

God is still in control

In recent weeks, the Tri-County area has been rocked by tragedy. A wreck involving two teenagers, one of whom lost his life, and a death by suicide of a local pastor, all occurring within days of each other sent shockwaves through the community.

While many people search for reasons, circumstances, and details to explain why these things happen, in the end, there is no explanation that brings comfort. Often times, our search for answers only leads to more questions. We are left asking a question that haunts many; "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

I am not sure that we can adequately answer why someone is struck down in their prime, or why someone who has lived as a servant to God takes their own life. The most common questions that arise in our quest for an explanation are "Why does God allow tragedy? If God truly loves us, and he is all powerful, why doesn't he stop these things before they happen?"

Even though it is tough to understand God's role in these tragedies, he is for sure present in our time of need. The truth is, we live in a broken world. At the beginning of mankind's existence, sin entered the world. God designed us with a free will. That free will was exercised and man disobeyed the commands of God. Therefore, sin has been with us since the beginning of humanity. God could force us to do good to all, but then we would be as robots walking the earth. God could even force us to love him and one another, but forced love isn't really love at all.

While it is a fact that we live in a broken world, and that brokenness leads to tragedies, many of us need a more comforting answer as to why tragedy strikes. Unfortunately, there is no crystal



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clear answer. Sadly, there seems to be no logical answer to the ways of God. Scripture tells us that God is in total control of the happenings of the world, and that God loves all. Therefore, when such unspeakable events occur, it seems contradictory to God's word. However, when we take a deeper look into the stories in Scripture, we see that life is full of heartache.

The most referenced book in Scripture when folks are suffering unthinkable hardships is the book of Job. He was a good man, a wealthy and powerful man with a good family who loved God. God allowed him to suffer immense torture, even though he was blameless and pure. Job's response in the midst of his personal tragedy was one on which a multitude of people draw in times of suffering.

"Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him," (Job 13:15). "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21).

Job did not fully understand how God, who loved him so much, allowed his family to die, his wealth to be stripped, and his own personal health to deteriorate. Yet he still found the strength and faith to trust that God was in total control of his life.

So, to the ones who are hurting because of recent tragedy, and those who may be suffering as they read this, I encourage you to trust God as you struggle. Trust that there is a purpose and a plan for your life and it will include tough times and heartache. As a youth pastor, I tell my students often that God does not promise us that life will be easy. However, he does promise that he

will be with us, leading the way through the valleys of life. The story of Job has touched countless people throughout history. God brought good from the the experiences that took a man through unthinkable circumstances. Because of Job's faithfulness in this valley, God reinstated him to full strength and blessed him beyond measure.

God often uses the trials of life for a greater good. The challenge for us is to see the good that grows from the bad. Tragedies make us

realize how fragile life really is. It can be gone in a blink of an eye. We naturally evaluate ourselves and examine our relationships. Two things are certain: 1. We do not know when our time on earth will be through. 2. We don't know when those we love and see everyday will run out of time as well. Therefore, it is important to draw close to God in our time of need. It is also important to help others do the same.

We may never find the answers to our toughest questions this side of eternity. Even so, we must trust that, even though it seems our world is crashing down, God is still in control.

For more help in understanding God's plan and our response, see the following scriptures:

Proverbs 3:5-6, Romans 8:28, Jeremiah 29:11

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