

**“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:13).**

**Today’s sermon topic is: Why do “good” people suffer? In another words, “Why do bad things happen to good people? I want to share with you these topics through the coming Sundays. Have you ever asked those questions or have you ever heard those questions from others around you? Or we would ask God, “Why me?” – During times of unexpected health problem, accident, or disasters.**

**First of all, I would say to you that this question “Why me?” is a normal and natural response to God when we suffer without knowing the cause. It is also a universal question of human beings. It does not indicate that we don’t have faith when we ask God, “Why”? Or why do you allow me to suffer? Rather, when we handle suffering given to us wisely, we often experience an increase in our faith and our life can be blessed.**

**Why do good people suffer? Why does God allow us to suffer? Where does suffering come from? These questions have always been difficult questions throughout the history of humankind. How do we trust that God is loving and caring when there seem to be injustices around those who fear God and what appears to be no reward for suffering?**

**I want to assure that the Bible does not say that the good or faithful will not have suffering; it does not promise that the good will live long without sickness, accident, or tribulation (meaning trouble or grief).**

**Looking at suffering from a Christian worldview can help. We can take heart and know that our suffering is not in vain. God does work all things for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28). Why do we suffer? Sometimes we suffer because of our wrong choices. When we give in to a temptation, usually there are natural consequences that cause hardship. But sometimes we suffer just because we are alive in this world. Jesus said, “He makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). Likewise, the good and the bad will face suffering as long as we are alive. But, once we face trial, it seems that I am only struck by suffering.**

**The book of Job deals with “the mystery of suffering.” We know Job was a very godly man from the words of the opening chapter: “In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East” (Job 1:1-3).” Yet, Job suffered tremendously, losing his children, business, and health. He was visited by those who arrived with their strong, personal opinions as to why this had happened. Eliphaz said that Job was suffering because he had sinned. Bildad was sure it was because he was a hypocrite. Zophar believed he was suffering the portion of a wicked man. Finally, Elihu,**

**the youngest of the group, declared that Job needed an attitude adjustment, and must see all of this as the Lord's chastening. Each friend of Job came to him and tried to answer the cause of suffering that Job had undergone. Their words did not comfort Job; rather Job was hurt by them. I suppose there is much about Job's experience we will never fully understand, however, one thing we CAN know is this: one reason Job suffered is because he served God, and Satan did not like it. King David expressed it this way, "A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all...Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned" (Psalm 34:19-21). Remember, God only promises a safe landing, not a smooth ride.**

**A young couple went out as missionaries to India. They had served only a few years when the young husband was taken seriously ill. As the days and weeks passed, it became more apparent, outside of Divine intervention, he would not recover. His lovely, young wife could not bring herself to accept such disappointment and sorrow as a part of the will of God. Her grieved soul began to grow more rebellious and bitter. She cried to God for some sort of peace and an answer. But none came, until one day her husband called her to his side and said, "You know, my dear, we came over here to teach these people how to live as Christians and to show them the Christian way. Now we have been given an opportunity to show them how Christians face things."**

**The Bible does not promise that good people will be exempt from suffering. But the Bible says that God can help us to handle our troubles and/or trials by His help. "Christianity is not an insurance policy against life's ills and troubles" – Billy Graham. However, Christians can become stronger when they overcome their problems. "As we get close to God, there are times of trials and testing. We can tell if we are clay or gold by how we respond. If we are clay, we become hard; if we are gold, we melt and flow with God's purpose." – Anonymous**

**"Why do the good suffer?" has always been a difficult question throughout the history of humankind. Life can bring some very unexpected blows without a moment's notice. One of the hardest issues to work out in our minds is how God can allow good people to suffer.**

**The world is full of suffering, it is also full of overcoming it – Helen Keller. Remember what our Lord Jesus, whom we believe as the Savior and the Lord of our lives, says: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But TAKE HEART! I have overcome the world" (John 16:13). Amen.**

**Questions to ponder: 1. When you encounter suffering, what is your reaction? 2. Think about a particularly painful trial that you persevered through. What did you learn about God that you might have not known any other way?**