WHY DOESN’T GOD JUST SORT OUT ALL THE bad stuff?

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

LOOKING AT LIFE
WHY DOESN’T GOD JUST SORT OUT ALL THE bad stuff?

The bad stuff of the world around us is a little too easy to list. And then keep listing.

I would guess you’ve picked up this leaflet because there is bad stuff in your life too—and you want an answer. Maybe you’re irritated by the flimsy answers you’ve had about God’s love and how it’ll all work out in the end. You want a real answer. Why doesn’t God do something about it all?

You may or may not believe in God. But, for the moment, let’s assume he is real. And let’s get on with it and ask him the big question: Why don’t you wave your ‘magic wand’ and get rid of all this bad stuff that’s in my life and on the news and everywhere I look?

Because if God is real, surely he can get rid of it? He’d be a bit like Thanos, at the end of Avengers: Infinity War, who gets the power to snap his fingers and destroy half of the universe. God could just snap and get rid of the bad bits. So if he can do it, but doesn’t, maybe he doesn’t really care that much about us. We’re struggling; but what’s that to him up there on his big golden throne, lazily watching us with a shrug of his shoulders?

Or maybe he can’t do it after all. Perhaps this world has got too big and out of control for him. And all he can do is sympathise from a distance and wish us all the best.

He’s not much of a God either way. Unless they aren’t the only possible reasons why he hasn’t got rid of the bad stuff yet …
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF GOD did get rid of all the bad stuff?
Let's say God makes an announcement to the world: “Tomorrow, at midday, I am going to come down and clean this place up. All the bad stuff is going into my cosmic bin.”

How would you actually feel about that? Excited to think that your pains, issues and worries are about to be swept away? Would you watch in satisfaction as the people who’ve hurt you in the past were chucked in the bin? Would you feel the world was a becoming a better place with every murderer, terrorist and rapist who was wiped off the face of the earth?

But then what about us? You may not think you’ve lived too badly ... but aren’t there also people we’ve hurt? Aren’t there things we’ve done wrong? Even little things? **If everything that isn’t 100% perfect is being dumped in God’s waste bin forever, where will we actually end up?**

Here’s the problem, removing everything that’s wrong with the world would mean the end of humanity!

In the end the biggest problem with our world ... is us. Maybe that sounds harsh. But we know people are a problem. Or else, why do we shrink back when we see a group of young lads hanging out on the street corner? Why do we put passwords on all our online accounts? Why do we give our kids curfews? Why do we get edgy when our partner is constantly messaging someone else on their phone? We know our world, our communities, our neighbours and our families are far from perfect. And that includes us.
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF GOD did get rid of all the bad stuff?
One part of the Bible sums it up like this: “No one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one” (Romans 3:11-12). No matter how hard we try, none of us naturally love God and follow his perfect ways, even though he made us and knows what’s best for us. In fact, lots of us don’t even believe in him. We cut him out entirely! We make our own way—and often get into a mess, hurting ourselves, others and God with our often self-involved lifestyles.

The scary thing is that God has the right to make that announcement to come down and clean up. When we realise that we are part of the bad stuff that’s being destroyed, suddenly the announcement is . . . absolutely terrifying!

God can remove all the bad stuff in an instant. But he doesn’t. Why? Because he would have to destroy us too; and he doesn’t want to destroy us. He wants to save us.

You might ask at this point: “Surely volcanic eruptions and cancer have little to do with how we live? Can’t God clear up those sorts of things at the very least?” Ultimately the answer is the same: everything in the world has become broken because we want to cut God out, yet we are just not capable of managing this universe on our own! We need him in ultimate control. But by pushing him away we’re faced with a decaying, destructive, unsafe world. Perhaps part of the reason God allows the world around us to suffer is to wake us up to the fact that we desperately need him. He wants us to realise we can’t fix this world, or even ourselves, on our own. Yet he has a rescue plan for us.
GOD'S plan
God doesn’t just leave us to suffer alone in the pain and mistakes of our world. And he does have the power to change everything. But his plan is far better than flicking a magic wand at the bad stuff. Before we look at exactly what his plan is, there are the two things we need to understand about him:

**He offers us a rescue:** The Bible spells it out for us: “[God] does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to [turn back to him]” (2 Peter 3:9). We haven’t given God our love or respect, yet he is ready and willing to show us mercy. He doesn’t want to just destroy us or strike out in rage. We have hurt him, but he still loves us and wants to rescue us from lives of mess and pain.

**He does it ‘legally’:** The Bible also tells us that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). This means that the way we live deserves, or earns us (like wages), God’s judgement. Because God is good, he cannot just ignore the things we’ve done wrong or the way we’ve left him out of our lives (which is what “sin” is). It would be like a judge letting a clearly-guilty murderer off because “I’m a nice judge and I want to help you out.” There is no way that’s fair. So any rescue from God has to be ‘legal’—there has to be justice. The payment for our sin still has to be made. The good judge’s judgement cannot be avoided.

