

Searching for Answers | Week 2 - Why Does God Allow Suffering?

Message Big Idea

While God does not provide the reason for each experience of pain, in Jesus, he identified with our suffering. We can find God's presence and goodness even in our hardest seasons.

Scripture

Habakkuk 1:1-4, John 16:33, John 11:35

Opening Questions

1. How have you been able to B.L.E.S.S. others recently?
2. Share a story where you've experienced physical pain, maybe a broken bone, sprained ankle, or cracked tooth. At that moment, what brought you comfort?
3. Today's question, "Why does God allow pain and suffering?" is one of the hardest because it's not just a philosophical question; it impacts us personally through our pain and those we love. We feel this question in our bones. The goal of our discussion is not to solve the issue of pain and suffering but to wrestle with the question openly and honestly. As we discuss the topic, try to avoid common, pat answers like, "Everything happens for a reason" or "You just need to pray harder."

Bible Discussion

4. Read Habakkuk 1:1-4. What stood out to you? What "misery" comes to your mind as you read this? How does acknowledging all the pain and suffering in the world make you feel?
5. Read John 16:33. What stands out to you? What emotions does this passage evoke?

Life Application

6. Often our pain and suffering can feel isolating. Like Habakkuk, we cry, "where are you, God?" Author Tim Keller writes, "It can't be that (God) is indifferent or detached from our condition. God takes our misery and suffering so seriously that he was willing to take it on himself" as Jesus. How does that influence your understanding of God?
7. We don't need intellectual answers to our emotional pain. What can be helpful is empathy. Brene Brown defines empathy as "feeling with people." How have you experienced this either as one receiving the empathy of another or entering into the pain of someone else?
8. What pain or challenges are you experiencing now? How can we support you?
9. Challenge: Invite God to reveal himself to you in the trials you are facing. Pray, "God, if you are real, make yourself real to me in my pain and suffering." Pray this prayer daily over this next week with an expectation of seeing God at work.