



## Why God Allows Suffering

July 6, 2025

Miscellaneous Scripture

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(Video 23:15)

Ordinarily, I would walk up right now, most likely advise you of a Puritans prayer that I selected to jump start us in our prayer time and then proceed to lead us in a corporate prayer time. We are indeed going to have our usual corporate prayer time, but it's going to be a little different. It's going to be a sermon or teaching or Bible study, an abbreviated but a very sincere, I trust, prayer time. And then whatever time I have left, I'm going to finally get to where I thought I was going to go right off the bat today in Romans chapter 12:9-21 that we have taken a hiatus from for the last five or six weeks. Well, what is the difference? We just sung something that the saints in Kerrville County, Texas, and a few other related places need to really, really believe. The second stanza of *God of the Ages: Quietly sovereign, Lord of our now*. God was sovereign on Friday, July 4th. God is sovereign on this Sunday, July 6th. And Almighty God was sovereign at 2:30 to 4 o'clock in the morning yesterday along the Guadalupe River near San Antonio, Texas. The question comes up, we're celebrating our nation's freedom. It's fireworks and fun and it's barbecues and cookouts for most of us on a Friday. And then hundreds, if not more, people along a river in Texas, many of whom believers in Jesus Christ, many of whom from the mystic camp, an all-girls Christian summer camp. There was about 750 young girls there. The death count when I left to come to church this morning was at 59, 23 to 27 from that camp alone were still missing. And the questions that I got yesterday afternoon and evening in a couple of emails were, "You know, I believe God is good, but he certainly can't be omnipotent and in control of that." Or "How can your Bible, you say sola scriptura, how can your Bible tell me that there's a God who's good and there's this kind of suffering and evil and tragedy in the world?" We need to be clear in our thinking as much as we need to be clear in our thinking about denominations and alleged Christian



denominations and heresies like that, we need to be very clear in our thinking when it comes to the existence of evil and the nature of evil.

There are four kinds of evil, really, in the world. There's a **supernatural evil** embodied by Lucifer, Satan, and fallen angels, and demonic forces. A supernatural force of evil in our life. There is **moral evil**. It's your human depravity, and mine. It's our sin nature that violates the principles of the Word of God. It's morally evil. Romans 12:9, we're told to abhor that as a matter of fact. I did get Romans 12:9 in. There's an **eternal evil**, an eternity in hell that will go on forever from sinners who refuse forever to repent. And there is a type of evil that occurred yesterday along the Guadalupe River in Texas. We think of it as a **natural evil**. We describe it as a calamity. It could be a disease, a bacteria, or it could be the 1918 influenza that killed millions of people around the world. Or it could be the flooding of the Guadalupe River, a type of natural destruction that occurs because we live in a fallen creation that ultimately, it's more of an impersonal type of evil. It isn't the product of our own immoral choices, but it's more the result of being in a fallen creation. So those calamities do ultimately flow from ultimately sin.

Now, what does the Bible say about such calamities? Turn to Luke chapter 13. Turn to the gospel of Luke chapter 13. I have no idea how Celeste Montague that puts these sermons together for the radio is going to deal with what I'm doing today, and I have no idea how Lia Fusaro is going to figure out how to do the transcripts because it's a little bit of a different. But I want you to look at Luke 13:1. ***Now, on the same occasion, there were some present who reported to Him, that's Christ, about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, and He answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."*** Now, here we go to



