

Earthquake: Why the Horror in Haiti?

by David Legge

David Legge's sermon addresses the profound questions of suffering and God's role in the context of the devastating Haiti earthquake, urging repentance and action from believers.

Duration: 40:39

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-7, Matthew 7:28-29, Luke 13:1-5, Luke 13:18, Luke 13:24

Topics: "Current Events"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful story of a man who sold his blood to buy an overhead projector to share the gospel in a tribal area. The speaker emphasizes that this story should serve as a wake-up call for believers, reminding them of their purpose. They quote C.S. Lewis, stating that pain is God's megaphone to wake up those who are spiritually asleep. The speaker also acknowledges that many questions about suffering and tragedy are unanswerable, but encourages humility in admitting that we don't know everything. They conclude by highlighting the tragic reality that thousands of people die daily and urging listeners to consider the brevity of life and the certainty of death.

Transcript

Well good evening to you all again and good to be back in Oliver tonight to preach the gospel and to that end I want you to turn with me please to Luke's gospel chapter 13 and as announced this morning I intend to take up as a subject the Haiti earthquake and so this is a portion that I feel led of God to read to you and we're beginning to read at verse 1 of Luke's gospel chapter 13. There were present at that season some that told him that is told the Lord Jesus of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Just to give you a little bit of background there this seems to be referring to an incident where you've heard the expression cloak and dagger well some Roman undercover soldiers at least had gone into the temple in order to assassinate certain people who they thought were going to cause insurrection and so these soldiers went to a place of worship and committed murder and the blood of that murder was mingled with the sacrifices in the temple and so this was an atrocity and Jesus answering said unto them suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things.

I tell you nay but except you repent you shall all likewise perish. Or those 18 upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem. Now in verse 4 the Lord Jesus is anticipating a question that might well have been in their minds and obviously this was a common knowledge accidental tragedy we might call it this tower had collapsed and fallen upon

18 people and obviously the talk was going around that these people may have been wicked and for that reason God allowed this to happen to them but the Lord anticipates this question arising in their minds and says do you think that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem because this happened to them and Jesus says I tell you nay but except you repent you shall all likewise perish.

Let us pray for a moment please and if you're a believer in the Lord Jesus be aware that there might be folk here tonight who need to hear the gospel they might be professing Christians who are cold in heart or backslidden and there might be those listening to the recording of this message and will receive it and they need Christ. So pray with me now please that the Lord may speak and be very evident among us as the word of God is preached.

Abba Father we thank you that we know that you as our Father are the all-knowing omniscient God and we worship you for having all knowledge we as creatures of the dust finite turn to you the infinite we as the foolish turn to you as the all-wise one and our request is as we have been instructed in your word if any man lack wisdom let him ask of God who gives to all men liberally and abrades not and Lord we ask for wisdom acknowledging our foolishness and our dullness of mind and heart and we ask Lord that you would gift us with the knowledge that alone comes from you and from your truth and we pray more than that Lord that you will impart the spiritual knowledge to those who are listening who need Christ whether they're still dead in their trespasses and sins or whether they're folk who

are doubting for some reason or another or whether they are backslidden in heart Lord we pray that all who may hear this word that the truth may witness to them as the truth and your Holy Spirit will take the truth and witness Christ to their hearts so Lord we cast ourselves upon you now and Lord we we really are looking to you tonight to move in our gathering or move in the lives of those who are hearing these words for Christ's sake and for his glory alone we ask these things amen as we all are so familiar with now on the evening of the 12th of January last week a series of earthquakes magnitude between 6.5 and 7.3 struck Haiti and where it struck was a highly populated area about 10 miles from Port-au-Prince prior to the earthquake Haiti was considered right up to date was considered

the poorest nation in the western world and added to that fact and contributory to it I'm sure it frequently was impacted by many natural calamities not just earthquakes in the past but we're mostly familiar with the hurricanes that often hit Florida as well and the most recent of those being 2008 however last week's earthquake has left Haitians and indeed the whole world incredulous at the utter devastation that it has caused and I'm sure you have been watching the newscasts and reading the papers just like me and there are certain terms that have been used to describe it apocalyptic the devastation has been spoken of as being at biblical proportions the full extent of the damage and death toll is yet unknown but the projections being made of the fatalities are so vast that it is

