

Sovereignty and Suffering - St John's, Downshire Hill - 22nd March 2017

The 'problem' of suffering

Objection of the head - no good reasons

Objection of the heart - I can't stand it

Romans 8

8:18-27 - Creation groans

The Bible is honest about suffering - creation groans

The Christian answer to suffering - not primarily philosophical, but eschatological

Luke 13 - don't link individual tragedy with sin

Lament - because God is sovereign and it's safe to do so

Psalm 13 - waiting for the LORD in sorrow, rejoicing in his salvation

8:28-30 - God works good for his people

Psalm 139:1-16 - God never makes mistakes

Ordaining whatsoever comes to pass

3 boundaries - divine sovereignty, divine purity and goodness, and human responsibility

Genesis 50:20; Acts 4:27-28

Ephesians 1:10-11 - big vision and purpose for all creation

Romans 8:28 - vision and purpose for Christians

Not one stray molecule

Hebrews 12:5-11

Heidelberg Catechism, Lords Day 10, Q&A27:

What do you understand by the providence of God?

The almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures; and so governs them, that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things, come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.

Humility - we need a better vision of God and better understanding of ourselves

8:31-36 - God gave up his Son

God **really** never makes mistakes

The Man of Sorrows - God works all things together for good

'Why do bad things happen to good people? That only happened once...and he volunteered.'

8:37-39 - God's love makes his people more than conquerors

Killed...but not harmed

Wait patiently - the best is yet to come