

#280 “Because He Cares”

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Have you encountered the trouble and tribulation that Jesus said would happen on this earth? Can you relate to Job’s catastrophe after catastrophe (Job 1)? God never promised easy street while this earth is still here (John 16:33), but, when He comes in His kingdom, pain, death, and suffering will be long gone and eternally erased (Revelation 21:4). But for now, we, like Job, will find ourselves in predicaments that seem utterly overwhelming, totally unfair, and seemingly even divinely unkind. But God is not evil, cruel, or unjust. He did, however, allow Satan to bring Job and his family great harm, even death to Job’s children. This is a hard one to swallow. It brings up the age-old question of why a good God and an all-powerful God would operate in this fashion. Why not protect the faithful from all harm? Yet even Jesus Himself said that the rain falls on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45). In other words, this world is broken, God gives Satan some leeway for now (Job 1:7, Ephesians 2:2), and sin and death still operate in the present world. God loved Job, and in no measure did He take pleasure in seeing Job’s pain. In fact, surely He suffered with him, feeling his pain and grieving over a good creation gone bad. God never did explain Himself to Job or to us completely concerning pain and grief in this life. He is allowed to do that, explaining to us only what we need to know (Deuteronomy 29:29). What He did point out was that He was God and that He would do as He would do (Job 38-39). He is Who He is (Exodus 3:14) after all. For us to challenge His actions is fruitless, pointless, and frankly, out of place (Job 40:1-2). But a little honest questioning, a little seeking that we may find, is not inappropriate. God did give Job increased blessing in the end, but restoration is not resurrection as far as his dead children were concerned. That is to say that receiving double the sheep (Job 42:12) was not going to take away the pain of the loss of children. Surely, God knows this, and, while the good gifts of God in this life help, they don’t necessarily soothe and heal all wounds.

I heard a pastor claim that grief over a lost loved one takes precisely seven years to get over. However, I would argue that some losses will only be gotten over when Jesus Himself wipes away every tear in His presence. This world is broken by sin, something man himself did. Yes, God did allow the serpent to operate, so He must have had a reason. However, to argue that Satan is needed for free choice to exist is a weak argument since Adam and Eve worshipped God by their free will before the serpent ever came their way. Even in eternity, believers will choose to worship Jesus, and they won’t be mindless robots. So the existence of free choice in the world does not explain away our dilemma. Frankly, evil is real, and sometimes in the present evil wins (Psalm 73:3). Ultimately, God will execute justice (Psalm 7:11), but in the short-term sometimes cheaters prosper and maniacs rule. The world is broken, and only under King Jesus one day will it finally be fixed (Micah 5:5).

So instead of cursing God, blaming God, calling God evil or cruel, or getting frustrated with God over not being able to see the whole picture, **we need to see the primary message**, a message of life, freedom, and utter compassion. See, the serpent would bruise the heel of the Master (the cross), as Genesis 3:15 foretold, but the Master, Jesus Christ, would bruise his head (the resurrection). Even from the beginning, God wasn't overwhelmed or taken aback when mankind fell into sin. He had a plan to do something even the angels longed to look into (1 Peter 1:12). He sent His only Son into the world to be born in human flesh and to be killed by sinners. He would actually shoulder the weight of all of their sins and cause His own Father to turn away from Him for a time. Then, when all seemed lost, He would rise from the dead and crush the devil, sealing his future doom in the lake of fire. The already accomplished victory of Christ over evil, sin, and death will come to full fruition in time, but that time is not yet (Revelation 19). The kingdom of Christ grows in the hearts of believers, and one day it will expand across a millennial kingdom and then a new heaven and earth. But for now, for today, we must not miss the forest for the trees. God has a profound message for us in how He has operated. *A good God and an all-powerful God chose to redeem sinners by way of seeing His own Son executed with criminals. That was the plan. Why did it have to happen that way? I mean, we complain about evil in our lives, and yet what Jesus had to endure was horrific beyond imagination.* But Jesus didn't go down the rabbit trail of "if my Father was good and all-powerful, surely another way would work". Rather, He said "not My will but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42) because He trusted the Father that death on the cross was the perfect and only wise way. But why? **What we know and ought to hold onto dearly is this: no other way would have properly manifested just how much God loves mankind.** The greatest love, Jesus said Himself, is when somebody gives up his life in order to save another (John 15:13). That is what Jesus had to do because man had to be able to see without any shred of doubt that God's love will go to any length and through any pain and to any extent, even to death and back, to save just one person and bring them into paradise with God in heaven. **No, God didn't spare Job pain in this life, but He didn't spare His own Son either.** Yet He exalted Him higher than any other and placed Him at His right hand in glory, so will He not also freely give us all things in glory (Romans 8:32)?

The incarnation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection show us that God is not aloof or cruel but loving, compassionate, and kind to the highest level. He made a way for pain, sin, and death to end one day, for even death itself will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14). It no longer has any sting because Jesus entered our broken world and made a way of escape, the fullness of which is coming soon. He knows pain, so He understands and cares (Hebrews 4:15). He will take it away in time, and He can be trusted because He is love (1 John 4:8). Perfect love came in Jesus Christ (1 John 4:18), and it alone can bring us comfort, certainty, and eventually total relief. 1 Peter 5:7 says that we can cast our cares upon Jesus because He cares for us. We must not miss the "why" here. **It is because He cares for us that we can go to Him for rest.** *Is He good? Yes. Is He all-powerful? Yes. But it is because He cares that we can have comfort and endure in a broken reality.* That He cares and loves us is the quintessential difference-maker. It is the core of the gospel message, and it is everything that Satan and this world want to keep us from.

His love is the answer. It is what Job needed to believe in, and it is what we need to remember. The cross and the empty grave speak infinite love and care that have no equal. This is why Christianity stands alone and why Jesus is unique: it is because He cares.