

Jesus- Risky Comparisons

Sermon Notes

March 31, 2019

The existence of evil and suffering creates a stumbling block for many in considering the existence of an all-powerful and good God.

Some suggest that suffering is an attack of Satan and is not going to happen to someone who is walking with God in faith.

Others suggest that suffering is punishment for the sinfulness of the victim.

Solomon wrestled with these life questions. **Ecclesiastes**

- Why do good things happen to both the wicked and righteous?
- Why does tragedy and trouble come to both the wicked and the righteous?
- Is it not strange that birth and death are each person's beginning and end?
- *"Meaningless!"* to make sense out of it.

Jesus's similar statement:

Matthew 5:45b *"...He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."*

Martyrs or sinners? **Luke 13:1-3a**

- Context: Caesar's image had been erected in Jerusalem and was received offensively as it desecrated the holy mount. So, the tension between Jewish worshipers and Pilate was intense. BEC
- These Galileans came to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices at a time of great tension.
- They were killed by the Roman soldiers at the command of Pilate and their blood being mixed with their sacrifices was highly offensive and required a great cleansing of the area.
- Do you presume that God rejected their sacrifices because they were evil in their approach and sinful in their lives? Or, were they martyrs and the victims of a great tragedy?
- Galileans were "susceptible to revolt" and despised by the Jews of Jerusalem as being unruly, uneducated, and lower-class citizens. This certainly would cloud the assessment of the religious leaders. EBC

Risky comparisons.

1. Cultural bias clouds judgment.
2. Theological misunderstanding misguides.
3. Suffering and tragedy can come to anyone regardless of spiritual standing.

"We cannot judge man's sins by their sufferings in this world." Matthew Henry

4. We cannot possibly know the motives or condition of one's heart.
5. Jesus challenged their judgment by asking a rhetorical question. "Were these Galileans more sinful than other Galileans because of the horrific manner by which they suffered?" (2) He answers it emphatically "NO!" (3)
6. To judge the souls of those who suffer due to a tragedy is to elevate oneself.

Tragedy happens. **Luke 13:3-5**

Tragedy of Siloam Tower: Likely a tower built to protect the water that was essential to the people of Jerusalem. ^{HBD} Those who died were likely in that tower simply doing their job.

- Who's to blame?
- It must be because they were doing something they shouldn't.
- They must have been great sinners!

Modern examples of such judgments:

- 9-11-2001—Gays, ACLU, Abortionists, must bear some of the responsibility for this.
- Hurricane Katrina 2005- punishment for our country's sins.
- Earthquake in Haiti 2010- made a pact with the Devil.

Proper judgement of tragedy. **Luke 13:3b, 5b**

- Evaluate your life for life is fragile and finite.
- Repent- the changing of the mind that ultimately changes your direction of life to God.
- Repent because death becomes us all. (3b)
- Unless you repent, a final death will become you. (5b)

Turning to a gracious God. **Luke 13:6-9**

- God graciously awaits your turning.
- God is working the soil of your heart to turn.
- If no fruit, there does come an end, so turn to him now!