

Why Evil Exists

Text : James 1: 13-18 ; Romans 1: 18-32

A. Recently we have lived through some very devastating times.

S#1.

S#2.

1. Hurricane Harvey hit the coast with record winds, but caused mostly flood damage
2. Hurricane Irma did major wind damage to the islands, but largely missed the coast.

B. This year forest fires took the greatest toll in recent history.

S#3.

1. There were at least 17 fires burning simultaneously in several states.
2. At least 8.8 million acres of forest were consumed by fires.
3. 8700 structures were burned in California alone.

C. In addition to nature's worst, we experienced the worst of men.

S#4.

1. A deranged man rented a hotel room overlooking an outdoor country music concert.
 - a. He then began to shoot the people who were corralled together by a perimeter fence
 - b. This sick nut killed 59 and wounded 527, of which 180 were hospitalized.
2. A fanatical Muslim terrorist rents a small truck to use as a killing machine. **S#5.**
 - a. The 29 yr old Uzbek national drove his truck on bicycle path hitting people in back
 - b. Shouting "Allah is great" he came up behind the cyclist killing 8 & hospitalizing 11
3. Last Sunday a 26 yr old mentally disturbed, man shot 27 people in a church **S#6.**
 - a. He systematically went from pew to pew cold-heartedly murdering everyone.
 - b. He even shot babies in the head point blank.

D. This list could go on page after page listing horrifically evil things that happened.

1. All through recorded history many evil things have happened in this world.
2. There have been natural disasters that have killed multitudes.
 - a. Earthquakes have leveled whole cities.
 - b. Tsunamis have wiped whole regions off the map.
 - c. Asteroid strikes has caused the extinction of whole species.
3. Nature has brought divesting evils on mankind.
 - a. Infestations of insects have eliminated whole populations .. locusts, ants, etc.
 - b. Drought and famine.
 - c. Diseases such as the plague wiped out 1/3 of humanity, malaria, aids
4. Man brings much evil on himself.
 - a. Wars bring the devastation of populations and the land.

- b. Deserts have been created by excessive exploitation of resources.
- c. Slavery, transfer of populations and genocide have destroyed nations.

S#7.

E. There's not one family on earth that hasn't been touched by consequences of sin.

- 1. One in four American households have been victimized by crime.
- 2. As medical science becomes more proficient at treating our maladies, we have more frequent interaction with the healthcare system.
- 3. Cancer appears to be becoming as common as a cold.

*** The point is that we live in a world that is inundated with evil on all sides.**

I. The problem of evil is the greatest problem faced by Christians today.

S#8.

A. The presence of evil in the world is the atheist's most common challenge to us:

1. Syllogism :

S#9.

- a. Christians affirm their God is the creator of all that exists.
- b. Christians affirm that their God is all good and contains no evil.
- c. The Christian God affirms that He created all things good.

Gen. 1: 31– God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.
And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

S#10.

- d. Evil exists on the earth, **therefore**, either God cannot be “all good or He did not create all things.”

2. The scriptures clearly affirm that God created EVERYTHING.

- a. **Col. 1: 16** – For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him.
17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

S#11.

- b. **John 1: 3** – All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

B. Satan is a created being, thus, God created him.

- 1. **Ezek. 28: 12b-14** – You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. **13** You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared.

S#12.

2. Satan is evil .. he sinned and was cast out of Heaven.

Isa. 14: 12-15 – How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, **S#13.**
 son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who
 have weakened the nations! **13** But you said in your heart, 'I will
 ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
 And I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north.
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself
 like the Most High.' **15** Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,
 to the recesses of the pit.

3. Thus, the atheist affirms that **God created evil so He cannot be completely good.**
4. Satan chose to do wrong and many other angels followed him.

C. Because God is love, He did not create evil, He created free choice. **S#14.**

1. Adam and Eve were created good. But they chose evil.
2. They were influenced by Satan, but chose to do wrong.
3. God gave man the ability to choose right or wrong.

II. Without the freedom to choose, there is neither love nor good. **S#15.**

A. God has the ability to force compliance to His will, but he never forces.

1. God can make rebellion unpleasant, **but** he never forces.
2. The atheists point to Jonah to refute this.
 - a. God did not force Jonah to go to Nineveh. *Boarded a ship running away.*
 - b. God rescued Jonah from the consequences of his rebellion and gave a chance.

