

# Why God Allows Suffering

by Roy Daniel

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*The sermon explores the question of why God allows suffering, and argues that God's perspective on suffering is one of love and redemption.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 44:23, Matthew 6:33, John 7:38, John 15:4, Romans 8:28, James 1:2

**Topics:** "Suffering"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the contrasting elements of the world we live in. He uses the analogy of two painters working on the same canvas, one creating a beautiful picture and the other splashing paint everywhere. The preacher acknowledges the existence of both perfection and sorrow in the world, causing people to cry and feel brokenhearted. He emphasizes the importance of showing the world that God is good and that people need to repent. The preacher also criticizes the view that philosophy is dead and argues that science, particularly physics, has become the torchbearer of knowledge. He mentions a popular author whose books sell in the millions and who claims that science can answer questions about the nature of reality and the existence of a creator. The preacher disagrees with this view and asserts that our understanding of the world should be based on the teachings of the Bible and our relationship with Jesus. He concludes by highlighting the hope of ultimate justice and contrasting it with the atheist belief that death is the end.

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## Transcript

Well, good evening to every one of you. And it's a privilege to be here. And thank you that I can speak to you.

And thank you for those who came last night and those who came tonight. I really, really appreciate it. I appreciate Ezra, too.

I remember when he woke me up at 4 o'clock in the morning. He didn't know South Africa was at a different time zone to where we are. And he asked me to come to the first of these youth meetings.

I'll never forget it. I told him, phone back later. And he did.

He's a persistent person. I, last night, spoke on the man who smoked his Bible and the goodness of God, which obviously involved stories of people who smoked their Bible, who got saved, and those who didn't, and a few other things from scripture. But tonight, I'd like to preach on a topic that's not very easy to

preach on, especially for someone who's not as, can I say, is not so clever like me, because it takes a lot of thought.

It doesn't involve as many big, and amazing, and wonderful, and captivating illustrations as some sermons. So you have to think a lot as you preach it. And it's on why God allows suffering.

Why God allows suffering. And under the umbrella of suffering, obviously, I'm talking about anything that emotionally, or physically, or in any other way hurts people on earth, or is hard to bear. And I'd like us to open our Bibles to Psalm 44, verse 23.

And before we read this verse in Psalms, Psalm 44, verse 23, I'd just like to mention that a lot of people, when they talk about suffering, they're not really going through suffering. But they've got a lot of self-pity for very small things. I've met many young people in what I would consider reasonably godly homes, where the parents are wonderful to me, anyway.

And I hear them complaining about the suffering that they're going through. For instance, one young man told me that he was suffering because his dad told him to shower. That was an American, by the way.

And he was dead serious. He was crying. Tears were rolling down his face.

And I just thought to myself, there's a lot of people out there in the world who don't realize what they've got. And that's why they think they're suffering. And to a less or greater degree, there's many different types of suffering in the world.

To one person, a small thing will be a small thing. To another person, that's a big thing. But there are really, in between all that, many things which people call suffering, which is just self-pity.

Now, when I look at my little child, Glenn, he's a good little boy, to a degree, compared to the rest of society, whatever you want to call it. But he does, now and then, I haven't counted how many times, but he does throw a tantrum sometimes. Kids do that.

And the way he does it is he's suddenly smiling away. And suddenly, he decides it's time to do something. And he just suddenly collapses on the ground.

And he just starts going, where, where, where? I don't know if he got it somewhere from me or my wife or something. But what we normally do with that is I just smack him on the thighs. That's the word for this part of the body.

I smack him on the thigh. And he knows. And I get him up.

And he knows that it wasn't right. But once or twice, what I used to do, and so my wife said that it might actually rub off on him, is I used to have a lot of fun when he had a little tantrum. Because I used to get down on the ground next to him and have a tantrum with him.

And what would happen is, and I wouldn't do this just in our house. I'd do it on the streets where there was people and stuff. I didn't always know there were people.

But Glenn would suddenly be walking along. And he decided there's something on Earth, like a door, something that he wanted to open. And he couldn't get his way.

And he'd get down on the ground, suddenly. And he'd go, wah, wah, wah. And I'd get down next to him on the side of the street.

And I'd go, wah, wah, wah. And immediately, it's amazing, Glenn would stop, tantrum, and he'd just look. And he actually looked embarrassed.

As if how could someone next to him be making such a scene? And of course, I don't think at that age he realized that he'd just been doing what he was embarrassed at. But isn't it true that adults sometimes act as children? That there can be little things in our lives which, sure, we can feel bad about. But it's not as big as we think.

And yet, when I look at this topic this evening, why God allows suffering, there is definitely, in this world, a lot of suffering. And there's a lot of things that go wrong in churches, and go wrong in families, and go wrong in the physical side of life, the financial side of life, and in so many different other ways, health-wise and so on. That things go wrong, and it's not easy.

And I'd like to read a verse that I asked you to turn to a little earlier, Psalm 44, verse 23, before we pray. It's just these words. Awake, why do you sleep, O Lord? Why do you, and this is verse 24, then.

Why do you hide your face and forget our affliction and our oppression? And I believe this was a godly person writing this psalm. And to him, as a godly person, there came a time in his life where he wondered why God seemed to be sleeping in the midst of his troubles. And I don't know about you.

Have you ever come to the stage, or a stage, or a period, where you're looking forward, you thought, God, I hope you're not sleeping, or looking backwards, you wondered, why was God asleep when I went through what I went through there, or just felt like God was asleep? And with that, before we go on, I'd like to go over the prayer. Dear Father, I know that I am very unqualified to bring this message tonight, but that your strength is made perfect in weakness. And you said in John chapter 15, that without me, or Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing, that we should abide in the vine.

And I'd just like to ask that not through my strength, or my might, or my power speaking, or anything else that I might possess, or think I possess of myself, Lord, but in resting in Jesus, in looking to thee, in believing in Jesus, out of my belly should flow rivers of living water to the people that are here, and that you would open up our understanding to see from thy word why there is suffering, and why in spite of suffering, you are a very good God. You are utterly good, and glorious, and worthy of honor, praise, and worship with all of our lives. And I ask this in Jesus Christ's name, my dear Lord and Savior.

Amen. Well, as I mentioned earlier, there's not going to be so many illustrations in this sermon, so you'll have to concentrate and bear with me, especially because I've got a little bit of thing called sinus. And I just remembered on the way, yeah, that there was a, I think it was a Timothy and Nicky store, there's a kind of a pepper that you spray up your nose.

And I was thinking, why didn't I think of that before tonight? But I'll definitely get it tonight and suffer. Now, in light of the verse, which I've just read, that there was a person, a godly person in the Bible, who was looking at the circumstances and things that he was going through in life, and he was crying out to God, why are you asleep, basically? There are people who blame God for being asleep. They're not just asking the question.

