

**INTRO**

- What injustice in our world right now would you love to see solved?
- Have you or a loved one ever experienced pain and suffering that caused you to question God? What was helpful/unhelpful in that time?

**READ & REFLECT**

The question of pain and suffering has a long history that requires both a logical and compassionate approach in answering it.

*Qu: how have you heard this question expressed from those around you? How have you sought to answer this question for yourself?*

**EVIL IS SOMETHING**

This seems an obvious statement, but in a world that is more prone to subjective morality (ie. we choose what is good and evil), we need to acknowledge that morality (good and evil) must be beyond us and comes from a moral law giver. In other words, how can we know a line is crooked unless we have a straight line to compare it to?

The problem of evil and suffering requires an objective standard of right and wrong in order to raise the problem to begin with.

*Qu: How is lamenting evil, suffering and injustice in our world actually a healthy sign of our awareness of objective morality?*

Essentially, acknowledging evil in our world presumes an understanding of what is good, which presumes some kind of moral law, which presumes a moral law giver. God is the grounding for saying something is right or wrong.

**EVIL IS NOT SOME THING**

In other words, evil is real but not something tangible that we can touch or hold or trip over. Rather, evil exists because of the absence of

something else. Like your shadow is real, but exists because of the absence of light, evil is the absence of good e.g. lawlessness, disorder and injustice are the lack of law, order and justice.

Genesis 1 & 2 testify to this. Our original parents were tempted to call the shots of what good and evil was. Mankind broke God’s law, but in reality it broke mankind.

*Qu: If you were God and your creation walked away from you and in so doing brought destruction and brokenness into everything you’d created good, how do you think you’d respond?*

**GOD HAS AND IS RESPONDING TO EVIL**

Just because pain and suffering appear pointless to us, doesn’t mean it is meaningless in general.

**Read Eph 1:11, Isaiah 46:9-11, Gen 50:20**

Christianity doesn’t just leave us a consolation for this broken world but a promise of restoration. God has stepped into his creation personally to do something about the problem of evil, pain and suffering. This Christian view of God is vastly different from other worldviews in that it confesses: *God became like us, walked among us, to be with us, to do something for us, in order to rescue us.*

If we are angry about evil, pain and suffering in this world, God is not our enemy; sin is.

*Qu: how does Jesus’ life, death & resurrection provide comfort and hope to you when you face pain and suffering?*

**RESPOND & PRAY**

- What encouraged/challenged you the most from this discussion?
- Spend time praying for those who are struggling right now with pain and suffering.