difficult to comprehend the staggering level of this humanitarian catastrophe but I think the greatest question to have faced mankind through all his painful history is being loudly raised again and it is a one-word question and it's probably a question that you at some time in your life have asked why as this happened and some are going further and asking why if God exists did he allow such a thing to happen and it causes some to reason God could not exist or there are others who ask the question if God is a good God why would he allow this to happen now let me just cause you to pause for a moment and I think the question why is a natural one for us in our finite beings to ask when we don't know everything and we don't understand all the occurrences that take place in our lives and in

the history of this world but I remember learning as a young child that whenever you point the finger there are always three pointing back at you and that relates to God as well and we ought to stop first of all and before we swiftly point the finger of accusation and blame into God's face for what has happened we need to consider ourselves first and foremost and there's no doubt that often man has been guilty of contributing to his own fate and to the suffering that he finds in humanity.

John Blanchard in his book where is God when things go wrong raises some probing questions of mankind in general and I want you to think about it as I read you this portion just now he says although our planet provides enough food to feed all six billion of us millions die of starvation every year because of our selfish pollution of the atmosphere our exploitation or mismanagement of the earth's resources and the vicious policies of dictatorial regimes can we blame God for this is he responsible for diverting disaster funds into the pockets of tyrannical rulers or greedy politicians millions are dying of hunger in India while its national religion forbids the use of cows as food Hinduism has millions of man-made gods can the country's chronic food problems be blamed on the one that

ignores suffering is often caused Blanchard says by human error or incompetence had the owners of the Titanic not reduced the recommended number of lifeboats to avoid the boat deck looking cluttered many more if not all of the ship's passengers might have been saved was God responsible for that executive decision the International Atomic Inquiry Agency blamed quoting defective safety culture for the Chernobyl disaster can the blame for careless neglect of safety procedures be laid at God's door a great deal of human suffering is deliberately self-inflicted smokers who ignore health warnings and are crippled by lung cancer or heart disease heavy drinkers who suffer from cirrhosis of the liver drug addicts and those dying of aids after indiscriminate sex are obvious examples so are gluttons

who dig their graves with knives and forks workaholics who drive themselves to physical or mental breakdowns to say nothing of the countless people who suffer from serious illness as a direct result of suppressed hatred anger bitterness and envy is God to blame for their behavior I think he makes some very valid points worthy of our consideration particularly you if in your mind you're leveling much of this guilt at God's door but whilst the guilt for these self-inflicted injuries can fairly and squarely be laid at man's feet you might be saying but surely natural disasters are in a different league well I'll grant you that to some extent and yet even today I heard it in the radio that some of the Sunday papers are insinuating that man is partly to blame for the fallout from this

natural disaster because man has contributed to the poverty of this most poor nation in the western world Haiti and man's corruption in that nation has also contributed to the state of its people and the fragility of the infrastructure how the buildings have been built the safety measures that were in place so on and so forth and yet we have to say at the end of the day a natural disaster caused it cannot be any of our faults has the Bible anything to say about this well let me start off by going to the very beginning to the book of Genesis and it tells us there that ultimately all suffering that man has ever suffered in his history is as a result of Adam and Eve's first sin in the garden of Eden and their sin disobedience toward God God told them of all the trees of the garden you may

freely eat but the day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and that day you die and they disobeyed God and launched the whole human race all their human descendants into this cycle of fallen existence that we now inhabit Paul described it like this in the New Testament Romans 5 and 12 wherefore as by one man Adam sin entered into the world and death by sin so death passed upon all men for all have sinned and from one man's disobedience our forefather Adam sin has passed on to all

humanity and if you ever wanted proof of that and many disputed death is the proof we die because the wages of sin is death and we live in a fallen world hence the suffering these are the tragic consequences of original sin but you might retort back rightly so but this but does that explain

natural disasters that might be the reason why we live in in such a fallen world but answer me this that does not explain why disaster visits one continent and not another why disaster visits one country and not another why disaster let's bring it home now why disaster and tragedy touches one family and not another one life and not another and neither does this explain the reason why some countries some families and some individuals suffer to such extremes you have to say that don't we that very hard to understand why some suffer so much well let me give you headings tonight that i hope will help you in some of these conundrums the first is this many of these questions are unanswerable and i think we have a duty to put our hands up and admit that we don't know everything sometimes some of

