

## Baggage Claim Part 5 Why is there Suffering in the World?

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### Message to Conversation Guide

1. Discuss the following quote about suffering?

**“For many, this question torpedoes the Christian faith. How can the hypothesis of a loving, powerful God stand under the crushing weight of human distress? Does Christianity work only for those whose lives are not shipwrecked? Must we gloss over others’ distress to believe in an omnipotent, benevolent Creator?”** Rebecca McLaughlin

2. Some suffering in the world is caused by people harming people. War, violence and sex trading would be an example of this. How does the story of Cain and Abel illustrate that human exploitation began after man sinned in the garden?

#### **Ge. 4:8-9**

8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, **Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.**

9 Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. **“Am I my brother’s keeper?”** NIV

#### **Matthew 15:19-20**

19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts—**murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.** 20 These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.” NIV

**War is defined as an active conflict that has claimed more than 1,000 lives. Has the world ever been at peace? Of the past 3,400 years, humans have been entirely at peace for 268 of them, or just 8 percent of recorded history.**

3. How does **Isaiah 53** show that Jesus entered into human suffering? What are some of the examples during Jesus life that he experienced the suffering that we experience?

#### **Isaiah 53:3**

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, **and familiar with pain.**

Like one from whom people hide their faces

he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. NIV

**“But Jesus is no remote deity, watching suffering from a safe distance. He is the God who inhabits our suffering.”** Rebecca McLaughlin

4. Suffering exposes how fragile our lives are. Examine Jesus response to a question about suffering.

**Luke 13:1-5**

1 Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus **about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.** 2 Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? 3 I tell you, **no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.** 4 **Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them**—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5 **I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”** NIV

5. Read and discuss quotes from people that reflected on the steel cross round at ground zero during the tragedy of 9/11.

**“That Cross is a symbol of faith, a symbol of hope.”** Lee Ielpi, Retired New York Firemen, who lost a son in 911.

**“No matter how dark the hour may be. No matter how much loss people experience. No matter how much pain they become enveloped in. Jesus is always able to penetrate that pain and darkness,”** Bob Appleby, Chaplain at Ground Zero

**“In the middle of the real worst nightmare God is still there. There is no place that we could go that he is not. There is no hole in the ground too deep that he is not right there with you. There is no trauma so bad that he cannot heal.”** Mike Martell, Chaplain at Ground Zero

**“Each person individual person has their own ground zero in their own home, their own school maybe at their job. We face a ground zero and sometimes in those 9/11s of our own there is no one’s hand to hold. But I tell you that God has extended his hand to you your whole life. When the ground begins to shake underneath you then that’s the time you find the cross.”** Mike Martell, Chaplain at Ground Zero

6. How does the story of the raising of Lazarus speak to the reality of suffering for people that love Jesus? Read **John 11:1-44.**

**“There is no pit so deep, that God's love is not deeper still.”** Corrie Ten Boom