



Session 10

- Welcome and Introduction

If God is so good, why is there so much evil and suffering? And...why doesn't He stop it?

1. There is a classic statement of the problem.

- If there is a loving God, He would want to get rid of evil.
- If there is an all-powerful God, He could get rid of evil.
- Evil exists.
- Therefore, there is no loving, all-powerful God.

There are two assumptions here: 1. Because God has not rid the world of evil, **He never will**. 2. If I can see no reason, therefore there **is no reason**.

“If you have a God great and transcendent enough to be mad at because he hasn’t stopped evil and suffering in the world, then you have (at the same moment) a God great and transcendent enough to have good reasons for allowing it to continue that you can’t know.”—Timothy Keller, in *Reason for God*

There is another way the logic can go...

- If there is a loving God, He would want to get rid of evil.
- If there is an all-powerful God, He could get rid of evil.
- Evil exists....now.
- Therefore, someday God will get rid of evil, and there must be a good reason for Him to wait.

2. God knows there is a problem. He cares, and He has acted, is acting, and will act.

- **The Bible itself** shows that God knows about the problem and cares.

Only the beginning and the end is void of evil and suffering. The rest is how He is addressing and defeating evil and its effects.

- **He sent His Son.** His suffering shows that God cares... is not detached or indifferent. “We look at the cross, we still do not know what the answer is. However, we now know what the answer isn’t. It can’t be that He doesn’t love us.”—Timothy Keller, in *Reason for God*

3. Why is there suffering and evil, to begin with?

A. The Fall

Why the tree in the garden? Because God desired for us a loving relationship.

B. The Consequences of the Fall:

1. Temporal and Visible

- a. **Moral consequences:** murder, lying, deception, oppression, etc.

“If something had gone badly wrong between humans and their Creator, and for some reason, a relationship that was supposed to be beautiful had been broken and had gone sour, then I’d expect it to taint everything...I’d expect the world to be filled with **greed** (as people tried to replace God in their affections with stuff), and **insecurity** (because the perfect love that gave them security had gone), and **competition** (as people tried to define themselves in the absence of God, desperately seeking validation from somewhere), and **conflict** (as that competition threatened people’s security)...” —Andrew Wilson, in *If God, Then What?*

b. Natural consequences: diseases, drought, disasters, etc.

Genesis 3:17-19—“Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain, you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you...”

Romans 8:19-22—“For the creation was subjected to futility...in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God...the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth...”

2. Eternal and Invisible...the most calamitous result of the Fall:

Spiritual separation from God.

- This is an eternal condition, with eternal punishment...except for God’s salvation through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:18—“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God...”

- Jesus endured suffering so that suffering could be ended without ending us.

4. Why doesn’t God stop evil and suffering now?

- Would we know there was a spiritual problem without evil and suffering?
- We would settle for partial removal of evil...when He does it, He will do it completely.
- God is waiting for people to respond to Him.
- He can use the hurting who have hope to help the hurting who don’t.

5. We know there is a “Last Act.” We are living in the Third Act of a Four-Act play.

Revelation 21:1-4—“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Conclusion and Encouragement