

# Occasional Update # 3

Wednesday 8 June 2022

## WHY?

Why did God allow Job to suffer as he did?

Why did God allow Paul, and other followers of Jesus, to suffer as they did?

Why are Christians today still persecuted, tortured, and martyred for their faith?

Why are people starving to death; or killed or maimed for life because of warfare ... ?

Or, more personally – Why does God allow “horrible/terrible” things to happen to me, as well as to other people?

## BAD NEWS!

So much news today is bad news, terrible news, “unbelievable” but true. Our minds get saturated by such events, yet we still watch it. Most of the news we read, hear, or see on the media is bad news, not good news. It produces anger, fear, hatred, unanswered “Why?” questions. Like covid, other pandemics, climate change, conflict, poverty, increasing violence, injustice. etc. And what can I do about them?

**Watching** bad news (visual) increases our identification with what we see – emotion, anger, hatred, fear, etc., in comparison with **reading or listening** to news, which may not affect us so much.

We can forgive people who have wronged us, but can we forgive people who have wronged other people? Holding onto anger, hurts or unforgiveness has an effect on us, even though it doesn't help those who have suffered the wrongs which we have heard or seen in the news.

## I DON'T UNDERSTAND

**Proverbs 3:5-6** ‘Trust in the LORD’ [occurs 15 times in the Bible] ‘with all your heart’ [occurs 20 times in the Bible] and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.

When we have serious questions about why God allows certain things to happen, we may just need to say, “I don't understand why, but I still trust Him.” Pray, and leave it with Him. We often don't know God's reasons, timing, ways, purposes, or “the other side of the story.” God knows!

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

What can we do? Don't try to do what you can't do; or feel guilty because you can't! We should be grateful for what we can do, not grumble or complain about what we can't do. We can always pray for (and help if possible) those who are worse off than we are!

We all have several areas of influence:

- **In our own lives**, we have God's help and ability to grow in the way which is pleasing to Him, and reflect this in our daily lives and behaviour.
- **In our families**, we can be an example of Godly living, and perhaps be an encouragement to our families to follow what is good and right.
- **In our churches**, we can be a help and example; and use the gifts God has given us, to help others.

- **In our work, and with friends and social contacts**, we can be salt and light in a very needy world.

Our influence for good may not go much further than that. We might have the opportunity to express our concerns, in various ways, to our **government**, local MP, in submissions to Bills before Parliament, and influence in other areas.

Ultimately, there are limits to what we can do and say, and hence limits to our influence, but we should not feel condemned – **none of us do everything**, and other people will work for good in spheres of influence beyond anything we can do. ***None of us can “save the planet” but we might be able to help in some small way, using the gifts and talents God has given us.***

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## **FOR PRAYER AND MEDITATION:   Philippians 4:4-9**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near!

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

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