natural calamity, verses 4 and 5. This is the overflowing of the Guadalupe River. This is seven inches of rain in 45 minutes creating a wall of water over 25 feet high that slams into your loved ones like a freight train in the middle of the night. Verse 4, ***“Or do you suppose that those 18 on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them,...”***, do you suppose that those 59 who were the subject of that ravaged overnight immediate flooding that lost their lives, do you suppose that they ***“...were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”*** What in the world are you talking about, John? What are you talking about, Jesus? Natural disasters are not necessarily, and by the way, usually not, divine punishment for someone's sin. They are used by God in His overall plan to underscore the universal need for repentance and to underscore the fact that life is very fleeting. Life is very short. I don't care if you're 10 or 8, like that picture of those two little girls that lost their lives yesterday at that camp, or 88. You have no guarantee of tomorrow. Today is the day of salvation. And if not, you say, well, I'm already a believer in Jesus Christ, well, number one, you want to make sure you are. And number two, it should put an urgency in your prayer life for those we love and in your vocal witness for Christ to those whom you love. Because your relatives and friends and those you care about don't necessarily get tomorrow. It's a fallen world. They have no guarantee of another day.

Is God sovereign even over those calamities? Let me just tell you where I'm going. Yes, yes, yes, a thousand times yes. Now please, you'll know when we get to prayer, hurting hearts, suffering souls, even believers in Christ who know their Bible. It takes time for their heart, it takes time for their emotions to catch up with what their head ultimately acknowledges as true. That's where you and I and prayer for them and any other ways that we can encourage them and pray for them comes in. But the truth is what I wanted to underscore today. People who want to doubt the existence of God point to “evil and suffering” in the world and say



there can't be a God. Or again, like I said, if there is a God, He's not a good God. And if He's a good God, He's certainly an impotent God because He can't control all these things that happen.

I want to give you some scriptures. I'm going to give you a lot of them to underscore and make a point and to make some specific points. Psalm 24:1, ***The earth is the Lord's and all it contains.*** "All" means all. Okay, well, He possesses it, but what about the events that go on? Keep listening. 1 Chronicles 29:11-12, ***Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion.*** He controls it all, ***O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all... You rule over all and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone.*** Okay, we still haven't got to calamities yet, though, John, keep listening. Psalm 115:3, ***But our God is in the heavens;*** get this, ***...He does whatever He pleases.*** Wow, but does that really mean that He does whatever He pleases in creation? Keep listening. Daniel, ***He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, "what have you done?"*** Daniel 4:35. Well... keep listening. We're just warming up. We're now getting to the heart of the matter. Deuteronomy 32:39, the Lord says this, ***See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; It is I, are you ready? It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; and there is no one who can deliver from My hand.*** Despite theologians who err and others to the contrary, God is not trying to get off the hook because there's evil and suffering and heartache and death in this culture in which we live in, in this world. He's not worried about the bad press. Well... you're not quite there. Exodus 4:11, listen to this: ***The LORD said to him (Moses), "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf or seeing or blind?"*** Think about the man in John 9, born blind,



born blind for the glory of God. You live 40 some years blind so God could get... yes, because God lives in eternity and you will exist in eternity as well. As a believer in Christ, you'll live in eternity. As a non-believer, should you die in that state physically, you'll exist for eternity in hell. God's got the big picture, the whole picture in mind and under His control. **...who makes him mute or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?** You mean to tell me that God is in control of a child born with autism? God is in control of everything. God gave that autistic child life, let alone allowed for the autism. Now I haven't said that God's the author of sin. I haven't said that He's the author of evil. I'm just telling you right now, He's in control. Keep listening. 2 Kings 17, oh, by the way, Psalm 105:16, just as an offset, it says God called for a famine upon the land. He called for starvation to fall upon the people, Psalm 105:16. Here's one, 2 Kings 17:25, **they did not fear the LORD, therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them.** He gives life, but He causes death. To all those folks trying to get God off the hook, He takes the responsibility. Don't try to get him off the hook. Lamentations 3:38, **Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both good and ill go forth?** By the way, Genesis 7, the flood, you know, there's anywhere depending upon which extrapolation and mathematician and historian you want, or theologian as well, you want to listen to. At the time of the flood in Genesis 7, there's either 10 million people or 100 million people on the earth. They all lived into their 900s and you don't know how many children they may have had. But guess what? God killed every one of those people except eight and did not apologize for it whatsoever. How can this be a God of love? We'll get there. Please, though, just let me put a parenthetical insert in here because this starts becoming crushingly overwhelming. Don't make the mistake of thinking that He's not holy. Assuredly He is. First of all, He cannot do evil. Psalm 5:4, James 1:13, God cannot do evil. As a matter of fact, He cannot even look upon evil in a positive light. That's Habakkuk 1:13. Somebody approached me one day and



