

Intro: From the beginning Satan has tried to deceive people into believing two primary lies about God by asking questions: Is God really able to do what He's promised? Is God really that good to do what He's promised? From the garden of Eden and onward these two questions prevail in our thoughts when we meet suffering in this life. Why do bad things happen to good people? Rabbi Harold Kushner concluded in his book, "When Bad Things Happen to Good People," that God is simply not powerful enough to do anything about evil and therefore about suffering. But, the Scriptures speak of a different God than this. Ephesians 1:20-23 speak of the supreme power and omnipotence of Jesus Christ. There is nothing, no power, greater than Him for He is far above them all. And it also teaches us that He is good, for He has bound Himself, of His own electrifying grace, to His church in so deep a mysterious bond that she is called His fullness. There is no greater goodness than a Savior who conceived of saving not a group of innocent children, but rather a gang of rebellious enemies, and binding Himself to them in so intimate a relationship that they are inseparable. This is the power and goodness of Jesus.

## 1. Jesus is the Supreme Ruler Over All

### a. Seated at the right hand of the Father

i. Jesus holds the highest position of honor over Creation, both angelic and physical

ii. Jesus lives to reign!!

1. He holds you in the presence of God, ready to present you holy and blameless (v4; 5:24; Col 1:22)

2. He lives to intercede for you when you presently sin (Rom 5:10; 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1)

a. Take heart in the Supremacy of Christ and in His kindness toward you.

### b. Above all rulers and powers

i. FAR ABOVE (intensive preposition, hyper-above)

1. Rule – *αρχης* (king, ruler, "first" or "chief")

2. Authority – *εξουσιας* (authority, right to act, liberty to do as one pleases)

3. Power – *δυναμεως* (power, might, strength, ability to perform desire)

4. Dominion – *κυριοτητος* (sphere of lordship, dominion, power, area of authority)

a. Possibly a phrase that is meant to encompass all powers that exist, comprehensive phrase

b. Possibly relates to angelic or spiritual realms, some think of ranks of angelic beings alone (see 6:12)

ii. There is NOTHING that can keep you from the hope of your calling, the riches of the glory of His heritage in you, because the surpassing power of Jesus is for you!

1. No spiritual power is greater than Jesus!

2. No physical power is outside of His authority and power to subject it to himself.

a. So, why do bad things still happen?

b. When bad things, really bad things (cancer, divorce, despair, death), happen we have two possible responses:

i. These are unjust of God and He is wrong.

1. He is not powerful enough to have saved me from this suffering

2. He is not really good enough to have saved me from this suffering

a. Both imply our worthiness of salvation

b. Both imply that our wisdom is greater than God's

- c. Both imply that God has somehow not done something, when the person of Jesus is God's powerful good answer
  - ii. God desires us to know HOW TRULY SEVERE that sin is in His eyes so that we would know HOW TRULY GRACIOUS He is toward us.
    - 1. We always need to be reminded that sin is still hated by God and that we still have a deep need for complete redemption (Rom 8:20-28) and the new birth. Suffering teaches us of God's grace and shifts our dependence to Him alone...again.
    - 2. Quote from p.107 of Morris' book:  
 "The question I had been asking was, 'What do You have to say to me about my son dying so friendless?' The question I ended up asking was, 'How could Jesus be such a true friend to the one who had been such a disloyal friend to Him?' That's what cauterized my bleeding wound – seeing that my son was not just a sufferer – but that he was first and foremost a sinner. The reality is that Jeff was not a loyal friend to Jesus, but even so, Jesus was loyal Friend to him. That's the real story, not just for Jeff, but for all of us.  
 Before, all I could see was Jeff's pain, but now I saw his sin and was devastated by the grace of God. Grace is something much more profound than God responding in sympathy to our suffering – it's all about Jesus, intentionally pouring Himself out in love for people who should rightfully have received just the opposite. I have a great disposition to see only my own suffering, but in order to see grace I need a reality check. I have to see that sin is truly sin – and then I can see that grace is truly grace. When I see that sin is appalling then I can see that grace is amazing."  
 3. We learn to look to Him alone through our suffering, just like Jesus.
- c. God has subjected everything under His feet
  - i. "subjected" – active form of *υποτασσω* (to place in subjection or subordination)
    - 1. God has placed everything under subjection to Jesus
    - 2. "under his feet" implies a victorious power of might
      - a. 2 Sam 22:39/Ps 18:38 – David's victories over his enemies
      - b. Josh 10:24-25 – Joshua placing feet on necks of enemy kings
      - c. God does have enemies
        - i. You and I used to be one! (Rom 5:10; Col 1:21)
        - ii. We do a terrible injustice to the Word of God to think and say that God does not have enemies. Behind every evil power is an evil spiritual enemy of God, desiring independence from the authority of God (Joel 2:30-3:16; Psalm 2)
  - ii. ALL THINGS
    - 1. There is nothing that is more powerful than Jesus, that He does not have the ability to bring underneath His feet by power.
    - 2. There is no suffering to which He is subject (Matt 4:24; Ps 91), no will of man that bends His will (Rom 9:16; Ez 6:22; Pr 21:1), and no evil power over you to which He must bow (Jer 10:10; Rev 19:19-21; 20:9). He is the LORD!!

