

General Topics :: Explain the presence of God

Explain the presence of God - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/9/17 3:01

I recently faced this question. How do you explain the presence of God to a person who has suffered a severe loss. For example to a young girl who gets gang raped and is asking the question, where was your God when I was getting raped ? How will you answer her?

I always tell them that it is a sin cursed earth. We will have people becoming animals in their selfish behaviors but that will not negate the presence of God. Just because God has not forsaken our earth there is at least some goodness in unconverted people. Still this answer is not satisfactory enough considering the trauma that the girl went through.

Re: Explain the presence of God - posted by TMK (), on: 2013/9/17 6:34

I know that God is good, all the time. I know this intellectually, because the Bible tells me so- but when faced with the scenario described above, my tendency is to simply shake my head and move on and pretend I just didn't read that. I also heard a story a while back where a little girl and her friend were walking home from school- one girl had her house key on a chain around her neck. The opened the garage door and somehow the chain got caught and lifted the little girl off the ground and strangled her in front of her friend.

A very popular current worship song has the lines:

"Your love never fails, it never gives up, it never runs out on me." I really like that song.

The cynic would say, applying these words to the strangled little girl and her parents (or the girl that is gang raped by thugs), that His love DID fail, His love DID give up and quite frankly DID run out on them. And of course there are countless millions in this world for whom these lyrics simply don't ring true.

I can state with my mind that God had nothing to do with what happened and that in this instance the devil won the day. But then, even if God is not to blame, He certainly could have intervened. Or could He? Is there something about the nature of God that we just don't understand, which results in these embarrassing questions like "How could a good God allow an innocent little girl be strangled in such a freak accident?"

Like I said, all this speculation really doesn't do any good because there are no satisfactory answers. There just aren't any, no matter what spin we try to place on it.

So I am left with determining, by faith, that God is good, all the time, and I just have to allow these difficult dilemmas to "float out there" and allow them to just be, because my pea brain can't comprehend how this all works.

Re: Explain the presence of God - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2013/9/17 8:26

Here is a truth I learned a long time ago when wrestling with the issue of suffering and pain and God's presence: No theological answer, no matter how spiritual and how correct, will ever emotionally satisfy the human heart. In such situations all we can hope to do is to continue to point men to our Savior. Sometimes we may never get an answer to our liking, but we will always get Him.

When pondering this mystery, my mind often turns to Hitler's gas chambers. I think of the horror many Jews felt as they climbed upon one another desperately searching for air as gas displaced the oxygen in the room, which slowly killed them. Many died with the final last thought of "Where is God?" rushing through their minds. Indeed, many Jews that survived those days became atheists afterwards, and have become popular novelists asking the same question.

The truth is, even in the midst of the terror of the holocaust, God was closer to them than they realized. In what seemed like his complete absence, the Lord was always ever present. Sadly, our circumstances often make it impossible to see His hand in our lives.

Such requires incredible faith to see God even when He can't be seen. But when we see him less, He's often closer than

we've ever hoped to feel.

- posted by Sree (), on: 2013/9/17 10:02

TMk that was an honest answer. I am looking for situation where people have counselled such a person who lost something badly and made them believe in God.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/9/17 11:35

QUOTE:

"Sadly, our circumstances often make it impossible to see His hand in our lives."

True.

In my experience is talking with those who are facing terminal illness in a young person is that people are angry and they blame God...they are closed minded. They would rather wallow around in the mud of self-pity then look up to see the hand and that is there waiting to be grasped.

In the case of the girl who was strangled - God usually does not suspend the laws of nature in regards to his children, be it young or old. So, don't blame God!

How to counsel a rape victim - good question, but one I would seriously look into is the 'victim' telling the truth? Sound harsh? I have counseled many rape 'victims' and am convinced many were lying. Some had been intimate (consensual) with the perpetrator earlier before this alleged incident. This leaves the few who are really victims. All one can say is that God allowed it and it is up to them to try to understand why, which is something no one else can do for them.

The reality is that if walking with the LORD would ensure a person would be exempt from the laws of nature more people would want to serve the LORD for the natural benefits they are sure to have. God wants our love separate and apart from the natural benefits we may experience. Love loves when things are hard, do not make sense. Read the WORD, noting the experiences of the old time saints - God did not spare them...

Hard questions earn hard answers, not always easy or pleasant.

Re: Explain the presence of God, on: 2013/9/17 14:26

Hi Sree, it seems that the question "explain the presence of God," may be better restated, given the subject matter "why do bad things happen to good people," or "why do bad things happen, period."

Free will, the very essence of what makes us human, the ultimate blessing of being, is also the source of evil. The very fact that we can choose makes us who we are, if we could not choose then we would be to varying degrees, robots, programmed to behave in a certain manner. God is the source of life itself, but He is not the source of evil. It's the heads and tails of a coin, there could be no coin unless it had both sides, the ability to choose good or evil. And then of course we know the story of Adam and Eve and how this freedom of choice allowed them to violate the direct command of God and thus create the genesis of evil in humanity.

