

LONGING FOR OUR HEAVENLY HOME

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Genesis 1:31

“And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

The above verse ends the first chapter of the Bible. It also is a conclusion to the creative world that the Lord made. Out of nothing, came everything. God said and it was. The world God made was sustaining, reproducing and a delight. We can only imagine how pure the waters were, and, how clean the air was. No graffiti. No names carved into trees. No pollution. No trash left behind. Pure, as God is. Clean, as God is. Perfect, as God is. That’s the world God created.

One of the most difficult issues in life that one faces is why does the innocent suffer? It’s one thing for a criminal to get shot down doing wrong, but why do children die? Why do kids get cancer? Why do good people suffer? Those are all tough questions.

And, when those questions become personal, and we can put names to those situations, then our faith often takes a hit. Those questions are the reason why some have no faith. In their minds, if God was all that He claims to be, then only the guilty would suffer. The perfection of creation ought to continue on, at least, for the innocent. But our world is cruel and harsh. Young children are shot and killed in schools. Children get diseases and die. And, crushed parents are left with empty memories and a whole lot of questions. Where was God? Why did God allow this? If God is good, how can He see this and do nothing?

The recovery from these tragic pains is long and hard. Some in hopelessness, turn to pills and the bottle. It destroys some marriages. And often those angry questions are tossed in our laps, and we are left without knowing what to say. We sing, “God is so good,” but for some in that Sunday audience, they are not so sure about that. They look around and see happy families and realize that they are not one of them. Either God is punishing me for something, or God simply doesn’t like me, or worse, maybe God isn’t there at all.

Here are some thoughts:

First, it takes just two more pages in your Bible to realize that the goodness of creation was wrecked by the sin of man. It wasn’t God’s choice to have guilt, misery, and sorrow in the world. You don’t find that in the first chapter. But by chapters three and four, there is disobedience, fear, death, and punishment. God didn’t create that. That wasn’t the way God intended things to be. That was man’s choice. That was the consequences of man looking away from God. The freewill which we all richly enjoy, allows wrong choices. It allows bad choices. It allows ungodly and sinful choices.

What God created was perfect. What God has prepared, Heaven, is perfect. In between, is our world. In between are the choices we make. Influenced by wrong, we will choose wrong. Tempted by evil, we will do evil.

Second, we must realize that even among our fellowship on a Sunday morning, are those with serious questions, fearful doubts, and struggles with making sense of things that do not make sense. When we sing, “I’m happy today, oh, yes, I’m happy today,” not everyone in that room is happy. Some are grieving. Some are angry. Some feel that God has left them alone. This is why it is so important to point all of us to the Scriptures.

King David had a baby that died. The mothers of Bethlehem had baby boys that died. The Hebrews had children that died during the days of Egypt. The tears and sorrows that those families felt and the questions why these things were allowed to happen can be answered technically in a Bible class. But when it’s your family, your child, those answers often do not seem like answers.

We need to be patient with those who are struggling. We need to be supportive. We need to help them see that God has not left them. Let's remember that God saw His Only Son die upon a cross after He was cruelly tortured and beaten. No one stopped it. No one stood up for Him. Heaven saw. Heaven realized. God understands.

Third, there is a strong pull to bring Heaven down to us. We want fairness in a land which is unfair. We want crime punished, yet the criminal dances to his freedom. We want suffering to end, but it grows. We want children to be safe, yet often they are not. Why doesn't God do something? He has. He has sent Jesus. Maybe God is expecting us to do something through Jesus. It's not better laws that we need, it's righteous people that we need. And, even if all of that were to happen, it is appointed unto man once to die, the letter to Hebrews tells us. Death is a part of this world. Death doesn't care if you are young, loved and needed. Death doesn't care if you are busy. Death doesn't wait for you to finish what you have started.

There is a world of perfection. There is a world where death won't enter. There is a world where everything is right. And, that world is called Heaven. It's not here. It's not now.

The suffering of this world ought to make us long for that Heavenly home.
