



Understand the Gospel - The Groaning of Creation October 5, 2008

❖ If God loves us, why do bad things happen?

I'd thought about Turner on the train ride back to New York. Why does God permit evil, including allowing the innocent to suffer? This is the hardest question for theists to answer, and an entire branch of theology, called *theodicy*, is given over to its study. Turner had seen his beloved sister linger in extreme pain before she died young, his prayers for her unavailing. I got the impression from being around him this weekend that it's not so much that Turner doesn't believe in God as he doesn't want to give God, who allowed his sister to be crushed by disease, the satisfaction of recognition. – **Ron Dreher (Columnist quoted after interviewing Ted Turner)**

Observations to consider:

- This side of eternity, we will not fully understand the work of God in the affairs of humankind.
Now we see things imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. (1 Corinthians 13:12 NLT)
- Even the worst of circumstances can not separate us from God's love – He is on record for how much He cares for mankind.
Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:34 – 39)
- The reason for evil is clearly laid out in scripture and is the very essence of why the gospel is needed.
 - Why do bad things happen? Satan has temporary power over this world. **(John 12:31; 1 John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4)**
 - How did evil gain influence in the world? The Fall

In the beginning... (Genesis 1:26 – 30)

- ❖ God made mankind as the summit of His creation.
- ❖ God placed mankind in a place where they had a perfect relationship with Him, with others, and with nature.
- ❖ God created mankind to enjoy a relationship with Him, rule over creation, and display His glory to all the earth.

Mankind's fall... (Genesis 3:1 – 6)

- ❖ Satan convinced mankind that the glory of God displayed through them was not enough.
- ❖ Mankind traded the glory of God for something of lesser value.
(Romans 3:23 and Romans 1:23)
All sin comes from not putting supreme value on the glory of God – this is the very essence of sin. **(John Piper, Desiring God)**

The results of this rebellion... (Genesis 3:7 – 24)

- ❖ Disrupted relationships between mankind and God, mankind and each other, and mankind and nature.
Adam hears God's footsteps in the garden...always before when he heard those footsteps he ran toward them like a little child playing 'Daddy's home'. But this time, Adam's body is flooded with feelings he has never known before. Now he knows shame and fear. This time he hides. Hiding is a curse. (and) Adam and Eve are not just hiding from God. They are also hiding from each other. To know and be known – which had always been the greatest joy of the human race – now becomes the greatest fear of the human race - John Ortberg
 - Mankind was now born disobedient to God and rebellious to all of His purposes. (Romans 5:12)
 - Mankind was hopelessly disconnected from God.
 - Nothing in creation is as it should be.

Our hope today...

Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. **For we know that all creation has been groaning** as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.) – **Romans 8:18-25**

- ❖ For [Jesus] must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets...**Acts 3:21**

Life truth: The fall is why evil exists and bad things happen. God will one day punish ALL evil in his justice and destroy it for all of eternity. When He does, those who treasure Christ will receive full rights as children of God. But the end will come for all who have not experienced the gospel. We are living in His patience now, not his apathy toward evil. **(2 Peter 3:9)**