

(Basics) 1. the Origin of Evil

by Zac Poonen

The sermon explores the origin of evil, emphasizing the necessity of free will and God's ultimate control over evil through Jesus Christ.

Duration: 13:02

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Psalm 139:1

Topics: "Free Will", "Nature Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that human reasoning cannot fully comprehend the nature of God. Just as a dog cannot understand a human being without being taught, we cannot understand God without His revelation. The speaker explains that God desires a relationship with His creation, not just obedient machines. He created angels and humans with free will, allowing them to choose to obey or disobey Him. The speaker also highlights the importance of conscience, which guides us in distinguishing right from wrong.

Transcript

We want to think today about one of the greatest mysteries that there is in the world that people have tried hard to understand. It is the mystery of evil. How did evil begin in a world that was created by a perfectly good God full of wisdom? Why has God permitted evil to exist and to spread so much? Why does evil have the upper hand in every part of the world? Why is there so much sickness, poverty, sorrow? Isn't God interested in helping us? There is an answer to this question of why God has allowed evil to exist.

Is it because God could not control it? Very often we find people suffering in so many ways in different parts of the world and even our hearts are moved. What about a God who is full of compassion? Now before we proceed further, we need to understand that our human reasoning cannot tell us what God is really like. Just like a dog cannot understand a human being because the human being is higher in the levels of creation than a dog.

In the same way, we cannot understand God. If a dog is to understand a human being, the human being must explain himself to that dog, teach that dog commands. In the same way, if we use our mind to try and understand God, it will be as foolish as a dog trying to understand a human being.

It's just not possible. We've got to allow God to reveal himself to us. And that's what we read in the Bible.

God has revealed himself to us in the Bible. And in the Bible we read of a God who is interested in a personal relationship with every single human being on the face of the earth. He is intensely, deeply interested in every single thing in our life.

God is full of wisdom. He is almighty, all-powerful. He knows everything.

He knows the future. And he has total control of the whole universe, not only this earth, but the whole universe with millions of stars. He is infinitely pure.

We cannot understand his purity. He is also infinitely loving, full of love, full of goodness. And God's love is totally unselfish.

Very often the love that we see on earth is selfish love, but not God's love. His love is totally unselfish. And right from the beginning, from the time he created man, God wanted to share his joy and his happiness with others and with us.

In fact, that's why he created living beings. And before he created man and the human race, we read in the Bible that God created millions of angels. And there again his purpose was that he might share his happiness and his glory with all of them.

And that was long before he created us human beings. But one thing, when God created angels, he created them with a free will. Now, when God created the stars and the planets, he didn't create them with a free will.

The planets, for example, rotate around the sun with perfect timing. They never slip up. They've been doing that for ages.

And they never disobeyed the laws God has made for them. Every star in the universe moves in an orbit designed by God. The earth moves on its own axis in perfect split-second timing, in perfect obedience to God's commands which were put into it ages ago.

But when it came to angels and when it comes to the human race, which we'll talk about later, God created us with a free will. In other words, God created the angels and the human race with the freedom to choose whether we wanted to obey God or not, whether we would obey him or not. Unlike the planets and the stars, the plants, the trees and the plants that you see, they grow.

They obey the laws of nature which God has put into it. They don't have freedom of choice. And that's why a star can never become evil.

A planet can never become evil. A tree or a plant can never become evil. Why is it they can never become evil? Because they have no freedom of choice.

And though trees and plants may do us a lot of good because God has created them like that, they cannot do good out of voluntary choice. A planet cannot do any good on its own. A star cannot.

A tree cannot. It grows according to certain laws of nature built into it and it has no choice. And so we can say these beings that have no choice, these parts of creation like the stars and the planets and the trees, they can neither do good nor evil.

They're like if you had a robot, a computerized robot in your home. You could program it to pick up your slippers and to do many, many things to bring you the newspaper, perhaps even to make a cup of coffee and many, many things you could program a robot to do. But a robot would not have any feelings.

It would never disobey you if you programmed it right. It would do every single thing that you ever wanted it to do. God could have made man like that where we'd never do anything wrong.

We'd automatically, blindly as it were, and dumbly obey God in everything. But God never wanted a race of people like that. They could never be his children.

Robots cannot become our children even though they obey. Any father would say, I'd rather have a naughty disobedient son of my own than an obedient robot. It's like that with God.

You know why human fathers feel that way? You know why robots and machines bring no joy to a childless couple? Because we are made in the likeness of God. We've got something of God's nature in us. And we long, married couples long to have children.

They're never happy with machines. They're never happy with obedient machines. They want children.

And there we see the heart of God. God's also interested in children. And children, when we think of children, children can turn out to be disobedient.

They can bring a lot of sorrow to our heart. And there we understand why God created the angels and human beings with a free will. Not like the way he created the stars and the planets.

See, that's the first thing that we need to understand. The first essential for a person to be a moral being is free will. And if we don't have free will, we cannot become moral beings.

And the second essential is a conscience. Something that tells us within us what is right and what is wrong. Now you see birds and animals, they also have a free will.

They are better than the trees and the stars in the sense that they can choose. A dog can choose to obey you or not to obey you. But they're still not moral beings.

They have no sense of morality. A dog or a bird or a lion. Because it doesn't have a conscience.

They don't have a conscience. Though they have free will. So there are two things that we need.

And that's what we see in ourselves. We have a free will and we have a conscience. And that's why these birds and animals can never become sinful or holy.

Because they don't have a conscience. They cannot become children of God. A dog cannot be a child of God.

Because it doesn't have a conscience. You can train a dog over a period of time. And teach it that certain things it should not do and certain things it should do.

But it's not because of an inbuilt conscience. It's because of external training. It's something like training a computer.

Teaching a computer through programming it to do certain things in a certain way. That's the way we train dogs too. But when it comes to the human race, we have a conscience.

And before the human race was created, as I said, God made all the angels. And there were millions of them He created. And He created them with a free will.

And among the angels was one who was the leader. His name was Lucifer. And the Bible says in the book of Ezekiel in chapter 28 and verses 12 to 15 that he was created perfect in wisdom and beauty and given a high position.

And gradually he began to have thoughts in his mind and ambitions that were not good. How did that happen? Because he had a free will. And that's where evil first began in this universe.

Not only were Lucifer's thoughts evil. They were proud thoughts. Rebellious thoughts.

Thoughts of discontentment with the lot that God had appointed for him. Up until then the universe was perfectly pure. But now evil had lifted up its head in the heart of a person God had created.

And that's how evil came into the world. And initially, this evil that was in the heart of Lucifer, the head of the angels, did not manifest itself externally in any way. You see, evil always begins in the heart.

Even a murder is planned by a man in his heart. From the heart it goes out into action. And that's how it was with Lucifer too.

But as soon as this thing came up in his heart, God could see it. God can see a person's heart. And God cast out Lucifer from his presence.

So there we learn something. God hates evil. But when he created a moral being, he had to give that moral being a free will.

There, my friends, is the origin of evil. Now we want to continue considering this. Because there's a solution God has made through Jesus Christ.

And we want to think about that in greater detail in our coming programs. But here, let's remember this today. Evil is not outside of God's control.

It's something he knew was coming. And he permitted it. He accepted it.

And he has provided a solution for it. That solution is in Jesus Christ.

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