

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



When We Don't Understand Why

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Peter 5:6-10 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 55:8-9 | Lamentations 3:22-23 | Romans 8:28
2 Corinthians 12:7 | Ephesians 6:10-17 | Philippians 4:4 | 1 Thessalonians 5:18 | Hebrews 13:5 | 1 Peter 1:7

SUMMARY

Trials, difficulties, and suffering bring out a variety of attitudes and responses.

Some people become angry with God for allowing the situation while others are able to rejoice in Him knowing that He's doing something good in their lives through the hardship. But one of the most common responses is to want to know why this has happened. What is the purpose? Why me, my child, or my family? Yet so many times, we don't understand, and God doesn't reveal the reason to us. How should we respond then?

SERMON POINTS

When you don't understand why something has happened, remember these basic truths.

- First of all, we need to understand that the Lord's perspective is complete, having full knowledge of the past, present, and future. Ours, on the other hand, is very limited, which sometimes leads us to a wrong attitude toward God and the situation. But the Lord understands every facet of the difficulty and knows why it has happened and what He desires to accomplish through it.
- Second, we must remember that the Lord is full of love, righteousness, mercy, goodness, and kindness. Whatever He's allowed in our lives is motivated by these qualities.
- Third, we need to recognize that God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isa. 55:8-9). There are some things we will never understand because they are beyond our human comprehension. That's when

we need to give up our quest for understanding and just let the Lord handle it.

- Fourth, we should rely on Lamentations 3:22-23 as we go through our trials. God's goodness, love, and mercy won't run out because they are new every morning, and the Lord is always faithful to keep His promises.
- Finally, understanding why is not as important as seeing our difficulties from God's viewpoint and responding according to His Word. Peter advises us to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, cast all our anxieties on Him, resist the devil, stand firm in faith, and recognize that our sufferings are only "for a little while" in comparison to eternity (1 Pet. 5:6-10).

Whenever you experience pain, disappointment, or distress, how do you respond?

- **Do you see it as God's way of getting your attention?** This should be our first thought when a trial of some kind suddenly hits us. Sometimes God has to use strong means to get us to focus on Him because we often pay little attention to Him when our lives are running smoothly. But if an accident, a job situation, or trouble in our family hits, we're stopped in our tracks and immediately turn to the only One who can help.
- **Is God using this to remind you to be totally dependent upon Him?** The Lord's will is that we always rely on Him for every aspect of our lives, but our natural tendency is to get along without Him when we can handle life on our own. However, when a situation arises that we cannot fix, solve, or change, we suddenly realize how helpless we are and how much we need the Lord.

■ **Could this be a satanic attack?** Since we have an enemy who's seeking to devour us, we must consider whether he's the source of our difficulties (1 Pet. 5:8). Since God has provided His spiritual armor for our protection, we must put it on each day so we'll be ready for the devil's assault (Eph. 6:10-17).

■ **Is God testing your faith?** The Lord's purpose in using trials to test us is not to see what we will do (He already knows that), but to strengthen our faith through the experience. He wants us to understand that every hardship or pain is an opportunity for spiritual growth and ever increasing trust in Him.

Do you have the right to ask God why you're going through pain or difficulty?

■ **It's a natural response.** Although our focus should be on how the Lord wants us to respond, we have the freedom to ask Him why He's let something bad happen to us.

■ **However, God is under no obligation to answer our question.** His thoughts and ways are higher than ours, and He doesn't always share them with us, but He always invites us to use our suffering to grow and learn. Our response determines whether we benefit from the situation or suffer in vain.

■ **But sometimes the Lord will give us a reason.** When Paul asked that his "thorn in the flesh" be removed, God told him that its purpose was to keep him from exalting himself (2 Cor. 12:7). Knowing this, Paul was able to rejoice because he trusted the Lord and recognized that He was protecting him from pride and teaching him to depend upon Christ's strength, thereby ensuring the effectiveness of his ministry.

How should you respond to suffering and pain when you don't understand why God allowed it?

■ **Remember that you are a child of God and He's watching over you.** You may not understand His plan, but He knows exactly where you are and what He's accomplishing in your life.

■ **Recall that the Lord is always with you.** Even if you cannot feel His presence, the Lord will never leave or forsake you (Heb. 13:5).

■ **Acknowledge that God has allowed the situation for His divine purpose.** Whatever has happened isn't an accident, but a vital part of His plan for your life.

■ **Thank the Lord in the midst of the situation.** Gratitude in everything is God's will for you according to 1 Thessalonians 5:18. When your heart is receptive, the Lord will show you blessings for which you can be thankful even in times of trouble or pain.

■ **Remember Romans 8:28.** "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

■ **Recall the Lord's promises in 1 Peter 5:10.** "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you." This is the good work He's purposed to do in your life through the trials you experience.

RESPONSE

■ Why is it so hard to let go of our desire to know why certain events happen to us? Do you think this displays a lack of trust in God? Why or why not?

■ The right response to trials is to immediately direct our thoughts toward God. Is this your first reaction? If so, what benefits have you discovered with this mindset? If not, what keeps you from focusing on the Lord? What can you do to shift your thoughts to Him?

■ What verses do you need to hide in your heart so that you will be armed with scriptural truth when pain or adversity comes your way?

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