

How Can God Be Good When He Brings Trials?

Psalm 119:65-72

Introduction

When everything in our lives is going great, it's easy to see that God is good. But what about those times when we face trials, tragedies, difficulties? That's the topic the psalmist talks about in this next section of Psalm 119 —

What trials has the author been facing? (vv.67, 69-71)

Twice he says he has been afflicted (vv.67,71).

In vv.69-70 he describes that affliction as insolent people who have smeared him with lies.

Imagine how it would feel to be publicly smeared with slander, lies, untruths.

He knows that God is sovereign over everything, and that God could have kept these men from slandering him. So —

How does he describe God's action of bringing him these trials? (v.65)

He does not think God has stopped loving him. He is not angry against God.

He says that God has dealt well with him according to his word (v.65).

He knows God has promised to always do good to his people (Genesis 32:12; Genesis 50:20; Numbers 10:29).

So it's not that part of our lives are good, and part bad, and it's God who brings the good parts, but the bad parts are just bad luck.

It's that even the bad things in our lives are part of God's goodness to us.

How can afflictions be part of God's goodness?

God used afflictions to bring him back to the word (v.67)

This does not mean every time we have a trial, it's because we've strayed from God's Word. But when we do stray from God's Word, he lovingly brings us afflictions to wake us up so we see we have strayed and turn back to him.

God used afflictions to teach him the word (v.71)

Afflictions are painful. So they drive us to God's Word with more passion and desperation. And when we read God's Word with passion and desperation, we will meet God more powerfully than if we just read casually. As a result, afflictions help us more deeply understand God's Word.

What's so good about God's word? (v.72)

God's word is more valuable to him than riches.

Because it's through God's Word that we have sweet fellowship with God, and that fellowship is our reason for existing.

So whenever we go through afflictions, open God's Word and pray, meditate, believe, and worship.

As we do so, we will meet him, and he is worth it all.



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

Have you had times of trial when you questioned God's goodness? How was that question resolved? How does this passage help?

Does it make sense that in his goodness God brings us trials sometimes (1) to bring us back to following his word, or (2) to teach us the truth of his word? Why or why not?

Have you had trials in which you knew God was seeking to bring you back to following his word? What happened?

Have you had trials through which God taught you his word more deeply? What happened?

How can the psalmist say that God's word is more valuable to him than thousands of gold and silver pieces? Is God's word this valuable to you?

Find out which people in the group are going through trials. Encourage them. Pray for them.