They're not just saying, God, why were you asleep and wondering why? They literally blame God. Why did you allow this to happen? And they have bitterness in their lives towards God. How many churches, and this is not very extreme suffering, but how many churches have I not seen across America and different countries of the world, where when the parents started to fight each other, and as I said, this isn't great, amazing suffering, but when the parents started to fight each other and in between families, and there was a church split, how the young people who used to be on fire for God, it seemed on the outside, suddenly started to compromise in wrong things in their life.

And they never said, I blame God. They never said, I'm turning against God. But as the standards in their life and the principles they used to have, they started to throw away.

And then they started still following God, but some other God, because they weren't doing what the Bible says, basically. You could see that it couldn't come from their mouths that they blame God in the way they lived. And what I like to say when I look at a situation like that is, was their life built around Christ, or was it built around their families and their church? Was their spiritual life, should I say, built around Christ, or was it built around their family and their church? Because if it's built around your family and your church, you'll look pretty good and try to do the things in the Bible as long as your family and your church is going pretty well.

But when the splits come, and suddenly it just appears where your heart really was, and it wasn't about a relationship with Jesus, it was about a relationship with your church. And that's very sad. But there are people out there who don't believe in God, and yet they like to talk about God a lot, and that is the atheists.

And they like to talk about babies drowning, and kids being born with AIDS, and wars, and famines, and the fact that in World War I, more people died from influenza and flu in the world than people died through guns. And they look at all these things and they say, bad God. God is bad.

If there is a God, though they say he doesn't exist, they like to talk about him as existing as a bad God, and then say, well, anyway, I don't believe in him. Like a dual personality, schizophrenic, bipolar, whatever they call it. But we have to be honest.

When we have these things which come from atheists, and by the way, there are books being printed, and I know many of you might have read of these books, but literally in the millions, books are spreading across the world. I go into airports, and more than spiritual books, almost there's an atheist section, why God doesn't exist, this about God, that about God, anything about God, and it's all against God. And one of the main arguments they have is not evolution.

And it's not science. This is a lot of good science. It's basically page after page after page of the bad things that happen in the world, and if God existed, they say, well, then God's bad.

And therefore, he doesn't exist. Because all the religions seem to paint, they say God is a good God. I mentioned yesterday that it's as if, when we look around on Earth, as if two painters had a go at the same canvas.

You remember that last night? I talked about the juicy carrot that Timothy paid for. And this is one beautiful, or shall I say, an artist that really knew what he was doing, painted a beautiful picture, and then a drunkard came afterwards, and he basically just splashed paint everywhere. And as you look around you, we see a world in which there is perfection.

But we also see a world in which there is sorrow, and there is hardship, and there's things which make, I believe, every single one of us at times in our life spend many hours crying and brokenhearted. But something that's very important is, the world has to see that God is good. And I mentioned this yesterday.

I'll still never understand that they are bad and need to repent. That's what we read in Romans 2, verse four, where it said that the goodness of God, the goodness that God is, not just the good things he does, leads us to repentance. And so the topic that I'm bringing tonight, which is why does God allow suffering, although it might not be one of those exciting topics that has a million illustrations and so on, it's an extremely important one.

Because if we don't understand why there's suffering in the world, then we cannot, as Christians, go out to people who have arguments in their millions, and converse with them, and bring to them a God who is good, and show to them that they are sinners in light of that good God. Because they, in their head, have this thing, well, God is bad because he's allowing suffering. God is bad because he's allowing suffering.

God is bad because he's allowing suffering. He's allowing little babies to fall into a swimming pool, and he doesn't take his arm and just pulls them out. He could, he's all powerful, so why doesn't he do it? Why did he allow that baby to die? But you know what's something that's very interesting? Have you ever heard the argument, if God is good and all-powerful, why does he allow suffering of innocent people like babies, being born at age? Have you ever heard that phrase before being used? Hands up if anybody's heard that.

From me? Or someone out there? Do you know that that is not a modern concept? It wasn't something that Richard Dawkins, or Stephen Hawkins, or Christopher Heskings, or any of those other guys, there's about 15 of the main atheists in the world that really write books that sold in hundreds of thousands, and millions, and whatever. But it wasn't actually invented by them, although they don't really give credit to the original guy in general. It was written, it was made up, actually, or it might have been made up before that, but the first recorded that it was written down was 300 years before God showed his goodness in giving his son to die.

There was a guy with the name Epicurus, and he wrote down basically that, and I'm not gonna write the whole thing, it's slightly different to how we say it nowadays, but it basically says, or actually I'll read it. Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent, he's not all-powerful. Is he able, you know, he's powerful, but not willing? Then he is malevolent, that means he is a very bad God.

Is he both able and willing? Then why is there so much suffering out there? When's come an evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God? And that was not Richard Dawkins, or any of these modern guys, that was a guy 300 years before Christ came around. This argument is a very old argument, and it's a very powerful argument. One of the problems that you have when you go out into society and talk to people is that most of them are not like most people sitting here.

They're not homeschoolers, they're like me. They went to public school, and there are people here who went to public school two years back. But one of the things they taught us at school was that we all came from monkeys and we acted like it.

And that's got a problem. That causes a problem. Okay, apart from the fact that some of the people sitting here look like monkeys, I'm not gonna say who, but apart from that, the problem is that this affects their view of God, if God existed.

Because the whole concept of evolution is there's a survival of the fittest. Therefore, death is necessary, and suffering is necessary for anything to progress that is alive. For a little cell to one day become an ape, and one day to become an elephant, and then one day to become a human being, I don't know how it exactly works with them, but at the end of the day, for that to happen, you have to have death.

It's a whole cycle of death and rebirth until suddenly something gets better by the survival of the fittest, and natural selection, and all these other stupid things that they claim happen. And as they look at this, and they think of this, and they look at life as being eight billion years that the earth is old, and there's millions and millions of years of death and suffering, and God having made a world, God, if there is a God, He made a world which can only progress, life can only progress through suffering. They look up at God, if He exists, they say, and say, He's cruel.

And one of the saddest things when you speak to people like this is they will not allow a God to exist who is according to the Bible narrative. If God exists, we judging according to what we believe, and we learn in science classes, which isn't really science, they only have one world view. And I've listened to hours, and hours, and hours, and hours of debates between very good Christian apologetics and between these atheists, and I've read many of their books, and I've sat down with people on the street and listened to their views, and it's so interesting that they look at God from the point of view of Him not existing, He's just an idea, and then they blame Him as if He existed.

Well, judging Him according to their thinking and their teaching. I often wondered, well, if God doesn't exist because of the cruelty on earth, then how can you say science exists? Because if God's not there, then all you got left is science, and science is cruel. I mean, evolution, that isn't science, by the way, but their theory of evolution is pretty cruel.

