

Be Reformed – Open the bible: study, dig and ask what the main point of the passage is
Be Charismatic – Expect the Holy Spirit: ask God to speak, minister, build up and lead us to maturity

Be Community – Love God's people: share vulnerably, apply, pray and build each other up
Be Missional – Win the world: apply lessons to outreach, make content accessible to non-Christians

Prefacing principles

We preach the gospel. That is to say that we simply declare it as truth, not as something that stands on the fact that it can be argued or proven (although it can). That truth must also be consistently and integritously exemplified in and defended by our lifestyle, character, logic and love.

God changes hearts. We are here to save the lost, but we do not save the lost. We labour with humility, honouring God first, then others, leaving our pride at the door.

That said, when logical arguments or scenarios are presented here, they are an attempt to answer honest questions.

Be careful about getting too engrossed with "proving" God. God has proof, but He does not need it. Often, those who have decided not to believe will simply gainsay or disregard the logic or evidence. Matt 16:1-4 recounts the Pharisees asking for a sign, just as some opponents of God today ask for logical arguments or evidence. Jesus refuses because He discerns their hearts. Ask God to give you the same discernment. Focus your attention on those who are truly looking for God.

Romans 1:18-25 says that knowledge of God is plain and obvious in the things that have been made (by God) – all creation, especially people. However, some people simply refuse to acknowledge this. Finally, don't be afraid to admit you don't know. There are other leaders to ask and not every question has to be answered immediately. In fact, not knowing the answer can often reveal the heart of the asker – whether he was truly seeking God or whether he was simply trying to test you, like the Pharisees did Jesus.

Study Notes 31 Oct 2010 – Can Jesus Heal My Pain?



Why do people ask this question?

The pain and suffering in this world and in our personal lives is overwhelming. Pain defines practically everyone in some way. Our pains are our fears, our purposes, our gods. Pain drives us to excellence, despair, boasting, cowering, hatred, love and many other extremes.

Indeed, many faiths try to tackle the problem of pain, prescribing mental and physical disciplines, nihilist philosophies, practical works, emotional and physical highs, or undefined vagueness.

One of the fundamental concerns that people have that cause this question to arise is the problem of the simultaneous existence of a good God and evil in the world. It becomes all the more pointed when this evil is experienced at a personal level.

Why answering this question well is important

Pain is a significant issue in personal relationships and our understanding of God. Many of us misunderstand God because we misunderstand the pain that we experience.

Pain also inhibits our ability to relate to one another in a godly way. Our past or present pain often causes us to be unduly suspicious, find fault, stand aloof, fail to engage, over rely, place false expectations or otherwise damage relationships with each other.

When we properly identify the biblical cause, meaning and purpose of pain, we open the door for healing to take place – first and foremost through the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ, and then the renewing of our minds and hearts when we recognize our own pain and respond in a godly way.

The answer

Jesus promises to heal our pain if we receive the forgiveness of sins that comes from Him alone and submit to His lordship. This painless bliss will come to fullness at the resurrection of the dead – in the New Creation. On earth, pain becomes a reminder of God’s glory and a tool for our discipline and perfection to godliness. Furthermore, pain and loss suffered for Jesus’ sake is rewarded in heaven.

Jesus actually promises suffering in this life (John 16:33). He heals some of our pain and sickness to prove that He is indeed both forgiving our sins and preparing us for an eternal painless eternity. Our pain is transformed from meaningless suffering into a meaningful process of sanctification.

Answers to study questions

Why is there pain and suffering in the world?

Sin is the cause of pain. Gen 3:14-19, Rom 5:12, Romans 8:18-24. This is not to say that it is some specific sin (we deny karma, see Matthew 9) but sin in general as a fallen state of creation from the time of the fall, ultimately for the purpose of God’s glory.

Sometimes, specific pain is the result of specific sin – violence, divorce, lying, etc. but this falls under the broader category of a fallen creation.

Is God to blame for sin and pain?

God is not to blame for sin and pain. As the author of good (James 1:13-17), God is not to be held in judgment for sin and pain. “Augustine argued that God could not have created evil in the world, as it was created good, and that all notions of evil are simply a deviation or privation of goodness” (wikipedia entry on Augustinian theodicy).

What does the bible say God is doing about it?

God plans to remove all evil, pain and suffering. Ultimately, this is done by condemning everything that is fallen to eternal destruction. However, God has a timetable for this and before it happens, it is God’s desire that some of His creation will be redeemed through Jesus Christ so that they can enjoy a perfect existence with Him forever.

Does God heal everyone of every pain? Why or why not?

As mentioned before not everyone is healed of every pain. Firstly, not every is saved and will go to heaven. Secondly, in this world, there are no promises to eradicate pain. Almost the opposite, as John 16:33 and 2Tim 3:12-13 show.

How does Jesus’ forgiveness of sin change the effect and meaning of pain?

Pain becomes 1) the evidence of God’s judgment (Psalm 9:3-8), 2) for God’s glory (through us, Rom 8), 3) for our discipline and perfection, leading us to righteousness (James 1:2-4), 4) for our reward (2 Cor 4:7-18).

Which does Jesus show to be more important – the removal of pain or the forgiveness of sin?

A God-man who lived a sinless life, forgave sins, suffered pain innocently in order that sins might be forgiven is definitely placing an emphasis on sin. Jesus did not lead a painless life – He led a sinless life.

How should a Christian respond to his or her personal pain?

Grieve for his/her own sins and repent.
Look to God for comfort and healing.
Thank God for the opportunity to suffer for His sake.
Forgive those who cause us pain.
Preach the gospel so that they too will receive forgiveness from sin.

How should a Christian respond to the pain of others?

Recognise the source and cause and purpose of that pain.
Empathise with them as fellow sufferers still under the curse.
Point them to God for comfort and healing.
Preach the gospel so that they too will receive forgiveness from sin.

Final thoughts

Examine the proofs and claims of Jesus Christ and decide for yourself if He is a lunatic, Satan or God Himself.