us do think we know a great deal more than we do and i find the more i learn the the more i realize a little in you in the beginning now there are some who would say that this country haiti has been punished and even in the secular press i've been reading that it has been named in the past the land of the damned it was a land that was given up by other nations it was a land whose national religion was voodoo and even though many would say they were christians it was christianized voodoo a bit like what i was talking about this morning certain churches come in and adopt the cultural and pagan practices of the people one commentator has described haiti as an international crime scene one in ten people under the age of 40 are hiv positive and it has to be said that many haitians believe that

they have come under the judgment of god they're testifying that themselves and the ones who have survived are praising god that they have been spared but we have to be very careful very careful because no one can say what is and what is not the judgment of god because there are many more wicked nations in our world that do not suffer such a faith and yes god judged the world with a flood in noah's day yes god rained down fire from sodom and gomorrah in lot's day but equally so god spared nineveh very wicked nation so wicked that jonah ran away from god's will because he couldn't understand how god a holy god could spare such a wicked nation it's very easy to pronounce on behalf of god but we would need to possess a mind like god's to comprehend these issues the best thing we as

christians could do before we open our mouths is go and read the book of job and job's tragic experiences and his subsequent encounter with god taught him and teach us that the answers to these mysteries lie deep within god's sovereignty our finite minds can never explain such mystery and neither should we try but you see what lies behind many people's accusation toward god in blaming him for such a disaster is really to declare there isn't a god at all how can you believe in a god if he could do such a thing and you preach a good god and a good god would never allow this to happen because the god that you believe in is also an almighty god so why doesn't he stop it though there's much fallacy in those assertions not least that god has made us with free will to do as we please and god

just doesn't step in after we've made moral decisions and personal decisions to stop us in our path he allows us to make choices and face consequences but here's the great question that those with an atheistic mindset and philosophy need to answer is atheism the answer for the people of haiti is atheism the answer for anyone will ditching god do us any good will it make the world better will it make people who are suffering's lives more meaningful i'll tell you what it does atheism only deepens the sense of despair now i'll agree with you there's much tragedy in this life man is born into trouble the sparks fly upward it's like a law of gravity we will suffer and some will suffer more than others but tragedy ought not

to drive us away from god it ought to drive us to god because that's

where faith comes in believing when we cannot explain and we do not understand and there's a great deal that we can't understand and we can't second guess what god is doing in our world particularly when it comes to natural disasters so the first thing i want you to consider is many of these questions are unanswerable and if we could answer all questions there would be no need for an all-knowing all-wise god but clearly there is a need for one because we don't know everything but the second thing i want you to consider particularly if you're not a christian if you're not born again if you're not converted if you've repented of your sins and believe the gospel you need to consider that these incidents are wake-up calls even natural disasters that we cannot explain at the very least are

wake-up calls to a sleeping world a world generally that is ignorant of god and willfully ignorant that that c.s lewis whom i'm sure most of you know uh wrote a book entitled the problem of pain and in it he said god whispers to us in our pleasures speaks in our conscience but shouts in our pains it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world pain is god's megaphone to waken up those who are sleeping spiritually and cataclysmic events are meant to alert us to the realities of evil and suffering that they are real they're meant to shock us to the fact that life is brief and death is certain and our existence is fragile this day in luke 13 the lord jesus was questioned about certain calamities as i said to you the first was man-made terrorism you could call it but the second was accidental a

tragedy and the lord answers this anticipated question and his answer tells us where our emphasis should be as we consider these events even in haiti and in verse 4 and 5 we get the lord's answer the 18 upon whom the tower of siloam fell and slew them think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in jerusalem i tell you nay but except you repent you shall all likewise perish so if the lord jesus was standing before us tonight and we said to him lord what are we to make of all this all this earthquake all this suffering this loss of life this destitution in haiti the lord will be saying this is what you're to consider this is the emphasis that you're to rest upon all of us every single one of us must face our mortality one day we are all going to die and therefore the great

question is how we will meet our maker will we be saved or will we be lost now you might argue with the lord jesus but i i won't never a man spoke like this man there was never wisdom you only need to read the sermon on the mount to realize in all three chapters of it matthew 5 6 and 7 that no one has ever uttered such a deep truth even all the religions of the word world borrow it and my friend what the lord jesus is saying look there is suffering all around and the duty that we have is not to answer unanswerable questions with our finite minds but rather to consider our own mortality one day we're going to die and one day we're going to stand before god and give an account of what we have done with the lives that he has given us and so the great issue jesus says is except you repent and