And the answer is very simple, it's this. Well, science, or they call it science, evolution and science isn't a person. And because it's not a person, it can't have a motive.

And so because it doesn't have a motive, you can't judge it. But God, if He existed, He's a person. And if He caused all this, He has a motive.

And because He has a motive, He can be judged. So they judge God, but they don't judge science. And they're very one-sided.

The other thing about atheists, by the way, which is very interesting, is nowadays you've got the new atheists. They're a bit different from the atheists just before the 1970s and so on. But in the modern time, we've had this movement called the new atheists, and they're very militaristic.

They're trying to make converts across the world, and they want people to know that religion in general, and especially Christianity, is dumb. You read their books, it's very interesting. They spend most of the time against Christianity.

But they do mention other religions. And they say that there is no possible answer outside of science for understanding anything on Earth that happens anywhere. Science is the only thing that will get us to any answers.

And I actually heard one of the most famous of these atheists stand up with a clear face and say the dumbest thing you could ever hear a scientist say. He looked and he said, one day science will tell us why people make decisions according to the chemicals in their brains. That is, we're gonna find out according

to the chemical reactions in their brains and the electric, magnetic, neurological, whatever, why people kill people and why people do this, and there's nothing, we don't even have a will.

It's all scientific. And then he said, we don't quite understand it now, and we probably wanna understand it for the next million years, but it's coming. That science will explain why people make everyday decisions like I ate a banana versus I ate a pear versus I ate a McDonald's hamburger.

And they did serious. There are no other answers. I wanna read you a little quote from a guy called Stephen Hawkins.

You've heard of Stephen Hawkins. He's quite a famous atheist. He's the guy who's a little cripple.

He's suffered quite a lot in life. And he, I think he uses his mouth to do stuff on the computer and so on. I don't know if one of his hands still works, but he's basically, if I understand right, he's paralyzed from the neck down, and we sympathize with him for that because that is sad, but I don't sympathize with him for his views.

And this is one of his views. I'm gonna read it right now. How can we understand the world in which we find ourselves? What is the nature of reality? And I'm gonna put dot, dot, dots in between because I left a few words out for time.

Where did we all come from? Dot, dot, dot. Did the universe need a creator? Dot, dot, dot. Traditionally, these have been questions for philosophy.

In other words, you know, common sense. But philosophy is dead. Philosophy has not kept us up with the modern development in science, particularly physics.

And then listen to these words. Now his books, among others, sell in the millions. Scientists have become the bearer of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge.

So to understand why we exist, to understand where everything came from, to understand our motives in life and what everything is about around us and in life and whatever happens in life, we need science. And it's gonna answer everything eventually. They've made science a god.

And thus the Bible is not relevant. In other words, we can come to them and say, okay, this is your worldview and because of this worldview, you are thinking in a certain way about God and blaming him for things. And they say, well, we can be against God according to our worldview, but you can't argue as if God exists.

God cannot exist in arguments for him. We can only argue against him as an idea. And what a horrible idea.

Now, John Lennox, he's a professor of mathematics at the University of Oxford. I don't agree with everything he says, but he has quite a few good ideas. I'm gonna change one of his stories.

He talks about Matilda's cake. Now, there's a guy sitting at the back. You've heard of him.

His name is Ezra. He was standing at the front earlier. And I'm gonna pretend that this is Ezra's cake.

To answer these amazing scientists. Ezra one day, he heard that my birthday, by the way, my birthday is the 2nd of November if anybody wants to send cards. I like chocolates too.

But especially when I'm suffering from lack of chocolates. But Ezra decided, now he's never done this. He's a very cruel person.

But Ezra, a nicer Ezra, decided that he was gonna make me a chocolate cake. And so he started to make this cake. And he brought it to me.

And I thought, wow, wonderful. All the little, you know, white stuff and the candles and whatever. I mean, it's wonderful.

It even smells great. And, I like chocolate. And I can't wait to get hold of it.

But first of all, I phone some of my atheist scientific friends and I say to them, listen, Mr. Chemical Biologist, can you come over and Mr. All these different things that you can have, you know, astronomical, whatever. And I bring them all over and I say, look at my cake. And they look at my cake.

And I say, could you do something for me? Could you take it to a laboratory and could you test this cake? And I want every single one of you to find out everything that you can possibly find through science about this cake. And then I want you to come back to me and I want you to give me results. And so they went.

Now, they wouldn't normally do this for me because I'm destroyed, Daniel. But let's just say, in an imaginary world, they actually listened to a nobody like me and they took that cake and they tested it with all their different machines and chemicals and whatever. And they took it and they figured out that it was made of these different ingredients and these different compounds, which made it that he actually used these different natural products and he heated it at this heat for that amount of time and even how old it was afterwards.

And they came to me and they had this long list of amazing stuff that I can't believe I didn't know that. I just looked like chocolate cake. It looked very nice before they got hold of it and messed it up with their science.

But at the end of the day, it looked wonderful. That's all I knew. And they come back to me and I said, but I got one more question that I'd like you to answer through science.

Why did Ezra make it? And they look at me and they say, well, we don't know. I said, take it back to the laboratory. I don't care about all these little things.

I wanna know why he made the cake and you're gonna find it out through science. And they'll take it back and they'll put all the chemicals on it, won't tell them anything because science is very limited. It can tell you a lot about what things are made of and what's gonna happen when you put more stuff in and take a whole lot of God's creation and put it together and make a mess.

But it can't tell you why it's there. But you don't need the most expensive laboratory in America not to find out why it's there. All they had to do was turn to Ezra and say, sir, I know this is very unscientific, but why did you make this cake? They just had to ask the maker.

And you see, Stephen Hawking is a genius. There's no doubting it. There's certain areas of science where him and many other atheists are absolutely phenomenally brilliant.

But what they're missing in thinking that science will lead them to everything is that an old lady can sometimes tell them something that science cannot tell them if an old lady happened to make a cake. Why she made it. And that God, who made this earth, this cake, can tell them a lot about this earth that they will never find out through science.

One thing that atheists love to do is they like to accuse God not in view of the greater picture of the Bible narrative, only from their worldview that suffering, suffering, suffering is necessary for progress, but they like to accuse God in light of individual events and not in light of the greater picture, the context of those events. What do I mean by this? Well, I'll tell you a little story. And this is a true story.

This is not like the cake. Ezra never made me a cake and I'm holding that against you. But when I was younger, any animal lovers over here? Oh dear.

Stay seated. When I was younger, I took a cat by the tail. I swung it around my head and I smashed its head into a tree.

The blood splattered on the ground and it died. It's the truth. There was a girl standing nearby and a few others and the girl wasn't very happy with me.

But at the end of the day, I have asked for trouble if I left the story at that, because I'm now gonna tell you the context why I did it. You see, my grandfather has a dog and the dog, just before I got hold of the cat, got hold of the cat and started to really rip it apart. It was like, I remember there was two dogs and it had hair and blood everywhere and it was basically dying.

