from his best seller: “*When Bad Things Happen to Good People*”)

- God would like people to get what they deserve in life, but He cannot always arrange it. If you think that it is so easy to keep the world straight and true, to keep unfair things from happening to people, *you* try it.”

- “Even God has a hard time keeping chaos in check and limiting the damage that evil can do. ... It isn’t God’s will that children suffer, but God is powerless to do anything about it.”

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ...

without God we would not only have to live with pain but with something far

worse, \_\_\_\_\_ pain.

In other words, denying God because of pain doesn’t make \_\_\_\_\_ go away. All

that would go away is \_\_\_\_\_

## The Cause of Pain

What are some common “explanations/theories”?

What’s the REAL explanation? Check out what the Word of God says ...

“I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” Gen 3:16-19.

C.S. Lewis referred to pain as **“God’s megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”**

**Recall your childhood years ... whom did you run to when you hurt yourself or got hurt by someone, something else?**

**All the more reason ... to whom will you run above and beyond your mortal, limited power parents, doctors, financial advisors etc.?**

**Distinguish the difference between the symptom: PAIN and the cause: SIN.**

How do believers respond to pain? Consider the following verses:

1 Peter 4:12

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.

Romans 5:3

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;

1 Peter 5:9

Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

## God's Answer

Consider the premise: "sin is something far WORSE than pain."

### **The cause of his pain?**

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. -Is 53:4-5.

Galatians 3:1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? **Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.** –

*The most remarkable act of God is when he did not act at all . . . When men swung and laughed, cursed and struck and pounded. -Paustian, more prepared to answer page 117*

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. -Gal 3:13-14

# Something Better to Come

Romans 8:18

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

## So, Now What?

One has two options when suffering in this life.

*“God didn’t say, “figure me out,” but, “Follow me.” I am reminded of how many times and in how many ways it is the way a person responds to the suffering that determines the outcome, whether bad or good. One person spreads the pain around; another... quite simply shines.*

*–Paustian MPTA p 119*

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. <sup>5</sup> For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ **our comfort overflows**. -2 Co 1:3-5.

## Conclusion

Elie Wiesel, as a young and bitter survivor of the atrocities of a Nazi concentration camp, first poured out his story in horrifying and painful detail to a Christian man he happened to meet.

What say you? Should the man have answered with a simplistic back-pocket reply or a fine-sounding, well-rehearsed argument? Or did the situation cry for something else, the sort of thing we learn from Christ?

Without thinking twice, without saying a word, the “little Christ” embraced the thin and broken Jewish man ... and wept. -Mark Paustian “More Prepared to Answer”