## 2. What Does This Mean?

- a. Remember the Path that Jesus Took to Glory
  - i. Brokenness and Submission
  - ii. Have you been broken? Has the Spirit loosened your opposition to God's over-arching sovereignty? Has the pride of your heart been humbled? Has God's Spirit emptied you, taught you the depth and severity of your sinfulness, nothingness, and led you to God's pardoning mercy, and Christ's justifying righteousness, through the deep, dark valley of the soul's brokenness and humiliation before Him?
    - 1. It is in the deepest night of the soul that the glory of God in Christ breaks in like the dawn's rising sun in the freedom of redemption and the gracious and powerful forgiveness of God's goodness in Jesus in all its luminescence.
    - 2. Jesus walked through the deep darkness of God's wrath in the tomb and came out in even greater glory!
  - iii. Now Jesus stands never to be humiliated again! He has passed beyond the reaches of brokenness and weakness to sit at the Father's right hand of glory. Let faith rest in His risen glory through weakness.
    - 1. Think of where Jesus is right now: Heaven. In the presence of stupendous glory where the Father resides, where all is perfect and healed.
    - 2. Rest in this power of Christ, for you, too, can anticipate such a beauty in the power and glory of God's redemption.
- b. Take hope in the Lord's salvation of you!
  - i. All of Jesus' work in His kindness for you
    - 1. Eph 1:3-14
    - 2. Titus 3:4-7
    - 3. Quote from C & J Morris from "Saving a Life: How We Found Courage When Death Rescued Our Son", p139:  
 "The other question is a *willingness* question. Is Jesus *willing* to deliver the help we need? A leper came to Jesus once and spoke that question, 'If you're willing, you can make me clean.' Most translation say Jesus was 'filled with compassion' when the man spoke to Him, but Today's New International Version says he was 'indignant'....He was indignant because the man doubted His compassion for his pain, His willingness to answer his request. It was as if the man's question hit right at the very heart of what Jesus' presence in the world is all about – He is here because He is willing. He went to the cross because He is willing. Willing is too weak of a word. His entire being is always, intentionally, passionately poured into helping us."
  - ii. His promises are TRUE and TRUSTWORTHY
    - 1. See the infinite resources of your Savior! There is nothing that you truly need to glorify Him that He does not possess or give graciously. He has every spiritual blessing poured out for you in His fathomless love.
    - 2. There is no trouble in your life which the promises of God, in Christ, cannot meet with mercy and grace.
    - 3. There is no sinful desire within you that Jesus, by His power and authority, cannot bring to death with the expulsive power of His Holy Spirit.
- c. Church is the fullness of Christ
  - i. One of the dangers in suffering is to see Jesus as unwilling to have come to the aid of a victim. We always tend to see ourselves as more innocent than we truly are and so to see our salvation

as something that God MUST do, not something that He is gracious to do, but never obligated to do.