said, you know, you always quote Habakkuk 1:13, that God's eyes are too holy to behold evil. What about casting people into hell? He is. He's present in hell. God is present in hell in the character quality of his wrath. He does not look upon evil positively. He is, Isaiah 6:3, **holy, holy, holy**. Psalm 103:19, **The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; and His**, get this, **sovereignty rules over all**. You mean to tell me that drunk driver ran a red light 15 years ago when you were preaching at a Child Evangelism Fellowship spiritual renewal conference and killed a missionary's son? You mean God was sovereignly in control of that? Absolutely. You're not going to live one day longer or one day less, one minute longer or one minute less, and neither did the people in Kerr County, Texas, then Almighty God has sovereignly ordained. But it doesn't make you a robot, and it's not fatalism. Write down Isaiah 14:27, I think it is. **For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?** Listen to Isaiah 46:9-10. **Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other. I am God, and there is no one like Me. Declaring the end from the beginning and from the ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'my purpose will be established and I will accomplish all My good pleasure;** But here we really go. 1 Samuel 2:6-8. This was when I revisited this last evening, they got to be overwhelming. 1 Samuel 2:6-8: **The LORD kills and the Lord makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. [He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, and inherit a seat of honor;] For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and He set the world on them.** This one really took me aback when I remembered this one. Amos 3:6, well, what's Amos 3:6? **...If a calamity occurs in a city,** how's this for an application today? **...If a calamity occurs in a city, has not the LORD done it?** If the Guadalupe River overflows in 45 minutes, that calamity occurs in Hunt, Texas, has not the Lord done it?



The simple truth of the matter is this: God takes responsibility throughout scriptures for the existence, allowance of evil. Isaiah 45:5-7, ***I am the LORD and there is no other; besides me, there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these.***

You have to conclude from these scriptures, you have to conclude from the Word of God that God willed, He decreed evil to exist. We affirm that He did not create it. Don't get me wrong, He didn't create evil. Otherwise it would be impossible really for Him since it's impossible for Him to do any evil so He can't create evil. That He willed or allowed, is maybe another way of saying it, it's a part of his will, for evil to exist. The question then becomes why?

There are many reasons for suffering, but I'll submit to you that the Westminster Confession of Faith Divines gave us the best one, the primary one: *God, from all eternity, did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass. Yet, yet, so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures. It doesn't violate man's will. Nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away but rather established. Sinfulness proceeds only from the creature and not from God who being most holy and righteous neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.* What's the point? Put simply: God has ordained evil to exist in this world for His glory. Paul told us that in Romans chapter 3:5. ***...our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God...*** Think of that. Our unrighteousness, our sinfulness demonstrates the righteousness of God, and the greatest example of that, the worst sinful act, if you will, the worst calamity, if you will, the worst disaster, if you will, the worst moral, spiritual, natural, and eternal evil that ever, ever occurred in the history of God's creation was the cross, the cross of Jesus Christ.



And out of the worst evil imaginable, a good and a loving God brought the greatest good ever to His creatures, a way of escaping eternal hell; a way of communing and getting into a right relationship with the eternal God through the person of the Son, Jesus the Christ.

All things are not good. Some things are absolutely evil, but all things, because of God's sovereignty, His grace, His mercy, His holiness, His righteousness, all things do work together for good to those that love the Lord, to those who are the called according to His purpose. Many of those little girls, and others, that died on that river were believers in Jesus Christ. Their parents are grieving, their loved ones are grieving, they'll grieve for a long time. But those that know Christ are not grieving whatsoever.

