

Jesus and Demons (Part 3)

The Messianic Permission

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 8:26-39



Big Idea

When faced with the problem of evil, we begin by humbling ourselves beneath the wisdom God, we cling to the things He has revealed in His word, and we look ever and always to the cross.

If, as the Bible presents it, God is all-good and God is all-powerful, why is there so much evil and suffering in the world?!

In theology, the struggle with this question has been called “**theodicy**” (Gk. theos [God] + dike [justice] = “justifying God”). Meriam-Webster defines it as: “[the] defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of evil.”

(1) Perspectives

We must beware of our tendency to put ourselves above God and demand He bow to our reason. We must beware of putting God in the dock as if He, the Creator, must answer to me, the creature. There is nothing more irrational than the creature's assumption that he can and should be able to wrap his own reason around that of his Creator. We must be willing to admit that mystery will always subsist at the core of our faith because creaturely limits will always distinguish us from the limitless Creator. I love what Eugene Peterson says on this point: “Mystery is not the absence of meaning, but the presence of more meaning than we can comprehend.” (cf. Psa 131)

(2) Principles

- (1) **God Is Not the Author of Evil** (cf. Jam 1:13, 16-17; 1 John 1:5)
- (2) **God Does Allow Evil** (cf. Job 1; Rev 20)
- (3) **Whatever Evil God Does Allow He Guides to a Good and Glorious End** (cf. Rom 8:28, 35-37)
- (4) **On the Last Day God Will Triumph Over All Evil and Do Away with It Forever** (cf. Rev 20:10)
- (5) **In the Meantime, We Must Count God's Patience As Salvation** (cf. 2 Pet 3:9, 15; Acts 1:7-8; Rev 6:9-11)

(3) Paradigms

A paradigm is “an outstandingly clear or typical example” of something. Paradigms serve, therefore, as a model, or grid, or lens through which you can interpret and understand all other similar situations. So with regard to God and how He relates to the evil in this world a good paradigm here will take our five principles and put them on clearest display. For this, we can look at the cross. God takes the most horrific event in the history of mankind and turns it for mankind's salvation! The darkest moment becomes the brightest light!

Reflection Questions



- How comfortable are you with mystery in your Christian faith? Are you the type that has to know every answer, or have you learned the secret of the “weaned child” (Psa 131:2)?
- Which of the five principles spoke the most to you? Which did you find the most confusing? Are there other Scriptures that aid in your understanding of these things?
- What evil or suffering have you been facing lately? Do you honestly believe that God is up to good in it for you? What effect would believing this have on you in the midst of it? What other Scriptures have helped you in times of trial? Explain.