

# I want to believe, but... 4 Heartless God

## I want to believe 4 Bumper

Welcome! My name is Chris Fluitt. I am so happy to be here in Plano Tx at Redemption Church. What kind of Church are we? We are the kind of Church that is WILLING. We are willing to go anywhere, help anyone, say anything... whatever God asks... Whatever DFW needs... WE ARE WILLING!

A big Texas God bless Ya'll to all our friends experiencing the Word of God over the internet. And of course I love all of you great looking people in this room.

We are the final week of our sermon series "I want to believe, but..."

## I want to believe, but...

We sometimes have trouble believing in God. But perhaps the reason we have trouble believing is that we have wrong beliefs about the true God. Over the 3 previous weeks we have been rejecting distorted views of the true God.

Week 1 we talked about ON-DEMAND GOD... The idea that if we ask something in prayer God has to do it... We reject that distortion.

Week 2 we talked about KILLJOY GOD... The idea that God only cares about rules and is out to make sure your life is angry & boring. We reject that distortion.

Week 3 we talked about GOOSEBUMP GOD... The idea that if we don't see, hear, or feel God he must cease to exist. We reject that idea.

We believe that most people want to believe in the true God of love... BUT... there is a misconception.. an incorrect belief, a distortion of truth that is standing in the way.

Today I want you to reject Heartless God.

## HEARTLESS GOD

It may be that you are thinking... I want to believe in God... but **how can I believe in a God who doesn't seem to care?**

We don't have to look too far to see hurt, pain, injustice, and suffering in our world. It leads us to ask... "Where is God? In fact I would like to

know what you think... Pull out your smart phone and text out anonymous line.

## **ANONYMOUS TEXT**

What recent news headline has caused you to ask... “God where are you?”

Our anonymous text number is 214-856-0550. The texts are anonymous! Feel free to text us anytime you have questions on life, faith, or Redemption Church.

While you are texting in... Let me tell you some that came across my mind.

- Mass murderers like the one that happened last October in Las Vegas. God if you would have stopped one guy, then 58 people would still be alive?
- Racism & hate crimes. Videos & stories of injustice & brutality.
- School shootings & Church shootings.
- Natural disasters like the Fuego Volcano that killed over 100 people in Guatemala. Did God care about these people? Then why didn't he stop it? People that are dying in a water drought... if it would only rain then lives would be saved. Is God so heartless that He is withholding rain?

These are world news stories... but perhaps your heart is broken over something more personal.

- Someone hurt you. Someone abused you. Someone stole from you. Someone betrayed you and said bad things about you. Why did God allow them to do this?
- You or someone you love is in the fight for their life after a terminal report from the doctor. Why God?
- You have worked very hard to achieve something and you just can't get a break. If God really cared why am I not doing better at this point in my life?

I want to believe... but how can I believe when God seems to be heartless...?

## **HEARTLESS GOD**

I can't answer all of this in today's sermon. I am not even going to try. If you want a more theological response I suggest you check out our sermon called "The Gospel vs a Broken World."

My goal today is not to cause you to understand why this is happening... My goal today is to get you to reject the heartless God distortion, and get you connected to a God who can be found in the middle of storms.

If you are having trouble believing that God cares... you are not alone.

- King David gave us many psalms where he asked God "are you listening? Do you hear my cry? God do you care and do you see what my enemies are doing to me."
- Job was a righteous man, yet he loses his house, his business, his wealth, his health... Job even loses his children. The only thing Job is left with is unhelpful friends and a wife that has the helpful suggestion that he should just curse God and die. There are many times in the book of Job where Job cries in agony and distress for God.
- In your new testament, John the Baptist selflessly prepared the way of Jesus. He said the right things. Did the right things... BUT YET he was arrested and thrown in jail. John the Baptist was the cousin of Jesus, and surely he felt like Jesus, who had done many miracles, was going to save him... Yet John waits, and waits, and no Jesus comes. John shows that he begins to lose all hope when he sends a message to Jesus in Matthew 11:3.

Matthew 11:3 (NIV2011) "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

The same John who declared emphatically the arrival of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world... is not asking if it is true in the middle of his pain. ...Jesus you can do this. Jesus you can save me, but you are not. Why? John lost his head in that prison.

Let me talk to you about WHEN GOD DOESN'T SEEM FAIR.

## **When God doesn't seem fair**

We like to think that things even out. If we do good then surely good things will happen. If we do bad things then it makes sense that bad things would happen. This seems fair... but it gets really confusing when you help the homeless man on the side of the road and get a flat tire a few blocks later. It is hard to understand how people who lie and

steal never seem to get caught and live wealthier lives than people who devote their lives to honesty & righteousness.

It's not so easy to trust God when He doesn't seem fair. Worship Him... Trust Him... Love Him...

## **1 God has a purpose for your pain.**

This is probably not what you want to hear in your pain. It definitely won't get me too many amens or people jumping up to worship... but it is true.

### **God can divinely use difficult times**

1 Peter 1:6 (NIV2011) In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

1 Peter 1:7 (NIV2011) These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

God doesn't always cause the pain... I would go so far as God doesn't usually cause the pain in our life. But at the same time we need to throw the qualifier in that God does sometime cause pain. Remember that God did bring 10 plagues upon Egypt.

## **God doesn't always cause the pain... but God can always use the pain.**

In 1 Peter 1:7 tells us that the God uses suffering and grief to refine our faith, bringing it GREATER WORTH. These same pains of life may result in praise, glory, & honor when Christ is revealed.

Is Christ revealed in pain? Is this possible?