B. God is totally sovereign over every aspect of His creation.

1. **Psa. 97: 9** – For you, Lord, are the most high over all the earth; **S#16.**
 You are exalted far above all gods.
2. **Psa. 135: 6** – The Lord does whatever pleases Him, in the Heavens and
on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.
3. **Matt. 28: 18** – And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, **S#17.**
 "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ..."
 - a. Where does our Lord NOT rule ? (*Heaven, earth, physical, spiritual*)
 - b. Is there any authority or power above Him ?
4. **Matt. 19: 26** – Jesus looked at him and said, 'With man this is impossible,
 But with God all things are possible.

C. God knows exactly what each person will do.

1. **Heb. 4: 13** – And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. **S#18.**
2. **Isa. 46: 10** – Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ' My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure';
3. **Psa. 139: 16** – Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them. **S#19.**
4. **Jer. 1: 4-5** – The word of the Lord came to me saying, 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." (cf – **John 9**)

III. God can use evil to bring about his good purposes.

S#20.

A. Some people are born for very negative purposes.

1. God makes all kinds of “clay pots.”
Rom. 9: 19-22 – You will say to me then, " Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? **S#21.**
2. Some people are created for one moment in life.
John 9: 1-4 – As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. **S#22.**

B. God turns some very negative events into positive in our lives.

1. God uses the trials of our lives to mature us as good servants for Him.
Jas. 1: 2-4 – A Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. **S#23.**
2. **II Cor. 12: 7** ... Apostle Paul's thorn in the flesh shielded him from sinful pride.

3. The brothers of Joseph did harm to him, but God used that harm to rescue many.

Gen. 50: 20 – As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good **S#24.**
in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

C. God has promised us that the evil we faithfully endure will minister good to us.

1. **James 1: 2-4** ... Each trial gives us strength to overcome even greater trials.

- a. Our trials enable us to lift up a brother who is stuck in a pit.

- b. Parable of the old mule who fell in a well.

2. **Rom. 8: 28** – And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

IV. The worst event in all of human history brought about the greatest benefit. **S#25.**

A. History is replete with horrible events. **S#26.**

1. Paradise lost when man was expelled from the garden.
2. The great universal flood.
3. The fall of great empires.
4. Plagues that wiped out much of mankind.
5. Great wars that killed millions of people.

B. Far greater than any of these was the crucifixion of God's only Son.

1. The prince of Heaven was wrongly convicted in a kangaroo court.
2. Though innocent Jesus endured the death reserved for the vilest of criminals.
3. He could have stopped it at any time, but he endured it to the end.
4. He endured it because He was a substitute ... the innocent for the guilt.
5. Only when the debt was fully paid did He walk away from the tomb.

C. His vicarious suffering gave man the victory over death and the grave. **S#27.**

1. As Jesus rose, all mankind will rise from the grave.
2. The death of the innocent purchased a pardon for the guilty who will receive it.
3. Have you received the pardon that Jesus purchased for YOU ? **S#28.**

INVITATION :

S#29. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**James 1: 13-18**

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. **16** Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. **17** Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. **18** In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

Romans 1: 18-32

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, **19** because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. **20** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. **21** For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. **22** Professing to be wise, they became fools, **23** and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. **25** For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, **27** and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, **29** being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, **30** slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, **31** without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; **32** and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Blk Grn Pur Brn Blu

Grn

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The Old Mule in the Well

A parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule 'braying' -or-whatever mules do when they fall into wells. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened ...and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back ... a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back, he should shake it off and step up! This he did, blow after blow. "Shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up!" He repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows, or how distressing the situation seemed the old mule fought "panic" and just kept right on shaking it off and stepping up!

It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well! What seemed like it would bury him, actually blessed him...all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity. If we face our problems, respond to them positively, and refuse to give in to panic, bitterness, or self-pity, the adversities that come along to bury us usually have within them the potential to benefit and bless us.

May God bless us this week as we, "shake off the shackles and step up out of the wells" in which we find ourselves! "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." - Phil. 4:13