

Death Defeated
Judging Jesus, Pt. 4

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I. PRAYER

- i. Would you help us to see your goodness even in the midst of the suffering and pain that we endure in this life. I pray that your love and grace would taste so sweet to us this morning, that you would be irresistible to us all.

II. INTRODUCTION

a. We believe that God is sovereign.

- i. What we mean by that is we believe that God exercises control over everything in the universe.
 - Nothing happens without his sovereign permission and will.
- ii. We also believe that this means that God is not constrained by time and knows the future.
 - He is not along the ride with us in time.
 - The future is not a mystery to him as it is with us.
- iii. So, we believe God is sovereign.

b. We also believe that God is good.

- i. In fact, we believe that God is the essence of good.
- ii. Good is not some separate standard that we evaluate God against.
 - We actually understand what good is by looking at God.
 - He is the very definition of good.
- iii. With this understanding of good, we believe that it is literally impossible for God to be anything but good.



c. So, God is completely sovereign and he is perfectly good all at the same time.

- i. So, here's the problem: Why do bad things happen in the world?
 - Why do natural disasters like hurricanes and earthquakes happen that devastate lives?
 - Why do some people oppress others?
 - Why do we experience things like wars, crime, and abuse?
 - Why do we experience suffering in our own life?
 - Why does something like death exist?
- ii. See, it would make sense if we said:
 - Well God is sovereign but he is not good because these bad things happen under his control.
 - Or, God is good but not sovereign and he can't control these bad things that happen.
- iii. But we are saying that God is sovereign and he is good.
 - How can that be?

III. SERIES PLUG

a. This is the last sermon in our first ever sermon series as a church called Judging Jesus.

- i. We've wanted to address some truths about Jesus to ensure that when you make a judgement on whether you accept or reject Jesus, you are making that judgement based on the what the Bible really claims.



- And for many people, one of the roadblocks for them believing in and trusting in Jesus is this question of how God could be so good and worth following while these bad things happen around us.
- ii. **So, my goal this morning is to show you in Scripture that God is sovereign, he is good, and he is in the midst of a work to eradicate all that is bad, all that is evil, all death, and all suffering.**
 - My goal is to show you this morning that Jesus Christ came the world to tell them about it.

IV. JOHN 11:1-44

a. I want to show you this in the Gospel of John.

- i. Eyewitness account.
- ii. I want to read a lengthy historical account from John, so it would be best if you followed along in your bible or on the screens behind me.

b. Read John 11:1-44

- i. **Three Questions**
 - Why did Jesus wait?
 1. Lazarus was suffering from an illness. His family sent for Jesus so he could help. But Jesus intentionally waited to go until Lazarus had died.
 2. Jesus waited two days to leave until Lazarus had died and when he showed up, Lazarus had been dead four days.
 3. Why did he wait?
 - Why did Jesus weep?
 1. Jesus made it very clear that this illness was not going to lead to death.



2. When Jesus arrived, he knew that he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead.
 3. So, why did he weep?
- Why did Jesus say that he was the Resurrection and the Life?
 1. What does that mean? And does it apply to us?

c. Why Did Jesus Wait?

- i. **Maybe this is a question that you have asked in your life.**
 - God, why are you allowing me to experience this suffering!
 1. Maybe you or a loved one has been ill.
 2. Maybe you have lost a friend or family member,
 3. Maybe you have felt the fear of not knowing if a family member is okay.
 4. Maybe you have or still are navigating a broken relationship.
 5. A divorce, losing a friend, being slandered...
 - God, I thought you were sovereign and you were good!
 1. You could end this suffering with the snap of your finger.
 2. What is taking so long?
 - Jesus, why did you wait two days to come here!
 1. You knew Lazarus was sick!
 2. Why did you wait to answer?
 3. Why does it seem like my prayers are falling on deaf ears!
 - Have you ever felt that before?



- ii. Here is what I want you to see in the text: everyone in this story except for Jesus is living moment by moment through this tragedy while Jesus is living above it.
- Take a look at the text.
 1. In v.2-3, Mary and Martha send for Jesus before Lazarus had died.
 2. And v.5-6 says that Jesus loved Lazarus very much so he waited.
 3. That makes no sense. If you knew that you were someone's only hope to live and you learned that they were ill, you would drop everything and go immediately.
 4. In v.21 - Martha comments that if Jesus would have been there earlier, Lazarus would have lived.
 5. In v. 32, Mary says the same thing.
 6. In v.37, the Jews say the same thing.
 7. In v.39, Martha warns Jesus not to open the tomb because there would be the smell from a decaying body.
 - So, everyone is living moment by moment through this tragedy while it seems that Jesus has a completely different perspective.
 1. Jesus says in v.4 that this illness would not lead to death but that God would be glorified through it somehow.
 2. In v.15, Jesus says that he was glad that he was not there for when Lazarus died so that his disciples would believe in him.
 3. In v.42, Jesus alludes to the fact that he is doing what he is doing so that everyone would believe that He was sent by the Father.



