

'Why does God allow the Innocent to Die?

Pastor Henry Schorr

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THE MAIN THING: God is holy, just, gracious and merciful. God is sovereign, choosing at times to act with mercy not justice. He creates and takes the life of a child according to His purposes, which we do not fully understand.

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Connect and pray as a group*

1. A young man asked Pastor Henry "Why does a loving God allow innocent children to die?" If you had opportunity to directly ask God a question, what would you ask?

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

Observation and Reflection

1. Pastor Henry outlined four foundational truths about God's character and purposes in creating humanity.
How do Genesis 2:16, 17; Genesis 3:16-19; Psalm 86:15; 145:9 Romans 1:18; 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 13:12; and 1 John 1:8; confirm these principles?
2. What are some Scriptural examples of God's choice to extend grace and mercy to people instead of pouring out wrath and judgment? (e.g. Jonah 3 and 4; 2 Peter 3:19)
3. A high percentage of suffering in the world is to our or others' sinful choices. How does this impact the death of innocent children? (e.g. abortion, genocide, prostitution, child sacrifice, missing children) Make note of Genesis 6:5, 6.
4. What might God's purpose be in allowing innocent children to die? How do the following verses give comfort? (2 Samuel 12:23; Psalm 116:15; Matthew 16:26; Philippians 1:21-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:13)

Application

1. Baby Hope's Mom said, 'God mends our hearts. We bend our knees.' What is she saying? What does this mean for your life?
2. Read Deuteronomy 30:15-20. Review the story of the students expecting mercy from Professor Sproul. How might you be taking God's mercy for granted? What steps will you take this week to show a renewed appreciation for 'God's amazing grace'?
3. How can this message help you bring hope and healing to someone suffering the loss of a child?

THE WORD (NIV)

[Genesis 2:16,17](#)

¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

[Genesis 3:16-19](#)

[2 Samuel 12:23](#)

²³ But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

[Psalm 86:15](#)

¹⁵ But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

[Psalm 116:15](#)

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants.

[Psalm 145:9](#)

⁹ The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

[Matthew 16:26](#)

²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

[Romans 1:18](#)

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,...

[Romans 3:23; 6:23](#)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,...²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[1 Corinthians 13:12](#)

¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

[Philippians 1:21-24](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:13](#)

¹³ Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.

[2 Peter 3:9](#)

⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

[1 John 1:8](#)

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

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Parents whose child dies feel enormous hurt and grief. They ask, "Why does a loving God allow that?" Someday we will have a complete answer (1 Cor 13:12) but for now our world is broken and not as God intended it to be. God originally created humanity and the world because of love; He gave Adam and Eve a paradise and the choice to love Him or not. They chose to go their own way, resulting in spiritual death, fractured relationships and a fractured world. (Gen 2:16; 3:16-19) Four fundamental truths stem from the creation event:

1. Life is a gift and not a right. (Rom 6:23) God chose to extend Adam and Eve's physical lives after their disobedience.
2. There are no innocent people. (Rom 3:23; 1 Jn 1:8) Research says 95% of all suffering is caused by poor choices--ours or others.
3. God is holy and just. (Rom 1:18)
4. God is gracious and merciful. God does not always ACT WITH JUSTICE—sometimes He acts WITH GRACE AND MERCY. (Ps 86:15; 145:18-19) Biblical examples show that God provided a way of escape...
 - a) God grieved the utter wickedness of people in Noah's day (Gen 6:5) yet He waited 120 years before sending the flood.
 - b) God called Israel to totally destroy the Canaanites and other nations (Deut 7:1-6) but gave them 400+ years to repent.
 - c) God sent Jonah to preach to the wicked city of Nineveh; the entire city repented so God withheld judgment. (Jonah 1:1-2; 3:1-10)

What about the children? Why were innocent children among those killed?

1. God is sovereign over all of life. Dr Norman Geisler says we cannot assume that what is wrong for us is wrong for God (in Lee Strobel's book, The Case for Faith). Because God created life, He has the right to take that life. Though death was not in God's original plan, death is not necessarily immoral for God, but is immoral for us (eg. abortion, murder) God takes everyone's life through death. (Phil 1: 21-24; Ps 116:15)
2. God's judgment is motivated not only by His justice but also by His mercy. The Bible teaches that every child who dies before the age of accountability will spend eternity with God in heaven. (Is 7:16; Deut 1:35) That is the age before a child has the mental capacity to choose between good and evil and to know what it means to trust in God or reject Him. King David accepted the death of his infant son as God's judgment saying "I will go to him (referring to seeing him in heaven) but he shall not return to me" but David mourned the death of Absalom, his rebellious adult son. (2 Sam 12:23; ch 18)

Heaven is a reality—a place where we are made whole, a place of joy and peace with no crying, pain or sorrow. So when God poured out judgment on ancient peoples because of their incredible wickedness, He took the lives of children to rescue them from such perversions as cultic prostitution, bestiality or child sacrifice, from being corrupted by their society and being separated from God forever. From God's perspective, it was a blessing for a child to be taken and ushered into paradise rather than left in a wicked immoral culture. Life does not end with death; everyone has an immortal soul that lives on after our life on earth, a soul that has much more value than our physical life. (1 Thess 4:13; Mt 16:26)

What God DOES is always consistent with who God IS. Tests, discipline or hardship in our lives are His 'wake-up calls'. His motive is always love; His intent is always to use ALL THINGS for our ultimate good and His ultimate glory. God longs for us to return His love, listen to His voice and follow Him—not by compulsion as a robot but by our free choice.

We could not live one minute without God's grace and mercy. Yet we take His goodness, patience, grace and love for granted, thinking they should continue forever. (2 Peter 3:9) We just EXPECT God to be merciful while we ignore or accuse Him, keep Him at a distance or look for reasons not to believe in Him. We forget that due to our sin and rebellion, we have forfeited the gift of life—we deserve to die. But because of God's profoundly AMAZING GRACE, He sent His only Son, Jesus, to die so that we can be reconciled to God and have eternal life. We should be profoundly thankful for His grace and mercy. God owes us NOTHING—we owe Him EVERYTHING.