Now, that explains who we are and why there is evil in the world and that it does not come from God, but all of that is of little comfort to the pain of someone who has suffered tremendous loss, either of a loved one or has suffered at the hands of evil.

Yet, the very essence of who we are in Christ is that in the midst of great suffering we can discover that God has not left us nor forsaken us, but rather has created a table before us in the presence of our enemies. I have spent several hours in the last couple of weeks with a man whose 30 year old son hung himself and the man found him. This happened at the beginning of this year.

12 weeks ago he was diagnosed with cancer. This man is nearly 60. Now, what a joy to fellowship and encourage a brother who, despite the enormous pain of his loss, and the many deep emotional and spiritual valleys he has traveled through this year, can still praise God. We have spoken much about Job and his great declaration of faith "even if He slay me, yet will I trust Him." These are no mere words, this is the blood that pours from a wounded saint.

What is in us will come out in times of trial. The man, I have discovered, has dealt with many trials in his life and has witnessed God taking him through them all. He is strong in his faith because over the years God has built up his strength so that when a mighty trial comes, when the great storm comes and takes others away, the man of God, who stands upon the solid foundation of Jesus, he is not swept away. Joyful submission to every trial, cheerful endurance of suffering is the key to the arming of the saint who, come the evil day, will be able to stand.....bro Frank

Re: Explain the presence of God, on: 2013/9/17 15:48

Quote:
-----For example to a young girl who gets gang raped and is asking the question, where was your God when I was getting raped?

This is the reality in all of this. The words "Your God" is both accusatory and full of unbelief. To such a question one can only tell the truth.

"He was in the same place He has always been. In Him we live and move and have our being".

Let her be angry it is a better route to faith than indifference. God is not offended by the anger of men when they have a just reason to be angry. But if knowing the truth sows the seeds of reality then one day even an angry man or woman may ask the only question which matters. Where are you God?

I was once asked by a man why God had allowed His new born baby to die. I told him that his baby was with God and he needed to know God as well if he ever wanted to see his child again. His anger subsided and became sober. The truth is always best stated plainly.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/9/17 17:13

QUOTE:

The truth is always best stated plainly.

Truth at the onset appears brutal, at times, but in the long run is not near as brutal as a lie. Many folks think Christians should have all the answers to life - maybe we do - "God allowed it" but this will not satisfy most folks. Once you hear this a person has the option to trust or get angry and at times you may experience both in turns but that is not bad. Just do not stay there - look for some stability and it will come.

Yes, bad things do happen to Christians but we will work in co-operation with the Holy Spirit to minimize them.

God bless.

Re: , on: 2013/9/17 18:24

The dearest saints I have known have come through the greatest tragedies. Like the lady at the feet of Jesus, so much pain and history behind those tears and yet she was pouring out what was precious to her upon His feet. If we are filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit, when we are squeezed and broken, when this life pierces us through with many sorrows and trials and tribulations, then, glory to God, out comes the oil. Oh, and it's a healing oil, a balm of Gilead, an oil of gladness that slowly replaces the spirit of heaviness. This oil is the oil that lights up the darkness of this world. For in us alone there is no good thing, but in the precious saint in whom Christ dwells, then Christ Himself is poured out in the depths of the raging seas and through our brokenness and into this world, and in this alone there is hope. Lord, let us be willingly broken and pierced, just like you, that hope may flow into this world.....bro Frank

Re: , on: 2013/9/17 20:45

I know a man that was beat by his Dad all the time when he was a boy. He put a gun to his head one time and told him, "I hold your life in my hand". It filled the boy with terror for many years. The Lord showed him later in life that during each beating, He was there with that boy. He was being beaten with him. This revelation brought total healing to the boy who at the time was a man. This revelation formed an inseparable bond between him and His God. The fact, that though he was not saved, Jesus Christ was still sharing in his pain and experiencing it with him changed him in a deep way and especially how he regards the lost.

Sometimes, we don't have all the "right" answers. But we can love people (that is always the right answer) and suffer with them and pray that they receive the revelation of Jesus Christ to them in such a personal way that they realize how much He suffered on their behalf and still does. He is done suffering for sins, but He still suffers with those that are suffering.

I'm glad I don't always have the "right" answer (as far as men are concerned). If we knew all the "right answers" we would not keep coming to the Lord. He alone is the ANSWER, and I know that!

Re: Explain the presence of God - posted by savannah, on: 2013/9/17 21:02

Any explanation of the presence of God will fall short lest we explain to them that God is God. Once this is clarified, only God alone can reveal Himself to them as He truly is, and consequently bring them to their knees.

John Owen states it truly and plainly as I have quoted him below.

In the following audio message this truth is stated plainly from Isaiah 45:7

<http://playmp3.sa-media.com/media/71107144328/71107144328.mp3>

Re: Explain the presence of God - posted by rufnrust (), on: 2013/9/18 6:37

He is in the same place He was when His Son died on the cross for our sins.

Ruf