

Why Me?

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[0 : 00] In Romans 8 we read, These verses and the rest of the passage that we read, we speak of a situation in which the believer, and to an extent that the wider human population of this planet, is in a state of groaning, in a state of difficulty or sorrow or struggle, in this fallen world.

And most of us, I imagine, at some point have made or felt the heart cry which wants to say and perhaps say to the Lord, Why me?

Why are these things happening to me? Why are these disasters befalling me? Why, Lord, is all this going on? Which of us has not asked this question at some point?

Even if we don't articulate it out loud in public, yet still, we're honest, we've felt it at some point in the heart. Why me?

Usually we will ask it in the context of frustration, perhaps, rather than tragedy. Rolling our eyes in irritation with some comparatively minor incident, often that has gotten the way of perhaps the smooth running of our lives.

[1 : 55] Why me, Lord? Why me? Our very question implies that we have somehow been personally singled out for some unpleasant experience.

God in his cruelty has bypassed everyone else and has picked on us for something bad to happen. And we don't know why.

Why should he do this? Why should it be me? Why me, Lord? It's a very human question. And because it is so human, and we can all identify with the sentiments in that short two-word question, it gives us a little glimpse into what we ourselves are really like.

All of us, by nature. And it's not a pretty sight. Because once we will wrap ourselves in the idea and the thought that, I should get sympathy here, I should get sort of comfort in treatment, and really just peel back the covering and the outward packaging a wee bit, and let's just look a little deeper about what does this question really say about us.

Remember that the question is not merely why, but specifically, why me? And implicitly, there is a quarrel in the question.

[3 : 25] A quarrel ultimately with God. We have no apparent problem with the fact that bad things happen. Only with the fact that they should happen to us.

And we say, oh, it's not that we want bad things to happen to other people, it's just, oh, that happened to me. You know, why me? But logically, it is okay in our minds if those things happen to other people.

Just not to us. Because the why me is not a moral question, not even a philosophical question.

We're not disputing God's right to inflict or allow bad things on people in general.

Our complaint, as it so often is within the heart, even if we don't articulate it outwardly, is that he has the wrong target. So the first question, this first thing this question reveals, we might say, which is none too pleasant, is how, I was going to say self-centered we are, but then that implies a sort of negative paintbrush.

So let's just say self-absorbed. We are self-centered in the sense that for so often, for so many of us, the self is the center of our lives.

[4 : 42] We are self-centered in the true, literal sense, but we think of somebody self-centered as being bad and sort of, you know, uncaring about any of us. So let's just say, okay, let's use a more neutral term, let's say self-absorbed.

We as humans tend to be, all of us. And how relatively, relatively speaking, uncaring we are about what may happen to others, just so long as it doesn't happen to me.

You know, just to give you an example, when a tragedy happens, you know, London Bridge or Grenfell Towers or whatever, the way that people express how much they care is that they send

little sort of messages of supposed caring out into the cyberspace and they put in little emojis and they put in lots of X's and hearts and how much they care and little weeping faces and things. Maybe they'll send a few pounds off to some disaster relief charity or whatever, but they don't really care. And it's still in the news two weeks later, then come on, this is getting boring.

Let's move on sort of thing. We are very much self-absorbed and we tend to want to be able to think that we are good even in the midst of it.

[5 : 59] But, suppose we turn the question around and imagine, if we can do so rapidly, just for the sake of argument, that God were to reply to our question with another question.

We're busy saying, well, why me? And supposing the Lord were to turn it around and say, well, why not you? Now, why not you? If we're honest, we're already prepared, we're mentally prepared with an answer, because I don't deserve this.

I'm a good guy. I'm good. I'm decent. I do nice things. I give a bit of help to charities now and then. I help people when I can and I don't hate anyone, really, except those that it's politically okay to hate. I'm a nice person. I'm a fine member of society. I'm a good neighbour. I'm a good person. Look at all these child molesters and murderers and rapists and thieves and muggers, you know.

Pick on them. Fair enough. But why me? You know, I don't deserve it. I'm good. I'm reasonably good, you know. I don't deserve these bad things. And there is, in the human character, revealed, really, the essence of what we're like there.

[7 : 15] There you peel back the layers and you see the human character really in all the ugliness of its natural state. I know grace changes us, but in the natural state, this is what the human being is like.

Self-centred, in the literal sense. Intolerant, or sometimes the least pinprick, against ourselves. But untroubled, really, by the calamities that may befall others. And through it all, a self-indulgent, overblown opinion of our own goodness.

And that somehow, God owes me a smooth surface and a free ride. Because I'm basically good, you know.

But none of that answers the question, why you? Why me? Why should these things befall me? Why should they happen to me?

[8 : 16] Well, firstly, if we're going to go from Scripture, then we have to say, because we are here, we are here in this fallen, sinful world where labour and sorrow are part of the kind of world we have turned this into.

Psalm 90, verse 10. We read, The days of our years are three score years and ten. And if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is there strength labour and sorrow.

For it is soon cut off and we fly away. Most people want to live to be old, but it says, you know, if you do live to be old, it's labour, it's sorrow, it's toil, it's struggle.

