

# SUFFERING AND FAITH

Prepared, Part 4

Pastor Ken Ritz \*January 29, 2017\* New Life Vineyard Church

*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*

1 Peter 3:15

Recommended reading: 'A Grace Disguised,' by Jerry Sittser.

**When someone says something like:**

***"I can't believe in a good and loving God, because of all the evil and suffering in the world"***

**2 simple responses:**

1. **"Have you ever read anything on that topic?"**
2. **"If you could push a button, and suddenly everything bad in the world would instantly go away, would you push it? But before you answer the question, have you ever done anything bad?"**
  - If you have good reason not to do away with everything or everyone bad, is it possible God has a reason as well?
  - Christians believe that God does have a reason... and that you and I are the reason.

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

2 Peter 3:9

**There is an element of hypocrisy when we complain about evil in the world.**

- When you have a problem, I pray for you. When I have a problem, I doubt God.

**Almost every human being holds two important assumptions.**

1. **Certain things ought not to be.**
  - But where did that "ought" come from? There had to be a creator, a God, a moral judge of the universe.
2. **The world is broken.**
  - The world we see today was not the original version, and it is also not the ultimate version.
  - But the current world is a path that leads us to the best possible world.
  - The best possible world is a world where people are free to sin, but freely choose not to.

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed...*

Rom 8:18-21

- Pain and suffering are not evidence of the absence of God, but evidence of the fact that we know things aren't right and they ought to be better.
- God is being patient with us, so that everyone has a chance to be saved, but one day God will make it better.

## Summary

- If God removed all the evil from the world, he'd have to begin with you and me.
- But we believe God entered this evil world, through his son Jesus Christ, to forgive us rather than remove us.
- And Jesus is coming back again to restore this world to what you and I know it ought to be.
- and because of that...

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

*\*All scriptures from TNIV unless otherwise noted*