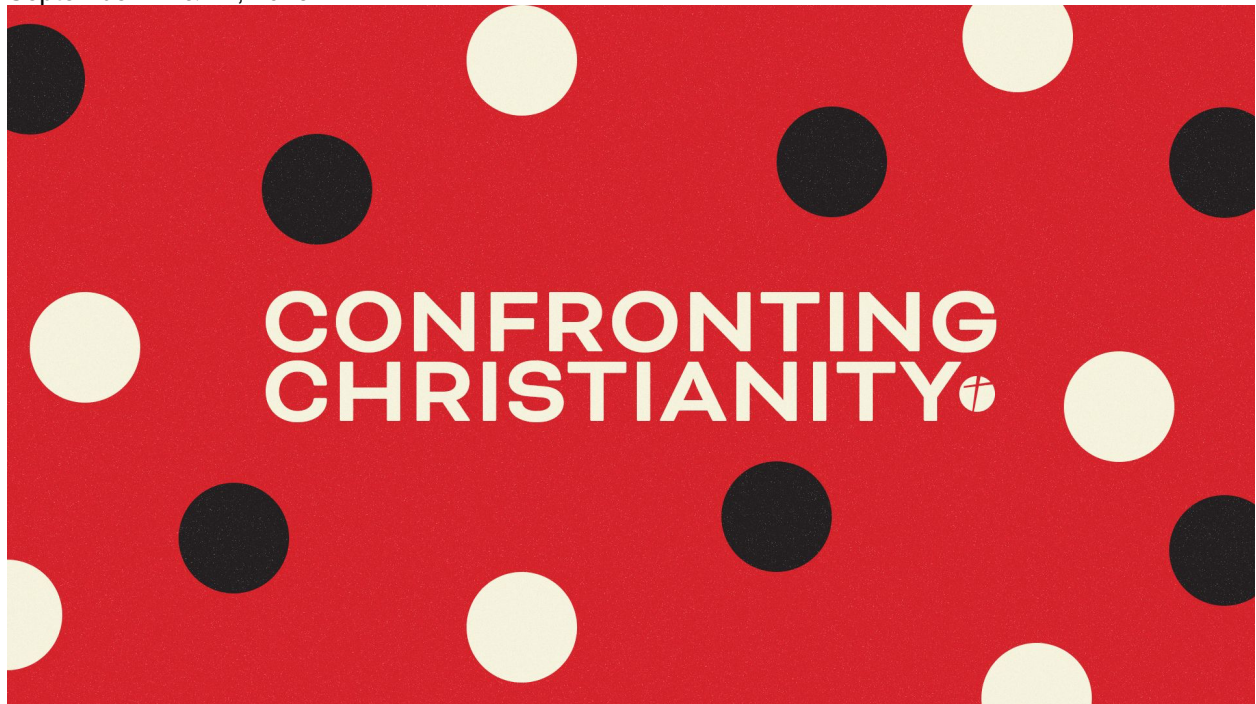


September 21 & 24, 2023



## **Confronting Christianity - Week #2**

### **How Can a Loving God Allow Evil and Suffering?**

#### **Scratching the Surface of Suffering:**

##### **1. Evil and suffering had a start!**

Genesis 2:16-17 (NIV)

*And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."*

- When God opened himself up for relationship, he also opened himself up for rebellion.
- It is a logical impossibility to have free will and have no possibility of moral evil.

Philippians 1:29 (NIV)

*For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him,*

## **2. When it comes to evil and suffering. you can live in the why or surrender in worship!**

Job 1:20-21 (NIV)

*At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship <sup>21</sup> and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."*

2 Samuel 12:18-20a (NIV)

*On the seventh day the child died. David's attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, he wouldn't listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate." <sup>19</sup> David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves, and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked. "Yes," they replied, "he is dead." <sup>20</sup> Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped.*

- Only when worship comes at a cost can we tell if it is authentic!
- With evil and suffering we have questions but God has better ones!

Job 38:1–5 (NIV)

*Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: <sup>2</sup> "Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? <sup>3</sup> Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. <sup>4</sup> "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. <sup>5</sup> Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it?*

## **3. Suffering is temporary and transformational!**

2 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)

*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

Romans 5:1-5 (NIV)

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained*

*access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

Revelation 21:1-5 (NIV)

*Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." <sup>5</sup> He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

- We must view present suffering through the lens of eternity.
- God allows suffering because it is purposeful and productive.

#### **4. Jesus is God's ultimate response to evil!**

- When it comes to understanding suffering, Jesus isn't a means to an end, He is the end.

Job 42:5 (NIV)

*My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.*