Revelation 21, remember, who've got this vision of heaven and the fulfilment of all things. God shall wipe away, chapter 21 of Revelation, verse 4, God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

[9 : 27] The very fact that Revelation mentions all these things as not being present in heaven by implication, it means that these things, which will have no place in heaven, are very much part of our lives here.

We know that in truth anyway. It's very much part of our lives here. And it is not just you, not just me.

everyone is in this same boat. Indeed, you know, we read this evening that the whole creation is in this same condition.

Verses 22 and 23 of Romans 8 there, for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

Now that word travaileth, it's an old-fashioned term that means, it's linked in, no doubt, with the French, travail, which means to labor, to work, to have to bring something forth.

[10 : 27] Nowadays, in English, it tends to be associated with childbirth, so that labor and travaileth in pain together until now. It's like in pain to want to bring forth something better, but it's not there yet.

It's still in the midst of the anguish, still in the midst of the suffering. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the

Spirit.

Even we ourselves, those who are saved, those who are believers in a state of grace, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption to wit, the redemption of our body. That's what we seek. Why me? Why you? Because you are part of this creation, of which hardship and suffering and frustration are an integral part.

We have made it so because from almost the very beginning, our first parents were every bit as self-absorbed, self-centered and uncaring and puffed up with their own importance and goodness as we are today.

[11 : 47] Perhaps with less excuse because they didn't inherit it, they were made good. You know, this is what we read in Ecclesiastes 7, verse 29. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright.

But they have sought out many inventions. The novelty of sin, the idea of being our own boss and going our own way and, yeah, if I want to eat that fruit, I'll just eat it.

Of course, I'll become like God then, I'm no good from evil. God has made man upright. But they have sought out many inventions, always wanting to push the boundaries of what we can try out, what we can do, even if it might be a sin.

Let's just see what's over the next hill. Let's just see what happens if we break this rope, if we smash this window, if we push this button. What happens? This is what they chose to become. Even our first parents, this is what they chose to become. And this is what we have chosen to make of the world because of the evil that men do in this world.

[12 : 54] They do because they are self-centered, not Christ-centered, uncaring, and with a grossly overinflated idea of their own importance.

Of course, much of the suffering or difficulty that befalls us is not because people have chosen to do it to us. It's just happened.

And because we know that nobody else was directly involved, you know, bad stuff, it just happens. Accidents happen. Natural disasters happen. Bad stuff happens to good people.

You know, that's partly what the book of Job is all about. Bad stuff happens to good people. It's just happened. And because we know that nobody else was directly involved and we have nobody else to blame, we blame God.

Why me? Why did you do this to me? But God allows it to happen not just to us, but to everyone.

[13 : 59] Whether they're a believer or an unbeliever. Whether they follow a false religion or philosophy or atheistic ideology or whether they're born again Christian, it will happen to them.

It is the lot of our inheritance in this fallen world. Nobody gets a free ride. The bad news is that when these things happen to us, we can't look for help or sympathy to the world because human nature throughout the whole world is the same as ours.

It's okay if it happens to you just so long as it doesn't happen to them. It's okay if it happens to somebody else just so long as it doesn't happen to us.

And if we doubt that again, let's go back to scripture and read what we do in Psalm 14 verses 2 and 3. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that he'd understand and seek God.

They are all gone aside. They are all together become filthy. There is none that doeth good. No, not one. It's a fallen world.

[15 : 14] We are right slapped by in the middle of it and we can't get out and we can't change how we are of ourselves or how the world is or what happens to us. That's the bad news.

Now for the good news. God has not left us in this condition. We could never have reached him in heaven to ask for help.

So the Lord has come down from heaven to earth and in the person of Jesus Christ has lived a perfect and sinless life which we could never have lived.

You know, we think we're good. We think, oh, a good guy compared to some others but it only depends who you compare yourself with, doesn't it? If we compare ourselves with Jesus, we don't suddenly look quite so good.

But he has lived the perfect and sinless life which we could never have lived. And he has offered up that perfect life to his father on behalf of all who believe in him.

[16 : 23] This means that if you trust and believe in Jesus Christ as your saviour, his perfect life is offered up to God as though it were your perfect life.

I'll say that again. if you're trusting and believing in Jesus Christ as your saviour, his perfect life is offered up to God as though it were your perfect life.

And for your sins, that perfect life of his is laid down as a sacrifice, a payment for the wages of sin, which is death.

So what Jesus Christ offers you is life, his life for yours, a straight exchange.

His death on the cross instead of your eternal death in hell. That's the exchange. He dies for you, you live for him.

[17 : 30] Alternatively, you can live for yourself and do your own dying. But as we read again, if we go back to Romans 8 verse 18, I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Notice how the apostle does not, inspired by God's spirit, does not attempt to say, this world is plain sailing, it's easy, just become a Christian and all your problems will float away. No, he doesn't say that.

He recognises that we have a cross to bear, we have a burden to carry, we are groaning and travailing and pain together until now, but I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

And at verse 21, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Again, not denying that we are in chains, we're in bondage, we're suffering in this bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty, freedom, of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groweth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit.