It would have died a slow death of a few hours. We were very far from any vet. You call it a vet, the animal doctor in America.

In South Africa, this was. We were far away from anywhere where I could get help and I realized that I had to kill this cat before it got away so that it didn't go through hours and hours of suffering. And I knew that if I took it, there was no stones around to throw it with, but if I took it with my hand, it would probably bite me.

And so to save myself from being bitten and to kill the cat at the same time, I grabbed it by the tail, I swung it around my head and I smashed it dead. Does that sound slightly better? You see, what happens is the same events in history. If you don't look at the context, look very bad, but in light of context, they become more understandable.

There's a vast difference between Hiroshima, although I don't agree with it, to save lives, they sent an atom bomb down, in a sense, although I don't think it was very good anyway, and someone just walking down the street and killing as many people with his gun. There's a context, there's a reason. And I'd like to look today at a little bit of the bigger picture, the context of why God allows a lot of things, not only in our lives, but in history.

And I'd like to look at it in light of who God is. That's a goodness. A God whose goodness is not relative, good compared to society.

A God who can judge harshly will not condemn himself. For those of you who weren't here last night, those four or five or six that are here, that weren't here last night, what I did mention was that one of the things that we don't understand, or many people don't understand, is why does God judge harshly? Why would he send people to hell if they were born a sinner and told just one lie? I would never do that, they

say. And I'd just quickly like to mention the illustration I used yesterday, and not in the same length and detail, but basically, if I was a judge and someone was dragged in and this person had told one lie, and I as a judge stood up there and I said, take him out, put wood around him, light the fire, and burn him to death.

One of the reasons I would not do that, apart from the fact that it's not allowed in most lands, is that someone might stand up and say, but judge, have you ever told a lie? Because if I was to judge him that harshly for telling a lie, then I would be condemning myself. And that's why, because people know they've done many bad things, they struggle to see how God can be so harsh, but God can stand up as judge. God can stand up as judge and harshly judge the sin which is very bad in light of who he is, utter goodness, without condemning himself because he is good.

And I'd like to look at the bigger picture in light of that. And the first thing we look at in the Bible narrative, and every single one of you probably knows this, is that this earth is not billions or millions of years old, and there hasn't been millions and millions of years of suffering, but that about 7,000 or 6,000 to 7,000 years back, God made a perfect earth in which everything was good. And he put a man and woman in the garden, which was a paradise, and he gave them one little thing not to do, please do not eat of that one tree, and they rebelled against him.

And in light of who God is, that was worthy of them being sent immediately to hell forever. But God is good, and God is merciful. And he actually let them live a little while.

And he reached out to man. But this Bible narrative explains a lot of things. It explains why people have to die, because the first man, our representative, sinned against the holy God, and in light of who God is, that was worthy of death, and he is our representative that passed down on all mankind.

It explains general suffering, why there are thorns, disease, sweat when you work. Nowadays we have air conditioners. Mosquitoes, you know mosquitoes in America are fatter than mosquitoes in South Africa? Their strength is in numbers.

In South Africa there's not so many, but they're thin and they're fast, you know, you can't get them. In America, I was up at this North, I don't know if all your mosquitoes are like this, but they look like they've been eating McDonald's like many Americans. But I look at these mosquitoes, and they're so fat, they can hardly stand there, and they come towards you.

And it's just like, slap. The only problem is when a hundred of them do it at the same time, you can't slap them all, so they get you. But they're definitely American.

But the fall of man, the fall of man explains why this earth is cursed, and why people die. So it explains, let me put this in inverted commas, general suffering. Not specific things like why babies fall into swimming pools and why, well actually it does.

If you think a bit more. But it doesn't explain, for instance, why babies are born with AIDS. That still wasn't conceptually come there, but you can see a world in which suffering exists, in which there is, how can we put it, there's sickness, there's mosquitoes, and there's Americans to fill up the gaps.

But also, before we go on to explain a few other things, it explains why babies drown. You see, one of the things that atheists, and Christians often, because the philosophy of atheism and other religions has come into the church, and people have got a lot of ideas in their head, and they find a lot of things on the

internet, and it affects them. The philosophy that is out there is people struggle to understand why God would allow a little baby falling into water when he's all powerful, when he could just say the word, and the baby would fly out of the water, and land back on land.

Why he didn't do that? And I've read a lot, and I've asked a lot of people, and I've read in the Bible, and thought to myself a lot, and the best answer that I seem to find, and I agree with it totally, is it all comes back to Adam, and the nature of the curse. Because if God was held to the same standard that you and I are held, as far as people dying goes, then nobody would die. What is the standard that we are held to? Well, if an old man walks across the street, he has a heart attack, you have to go and help him, else you're cruel.

If someone falls into a swimming pool, and you can swim, and this guy shouts out, help, help, help, then you're supposed to jump in and help him, else you're cruel. Now imagine God was held to that standard. Imagine God was held to the standard apart from in wars and things like that, that we had to help people, anybody that we can possibly help that is suffering, and or shall we say, that is about to die in some way, and is in danger of dying, we're supposed to help them.

If a wall is falling down, and we see it falling down, we say, get out of the way, or we jump, and we get them down. And we say, I saved your life. If God was held to the same standard, then nobody would die.

Because God is all powerful. And something that people don't understand is what Adam wanted. He wanted life without God.

He might have wanted the name God still to be there to give him stuff, you know, and the nice paradise and everything, but when it came to him taking that fruit, he wanted to go out from under the authority of God and live his own life. And what he rightfully deserved, like I mentioned earlier, was to be zapped basically and go to hell forever. But God instead, he was gonna die, gave him a taste, and gave man a taste of what he'd asked for.

A world without God's perfect sustaining power. A taste, not a perfect, and God still sustains this world, by the way, I mean, the trees are still there and everything, if God stopped sustaining the world, we'd all fall down dead. But to a degree, we are getting a taste of what it is to have God not perfectly there.

And ever since God did that, Adam asked for it, he didn't know what he was asking for. Man has been complaining ever since. And that explains why babies drown.

It's the nature of the curse. If God was held to the same standard we held to as far as death goes, then nobody would die. And God is, we are living in a world in which we're experiencing life without God's perfect sustaining power.

A life without God in his fullness. And therefore, babies will die. And bullets will hit people's heads that God could have stopped in a moment because God is not stopping it, we are in a cursed world due to our deed, due to what Adam did.

But like I said earlier, this does not explain why babies are born with AIDS. Or why God ordered the killing of babies in the Old Testament. In quite a few places.

Another question before we go on though, to those points is, why did God make Adam capable of choosing against him? I've written quite a few atheistic books and other places that people struggle with

this. Why, if God knew, if God knew that Adam was going to, or could, fall into sin and that would cause a cursed earth and all the terrifying things that we see around us, then why did he make Adam capable of doing evil? Why didn't he just make Adam, you know, only capable of eating everything else but that tree? God could have done that. And this is not about Calvinism.

