

**“I think God hates me.
Where is God when I need Him most?**

Sunday, September 16, 2012

Mark 15:34 (NIV)

34 And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

Job 13:24 (NIV)

24 Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy?

Psalms 44:23-26 (HCSB)

23 Wake up, Lord! Why are You sleeping? Get up! Don't reject us forever!
24 Why do You hide Yourself and forget our affliction and oppression?
25 For we have sunk down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground.
26 Rise up! Help us! Redeem us because of Your faithful love.

Matthew 11:2-4 (NIV)

2 When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples 3 to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

Questioning God:

- Was Jesus' question of God legitimate?
- When Job questions God is that an okay thing to do?
- Did the author of Psalm 44 have an okay expectation of God?
- When John asked if Jesus was the Messiah was that a lack of faith?

Why This Matters: Since it happened to Jesus, Job and John the Baptist, it can, and most likely, will happen to you and me. It's how we talk with God and the questions we ask of Him and what we do with the answers we get and don't get that determine the fate of our walk with God.

Two Kinds of Faith We'll Have on Our Journey With God:

1. Child Like Faith ('Dating God' because He makes us feel good.): Feelings drive faith in this season.
2. Covenant Faith (Fidelity): Faith drives our relationship with God in this season no matter what our feelings are. We shift into fruits of the spirit like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and self-control. (See Galatians 5:22-23.)

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Invites You To
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The Faith Cycle: Childlike / suffering & struggle & silence / childlike again because we trust that HE is enough even when He doesn't answer every question or do what we think He should do. We live ready for the next step of our adventure with God.

“So, what is God doing when He’s AWOL when I’m suffering?”

1. We are brought to a decision point where we will 'break-up' with God or move into mature relationship with Him. (“Curse God and die” or remain faithful.)
2. God’s silence allows us to choose faith over feeling. Will we trust Him even when we don’t ‘feel’ Him or see Him coming to our rescue right now?
3. Never assume that silence is punishment for sin. That’s just not in the Bible. (Study Job and John 9.)
4. God may be letting you learn new things about Him during silence.
5. God may be growing your faith so that His glory gets revealed through you in a bigger way later.

The Ultimate Answer: Why does God appear to be silent in human suffering? I believe that the answer must ultimately be: because God is God. He alone knows where wisdom is to be found. He alone chooses when and what to disclose. And his reasons will remain a mystery, yet one in which we can put our trust.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)

8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. 9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Call(s) to Action:

- Let God be God.
- Come to Jesus as a child who is willing to grow into mature faith and become a child again.
- Find a person you trust as a Christ follower to be honest with and to pray together this week.

Source for much of today’s message:

“Speak, O Lord: The Silence of God in Human Suffering” by Ataloea Snell Woodin. Read at <http://www.directionjournal.org/article/?910>.

Encouragement when you are struggling from the Bible:

Key Idea: God is up to something good when you are being tested.

“Follow On” Scriptures concerning what God is up to when life is hard:

1 Peter 1, Job 23:10, Psalm 66:10, Proverbs 17:3, Isaiah 48:10

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