

Living the Christian Life

Sundays@9 – October 30, 2022

Week 1 – Understanding Suffering, part 1

Resources for the 6-week Module on Suffering, Grief, and Lament

- *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering*, by Tim Keller
- *Suffering: Gospel Hope When Life Doesn't Make Sense*, by Paul Tripp

According to the secular worldview...

- What is the purpose of life?
- What role could suffering play in that purpose?
- What is the appropriate response to suffering?

The Argument against God from Evil

- If God cannot stop evil, then he is not all-powerful.
- If God can prevent evil but does not, then God is not good.
- If God is all-powerful and good, then evil would not exist.
- Evil does exist; therefore, God must not exist.

Defeating the argument against God from evil

- Theodicies
 - The believer must justify God's ways to the skeptic
 - Soul-Making Theodicy
 - Free Will Theodicy
- Defenses
 - The skeptic must prove his/her case against God
 - One can have the power and desire to act, yet choose *not* to act for good reasons.
 - Sometimes we inflict short-term harm for long-term good
 - There is no automatic inconsistency between the existence of God and the existence of suffering and evil.



The visceral argument from evil

- Nazi death camps
 - Elie Wiesel
 - Victor Frankl
- If there is no God, how does one judge good vs. evil?
- In what way might the existence of evil and suffering in the world actually make the existence of God *more* plausible to us?

Scripture on Suffering

- Suffering is sometimes justice or judgment
- Suffering is sometimes an injustice
- Suffering is an enemy of God
- God is the Suffering Sovereign
 - The Sovereignty of God
 - Compatibilism – God is completely in control over what happens in history and yet He exercises that control in such a way that human beings are responsible for their freely chosen actions and the results of those actions.
 - God stands behind good and evil asymmetrically.
 - The Suffering of God in the Old Testament
 - The Suffering of God the Son
- The Final Defeat of Evil
 - Final judgment
 - Not only is evil punished, but it will be ***undone***.