

Maple Springs Baptist Church

Series: When God Isn't There

Week 8: Presence in Suffering

God regularly uses suffering to shape us.

Problem: we don't usually equate pain with goodness.

Job 1:11-12; 14-19; 20-22. Job worshipped God in his suffering because Job knew God was present in it. When we go through hard times, the only proper response is worship.

Satan's thesis was proven false.

JOB 2:4-6, 7, 9. Sometimes suffering is not just about what we've lost, but about what we're left with that turns to rot.

JOB 2:10.

We often equate suffering with God's absence. Hard times = God must be far off. Good times = God must be close. We believe that joy means God is there & anguish means He isn't. But Job understood that God is present & active in both.

God is not absent when you are suffering. He is present, because His is the hand that gives both comfort & distress. Scripture demands that we see God as the ultimate cause of everything, whether good or evil.

We cannot separate God's presence from suffering.

Suffering is not just hard because of the affliction it causes; it's hard because of the questions it raises.

Not all suffering is an equal response to an equal offense. God uses suffering & trials to make us holier: sanctification. The existence of suffering doesn't disprove the existence of God. The presence of pain does not prove the absence of God.

JOB 9:14-15.

Job saw the problem in asking, Why do bad things happen to good people? because there are no truly good people in the full light of God, none of us are no truly good people in the full light of God, none of us are truly innocent. We are all sin-stained people, worthy of suffering.

JOB 10:3, 5-7.

God is not present in suffering because He enjoys tormenting us. He is present in suffering because He loves us.

JOB 38:1, 3-5; 40:4-5. The greatest mystery in the world is not why people suffer, but how God goes about being God.

JAMES 1:2-3. Suffering can be considered a joy when we know that our good God is present in it. God is absent in the way we most desire, He is surely present in the way we most require—even if that presence brings pain.

Suffering in absence prepares us for presence. **2 CORINTHIANS 4:17.** Pain prepares us for presence.

Pain prepares us for presence. Suffering paves the road to glory. Th

We do not need to blame God for our pain or believe that He is absent in it. He took our blame & our pain when He became present to us in the person of Jesus Christ.