repent means change your mind about your sin change your attitude toward yourself and just loving for sin and for pleasure and turn to god by faith except you repent jesus says everyone likewise shall perish oh they might die in a hospice or an old people's residential home at a ripe old age having lived a good innings as we say but ultimately we must all needs die it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment oh i know people don't like preaching like that these days but this is how the lord preached and this is how we must preach now one death is a tragic thing but one death we've got to realize is as tragic as thousands one death is as tragic as thousands and i want you to consider tonight that on average every day 151 000 or thereabouts people 151 000 people die

daily on our planet that doesn't make the headlines in the daily mirror does it but each one of those deaths is tragic and what makes it even more tragic believer tonight is that most of those people have never heard the name of Jesus Christ and I'll tell you if there's a wake-up call for unbelievers in these events of the Haiti earthquake and such like there's a wake-up call for believers now let me say as Christians we have I believe a duty to help these poor people and there are many missionary organizations that that we can use as an avenue to do that and I think that we we should and indeed wherever we find people in need particularly our brothers and sisters in Christ and there are those of them out there in Haiti we're to help meet their need but our primary responsibility is to

take the gospel to them and our primary responsibility is to fund those who take the gospel right across the four corners of the globe and this is a wake-up call to do the work of the gospel and I know some of you I'm sure are funding missionary work but I've recently been confronted with this issue I was reading a book by the founder of Gospel for Asia a mission Kp Yohanan and his vision really in his ministry is that he believes that the western world is rich and by the way you're rich you mightn't feel it or think it maybe you're a pensioner and you would like to have a few more pound and you're waiting on this uh money coming through the post for the fuel bill and all the rest well I sympathize but in in comparison with the rest of the world we are rich many of us are very rich and he

asked this question now I'm why are we rich why is the believing church in the west rich is it to live on the high hog or is it to fund the gospel to those who are poor and my friend it would break your heart to read this book because he tells how evangelists are living in abject poverty and can't feed their children because they don't have money and I believe God provides that's the way I live but I believe God provides by Him exercising in the hearts of His believing people to help those who are serving and I thank God for people who are exercised to give to our cause but there are evangelists wanting to serve the Lord in Asia they're springing up everywhere but they don't have the resources to do it and I I I don't cry easily but I almost did when I read of of one man who had to go to

a tribal area and the people were completely illiterate could not read nor write so there's no sense giving them bibles he couldn't give them gospel tracts and so he decided he was going to show them slides but his problem was he had an overhead projector and he couldn't afford to buy one and you know what that man did he went to his local hospital every week and sold his blood he sold his blood to buy an overhead projector to share the gospel this is a wake-up call for us as believers and the wake-up call is that we're here for one purpose and the one purpose is not the business and the one purpose is not the family and thank God for both but we are here primarily to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness these other things will be added unto us but this is why we've been

saved this is why we exist but unsaved person here tonight this is a wake-up call to your mortality what of your soul there's a king on one occasion had a jester and whenever he was down in the dumps he used to bring his jester in the court to cheer him up and he would laugh at the jester and it would make him feel good but this king contacted a terminal illness and he called the clown to him and told him your king is going away to a far country and you're not going to see him again the jester was smarter than the king granted him and he said to the king king do you know the country you're going to he says no he says have you prepared to get there he says no the jester remembered that on one occasion in the court when he was cheering the king up the king was in such raucous laughter that

he gave the jester a stick and he said jester if ever you find a bigger fool than yourself give them that stick and that day as the king confronted him with that tragic news he reached into his pocket and he gave the

king the stick he said sir i am a fool in this world but you're becoming a fool in the next my friend don't be a fool with your soul this earthquake is a wake-up call but it's not just a wake-up call to our mortality and here's my third point it's a wake-up call that there is worse to come matthew 24 the lord jesus in verse 7 said just before he returned nation would rise against nation kingdom against kingdom there will be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places the next verse the lord jesus said that these were the birth pangs before he would come to this

world now you know ladies that birth pangs are something that increases just before the delivery and many bible scholars believe that what the lord jesus was saying was that wars and famines and pestilences and earthquakes would increase in their frequency and their ferocity just before the lord jesus christ would come it's certainly a wake-up call that worse is to come the book of hebrews tell us that there's coming a day when the earth shall be shaken once more god says i will shake not only earth but also heaven yet once more the removing of things that are shaken as of things that are made that those things which cannot be shaken may remain now let me explain that it means that the things of this earth that can be shaken will be shaken but only unshakable things will remain my dear

