



Walking with God through Pain and Suffering Week 3; Chs 5-6

Week 3

RECAP

- 1- Suffering is a universal human experience (circumstantial and spiritual).
- 2- Modern Western systems have few to no grounded helps for suffering.
- 3- Secularism is the key filter/belief system for Westerners.
- 4- Christianity offers unique helps to those who suffer that are timeless and speak to the circumstantial and spiritual suffering of humans.
- 5- Most people struggle with faith in God because of experiential suffering and theological difficulties

RECAP

- 6- Expressive individualism makes suffering harder because it calls for each person to make sense of their own suffering without any reliance on any external standards or definitions.
- 7- Christianity offers a larger narrative that provides hope and cohesion for an individual's suffering narrative.

RECAP

PILLARS OF CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

God is personal, wise, infinite and inscrutable.

In Jesus, God came to earth and suffered with us, sacrificially.

Through the cross, we have assurance of salvation.

Those who trust in Christ have bodily resurrection from the dead and an eternal, perfect existence with God.

Week 3

On p. 113, Keller talks about “reasons of the heart” in terms of why people formulate arguments against God. What does he mean by that term?

“...we do not know the reason God allows evil and suffering to continue, or why it is so random, but now at least we think what the reason is not. It cannot be that he does not love us. It cannot be that he does not care.”

p. 121

Week 3

“...Henry. He couldn't cope with his daughter's death if it was meaningless; but he could cope if it was God's will. It gave him an explanation and however horrendous it was to me, for him a bad reason was much better than no reason at all. He could live with an exclamation mark but not with a question mark.

It also gave him a remedy and a means of reasserting control. In his mind, by coming to synagogue, he could get into God's favor and avert any future punishments. He happily did so for the next 15 years until his own death....

Those who are not Henrys prefer to admit that suffering is without reason, happens because it happens, is often random and unfair, and do not seek to justify it, merely to deal with it- whether in their own lives or those of others. We do not look for silver linings but just get on with trying to lift the cloud as soon as possible without quoting God as either author or rescuer.”

Johnathan Romain; *Suffering Serves No Divine Purpose*

Week 3

What does he say that is correct?

What does he say that is incorrect?

How would you interact with Johnathan or Henry?

Week 3

In your small groups, discuss:

Questions 1, 2, 4

Week 3

p. 130 “Suffering is both just and unjust. God is both sovereign and a suffering God.”

True? Agree or disagree? Helpful or not?

Week 3

Case Study:

You wake up and go to the restroom and stub your toe on the bed post.

You spill your coffee on your favorite shirt on the way to work.

Your optometrist calls to tell you that you need to increase your lens prescription.

You get an online gift card from your energy supplier for Amazon.

You receive a text from an old friend just checking on you.

Week 3

Case Study (cont):

You go to a warm home with food to eat, but nothing you're excited about.

You experience some overwhelming feelings of loneliness during the day.

You are not living your best life and wish things were different.

You end the day wondering what your latest blood tests might reveal about your high blood pressure and heart's condition.

You haven't been to church in over a month; you yelled at your dog; you "ghosted" your spouse; you were rude to the waiter last Friday; you read your Bible and pray almost every day; you gave up your place in line to a pregnant mom; you were encouraging to a co-worker you don't like.

Week 3

Case Study (cont):

Why did any and/or all of the bad things happen to you?

What is God doing/not doing in your life through those bad things?

Why did you do anything good?

Why do you do bad things?

Why did anything good happen to you?

Week 3

Case Study (cont):

Providence and Sovereignty

Sovereignty- God's right as Creator King to do whatever he chooses to do.

Providence- God acting to insure that everything is provided so that his will is accomplished.

Week 2

Case Study (cont):

What is God's purpose in the lives of Mankind?

What is God's purpose in all creation?

What is God's purpose in the lives of believers?

Week 3

Study Guide Questions:

#s 10, 11

Week 3

Though you slay me, yet I will hope in you. Job 13:15

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:17

Week 3

Q and A??

Homework week 4/March 2

Chapters 7-8; Study Guide