

wrestling with  
**doubt,**  
finding  
**faith**

## SERMON NOTES

Week 5 February 4, 2024

**“Why Do the Innocent Suffer?”**

Genesis 1:28, 2:15-17, 3:2-6; Joshua 1:9;  
Isaiah 41:10; Psalm 55:22, 91:9-11, 139:14;  
Romans 8:18, 28



### I. Misguided Assumptions

- A. If I believe in God and try to be a good person, it means nothing \_\_\_\_\_ will happen to me.
- B. Everything happens for a \_\_\_\_\_.

### II. Foundational Ideas

- A. God is the creator of all things and God places \_\_\_\_\_ in charge of the earth.
- B. To be human is to have the ability to \_\_\_\_\_ right from wrong.
- C. Human beings tend to \_\_\_\_\_ from God's will.

### III. God's Providence and Human Suffering

- A. Forces from natural disasters can cause death and devastation, but the forces themselves are \_\_\_\_\_ to life on our planet.
- B. Suffering can be caused by the \_\_\_\_\_ of freedom by ourselves or others.
- C. Our \_\_\_\_\_ are not indestructible; they are susceptible to certain common problems.

### IV. God's Response / Our Response

- A. God promises to never \_\_\_\_\_ us or forsake us.
- B. God works through \_\_\_\_\_ to help those in need.
- C. God forces evil and suffering to accomplish \_\_\_\_\_ purpose.
- D. We are to place our sorrows and \_\_\_\_\_ in God's hands.

***Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message***

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# ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *February 5-10, 2024*

## INTRODUCTION

People dying from natural disasters, children getting terminal illnesses, people dying of starvation, innocent people killed by gun violence or wars are among the situations that make us wrestle with doubt when it comes to our faith. Many people wonder how a good and loving God can allow these things to happen.

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### Monday: Job 1:20-22, 42:1-8

In chapter 42, Job saw that he needed more than the “why” answers he asked God for (which never came). God said Job’s friends’ answers had “not spoken rightly” (Job 42:7). Have well-meaning friends ever given glib explanations of your suffering? How can having God’s caring presence with you help more than any explanation?

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### Tuesday: John 16:33-17:11, 14-17

Like Job’s friends, many in Jesus’ day and ours feel (maybe subconsciously) that “being good” is a kind of “suffering insurance.” Jesus didn’t see it that way. How do you react to his direct words: “in this world you will have trouble”? How can you live into the flip side of Jesus’ words - to “take heart” because he’s overcome the world?

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### Wednesday: Romans 8:18-28

“Paul is not expressing a... superficial optimism that everything tends to everybody’s good in the end.”\*. Verse 28 does not say (as some think) that “everything” is good, but that God works for our good in everything. When in your life has God’s power brought good out of what was clearly a bad thing?

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### Thursday: 1 John 4:4-10, 5:1-4

On one hand, John’s churches faced teachers who used Greek philosophy to deny that Jesus was God. On the other hand, brutal Roman persecution threatened to imprison or kill anyone who didn’t recognize Caesar as “Lord.” In that hostile world, the only “weapons” Christians had were trust in Christ and love for each other. That was enough, John said; it would defeat the world. How does your faith in Christ help you to overcome evil in our world?

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### Friday: Genesis 3:8-15

Evil entered the world when Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Evil brought the human race terrible problems, but this was not a story of despair. The Hebrew storytellers were confident that evil would be defeated in the end. God firmly told the snake that, though he would strike humanity’s heels, Eve’s offspring (particularly Jesus, as it turned out) would strike (or crush) his head. How does this story give you hope?

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## MOVING FORWARD

Our disappointment with God in the face of suffering and injustice typically stems from our assumptions about how God is supposed to work in our world. God never promised that we would never struggle and suffer in this life. But God does promise to never leave you or forsake you, He works through others to help people in need, and he can bring beauty from ashes. Our job is to trust Him and place our sorrows and suffering in his hands.

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*Answers to the sermon notes: IA) bad, B) reason. IIA) humanity, B) choose, C) stray.  
IIIA) essential, B) misuse, C) bodies. IVA) leave, B) people, C) His, D) suffering.*

\*Stott, John. *The Message of Romans*. United Kingdom, InterVarsity Press, 2020. p. 242.