[18 : 56] In other words, if we begun to taste something of the goodness and blessedness of God's Spirit and of the life that he offers us, you would think, oh, well, now we're Christians, now we believe that makes it all better.

It doesn't make it all go away. We have the first fruits of the Spirit, but even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption to wit, the redemption of our body.

This is the sense of, you know, not being dissatisfied, but rather, when you receive something good, it makes you hunger and thirst for something better. You know, if you fall in love and whatever, then you get engaged and that's lovely and isn't it nice to be betrothed, but that just makes you hunger and thirst for your wedding and then your wedding, you want your life together and then you want your life together and you want all the years ahead and maybe if there's family or children, you want that and you want the next stage of something that is good always makes you want more of it, always makes you want the next stage, always makes you want the next thing and this is why in a sense, when the Lord gives us the blessing of his spirit, it's wonderful, it's great, but it makes you hunger and thirst for more, it makes you want the fulfillment, it makes you want the consummation, it makes you want the fullness of blessing, you want to slow off this body of sin and death and be filled with his spirit and to get your glorious resurrection body, we are groaning within ourselves waiting for the adoption to win the redemption of our body, for we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why did he yet hope for, it's all very well having this hope in

Christ, but if we had it now it wouldn't be a hope, but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it, so when the hassles come, when we feel God is getting at us, remember he isn't picking on us, he's stretching us, exercising our faith to increase and improve it, if you want to be a top athlete, then it may be a brilliant idea in your own mind to sit on the sofa with packets of popcorn and crisps and fizzy drinks and just sit there from day after day watching television, but you will not become a top athlete that way, you'll become a top athlete if you're prepared to get up at four o'clock in the morning and drink some vile kind of energy drink and then go out pounding the road and doing upteen press ups and going to the gym and then doing other workouts and then running and building up your stamina and part of you hates it and part of you wishes you could just lie in bed and it would be so much better, but as you gain in strength and you sense your body beginning to build up stamina or muscle and you begin to be able to achieve some of your athletic goals, you get the appetite for more, but it's only as it's put under pressure, as the body is strained and as the athlete's body is put under this pressure and it's tested and it's driven from day to day, it begins to increase in strength, God is not grinding you down, but rather he is stretching you, exercising your faith to increase it and improve it, Romans 5 we read and not only so, verse 3, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation work of patience and patience experience and

experience hope and hope make of not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the

Holy Ghost which is given unto us for when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly when you had nothing, when you were as self centred and self absorbed and spiritually ugly and detestable and loathsome as we subsequently recognised that we were before we were in Christ, that's the condition we were in when Christ died for us when we were yet without strength and due course, Christ died for the ungodly but what we read about in the preceding verses you know, we glory in tribulation adding tribulation work of patience patience experience experience hope hope make of not ashamed it's like layers of muscle being built up on the soul stretching testing exercising building up the muscle of your soul making you more and more athletically prepared for heaven that's the way the Lord works why should he do this for us?

[24 : 00] well partly because he loves us he loves this world that he has made but he hasn't died for all and sundry he hasn't given everyone this precious gift that is held out to us on a regular basis held out to you tonight you know, God so loved the world yes that he gave his only begotten son yes that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life for God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved it doesn't say everyone in all the world is going to be saved God so loved the whole world that he saved the whole world no God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but otherwise they will but have everlasting life for God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world he didn't bring Jesus so we could all go down the tubes to hell anyway he sent Jesus so that we could repent and believe and be saved can you believe God do you trust him as your savior well

I do I do but I don't know why and I don't know and any Christian can answer the question why has he had mercy on me if you're a believer in Christ then you'll know that he's had mercy on you but you won't really know why of all the people out of all the multitudes out of the millions of this world we could say to the Lord why have you so loved me why have you loved me so much Lord why have you given your son for me of all the multitudes you might have chosen of all the millions in all the world that you might have redeemed why have you chosen to save me why am I little me numbered among them and now it's a different kind of the same question why me the Lord knows in all reverence we could say God knows he knows the answer to that I don't you won't either but the Lord knows the answer to that yes it's partly because he loved us he might say all because he loved us but he doesn't explain why he chose one and not another example I always use is in my former congregation there were two brothers both elderly gentlemen by then two brothers lived in the same house both bachelors identical upbringing identical genes identical bloodline identical environment in which they had grown up and one was an elder in the church of Jesus Christ and loved the Lord and prayed to the Lord and read his Bible and knew his Bible and he loved the Lord and he died in the faith of the Lord and the other one never darkened the door of the Lord's house except for his sister's funeral didn't have a word of the Lord didn't care wasn't bothered completely in and of the world and yet their background their bloodline their genes their DNA everything was identical why would the Lord choose one and not another

I don't know I don't know the Lord knows but I don't I don't know why he has saved me I don't know why he chooses anyone that he saves and any of us who are saved or who know the Lord is drawing us to him to be saved could legitimately say why me and no longer is it a cry of irritation but it's a wonder of grace why me the Lord knows I don't but thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift that's right