- ii. Jesus has endeavored to bind Himself so closely to His redeemed that He will not consider Himself whole without her! He fills her up so that she becomes His fullness.
  1. He is not insufficient in any way, for “He fills all in all” and is doing the filling of the Body, not vice versa
  2. But His love for His people is so great that He has condescended to bind Himself to us
    - a. So the Head without the body is incomplete.
    - b. The body w/o the Head is incomplete
    - c. “Abide in me and I in you.” (John 14:20; 15:4)
    - d. “one flesh” (Eph 5:30-32)
    - e. “hidden with Christ in God” (Col 3:3-4)
    - f. “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27)
- iii. Strange paradox of the Redeemed community’s unity with her Savior
  1. We’ll wrestle with this more next week, particularly what it functionally means for the church to be the fullness of Jesus in this world
  2. But we can see here the greatness of the love of Christ, that He has bound Himself so closely to His broken people!! What a Savior!! What a Redeemer! Who can fathom this love?! Behold the goodness of God in Jesus Christ!

THIS FATHOMLESS LOVE, by Steve and Vicki Cook

Lord, what moved Your heart to love lowly man  
Before any star could herald Your praise,  
And why did You come abasing Yourself,  
Veiled in a robe of frail human clay?  
Why would You the Pure give Your life for the vile,  
The innocent seeking the guilty to be reconciled?

CHORUS

I can’t comprehend this fathomless love.  
I’m gripped and amazed at what You have done.  
Why would the adored become the despised,  
To bear all the furious wrath that was mine?  
How awesome this mystery of Your fathomless love for me!

Why would You adopt and take as Your own  
Those who had crushed Your one precious Son?  
Why mercy and grace towards Your enemies?  
Your name they have cursed and Your throne they have shunned.  
O how could You choose to show kindness to these,  
The ones who would mock You and hate You, the ones just like me?

- d. Acknowledge Him in All Your Ways!
  - i. Jesus is not some weakling Savior, but is more powerful than anything that you can imagine. Take heed lest your pride puff you up!
    1. Humility is the sign of the saints which preaches to the world of the Kingship of Jesus and His authority. Your redemption, planned and accomplished by God, shows the world how powerfully authoritative that He is! In your humility the world sees the greatest miracle of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- ii. Consider the gospel
  - 1. Doctrines of the gospel
    - a. Full pardon
    - b. Free justification
    - c. Glorious adoption
    - d. Sanctification
      - i. Let these truths govern your soul and functionally control your heart
      - ii. Let these deep truths become your essential controlling reality to identify you with Jesus, your glorious Savior.
  - 2. Promises of the gospel
    - a. Let these doctrines sink deep with the soul to soothe your tears and salve your anxieties.
    - b. Ask the Spirit to lead you into a deep acquaintance with the riches of the beauty of His gospel.
      - i. There is no need which Jesus cannot meet.
      - ii. Every wound has a balm; every fear has a promise; every battle has armor; every hunger has sufficient morsel in Jesus!
    - c. Remember that your home is with your risen, authoritative, and glorious Lord who rules the Universe by His awesome power
      - i. Fear not the loss of this world
      - ii. Fear not the powers of this world
      - iii. Rest in the knowledge of the power of Jesus and in His glorious goodness and generosity toward you
      - iv. Anticipate and yearn for the day of His ultimate defeat of the last enemy (death) where you will be glorified with Him in the presence of the Father

Conclusion:

To the praise of His glorious grace! The Lord over all that exists has condescended to His chosen ones in order to magnify His glory to the Universe. He has bound Himself to His people in great love and sealed them with His very Spirit. You are His body, you have been filled with His will, power and purpose for all of eternity so that you might show the excellencies of glorious grace (1 Pe 2:9-10), the surpassing the greatness of His power to take resistant and rebellious enemies, dead in their sins and enslaved to their ignorance, and make them humble, dependant, worshipful people of His glory.