

**"WHEN WE ASK 'WHY'?"**

Romans 11:33-36

*May the God of peace be with you all.* {Rom 15:33}

Children ask their parents lots of questions. **WHAT** are you doing? **WHERE** are we going? **WHEN** are we going to get there? **WHO** is coming over? But the most persistent question and hardest to answer is **WHY**. I remember my guys asking us all that all the time. Why this? Why that? And then when you answered, they'd ask you again WHY? It just seemed you could never give the answer they wanted. So you ended the constant inquiries with a grumpy: "*well, that's just the way it is!*"

That question **WHY** isn't the hardest one to answer just for kids – it's rarely an easy ones for adults too. Take for instance, **Hurricane Katrina** on August 29, 2005. A category 3 storm hitting the southern Louisiana coastline with over **175 mph winds**...**1,800+** people died in the storm surge and subsequent flooding...**\$108 billion** of damage...water pushing **inland 6-12** miles from the Gulf coast. Why? Global warming? Was God angry with America? Just the result of living in a sinful world?

For 13 years now, **WHY** is still the question. \$10 billion damage, 3,000+ people killed. Why two planes into those Trade Center towers, one into the Pentagon, and another downed in Shanksville, PA? Oh, we have some answers to the horror of that terrible day on September 11<sup>th</sup>: terrorism – lack of communications – security breaches – confusion – chaos. But the question **WHY** will always be asked.

God often gives answers to the easy questions when He tells us who created the universe and world, what He gave Moses on two tablets of stone, how the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, who was born in a manger, who died on a cross, who rose from a grave. But we often have a much harder time getting an answer...

**"WHEN WE ASK 'WHY'?"**

1. **THAT IS OUR QUESTION**
2. **HERE IS GOD'S ANSWER**

**1**

**WHY** is not a new question in the Bible. When God called Adam & Eve onto the carpet in the Garden of Eden, his questions to them basically said "**WHY have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from**" to which they immediately started the blame game. You think that question **WHY** might have crossed Abraham's mind when God told him to leave his homeland and go a land he would show him? You think Abraham wondered **WHY** God told him to put a dagger into the heart of his only son Isaac? The children of Israel asked that many times during their wanderings in the desert to the Promised Land. When surrounded by the Red Sea on one side and the oncoming troops of Pharaoh's armies on the other, they asked: "**What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'leave us alone, let us serve the Egyptians?**" {Ex 14:11-12} Or to put it simply: "**WHY DID YOU BRING US OUT HERE?**"

Consider Job. God allowed the devil to take Job's sons & daughters, (his family) all his animals and servants (his livelihood). For a time, he hung IN there and simply answered: **The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away**. But then his three so-called friends (*Bildad, Elihu, and Eliphaz*) tried to come up with answers as to why all this loss in Job's life and they all wrongfully concluded that Job did something to deserve this suffering. And Job wasn't faultless either: God said to Job: **WHO IS THIS THAT DARKENS MY COUNSEL WITH WORDS WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE?** {Job 238:2}

When we ask **WHY**, that is **OUR** question because this comes up almost every day. We ask it when the doctor comes back with the news of a brain tumor or breast cancer cells. We'll ask it if Wisconsin joins about a dozen other states with this mysterious respiratory virus putting children in intensive care. Surviving families will always ask it after Malaysian Airlines #370 literally disappeared presumably into the Indian Ocean on March 8, 2014. The **widow** still asks it after losing her spouse and living alone for 15 years. **A couple** asks it when they spend a lifetime yearning for a child while thousands of others are given children they never wanted in the first place. **New parents** ask it when they have only a few minutes with their newborn. **Older parents** ask it when their son ½ their age just flat out rebels against God and rejects His Word or is taken from them in a fatal car crash.

We aren't the first and we won't be the last to ask the question **WHY**. When God's Word says something that doesn't make sense, people try to make up their own answers. **God created the world in 6 days**. No, there has to be a better answer than that, so textbooks are filled with theories that we were evolved as the result of a great bang somewhere in the universe a ga-zillion years ago. When Jesus says in John 15: **You did not choose me, but I chose you...** {Jn 15:16}, our minds figure there must be a reason why. We must have done something to be worthy, God saw how good we were – that's why. When 3 men were inhumanely tossed into the fiery furnace, the modern day skeptic explains that they were lucky to find a cool spot that had no flames OR Jonah in the fish's belly for three days probably was on shore, OR Lazarus was in a coma when Jesus raised him. Take all of Jesus' miracles and you can go on and on trying to explain the **WHY** about things that are beyond our understanding. And that just gets us into trouble.

