

## BIG QUESTION: Why Is There Suffering In The World?

### SERIES: EMOTIONS #3

CS Lewis (book: The Problem with Pain)

- God whispers to us in our pleasures.
- Speaks in our conscience.
- But shouts in our pains.
- IT is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

Admiral Jim Stockdale (Interview w/Jim Collins "From Good to Great")

- "I never lost faith in the end of the story."
- "You must never confuse FAITH that you will prevail in the end – which you can never afford to lose - with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be." (STOCKDALE PARADOX)

**John 9:1-5** -- As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

- When did suffering enter the world? (Gen 1:1; Gen 3 - see John 10:10)

<sup>3</sup> "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

**Mark 2:1-12** A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. <sup>2</sup> They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. <sup>4</sup> Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

<sup>6</sup> Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

<sup>8</sup> Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? <sup>9</sup> Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? <sup>10</sup> But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, <sup>11</sup> "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." <sup>12</sup> He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

**Rom 5:12** - Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man ...

**Rom 5:17** - For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness.

**John 1:14** – And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

**Phil 2:6-8** – Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

**Heb 4:15-16** -- For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses. But (on the contrary) we have a high priest who has been tempted in every way, just as we are. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

**Rom 8:18** - I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

**8:22-24** - We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.

Quote from CS Lewis book: Mere Christianity

- *"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, "the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."*
- Admiral Stockdale – *"We must never lose faith in the END of the story."*
- *KEY: we're NOT in heaven yet! We're living in the messy middle.*

**Take-it-Home – questions to ponder on your own:**

1. Were you raised believing there is a one-to-one correlation between BAD behavior and suffering?

2. At this point of your life, how do you explain why good people suffer? Has this fact diminished your faith or that of someone you know?

3. Re-read Hebrews 4:14-16. WHY should we remain faithful during seasons of suffering? What can we expect from God during these times?