### **Mohamed Bzeek (silent video)**

Playing on the screen is footage a Libyan born Immigrant named Mohamed Bzeek. He is a widower and lives in Los Angeles. He cares for terminally ill foster children. These are children who will die of physical disorders and disease. Some of these children are abandoned by parents or taken away from drug addicted parents by the state.

Mohamed takes these children into his home and cares for them. He holds them and shows them love. These babies have a brief time here on earth, but they leave this life having known the loving touch of a father.

Is their pain in this story? Yes. Is there brokenness and grief in this story. Yes.

But is their beauty in this story? Yes. Don't you think God's love is revealed in this story. Yes.

As far as I know Mohamed is not even a Christian. I believe that he is Muslim, but I would tell you that I can't help but feel that Christ is revealed in this pain.

Now I want to be very clear. I DO NOT BELIEVE that God gave these children tumors & cancer... But I believe that God is using a broken situation.

I know many people who didn't know Christ was real until He was revealed in the pain.

Let me give you a new way to pray... "God please help me understand the purpose of my pain. Use it for the benefit of others."

## **1 God has a purpose for your pain.**

A young minister was asking a seasoned pastor if there was anything in His ministry he would change. The older minister paused and considered it... He then answered "There are things I would never choose, but looking back I can see how God used these times of pain for the benefit of myself and others."

Can you say that about your life? I WOULD NEVER CHOOSE IT... BUT GOD USED IT...

God has purpose for your pain... and also God is present in your pain.

## **2 God is present in your pain.**

It is not easy to sense, but I believe that God is present in the pain. God can be found in times of pain.

Psalm 46:1 (NIV2011) ...God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

**So many times we want God to give us what we WANT...**

**But God wants to show us HE is what we NEED...**

Paul's thorn was greatly used by God. The apostle Paul suffered greatly for the gospel. He wrote over half of the new testament. In 2 Corinthians 12 Paul talks about a "thorn in his flesh." A lot of people wonder what the thorn was... was it literal or something else. But regardless it was something PAINFUL... and it was something Paul says was GIVEN TO HIM. (2 Cor 12:7)

2 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV2011) ...in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

2 Corinthians 12:8 (NIV2011) Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV2011)] But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Paul prayed for the pain to be taken and God said NO. God says NO... the removal of the thorn is not what you need... my sufficient grace is what you need.

This can't be explained... it can only be experienced.

Paul actually comes to the place where he boasts in his weaknesses... so that Christ's power could rest on him.

- You may be weak of cancer, but you can have the power of Christ rest on you!
- You may be weary from a continual job searches and closed doors, but you can have the power of Christ rest on you!
- You can be hurt from a betrayal, but you can have the power of Christ rest on you!

Some of you in the middle of the pain, so all you see and feel is the pain. One day you will be able to look past this pain. One day this moment will be like a picture in time, or a facebook memory that pops up on your news feed... you will look back at this moment and you will declare... You know there was a lot I wouldn't choose.. but God used.

We often ask “Why do bad things happen to good people?” But the reverse question is equally important... “Why do good things happen to bad people?”

We of course like to think that we are good people.. but the truth is I am not always good... I don't always think good things, say good things, or do good things. And a few weeks ago we declared that COMPARED TO JESUS none of us are good.

We focus on us being the good people... and then we focus on the bad things... but then we forget about all the good things that bad people don't deserve.

I don't deserve all this good! THANK YOU GOD FOR... THIS DAY, MY CAR, MY LIFE, MY WIFE, MY KIDS, MY HOUSE, MY HEALING, MY FRIENDS, MY SINS COVERED BY YOUR BLOOD, MY FUTURE IN YOUR HANDS...

## **2 God is present in your pain.**

When God doesn't seem fair I would remind you that God has purpose for the pain... and that God is present in the pain.

..But what about this fairness? Is God fair? No He is not! God is JUST but now always fair.. and that is good news! Because if He were fair I would get what I deserve... I would receive what my sins deserve and that is death!

Psalm 103:10 (NIV2011) he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

Psalm 103:11 (NIV2011) For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

Psalm 103:12 (NIV2011) as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

I don't deserve His love! I don't deserve His forgiveness.

### **musician**

It is time to reject Heartless God. The pain in your life does not reveal that we have an uncaring God... Here is my final point.

## **3 God hurts with us**

We have a Jesus who wept. We have a Jesus who bore our sorrows and was acquainted with our grief. We have a Jesus who is able to empathize with our weakness...

God hurts with us. He feels your pain! Do you realize how amazing that is.

2 Corinthians 1:3 (NIV2011) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

2 Corinthians 1:4 (NIV2011) who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

This God of all comfort is in ALL OUR TROUBLES bring comfort... so that we in turn can insert ourselves in the trouble of others and bring God's comfort.

The trouble is that it is sometimes hard to understand in the middle of our pain...

One day I took a 3 year old Will to a playground, and while playing he tripped and went headfirst into a piece of metal that cut him deeply on the forehead. There was blood everywhere... and crying... and pain...

I swept Will up and carefully took him to the Emergency Room where doctors would stitch up the cut. I had to climb on the table and hold my little boy down as the doctors stitched him up.

Will was scared, confused, and in pain. Why is this happening? Why are you holding me down? Why won't you stop the scary people...

As a loving father... As I did my best to properly love my son, I climbed onto the table with him, I held his little arms down, and I brought my face down to his face, and I said "Daddy loves you soo much."

My child I am holding you down for a purpose...

My child I am present with you...

My child I feel your pain and I love you...

If you are going through pain I want to pray with you. Come today?

Perhaps you need to get ahold of this God of all comfort today.

I invite you to come and pray that God's purpose would be fulfilled in your pain.

If you aren't in pain right now you ought to come and pray with someone who is in pain.