It is not about non-Calvinism. It is not about anything like that. It is not about theology.

But to me, the best answer would be this, concerning Adam, that God wanted a relationship with him in which there was love. And if he created a robot or someone that could not, could only choose good, and could only choose to do what he said, then he, in a sense, was creating a robot that had to love him. But to create someone that actually could love him back and have a kind of relationship as far as God wanted, he had to create someone that had a choice, a capacity to love.

And to have a capacity to love, you have to have a capacity to choose not to love. And so God created a non-robot, knowing what would happen, by the way. God wasn't caught out by Adam's fall.

And before the foundation of the earth, he had a plan to give his son. But let's carry on. We see from the context of Scripture why everyone has to die, why there's general suffering, even why babies drown or why people die, basically, of all ages.

But something else we have to realize when understanding suffering is that it's not just the curse, it's not just the result of Adam's sin that leads to suffering in life. Sin, as an option, still exists. Adam isn't the only one who has sinned.

His children were born sinners. And his children's children were born sinners. And his children's children's children's children's children's children were born sinners.

And they've done sin. And some of them have done more sin than others. Some of them have given themselves over to the evil that lives in their heart.

Others have become Pharisees. Others have remained relatively good, but on their way to hell, because in light of who God is, they deserve hell. But sin itself causes suffering in people apart from the person who did the deed.

And that is the life we're living in. A life, a world, in which people can hurt other people, even though relatively, in our minds, we understand the other people to be relatively better than the person who did the deed. And we have examples of this.

Number one, we have Cain and Abel. What did Cain do? He was jealous. He did sin in his heart.

He took a stone. I don't know what he took. It doesn't say in scripture, but he somehow killed his brother.

One man's sin affected another man for eternity that he never had children that we know of. Babies are born with AIDS. That little child, an atheist will say, but that little child doesn't deserve to have AIDS.

But you have to understand, we're living in a world where the sin of the parents, as they sleep around and do evil, whatever else happened, can affect a child. Like Cain affected Abel, so a parent's sin can affect a child's sin that is born with AIDS. And God is still good, but that's the world that we're living in.

When churches split and families divorce and you have terrifying things that happen, it affects others because sin doesn't only affect the person that did it and make him piling up another, basically he just piled up another brick of sin to which God, in light of who God is, he's piling up wrath against the day of judgment. Sin affects other people who are innocent in the matter that was done. Now here's another question.

Why are we, why are we, and thank you for concentrating through this because as you can see, it's not full of interesting illustrations as other assumptions can more easily be. Why are we punished for Adam's sin? Some people ask that question. Why couldn't we just be put in our own little paradise? Man, right now that would probably be Timothy's story, and he's not there and we can eat what we want.

But we put in our own little paradise and get our own chance to not eat of that tree. Well, what we have to understand, number one, is that Adam was our representative. We read this in Romans 5 verse 12.

Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed on all men, for that all have sin. Adam is our representative. And some people say, but wait a minute, that's not fair.

Well, it's only not fair in that person's head because the creator is allowed to set up his creation as he wishes. We can be proud and say that's not fair, but it is fair. The potter is allowed to make the pot like he wants to.

And I'm gonna read that. It says in Isaiah 45 verse nine, woe unto him that striveth with his maker. Let the potter strive with the potter of the earth.

Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, what maker's thou? All thy work he hath no hands. So God, the creator, set up creation that the first man and woman, Adam specifically, was the representative of mankind. And in that death passed on all men and sin passed on all men and we were all born sinners.

But the second thing we have to understand concerning that question, why are we punished for Adam's sin, is that we're not gonna be punished ultimately for Adam's sin. The Bible teaches very clearly that though we were born sinners and iniquitous, we are gonna be punished for our sins. And I once heard an atheist stand up and say, well, then God created us sinful, made us do sin, and is gonna punish us for doing it.

And they don't understand what they're talking about. I was a naughty boy. Anybody here was a naughty boy? I mean, I'm talking about, you know, just doing very naughty stuff.

I did some of that too, but, well, I mean, I mean, just, you know, naughtiness, you know, like throwing water balloons or whatever. And people, I know, and I know this, and I think that everybody else knows this if they're honest with themselves. Though we were born in iniquity and we had a heart that lent ourselves towards sin, there were times in our life when whether we had the Bible or not to tell us what was right and wrong, according to the Bible, we had a conscious, Romans 2 verse 15, the law written in their hearts, their conscious also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.

And even atheists have this, by the way. They've got a conscience, though it's very warped through life and it becomes hardened against God. There was a time in their life, and there's a time in your life when you're going to do something against God, you're going to know it's wrong, and you didn't have to do it.

And I remember times when I didn't have to do it, and I chose to do it. I remember other times I couldn't help myself because we kind of enslaved to sin. But there are times in my life where I did things I didn't have to do, and God is going to judge us by according to our works, not according to the fact that we were born a child of Adam.

Let's just go quickly in light of that to Revelation 20 verse 13, and let's read what it says. And if anybody wants to look up Romans 2 verse 6, that's another verse that's pretty good. Revelation 20 verse 13 and Romans 2 verse 6. And it says these words.

And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them. And they were judged because they were children of Adam. No, and they were judged every man according to their works.

And then Romans 2 verse 6, who will render to every man according to Adam's deeds, according to his deeds. And this just brings us quickly to the fact that babies go to heaven. Because how I understand it, if I read 2 Samuel 12 verse 23, and I see that David and his little baby had died, and he said, I can't go to him.

How can I put it? He can't come to me, but I can go to him in my own words. In other words, he's in heaven. I'm going to one day go to him, but he can't come back to me.

That implied that this baby was going to be, was in heaven. He wasn't punished for Adam's sin. He was a sinner.

But the moment he died, the work of the cross became real in his life, and he became a saved person, according to these scriptures. I believe to explain this, I can't get every single little verse, but as I put different verses together, as far as babies go and heaven goes, and I see the babies do go to heaven, my understanding is that there's an age of innocency. And in this age of innocency, until you get to the stage where you know a little bit of right from wrong, and in your conscience, you know I'm doing something against God, I'm choosing to do it.

In this age of innocency, for the first few years of your life, if you die, you will go to heaven, and the cross will be real in your life, and your heart will be changed in a moment. But I also believe that after the age of innocency, God is not going to only judge us by the things we did, that we chose to do, but by the things we were enslaved to, by every sin that we ever did. But we can never say to God, God, you're only judging me for the things which I did, which I had to do because I'm a sinner, because there are things in each one of our lives which we can look to, and we know, if we're honest, we chose to do.

