

Why Do Bad Things Happen?

Jaysee and his High Riders were cruising through the hills and valleys of Central Wisconsin. They had been on the road for some hours, and were due for an extended stop somewhere. As usual, the boys had no idea where they were going - that was up to Jaysee. He seemed to know every stop-off and watering hole in the country. And he always seemed to find friends there. As they rounded a curve and topped a small rise in the pavement, a late-model four-wheeler pulled out of a side road right into the middle of the pack. The bowling pin effect was the result. Campfire that night included a lot of scratch mending and bruise rubbing, but no significant loss. However, the conversation would not deviate from the question of why good people go through bad times.

"What about all the bad things that happen? What's going on with that?" This gave Jaysee the opportunity to straighten out some convoluted thinking among his friends and followers.

"Human beings have a 'Karma-like' idea that good will result in good, and evil will beget evil. We believe that if we, who are bad, will perform some off-setting good works, we will be OK. We have developed a philosophy which would state that, after all is said and done, life is fair - the universe is fair. Isn't it?"

"Remember what happened to 'Bugbear?' Health, wealth and happiness belonged to him and his family. They were living the American Dream, and had no reason to believe that it wouldn't continue. After all, it was their Constitutional right to have life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They had achieved that which they had pursued. Then, in the seeming blink of an eye, it was gone. Uncounted loss, unbearable pain, unfathomable confusion became their constant companions. 'Mrs. Bugbear' screamed to her dust shrouded husband, 'Curse God and die.'

"What about 'Singer', whose only crimes were his musical talent, and his devotion to God? He was pursued by the government for years, under penalty of death, for his 'perceived' crimes. His enemies were more accepting of him than his own government. The prime years of his life were stolen from him, as he lived in caves, fields, and even in exile.

"Then there is the case of those who opposed the government because they thought it was wrong to subject citizens to exorbitant taxes and regulations. Upon their strenuous objections, their efforts and their lives were extinguished by the authorities charged with their welfare. Or the case of eighteen whose lives were taken in a building collapse while they were worshiping God.

"And we've heard of Senator Dave, who was involved in a horrific accident down in Florida, and sustained a life-changing injury. By the miscalculation of another, Senator has undergone unimaginable pain, suffering and loss. He will continue to experience the effects of this incident for the rest of his earthly existence."

Considering these cases which Jaysee mentioned to the group, we all must modify our thinking somewhat. Is life fair? No. Does every good deed beget a good result? No. Do evil persons get repaid in evil? No! How can this be?

When Jesus Christ was on this earth, one came to him and addressed him as "Good Master." Jesus responded by saying that there is only one good One in existence - that being God in Heaven. When we try to determine good and bad, we do so by comparing one human with another. The real understanding of good comes when we compare a human beings behavior with the standard by which God judges us. We would like for good to be a relative thing, but it is more absolute than that. So, part of the question turns on the fact that there is no one who can demonstrate consistent goodness - not even the best of us - when compared to the standard God sets before us. This is not a behavioral problem, it is a problem in our nature called sin. The only good standing we have in God's sight is when we are standing with Jesus Christ. But, this only answers the question in part.

We must also recognize that this world is steeped in sin, and is controlled by one who considers us, and all that is good, an enemy. He is opposed to God, and desires to destroy all good which God has created. Jesus said, "The thief (enemy) cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." (John 10:10) If we think of the efforts of the enemy in the case of Senator Dave, we will conclude that this "accident" was a deliberate attempt by the enemy - Satan - to destroy this man, and the good, humanitarian work that he does. And this was not the first try. If the truth were uncovered, the effort began long before the Senator's commitment to serve God and his fellow man. On a far off battleground, years ago, efforts were underway to steal his commitment, kill his impact or destroy his credibility. If all else failed - to take his life. Pains would be taken to remove him from the field of public service by any means possible.

When all else failed, Satan attempted to take his life - to really kill him. We can't forget the day that the Senator rode into a meeting a couple of years ago with a wrecked motorcycle and a dead deer as his passenger. This latest attempt was more serious, but the result proves that God is not finished with him yet. God has placed his hand on the Senator, and the devil can't get his hands on him now. He has tried and failed, but even if the outcome had been different, the Senator would have won. He has long since professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who told us that the enemy comes to destroy. But, He also said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

The god of this world - Satan - is not fair, so bad things may happen to good people, but God in Heaven is still in control of things. (Read Job 1 and 2) When you place your faith in Him, and receive forgiveness of your sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you will know that no matter what happens to you, God will take care of you. "Bugbear" met God face to face, and his life was restored. "Singer" finally found purpose and became a great leader in his nation. Those who have been persecuted for their convictions will be vindicated. Those who suffer for their faith in this world will inherit a home in the next. The rest of Senator Dave's story is yet to be told. And so is yours.

Pastor Sam



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