And yet, like I said, with all these things being true, it takes time for the heart to catch up with the head. Someone asked me, and I appreciate your heart so much, should we give some money? Maybe, depending on what the needs are through another church, maybe we as a church again will help in that way through Samaritan's Purse, but maybe not. It isn't so much property damage right now as it is loss of life. The greatest aid we can do to our brothers and sisters in Christ who are hurting, the greatest thing we can do to all of those individuals who are hurting, is what we are about to do right now. We're going to go to our time of corporate prayer.

Governor Abbott of Texas declared today, Sunday, he asked that it be a day of prayer in the state of Texas. Others I saw online were calling that it be a day of prayer for all of those who are going through this horrific calamity in Texas. I'll touch upon some of the other things, not all of them, for the interest of time, that we usually cover in our corporate prayer time. But truly, we are about to do exactly what the people who survived this tragedy need most from us. They need our prayers. Let's go to God in prayer.



Father, we affirm again that You are a good God, that Your love endures forever. We live in a dangerous, dangerous world. It is a fallen creation. Calamities occur, and You are in control of all of them. And they are constant reminders of the need to repent. They're constant reminders that we must work now while it is day, because there's coming a time when it'll be night, and we will not be able to work for Your glorious purposes any longer. We have them as constant reminders to be in prayer for loved ones and others we know who do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. And so right now, at the start of this time, Father, first of all, we as a group of believers in Christ, individually where we sit and where I stand, we want to tell You how sorry we are for our own personal sinfulness and sins. We want to take time right now, Lord, individually before You, to ask that You and the person of the Spirit that indwells us to replay and remind us of sins that we need to repent of right now before we go another step further.

Father, we need to continually remember and be reminded that You are sovereign, that You're in control, and that somehow You have factored in the prayers of Your people as providing real, real mercy, real grace, and real comfort to people who are afflicted. We have brothers and sisters in Christ who we will never meet until we get to glory, who are suffering tremendously right now in that portion of the state of Texas. And we pray, Father, for those that do not know Christ, that somehow this tragedy will bring about a series of circumstances that will ultimately lead many to a saving belief in Jesus. Lord, we lift up the men and women involved in the federal agencies, FEMA, and the Homeland Security, and the border personnel who've been shifted from guarding the border now to helping with the relief effort in Texas. We pray for all the state officials and state agencies, relief organizations, churches, and individuals who are coming together at this time, Father, in an effort to try to find any who may still be clinging to life and to find the bodies and remains of others who have perished.



We pray for wisdom for all of the individuals involved in the federal, state, and local level, organized and unorganized alike, that they will have the mind of Christ in doing what they need to do. We ask that for Governor Abbott in Texas and everybody under his direction and control. We pray for the families of the victims, Father. Some may still indeed be buried under rubble somewhere and still alive. Father, we pray that you would preserve those lives. We pray for families who have definitely lost loved ones, that you, Father, the God of all comfort, may comfort them in a supernatural manner with a supernatural peace that can only come from You. Again, Lord, our heads know that You are sovereign, You're in control, that there are no accidents, that You'll be glorified. And yet, Father, I pray for the hurting hearts. I pray for these tearful souls, that I pray somehow you would cause their hearts to heal, that they truly would be able to say with Job, though He slay me, I will trust Him. Oh God, You be glorified through all of this.

And Father, if there is a way, a tangible way down the road in the days ahead that we as a church can be involved in being a part of that healing process, we ask You to give us the privilege of knowing that and of responding to it.

Lord, I pray that the principles and truths that we just quoted from Your word would be a real blessing to people right here in our fellowship who are going through tremendous times of physical, emotional, and spiritual pain and suffering right now. We have members in our congregation, some of whom have managed to put one foot in front of the other and get here today, some who literally physically, and emotionally could not do so. Father, I pray that You would bring healing and comfort by simply knowing that You are in control of every aspect of the situation that they are dealing with at the present time, and that You do indeed, in addition to bringing You glory, You have a purpose in all of it. Father, that's our prayer for all of those who hurt here at home, in Texas, and indeed around the globe.