- So, we have people who are living moment by moment through this tragedy and yet Jesus is able to discern when and how he is going to intervene for the ultimate good for everyone.
- iii. **A sovereign God who is allowing tragedy to strike so that he can accomplish good.**
- Here is what we have to understand about God.
 1. As we are experiencing the all-consuming pain of suffering in this world.
 2. As we are living in that moment, God is doing a million different things as he exercises his sovereign, good will.
- iv. **We respond to suffering reactively but God uses suffering redemptively.**
- We live through suffering moment by moment wondering why God would allow us to experience this.
 - But God somehow uses it for our good. He uses it to teach us about him. He uses it to redirect our lives.
 - Although we see our suffering as nothing but negative, God is able to take our suffering and repurpose it if our ultimate good.
 1. God's allowed these events in John 11 because he had something good for the disciples, he had something good for Mary and Martha, he had something good for all that witnessed, and he had something good for a small church in Herndon that would think about these things 2000+ years later.



- v. So, take that truth. Put it on the shelf for a minute. We'll come back to it.

d. Why Did Jesus Weep?

- i. The shortest verse in all of Scripture - v.35.
- ii. He knew that he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead.
 - He intentionally let Lazarus die because of his redemptive purposes.
 - This was a part of his plan.
 - Nothing that had happened was a surprise to Jesus. Nothing was outside of his sovereign will?
 - So, why did he weep?
- iii. Some say that Jesus wept because we are supposed to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.
 - Jesus was simply consoling those who were mourning.
 - Although I do believe Jesus was emotionally making himself available to those who were mourning, I don't think this was the only reason that Jesus wept.
- iv. The Bible teaches us that death and suffering became a part of this world when we, as God's creation, rejected him and his rule over our lives.
 - God is sovereign and he is good and he created us to live in his kingdom underneath his sovereign and good rule.
 1. In a place with no suffering, no pain, no death.
 2. We were designed to experience joy inside his kingdom and to experience anguish when we're outside of it.



- But all of creation has descended into brokenness as God gave us what we asked for...autonomy.
 1. Independence from his kingdom.
 2. He has allowed us to experience life apart from the sovereign, good king.
 3. So, if you take a fish out of water, the environment that it was designed to be in, it suffocates, it groans, it flops on the ground as it suffers to death.
 4. So does humanity apart from our sovereign, good king.
- v. **Death and suffering are literally evil because they are what happen apart from God.**
 - Jesus weeps because he is starring death in the face.
 1. He is feeling the anguish.
 2. He is feeling the true consequences of our sin.
 - Suffering and death are literally evil.
 1. It is awful.
 2. Listen, it is right for us to respond to suffering with the why question!
 3. Why am I going through this?
 4. Why do tragedies happen in the world?
 5. This doesn't seem like it is right!
 - Well, it's not right. Suffering and death is literally evil.
- vi. **So, take the first truth that we talked about.**
 - We respond to suffering reactively while God uses suffering redemptively.
 - Combine that with the second truth we talked about: suffering is evil.



- So, how can God use suffering in our lives if suffering is truly evil?
 - How do you create good out of something evil?
- vii. Well, the answer is found in our third question.

e. Why Did Jesus Say He Was the Resurrection and the Life?

- i. Read John 11:25-27
- So, Jesus makes the claim that if you believe in him and if you live in him, though you will die, you actually will live and never die!
 - What does this mean?
- ii. This means that although God allowed the world to descend into brokenness as we rejected him, he didn't leave us.
- It means that our sovereign and good God came to us in the person of Jesus.
 - And he came to redeem all of our suffering by taking our life and giving us his.
- iii. *Hebrews 2:14-15 - "Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death."*
- So, the author of Hebrews is saying this.
 1. Jesus became a man so that he could defeat death through death.
 2. Jesus endures the ultimate suffering, death, in order to put death to death.
 - See, Jesus came to endure the suffering that we endure.