So we cannot blame God for punishing us for Adam's sin. Another thing which is very interesting in scripture is that God suffered. God didn't just put us through suffering, who deserve it as mankind, He put Himself through suffering, who didn't deserve it.

He sent His only Son to suffer, not just on the cross before, and He suffered rejection from those who He came to love and to save. He suffered rejection from His own, the people that He'd looked after for so many years, as a God, the people He'd fought for. He suffered in so many ways.

And then He died. And some people ask, and I've seen some atheists ask this, why did Jesus, why did Jesus have to suffer? Why couldn't God, I mean, He's all-powerful, He can do anything, by the way, He can't do anything, He can't lie. He can't do that which is against who He is.

He has to work according to who He is, that's part of Him being God, and that's why He sends people to hell, by the way, because He works according to who He is, a good God who has to punish according to who He is. But why did Jesus have to suffer? Why couldn't He, just as an all-powerful God, have said, okay, if you're sorry, I forgive you. Because God had to work according to who He is.

And anything less than a perfect man, or actually His Son, dying for our sins would not satisfy His justice according to the good God that He is. And so He had to give His Son to die, there was no other way. I once heard one guy talk and he said, if there's aliens out there, could they get saved? And of course there's no aliens out there, but one of the interesting things that he said was, if there were aliens out there and they'd had their rebellion and they'd sinned, an alien would have to die for the alien.

God didn't come down and become a sheep, He became a man. Because only a man could die for man's sins, and that's why God had to become a man so that He could die for man. And if only a man could die for man, why couldn't any of us die for everybody else? I'll tell you why, because the helpless cannot die for the helpless.

God had to give His Son. How wondrous is that? God is good. But the point that I'd like to bring out in light of that God has suffered is just this, God understands when you go through suffering.

Yes, we can talk of God who allows babies to die in swimming pools, and we can talk about God who allows all the suffering in the world, but I can tell you that was not what He wanted for all of mankind. He doesn't sit there and say, ha, ha, ha, I'm so glad with these little puppets, I'm putting them into suffering. He has compassion on us as we suffer.

As people were standing before Him in a crowd and they were hungry, that's not very bad suffering, just hungry being away from home for a little while, He had compassion on them, the Bible said. That was before He died. But we read something amazing about after He died.

It says in Hebrews 2 verse 18, for in that He Himself had suffered being tempted, that's tested, He is able to succor them. It's like taking a little child and comfort it. Them that are tempted, tested.

And through the trials and tests which we go through in life, God understands He was there. He has suffered as a man. He was tempted as a man.

He was rejected as a man. He experienced betrayal as a man and He died. He was murdered as a man.

And He can come to us and care for us in our suffering. But I'd like right now to ask the last two hard questions to end off the sermon. The last two hard questions that have not been answered yet and I'm not gonna say that I can answer these perfectly.

I should have actually said at the beginning of the sermon, not just to sound humble, but it's the truth. I don't have all the answers. But I'd like to look at the last two questions and attempt to bring some answers.

Well, number one, the last two hard questions. Why, if God is love, why are... And actually this is not so hard as the very last one. This is actually relatively easy.

The last one is very, very, very, very hard. If God is love, why are His followers so cruel? That's what many atheists ask. Why were there crusades? Okay, they weren't saved.

But why are there so many people in history who called themselves Christians, who said, I'm following Jesus and they murdered people, they raped people. And you've got entire semi-nations that formed out of the armies that called themselves Christians and they raped people along the way. Why is it that in Northern Ireland you have Christians, Protestants, bombing Catholics and Catholics bombing Protestants, tit for tat, turn the other cheek.

Why, how can you call God good if those who call themselves His followers are so horrible? And the answer, of course, to many of us is obvious. But you'll be surprised how many people don't realize that there's many fake, false Christians out there. And even Christians who do bad things in their life, when there comes a point in their life where they disobey God.

Because God said in the New Testament that we are not basically to take up the sword. I once had an atheist, or to put it this way, I'm not talking about non-resistance or this or that or whatever right now. What I'm talking about is taking up the sword to defend your faith.

God doesn't want us to do that. We are not to stand up and go up to people and say, you are about to become a Christian. Or when the Muslims come to us, say, we are about to kill you if you try to make us a Muslim.

I've got nothing in Africa against stopping people if they try to hurt my wife. I've got nothing against if there is a school and a person comes in with a gun and he says, I'm going to rape a lot of these children. That's what happens.

Taking a little hammer, knocking him on the head, let him have a nice little headache, and those kids don't go through trauma for the rest of their lives. But I am against us taking up the sword ever to defend our faith. But there are some verses in the Bible which atheists like to point to.

I heard an atheist the other day actually quoting scripture. They like to do that, by the way. They don't always know the context of scripture.

They don't always know the rest of scripture, but they know certain scriptures to use in arguments. Luke 22, verse 36. Then said he unto them, but now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his script.

And he that hath no sword, this is Jesus speaking, let him sell his garment. Sell your clothes and buy one. I mean, it's so urgent that you get a sword, you better sell your clothes.

What did Peter do? I don't know if he did that, but he got a sword. And why do we know that God was not, you know, reading that, I would think God really meant us to get swords, you know? There's a lot of theology beyond that. Perhaps it was just the time that Jesus was taken the hour of darkness when he was taken captive to be killed.

But even that argument falls away because when the people came to take him away, we see that Jesus did not meant them to take a sword and to start killing people because he healed the person's ear. He healed the person's ear that Peter cut off. They asked him, Luke 22, verse 49, when they which were with them, that's when the people came to take Jesus away, they saw what would follow, that these soldiers were gonna take Jesus away.

They said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? Is this the time that you're talking about? And then Peter took his sword and started cutting ears off, at least one. And Jesus took his hat and showed

himself to be the good God that he was. And even his enemy, he healed his ear.

There's another verse which people misinterpret as far as this goes, Matthew 10, verse 34. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword.

But if you look at the context, it's talking about families. It's talking about, like many of you would know of Amish families where people have been disowned because they were born again. And of Muslim families where they lost their wife because the Muslim was born again and he told his wife and his wife, though she loved him, left him because he was a Christian.

He's not talking about us taking up a sword and killing everybody. No, these people who did things in history that were absolutely against the Bible were not followers of Jesus Christ. They were in disobedience to Jesus Christ.

We know in 2 Peter chapter two, verse two, it says these words, and many, and many, this is not talking about the sword. This is talking about people who call themselves Christians following false prophets. And by the way, nowadays, we've got them in every color.

Pink, blue, star-spangled banner, you've got it. It's in every single color, you've got a false prophet, legalistic, liberal, fall over, stand up. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, calling themselves Christians, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Why am I mentioning that verse? It's very simple. Because when I look around me, when an atheist looks around him and he sees Christians that don't live it, and when an atheist looks around him and sees Christians that are cruel, and that murder people, and that they rape people, and they bomb people, then the atheist says, see, God is not good. But when I look around and I see those things, and I look at this verse, then I say to myself a very simple thing.

