

sermon study summary

Why Believe Series Part 13

October 5 / 6, 2024

Why Does God Allow the Innocent to Die?

Speaker: Dr. Henry Schorr

LOVE motivated God to create us. For love to be genuine it must be chosen. Choice means we have the freedom to say 'no'.

God warned Adam and Eve that if they disobeyed, they would surely die. They did say 'no' to God; consequently, evil entered the cosmos, and natural disasters and death became a part of life. Though the first couple died spiritually that day, they did not die immediately. God extended His grace and mercy to them so their relationship with Him could be restored.

Foundational truths from that event show us why a loving God would allow, or even order, the termination of innocent lives.

- 1. Life is a GIFT, not a right.** God clearly told Adam and Eve that the cost of their rebellion against Him would be death. God's justice demands death and yet His love and mercy led God to extend their lives. God wasn't obligated to extend their lives but He did.
- 2. There are no innocent people.** We are all sinners. Romans 3:23 says: "*We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" 1 John 1:8 says, "*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*"
- 3. God is holy and just.** Our God could not be a God of love without also being a God of justice. God is patient and merciful, but in His perfect time He will bring judgment to bear. His very nature demands it!
- 4. God is gracious.** Sometimes He acts with grace and mercy and postpones justice so we have the opportunity to humble ourselves and repent. Psalm 86:15 says, "*But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*" We see examples of this in Scripture, such as when God waited 120 years before sending the flood. Not ONE person humbled himself and responded to God's offer of safety in the ark. Only Noah and his family had the faith to enter the ark, which (like Jesus today) was God's only way of escape.

But why do innocent children die?

First of all, **God is sovereign over all of life.** God CREATED life and He has the right to take it. We tend to forget that God takes the life of every human being. It's called death.

Secondly, **God's judgment is motivated not only by His justice but also by His mercy.** When God poured out His judgment on wicked nations and children were killed, He was actually extending His mercy to them by rescuing them not only from the real possibility of being a victim of child sacrifice but from being forever separated from God in hell.

We learn from Scripture (Deut. 1:39; 2 Samuel 12:23) that every child who dies before he knows right from wrong (the age of accountability) will spend eternity in the presence of God in heaven. If your child died before birth or at a young age, your child is in heaven with Jesus. That child is healthy and maturing, and if you are in right relationship with Jesus, one day you will be reunited.

Don't take God's goodness, His patience, His love and His grace for granted. If Jesus hadn't come and died for OUR sins, we would have no hope of ever being reconciled with God and receiving the gift of eternal life. God loved us so much that He gave us grace instead of what we deserve – DEATH.

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Have you not gotten a ticket/punishment that you deserved (e.g. parking, speeding, etc.)? How did that make you feel?
2. Are you more inclined to emphasize justice than mercy and grace? Would your position change if it involves yourself? Explain.

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Pastor Henry mentioned three Old Testament events: the flood (Genesis 6), the destruction of Canaanites (Deuteronomy 7), and the repentance of Nineveh (Jonah). How is God's holiness demonstrated through His justice and mercy?
4. Read Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 John 1:8. Why is it difficult for some people to accept that they are sinners, not in right relationship with God, particularly if they are living a "good" life?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. Although God's justice at times may seem harsh, what hope does He provide? (Psalm 86:15; 2 Peter 3:9)
6. How would you respond when someone asks, "Why does God allow the innocent to die?" Consider different situations including miscarriage, abortion, and the age of accountability.

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Is there someone you need to extend grace to? Are you willing to extend it? Remember the times when Jesus gave you grace. Why did He do it?

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 1:8

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Psalms 86:15

But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

2 Peter 3:9

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

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, Deb Matiko, Jem Ong, and Jorel Quemuel