

Why Suffer?

Hebrews 5:7-10

PROPOSITION: The Bible provides answers to the great mystery of pain, suffering, and evil.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Life comes with a warning (cf. John 16:33).
2. God knew there would be disappointments and pain, but He also knew many souls would long to be with Him and follow His will and live eternally with Him.

DISCUSSION: Suffering will make...

I. Excellence Appear.

- A. God can use suffering to accomplish good.
 1. He can draw people to Him (cf. Psa. 119:71).
 2. He can sharpen character (cf. Rom. 5:3-5).
 3. He can point us in the right direction (Heb. 12:10, 11).
 4. He can make positives out of negatives (Rom. 8:28).
- B. Suffering is not good, but God can and does use it for His good purposes.

II. Evil Appraised.

- A. The day is coming when suffering will cease and evil will be judged.
- B. It is right for the afflicted to be relieved (2 Thes. 1:6, 7).
- C. That relief will come in heaven into which the unrighteous are not allowed (Rev. 21:4, 27).
- D. Why does God wait? Cf. 2 Peter 3:9.

III. Ecstasy Admired.

- A. It may help to look at suffering from a long-term perspective.
- B. Consider Paul (2 Cor. 11:21-23; 4:17).
- C. Here's the "big picture": One may have a lot of suffering in life, but after fifty million years of heavenly bliss, he will look back and say about his life, "It was but a moment."

CONCLUSION:

1. We make the decision to turn bitter or to turn to God for peace and courage.
2. God's answer to suffering is Jesus.
3. He is the One Who invites. How will you answer?

--Andy Kizer; 9th Ave. church of Christ
Sunday, August 23, 2009