So how does God both rescue us and judge how we have lived? That’s where Jesus steps in.
THE RESCUE MISSION
God showed his great love for us by sending [Jesus] Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s [judgement]. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. —Romans 5:8-12

Jesus is sometimes known for being a ‘good guy’, a teacher or maybe even a revolutionary. But the Bible tells us who Jesus actually is: God’s son. And it tells us he came to earth for a very specific reason: to die. Jesus was executed on a cross of wood just as God planned all along.

Jesus died in our place with ALL our bad stuff put on his shoulders. Like a bank transfer, our ‘bad stuff’ funds have all been emptied into Jesus’ account. He took the blame for it all. Every mistake, every cross word, every rejection of God was put against his name, not ours. As we already saw, the “wages [or reward] of sin is death.” With no wrongs of his own to pay for, Jesus paid for all of ours in full, taking on all of God’s judgement with his death.

But that wasn’t the end. Three days later Jesus walked out of his grave. He came back to life, our bad stuff having been paid for, to offer us new and unending life with God. Now, when we trust him, he makes us “friends of God”. Once we trust Jesus, we have God with us, leading us through everything and helping us to become the loving, good people he made us to be. And we have God’s unchanging promise of a place in heaven, his home, to look forward to once we die.
BETTER THAN

a magic

Wand
**Why did God send Jesus to rescue us?** If he loves us and wants to save us and get rid the bad stuff, why not do it all through the flick of a magic wand? Jesus dying and coming back to life—and us trusting him—all seems a bit complicated by comparison.

Think of it like this: your house is badly damaged and is in need of urgent and extensive repairs and rebuilding. A builder comes in and gives you a quote and tells you he can get started straightaway. He says there’s no need for sorting all the paperwork, contacting the council, applying for the building regulations and getting the right insurance. He’ll just crack on and get it finished asap. It’s quick and easy for you.

But if ever anything ever goes wrong in the future, or if a potential buyer—or maybe someone from the council—asks to see the documentation supporting the building work . . . you’re in trouble. The work has been done, but there is no security. You could find yourself in hot water if the wrong people start sniffing around for proof, evidences and guarantees.

Getting all the legal stuff sorted may take a time and delay the project, but the end result is secured. It doesn’t matter who turns up to inspect your house or who demands to see the paperwork—you’ve got it all to hand.

Jesus’ rescue is a bit like that. A magic wand to save us and sweep away the bad stuff and guilt would have been a quick fix, without any justice. Whereas Jesus makes sure that our wrongs are fully paid for, never to be revisited. In fact, if anyone ever says to us, “You don’t deserve to be God’s friend,” Jesus’ death and resurrection is our proof that everything has been taken care of and we are now forgiven of all crimes. The case is closed and all the paperwork has been signed. That’s the rescue Jesus offers. It’s not a quick fix; it’s a proper job: secure, permanent, reliable and covers everything.
And we need a rescue like that—one to give us total confidence—because God has made his announcement! Jesus is coming back to clean up. We don’t know exactly when, but a day is coming soon when he will get rid of all the bad stuff (including anyone who continues to reject his rescue):

The present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgement, when [people without God] will be destroyed . . . [This day] will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgement. — 2 Peter 3:7-10
How amazing that even though this world, and all the bad stuff, is due God’s judgement, he loved us enough to come to earth as a man and take all our judgement in our place! And the way he did it makes our forgiveness and safety with him absolutely certain. If we trust Jesus, we don’t need to be afraid. God has saved us securely; our wrongs haven’t just been hidden, they have been paid for in full by Jesus—never to be held against us. We are told: “On that day, [God] will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. But [those who trust Jesus] are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God’s [goodness]” (2 Peter 3:12-13).

God wants us to know him personally, to turn away from living without him and to enjoy the safety of being his. That’s for today, tomorrow, the day he gets rid of all the bad stuff and forever after. Belonging to God doesn’t mean we’ll never struggle with bad stuff again, because that bad stuff is going to have to stick around a while longer as God gives time for more people to trust Jesus before it’s too late. But belonging to God does mean he’ll help us get through it all, reminding us of his promise to finally get rid of it all one day, while keeping us safe forever.

In the end, the decision of whether you will trust Jesus and accept his rescue is up to you. Our Daily Bread Ministries would love to help you think more about Jesus, who he is and the very real difference he makes to the future and every day leading up to it. Why not check out more leaflets like this at ourdailybread.org/lookingatlife
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For information on our resources, visit ourdailybread.org

Alternatively, please contact the office nearest to you from the list below, or go to ourdailybread.org/locations for the complete list of offices.

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