

The Harvest is Plentiful – Can God be Trusted? Romans 8:28-29

Last week we looked at the question “Does God Exist?” And we looked at several reasons why we can respond with a resounding, “Yes and Amen”!

But there are some people who struggle, not with the existence of God, but with their perception of what kind of God He is! Their experience has led them to wonder if God is actually all-powerful... sovereign over all... good...

It is this kind of wondering that leads to our big faith question for today...

“Can God be trusted?” What is our answer? How do we know?

Scripture declares, and our catechism affirms, that God is the one supreme, & all-powerful, being in the universe... & at the same time, He is all-loving & all-good! The catechism declares, “He is almighty God & he is a faithful Father!

Q 26 - What do you believe when you say, “I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth”?

A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and everything in them, who still upholds and rules them by his eternal counsel and providence. He is my God and Father because of Christ the Son. I trust Him so much that I do not doubt he will provide whatever I need for body & soul, & he will turn to my good whatever adversity he sends me in this sad world. He is able to do this because he is almighty God; he desires to do this because he is a faithful Father.

But we don’t always understand his “eternal counsel and providence”...

We question it at times because we can’t make sense of our experiences!

Q 27 - What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. Providence is the almighty and ever-present power of God by which He upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty – all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but from his fatherly hand.

How do we make sense of a God who is all-powerful, and all-good, yet allows, or even brings, adversity into our lives? “Why do bad things happen to good people?” & “How can we trust God when those things happen?”

Pastor Joby Martin explains this well so let me share his response with you... First, we can’t assume we are good people... because we are all sinners!

God owes us nothing! “There was only one person who was good, His name was Jesus, & the worse thing ever happened to Him so that we would have life!”

That helps, when we consider trusting God with our eternity, but how do we learn to trust God, here & now, with the hurt we are currently feeling?

There are theological answers, but they are better learned before the hurt happens, so that they can form a foundation to stand upon when it does!

Why do bad things happen... and can God be trusted in the midst of them?

- 1) Collateral damage of sin! When Adam & Eve sinned and rejected God, they opened the door for all the pain/strife/shame that we have ever experienced. Bad things happen at the macro level – tsunamis hit... and at the micro level – people tell lies & even cells don’t obey!
- 2) It’s a direct attack of the enemy! We have an enemy that wants to steal kill & destroy! There is evil that exists! And sometimes bad things happen as a result of our enemies choices, and not our own...
- 3) Because we act stupid! “If you play stupid games, you will win stupid prizes!” God will forgive us of all sin, but He doesn’t necessarily rescue us from all the consequences of our own dumb decisions! Sometimes the attack/hurt/pain we feel are from self-inflicted wounds!
- 4) Other people sin against you! Sometimes other people do evil things and you just happen to be the target of it!
- 5) To conform us to be more like Jesus! No matter what you are going through, God is sovereign over all of it! It all had to pass through the hands of God. And sometimes God hands out pain, so that we might be conformed to the image and likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ!

Joseph in the Old Testament – domestic violence, human trafficking, false imprisonment – Does that sound like the will of God? And what was Joseph’s response – “Am I not in the place that God has for me? For what you intended for evil, God intended for good!”

Or what about Job? He was the best humanity had to offer (righteous) & he suffered because of the attacks of Satan... But God did not abandon him!

Remember Jesus in His sufferings... “By his stripes we are healed...”

God answers our prayers when we reach out to Him in our difficult times... Sometimes “yes” ... sometimes “no” ... sometimes “not now” ... & sometimes “I’ll see you in heaven!” But He always offers us His presence!

Life is hard, & God is good... All the time... And all the time... God is good!

The Harvest is Plentiful – Can God be Trusted? Romans 8:28-29

Last week we looked at the question “Does God Exist?” And we looked at several reasons why we can respond with a resounding, _____

But there are some people who struggle, not with the existence of God, but with their perception of what kind of God He is! Their experience has led them to wonder if God is actually all-powerful... sovereign over all... good...

It is this kind of wondering that leads to our big faith question for today... “Can God be _____” What is our answer? How do we know?

Scripture declares, and our catechism affirms, that God is the one supreme, & all-powerful, being in the universe... & at the same time, He is all-loving & all-good! The catechism declares, “He is _____ & he is a _____

Q 26 - What do you believe when you say, “I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth”?

A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and everything in them, who still _____ them by his _____ and _____ He is my God and Father because of Christ the Son. I trust Him so much that I do not doubt he will _____ whatever I need for body & soul, & he will turn to my good whatever _____ he sends me in this sad world. He is able to do this because he is almighty God; he desires to do this because he is a faithful Father.

But we don’t always understand his “eternal counsel and providence”... We question it at times because we can’t make sense of our _____

Q 27 - What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. Providence is the almighty and ever-present power of God by which He upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty – all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but from his _____

How do we make sense of a God who is all-powerful, and all-good, yet allows, or even brings, adversity into our lives? “Why do bad things happen to good people?” & “How can we trust God when those things happen?”

Pastor Joby Martin explains this well so let me share his response with you... First, we can’t assume we are _____ people... because we are all sinners!

God owes us nothing! “There was only one person who was good, His name was Jesus, & the worse thing ever happened to Him so that we would have life!”

That helps, when we consider trusting God with our eternity, but how do we learn to trust God, here & now, with the hurt we are currently feeling?

There are theological answers, but they are better learned before the hurt happens, so that they can form a _____ to stand upon when it does!

Why do bad things happen... and can God be trusted in the midst of them?

- 1) Collateral damage _____ When Adam & Eve sinned and rejected God, they opened the door for all the pain/strife/shame that we have ever experienced. Bad things happen at the macro level – tsunamis hit... and at the micro level – people tell lies & even cells don’t obey!
- 2) It’s a direct attack of _____ We have an enemy that wants to steal kill & destroy! There is evil that exists! And sometimes bad things happen as a result of our enemies choices, and not our own...
- 3) Because we _____ “If you play stupid games, you will win stupid prizes!” God will forgive us of all sin, but He doesn’t necessarily rescue us from all the consequences of our own dumb decisions! Sometimes the attack/hurt/pain we feel are from _____ wounds!
- 4) Other people _____ Sometimes other people do evil things and you just happen to be the target of it!
- 5) To conform us to be more _____ No matter what you are going through, God is sovereign over all of it! It all had to pass through the hands of God. And sometimes God hands out pain, so that we might be conformed to the image and likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ!

Joseph in the Old Testament – domestic violence, human trafficking, false imprisonment – Does that sound like the will of God? And what was Joseph’s response – “Am I not in the place that God has for me? For what you intended for evil, God intended _____

Or what about Job? He was the best humanity had to offer (righteous) & he suffered because of the attacks of Satan... But God did not abandon him!

Remember Jesus in His sufferings... “By his stripes we are _____”

God answers our prayers when we reach out to Him in our difficult times... Sometimes “yes”... sometimes “no”... sometimes “not now”... & sometimes “I’ll see you in heaven!” But He always offers us _____

Life is hard, & God is good... All the time... And all the time... God is good!