It's at times like these when things never come together, **never turn out** the way we thought they should, when we **don't live happily** ever after--that many people, including Christians live and die lonely and disheartened with life on earth. At times like these, when **things don't go as planned** – **that's when we ask OUR question: WHY!**

## 2

I believe you all can identify with the question. I have asked it many times myself. But **WHEN WE ASK WHY**, that is the God's unique teaching moment to tell us: **HERE IS MY ANSWER!** Paul writes these words to the Romans as a Doxology (hymn of praise) ending the doctrinal part of his letter. To this point, he has highlighted how God's righteousness is ours through faith in Jesus and that is why we will be in heaven with him, not because of our own righteousness.

Now he concludes on a high note that focuses on God's Wisdom as the reason not to doubt or second-guess him. **OH, THE DEPTH (the unlimited abundance) OF THE RICHES OF THE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD! HOW UNSEARCHABLE HIS JUDGMENTS AND HIS PATHS BEYOND TRACING OUT!** God's mind is unfathomable. The depth of God's wisdom can't be seen, measured, understood, imagined or duplicated. (*You might trace your hand on paper to duplicate your hand, but you can't trace around God's wisdom and comprehend it.*) His decisions are unsearchable – there is no textbook that explains God's wisdom or his ways of doing things. His judgments rarely match ours. We can't read God's mind or even understand his decisions. We can't do that with earthly judges – how can we do that with God? How dare we claim we know better!

**WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD OR WHO HAS BEEN HIS COUNSELOR (advisor)? WHO HAS EVER GIVEN TO GOD, THAT GOD SHOULD REPAY HIM?** God's answer reminds us that God doesn't need our advice. **There's nothing we know better to help God figure out something.** In fact, all we know is sin. We're good at that because of our human nature. Our minds are stained with sin, we wallow in it and therefore are doomed to eternal judgment. People ask why do people go to hell? Because everyone deserves to – **there is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** {Rom 3:22-23} **God doesn't owe us anything.** What have we ever done for God that He should pay us back? Nothing, except **DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO ARE CURSED, INTO THE ETERNAL FIRE PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL & HIS ANGELS.** {Matt 25:41}

**WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD** in figuring out how God couldn't give up on us sinners? Instead of condemning us, he sent His Son on a mission to wallow on this sinful world with weak, sinful people. He sent Jesus to be mocked, beaten, crucified, and punished for the sins of the world. Instead of making us suffer for asking WHY in sinful doubt, God decided to judge His Son and make Him sin FOR US. **WHY you ask?** Because God loves us, that's why. His grace does not allow him to send us packing to hell, but rather preparing for heaven. Who can figure the mind of the Lord? Who has a better plan to save sinners?

God doesn't need to explain himself **FOR FROM HIM AND THROUGH HIM AND TO HIM ARE ALL THINGS.** The sun wouldn't shine if God didn't let it. The earth wouldn't move if God didn't let it. Our issues in life wouldn't exist if God didn't let them. His will is always good; His promises are always there **THAT ALL THINGS WORK OUT FOR GOOD...** I don't know when, I don't know how, but I do know why: because **TO HIM ARE ALL THINGS.** All that happens in life, for good or for evil God somehow uses to ultimately serve His purpose. Look how God used the evil of Christ's suffering & death to serve for our good in forgiving our sins and opening heaven for us one day. **We may/may not understand** God's answers to our questions WHY. But remember what John wrote: **HOW GREAT IS THE LOVE THE FATHER HAS LAVISHED ON US THAT WE SHOULD CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND THAT IS WHAT WE ARE.** {1 Jn 3:1}

One day, this will all make sense. **There will be no more questions, only blessed answers** when God reveals His whole plan on Judgment Day. How glorious that will be. In the meantime, **trust God's answers** (don't second guess them) and firmly **cling to His promises** that in heaven we'll have all the answers **when we shall see Him as He is.** Look forward to that day and pray for patience to wait for it.

**TO HIM BE THE GLORY FOREVER! AMEN**