

What to Do When Pain Makes Me Sit and Ask Why

April 23, 2023

Main Passage: Job 1:1-5, 20-21; 2:8-10, NIV

A Christian Perspective on the Question of Pain

The Question: If there is an all-good, all-powerful, all-loving God, then why is there pain and suffering?

“Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot; or he can, but he does not want to; or he cannot and does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, and does not want to, he is wicked. But if God both can and wants to abolish evil, then how comes evil into the world?” – Epicurus, Greek philosopher

The Claim: _____

“The depravity of man is at once the most empirically verifiable reality but at the same time the most intellectually resisted fact.” – Malcolm Muggeridge, journalist and atheist turned Christian

Christian Counterclaim: _____

1 Timothy 6:17c, NCV – God richly gives us everything to enjoy.

Worldly solution: _____

God’s Solution: _____

John 3:16, ESV – [Jesus said,] “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

“I could never myself believe in God if it were not for the cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?” – John Stott, theologian

“At the supreme moment of his dying Jesus so identified himself with men and the depths of their predicament and agony that no man can now sink so low that God has not gone lower.” – Os Guinness, Christian author and philosopher

Because of Jesus, the question of pain becomes: _____ ?

Hopeful Ways to Sit and Make Progress Through Pain, Like Job

1. I choose to sit with _____

Job 1:20-21, NIV – At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”

2 Corinthians 1:8-10a, LB – I think you ought to know, dear brothers, about the hard time we went through in Asia. We were really crushed and overwhelmed and feared we would never live through it. ⁹ We felt we were doomed to die and saw how powerless we were to help ourselves; but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us, for he can even raise the dead. ¹⁰ And he did help us and saved us from a terrible death...

To Lament means...

Lamentations 3:48a-49, NLT – Tears stream from my eyes because of the destruction of my people! My tears flow endlessly; they will not stop.

2. I choose to sit with _____

Job 2:9-10, NIV – His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!” He replied, “You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

Micah 7:7, NLT – As for me, I look to the Lord for help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me.

Job 31:4, NCV – God sees my ways and counts every step I take.

3. I choose to sit _____

Job 2:8, NIV – Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

Job 19:23-26, NIV – Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.

John 14:19c, NIV – [Jesus said,] “Because I live, you also will live.”