It's just another piece of proof that the Bible is true. But the Bible foretold it long ago. And God is good, even though they are not followers of God and are dragging his name through the mud.

But the last thing, the last thing I'd like to look at, probably the hardest thing in the Bible, and I've spoken to many, I call them theologians, call them clever guys, call them what you want. People who study the Bible, people who study history, I've spoken to many, many, many of them, and I've never got a perfect satisfactory answer to this question that I know would satisfy an atheist. And yet I'm not worried.

But it is a hard question. Why did God, in punishing parents, kill children, babies? Because that, to our mind, is extremely hard to fathom. In 2 Samuel 15, verse three, we read these words, and now go, this is Samuel, I think, speaking, and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, baby, sucking, and mother's milk, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

Well, I'd like to look at, you know, I can't perfectly answer this, although at the end I'll give something that sounds like a good answer, but I can't honestly perfectly answer this, but a few things I can say is there are many aspects of this which atheists like to pinpoint which you can answer. Number one, God did not just suddenly say, hey, go and kill another nation. That's what some of them imply.

You listen to their debates, you read their books, they're saying God's just sending people out to kill people. Like, as if he was just an idea that got into their head and sent them out, and they did terrifying

things. We know from scripture concerning the Amalekites, which was spoken of here, that it was, and especially when it comes to Genesis 15, verse 16, which not Amalekites, it's the Amorites, I'd like to read this verse.

Genesis 15, verse 16, but in the fourth generation, they shall come hither again, for the iniquity that's going their own way of the Amorites is not yet full. Now, the Amorites dwelt outside Canaan and in Canaan. The Amalekites dwelt inside Canaan and a few other places.

But ultimately, God looked at these nations, the Amalekites he looked at because they had gone, when Israel was going through the desert, they'd gone and killed little children, and they'd killed old people, and they'd basically killed the stragglers. And God said, my judgment is upon that nation. And he judged them by saying, I'm gonna kill their kids as well.

You know why? One of the reasons would be that it is a punishment to a father to know that he will never have anybody to bear his name in the future. Wiped off on the earth. But with the Amorites, God said those words which I just read to you, which is, but in the fourth generation, they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

God was not just, even though every single person on earth for their sin deserve to be zapped and sent to hell forever, that's what we deserve in light of who God is. God was not just gonna send a nation and kill them off just because they'd done some sins which made them worthy of hell. He was not gonna do that.

He was saying this very clearly in Genesis, as I said, chapter 15, verse 16, until it comes to the point where I cannot anymore bear the burden of their sin, I'm not gonna utterly destroy them. And that's why when you look at Sodom, where God came to rain fire down upon that city, it wasn't just, you know, Ryan Lander and a few people lying or whatever. It was people who were given over to the most evil, gruesome things that you could hardly believe people could be involved in.

And if you look at these Amorites and these Amalekites, these people were sleeping with animals. That's why you had to kill the animals. They were sleeping with animals.

They were killing their children. They would take their children and sacrifice them. Sacrifice them on altars.

They were doing everything that you could possibly think was evil by the time that the Israelites came there to Canaan to take over that land. The second thing we look at is that in light of the bigger picture, I don't perfectly understand this, but I know this. At the very beginning, when man sinned, God should have sent everybody to hell, but he didn't.

And sin became an avalanche in which people got worse and worse and worse and worse and worse, and that all that God could do is send everybody to hell, but he took a nation. He took a nation, starting with Abraham, and he tried to make a light on earth for other people to see who he was through those people. And he gave them his law, and he tried to preserve them as a light so he didn't just have to destroy the entire earth and stop the whole process before Jesus came.

And he tried to preserve this nation as a light for him, and he knew that these evil, evil, evil people could not be living close to them. And so in light of that context, it's not just God, like a terrorist nowadays, going out and saying, I decide everybody must be like me, else I'm gonna bomb them, kaboom. It's not that.

It happened here. And the third thing is we must allow God to be God, not just an idea. You know, if God was just an idea, then that's scary.

Then we could take the Bible, we could take these stories, and we could go out, and we could say, well, why don't we, God just told me to bomb America. God just told me to do evil things, like many terrorists do today. And that's scary.

But we know, though atheists bring that thing up a lot in their books and in their debates and everything, that that's not true, that God told us not to defend our faith with a sword, that we don't have a country down here, that we're pilgrims, that we're living for that land, though we will be killed, we're not going out to kill others as Christians. We're not the nation of Israel. We're pilgrims seeking another country.

So that fear that the atheists try to put into people's minds is not applicable. But all that I've said now still leaves unanswered this question, why the babies? And my answer to that is this. And by the way, I don't know about you, the worst I've had as far as losing a child is a miscarriage, and I cried for days, literally.

I don't think God isn't compassionate in those who lose their children. I don't think it's a small thing. And I don't like to put this lightly, but God knows some things that we don't.

God knows some things that we don't. And you can say that's unfair, but that's the truth. God knows some things which we don't.

And I'd like to quickly illustrate that. When I was a little boy, my mommy and daddy didn't always not struggle financially. In fact, they struggled financially quite a lot.

There was times when we didn't have food in the fridge, and then they'd pray, and then somehow food got in the fridge from somewhere. But at the end of the day, I remember times when we really, really, really struggled. And I couldn't understand it, because there was this thing called the bank.

And as a little boy, I was four years old, I used to look at this bank. And I said, but they've got a bank card. And daddy goes with this bank card, and he puts it into the machine, and money comes out.

And then he goes home, and he says, we must pray for money. And I thought to myself, daddy, if I was you, I'd just go back to the bank. You know, take that bank card, and put it in the machine, and take the money out, whenever you wanted it.

Now, my dad used to give me about 20 cents per week pocket money. I'm not saying you should give your children pocket money, but he was kind enough to do that at that stage. I often wondered, if he could go to the bank, why didn't I get more money? And I figured something out that's actually very clever.

Even a child can figure this out sometimes. I didn't know the answer, but I figured, daddy probably knows something I don't. And all of us know this.

Little children know less. There's things which they think simplistically. They think that when you have a simplistic answer, it's an answer which insinuates that there's an easy answer to the problem, but it's actually much more complicated.

That's a simplistic answer. Little children know way less than adults. Although adults act like children sometimes.

They do. But the most wise adult on earth knows way, way, way, way, way, way, way, way, way less than God about why things happen and why he does certain things. One preacher in America, I listened to this recently, said, if God is only omnipotent, all-powerful, if that's the only thing that God is, that he's all-powerful, then we can stand as men and shake our fists at God when things go wrong because he could have put it right.

