



Where Was God?

Chances are you heard someone voice that question last month after the unimaginable shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

I heard that question quite a few times. Most of the time it seemed to me the person asking it was in reality making the following statement disguised in question form. "Here's another proof that God doesn't exist."

The truth of the matter is that this horrific event proves nothing of the sort.

The Bible - God's own record of His dealings with mankind - is full of examples where He did not step in to prevent human beings from doing something horrible. Here's just a sampling:

Eve/Adam... and the fruit;
Cain... and Abel,
Herod ...and the babies in Bethlehem;
The Jewish leaders/Pilate... and Jesus.

If God himself told us about these tragedies that He didn't intervene to stop in biblical times, we should not be quite so surprised when He doesn't intervene to stop every tragedy in our time either.

So, while we certainly cannot say the tragedy in Connecticut is proof that God doesn't exist, we can say this: It certainly is proof that evil does exist... and that evil is powerful. (We already knew that, but this was a horrible reminder.)

But there's another side to the question. An honest, sincere side. One that comes from the correct belief that God really does exist and that God does have power over evil. One that is, in effect, asking, "Why didn't God step in to stop this? He could have. He's done it before.... many times...Why not this time?"

That's the question no one but God can answer. And if He hasn't told us the reason, we'd best not presume to speak for Him. We would do well to remember what God has told us in Isaiah 55:8-9

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

God reminds us that we - because we are not God - will never be able to fully comprehend some of the things He does (or allows). We can take comfort in the fact that He always sees the "big picture" (the really big, ETERNAL picture) while all we see is a very tiny part of the picture - the part right in front of our eyes at one very short point in eternity.

Based on that and other passages of God's Word, we can safely say this:

In each case where God doesn't step in to prevent evil, He sees that big, eternal picture, and He has a plan to bring some greater good out of that evil.

The cross is the ultimate example of His plans to make good come from evil - and His power to actually make that plan happen. But I'm guessing you can take a look at your own life and come up with at least a few instances where God allowed something evil - either to happen to you or to be done by you - that you can find some greater, more eternal good that He brought about as a result.

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. John 16:33
– Jesus Christ to his disciples just hours before his crucifixion.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net