- And when he went to the cross, he was beaten, he was humiliated, he was tortured, and he was put to death.
 1. But not because he was qualified for death.
 2. No, Jesus was righteous. Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus never rejected the kingdom of God.
 3. He wasn't qualified for death, he was qualified for eternal life!
- But he dies because he took with him to the cross the sins of all who call upon his name.
 1. So, if you trust in Jesus, your sins (the sins of your past and the sins of your future) were used against Jesus. They were used to accuse Him and not you. They were used to carry out the sentence of death.
 2. And he endured it instead of you.
- The Bible says that if we die and our sins were not placed upon Jesus because we never placed our trust in him...
 1. ...that if we go to the grave in our sins, we will never be able to pay off the debt that we owe to God for our sins.
 2. So, death will have ahold of us for all of eternity.
 3. Because our debt will never be paid.
- But for some reason the death of Jesus brought a death blow to death.
 1. See because Jesus was righteous.
 2. Jesus was the Son of God.
 3. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins.
 4. The one and only sacrifice that could completely pay the debt that all of sinful humanity owes to God.



- And so you know what happened after Jesus died on that cross.
 1. Death died and Jesus walked out of the grave.
 2. He rose again. He's alive.
 - This is why the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 (Dan read earlier) that if Jesus didn't rise from the grave that we are still guilty of our sins.
 1. Because if Jesus didn't rise from the grave, death still has power over us and so does our sins.
- iv. **But Jesus did come out of that grave and that is why Jesus is able to say that if we live in Jesus, we will never die.**
- Because as Jesus takes upon himself our sinful life, he gives us his righteous life.
 1. Before Christ, we are like the living dead. People who have breath in our lungs but our souls are crushed under the power of death.
 2. But just as Jesus called Lazarus to come out of the grave.
 3. Jesus calls us and breathes eternal life into our souls.
 - So although we will experience physical death, that does not mean that there has been an interruption to life!
 - The Scriptures tells us that we will pass on immediately into God's Kingdom to live forever.
 1. Underneath the rule of our sovereign and good king.
 2. Never to experience pain, suffering, or the fear of death again.



v. **So, where are you?**

- If today was the day that your body shut down, are you still in your sins or have you trusted upon Jesus.
 1. Does death still have hold of you?
- So, hear us this morning. Trust in him today. Why wait? Why delay? What else do you need to know or figure out.
 1. Cast your life upon the only one who can save your soul and give you joy.

V. APPLICATION

a. **So, I told you that my goal this morning is to show you this morning that Jesus Christ came here to defeat death and send his church to tell the whole world.**

- Because one question we might have is why do we still experience suffering in a world when Christ has already come, already died on the cross, and already walked out of the grave.
- Well, after Jesus rose from the grave, his disciples and followers had the same question.

i. **Read Acts 1:6-11**

- Jesus tells us that there will be a day that he is going to return, he is going to eradicate all sin and evil, and he is going to establish his rule and reign in God's perfect kingdom forever.
- But not yet.
- So, Jesus says GO!
 1. Be my witnesses!



2. Life is available to all who will trust in the name of Jesus.
3. Go tell the whole world.
4. There are people who are suffering and dying in their sins.
5. Go tell them that death has been defeated and life is available and do that until I return!

b. So, I want you to hear this, this morning.

- i. **Although we believe in Jesus and have been redeemed by Jesus, he has left us here.**
 - We will experience suffering.
 - We will experience heart ache.
 - We will have questions that don't have easy answers.
- ii. **But he has left us here not because he doesn't care about our suffering and our pain.**
 - But because he wants to use our suffering and our pain for his redemptive purposes.
 - He wants us here to proclaim the hope that is in us.
 - He has left us here as his ambassadors. As his Kingdom representatives with a message to proclaim until our physical bodies shut down or he returns.
- iii. **Suffering, death, and pain is terrible.**
 - It is awful. It is right to mourn. It is right to cry. It is right to feel anger and frustration.
 - But we don't do so like the rest of the world, who have no way of making sense of it.



- We endure our suffering knowing that our God is sovereign and in his sovereignty, he has granted us life.
 - And our God is good. He has left us here so more people can have life.
- iv. **Grace Hill, this is why we planted this church.**
- There is suffering and pain in this world.
 - There is brokenness.
 - We're here to proclaim the good news that redemption is available.

c. So, if you wrestle with the idea that God is both sovereign and good.

- i. I want you to know that he is in the midst of a work to eradicate all that is bad, all that is evil, all death, and all suffering.
- ii. **Will you trust your life to Him?**
 - Will you fall into to his arms and experience the redemption that you've always longed for?

d. Church?

- i. **Will you trust your life upon him?**
 - The one who defeated death and has offered us life.

VI. PRAY