friend this refers to the second coming of the lord jesus do you know that jesus is coming again zechariah 14 speaks of a great earthquake when jesus feet lands on the mount of orleans matthew 24 and verse 29 says that there'll be great tribulation the sun will be darkened the moon will not give light the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of heaven shall be shaken this is not just an earthquake on earth the whole of heaven will be shaken and revelation 16 says there will be thunders and lightnings and a great earthquake such as was not seen on the earth so mighty an earthquake so great and every island flayed away not just one island every island flayed away and the mountains were not found the greatest ever earthquake in history is still to come in fact the bible tells us this

earthquake will split the city of jerusalem in three parts and god will punctuate the completion of his anger being poured out on this earth with this devastating earthquake when jesus comes again god's word says the things that can be shaken will be shaken but the things that can't be shaken won't be shaken they'll remain what is it talking about when it says the things that can't be shaken my friend i don't know whether you ever learned the story in sunday school of the wise man and the foolish man maybe even sang a chorus about it and it simply goes like this there was a foolish man who built his house in the sand jesus said and when the storm came because it was on a wrong foundation it sank and the house was destroyed but there was a wise man who built his house on a firm foundation

the rock and when the storm came the house remained now jesus said according to that parable the man who built his house on the rock was whosoever hears these sayings of mine and does them whosoever hears these things of mine and does them my friend it is those who have believed in jesus christ as savior repented of their sins and trusted in him when jesus comes they will be the ones that remain they will be the ones that stand firm john says the world this world passes away and the luster of and that word lust i think can mean fashion this world passes away and fashion passes away but he that does the will of god abides forever that's what it means to be saved to be saved from judgment my friend do you know there is judgment coming now i know the way people think and the way they feel

and they think such a god is a callous god such a god is a cruel god such a god must be removed from all our suffering and all our pain and even all our sin no my friend you couldn't be farther from the truth your problem and my problem is that god is good that's our problem he is so good that he is just he is so good that he can't sweep sin under the carpet because he knows will fall over it better than that my friend the

answer to all human suffering and all death and all judgment is this that god himself came in the person of his own son to be our savior god himself embraced our suffering he embraced our pain he embraced our sorrows in his incarnation he who was god who created the worlds came to be a babe in a feeding trough in in a in a stable in bethlehem he was infinitely rich

became destitute that we might be rich through his poverty and the humiliation he suffered at the hands of men and then crucifixion as he hangs on a cross suffering ignominy but more than that he is becoming the substitute for your sin and mine and in three hours on the cross he is suffering for all humanity the bible says surely he has borne our griefs and carries our sorrows and he not only took our sorrows and he not only took our death it says he tasted death for every man and woman boy and girl but he took our sin and he became the sacrifice for our sins forever and he died and when he died he cried my god my god why there's that question why oh don't think he didn't know why he knew why you see god's answer to all human suffering sin judgment is the cross of jesus the shed blood of

jesus the compassionate dying love of jesus god's answer to all human suffering and sin and the consequences thereof is the crucified god god came himself to die on the cross to reconcile a world that doesn't want him to himself my friend never think god is distant god is callous god is harsh god is apathetic my friend god came to where we are and not only died our death but the death of all men and women and took our sin and bore our hell and carried our shame and rose again the third day so that image saved to the uttermost all who come to god by him but my friend i've got to tell you tonight accept you repent if you don't change your mind and attitude about your sin and yourself and believe in this jesus and say yes lord i keep you as my savior you'll perish let us pray now whether

you're here this evening in our gathering or listening on the recording consider what we have said no one has all the answers we do not know why this tragedy has happened at the other side of the world or why suffering and so much anguish happens across the globe and in individual family units and lives sometimes that these things are as a direct result of self-inflicted sin and decisions that are made even nationally and i do believe that many things that we are suffering nationally are indeed the finger of god upon us and yet none of us have the mind of god to say dogmatically this is so but what we do know is that this is a wake-up call to all of us to our own mortality that our life is like water spilt in the ground when it's spilt it cannot be gathered again our life is but a vapor

that appears for a little time and then vanishes away and my friend your emphasis tonight should be jesus now unless you repent you'll likewise perish will you come to jesus now will you say lord i repent and i believe in you save me now that's all you need to do friend by faith repent and take him as your savior just who you are from your heart say lord i repent save me now and he'll do it even at home will you sit and listen he'll do it but christian can i urge you do something more for a vast world in need that has never heard two thousand years since his birth has never heard of jesus and his love

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