But if God is sovereign, then we are at his mercy. If God is only omnipotent, all-powerful, then we can shake our hand, but if he is sovereign, I'm not talking about Calvinism or non-Calvinism or anything like that, I'm just talking about the term sovereign, which any Christian can use, then we are at his mercy. He can do what he wants with us because he's God.

And I'd just like to end off by asking, what did he do? He had us at his mercy, we deserved hell from the beginning for our sin in light of who he is. What did he do when we so-called judge God, which we're actually not allowed to do? Well, the first thing he did is he punished us according to who he was, he cursed this earth, rightfully, and he was still good. But then this God, at whose mercy we are, who could do what he wanted with us, he still allowed us to live, though he should have sent us to hell for eternity.

We didn't get zapped. This God, at whose mercy we are, gave his son to die for his enemies. God even died for those atheists to shake their fists at him.

This God, at whose mercy we are, reached out first to man. Adam did not seek God, Adam went away from God and hid and put little things on him or whatever. He hid away from God and God came out to him and started to work in his life.

And God took an animal and killed it and gave him a picture of what will one day be Jesus Christ dying on the cross. And since then, he made a river of blood through the Old Testament so that everybody could see very clearly. I'm telling you now, I'm telling you now, I'm telling you now, I'm making it very clear.

It's coming, it's coming. My son will die for your sins. God reached out first to man.

You know, one of the things that really, I think it was last week, and there's been times before, many times, where I've suddenly just thought to myself, well, what if Jesus had come before I got saved? He could have, he had that right. I am at his mercy, we are at his mercy, and yet I can look back and say he didn't come in 1999 and I was in hell forever. Obviously, you've got things that happen after you come, but at the end of the day, I could have died anyway.

He didn't take my life before I got saved. He could have, and because he in his mercy did that and one day saved me, I can die tonight and go to heaven forever. And it's all grace, it's all mercy, it's all undeserved, it's all love, it's all the goodness of who he is, that I am on my way to heaven, though I deserve hell for eternity.

It's grace, it's goodness, it's who he is. One day, and this is just mercy, those who know Jesus will have new bodies. You know what's wonderful about that? Apart from, I mean, there's so many things.

I think last year I preached a whole sermon on that, but just one little thing. Those of us who have suffered in our body, those of us, and I wasn't this, but there are people who've been molested, there are people who've been raped. I know a minister whose wife, he's a godly minister, he's one of the greatest ministers and preachers in South Africa of the Afrikaans language.

He, his wife was raped. In heaven, she's gonna have a new body. On earth, she can rest in Jesus and forgive.

I know a little, I mentioned this before, a little Christian, and I believe you were saved, you got cut up by a witch doctor in South Africa, his body passed, lying on the ground. Well, in heaven, he's got a new body. I'd like to conclude, there are some things I don't understand.

But ultimately, I believe, in spite of the things, the few things which I don't understand perfectly, I believe there's overwhelming evidence that in light of who God is and that we are at his mercy, what he's done, which he didn't have to do, we didn't deserve it, he is overwhelmingly good. And he is utterly deserving of every last drip of praise and honor and glory that we could ever give to him in all of our life. And even if our entire church splits and everything we think is big is actually very small compared to what people in other lands sometimes go through.

Whatever happens in our life, we have no right to say, I love God, but I'm actually bitter against him and just throwing away this Bible and this book and these standards and what God says you must live, because we love Jesus. And our life is built around the good Jesus and not built around a church or a family. Although those things are important according to scripture.

But our relationship with Jesus is founded on him and we love him. And when others turn against him, we don't become bitter against him because we're living in a cursed, fallen world with sinners where their lives affect us and where the cursed world affects us and where bad things happen. We carry on and we stand for the one who gave his son to die for our sin.

One last little thing is that there will be ultimate justice. The atheist view of the world is very sad. They blame God, but in their view, when you die, that's it, zoop, I'm dead.

And that means Hitler, guess what happened to Hitler after he shot himself in the head and he never, I don't know, they say he did, and he never faced trial for what he did in the killing of six million Jews and all these different things. He's not just escaped, he's gonna stand before God. But I've heard atheists say this word, not exactly of Hitler, but of other people who are very bad.

And I'm just gonna use Hitler as an example. What if Hitler had been saved? Wouldn't that be just so unfair that God just freely forgave this man and he went to heaven after all that he'd done evil? You see, it's because they think in according to their worldview, because they don't understand what goodness is, because they don't understand what it means that God is good. They don't understand that in light of who God is, it makes perfect sense and it is fair that God's son dying satisfied God's judgment and that the worst of sinners can be forgiven freely based on that awesome, that worthy of God deed where his son died for our sins.

God is good. There's a book written by a guy who's dead now. He's found out that God exists.

I won't mention his name, but he was a famous atheist and he died of cancer recently. I think it was two years back. And he wrote a book called God is Not Good.

And he mentioned all the things that go bad on earth. God is not good because he sleeps while men suffer. Famous atheist.

But we know that this is a simplistic argument in light of who God is and that he can be harsh without condemning himself in his judgment. We know that this is a simplistic argument in light of what God knows that we don't. We know that God is good and merciful and love.

Now tomorrow, I'm gonna look at not why God allows suffering, but what we as Christians, those of us who are saved, can learn through suffering. And also that God is compassionate and merciful and love and that he feels for us in our suffering. And all these things that I'll try, attempt in my weakness to show tomorrow, all of it that God can teach us through suffering, I'd like to emphasize, it's not because he's feeling bad about the bad things on earth.

It's his mercy, it's his love, and his confession for every single one of us in every situation that we go for because he is love and because he is good. It's a fearful thing to touch the name of God because he is good. Those atheists are gonna find it out one day.

Let us pray. Father, I'd just like to thank you for helping me through this sermon. I noticed that I was very tired before I came and stood up here.

For some reason. But I wanna thank you that even as I preached, even if I believe people were blessed by your word through what you did in their lives and what you spoke tonight, but even if no one else was blessed, thank you for blessing me with these wonderful truths that there is an ultimate reason for suffering, that most of it is explainable through the context of the narrative scripture. And that little bit which is strange and we don't quite understand, although we can see some reasons why it might be that it happened, that though we don't perfectly understand it, we know that you understand and you know why and the rest of scripture cries out so clearly that you're good, that we know that you're good and that what you did was right and just and perfect.

And thank you that you've blessed me and reminded me of the fact that you're good. And in light of your goodness, not only must sinners repent but us as Christians must always glorify and never have bitterness against you because you're righteous no matter what happens. And so I thank you, a righteous God, a loving God, a good God, for saving my soul, for being with me, for being in a relationship with me for these last 10 or so years.

And also for these youth meetings, the goodness of God that we can be in meetings where we're unpersecuted and people don't come with guns to stop us. And thank you so much that we can preach from my Bible without fear tonight. We praise thee for all thy manifold goodness that you've done, but above all, the good God that you are.

In Jesus Christ's name.

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