

**Each sermon in this series has a short, 10-minute video that introduces the topic for discussion. It can be viewed at <https://www.exploreGod.com/series/the-7-big-questions>. This week, we are on video #3 – Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering?

I. Introduction to this Study

This week, we continue our Explore God series by wrestling with one of the most difficult and personal questions of all: **Why does God allow pain and suffering?** Every belief system tries to answer this question. Some teach that suffering is an illusion, others view it as the result of karma, and still others say it's simply random and meaningless. But Christianity offers a unique and hopeful perspective: a God who doesn't just explain suffering but enters into it—a God who weeps, grows angry at suffering, dies for us, and ultimately conquers death. Through the lens of Scripture, we'll explore how Christianity speaks to our suffering in ways no other worldview does.

II. Connecting with One Another

When have you found yourself asking, "Why is this happening?" How do you typically respond when facing hardship—by trying to solve it, escape it, or make sense of it?

III. Study the Text

Read Ecclesiastes 9:11-12

- What observations does the Teacher make about the unpredictability of life and suffering?
- How do you respond to the idea that "time and chance happen to them all"?

Read John 11:1-44 (The Story of Lazarus)

- In verses 33-35, Jesus weeps. What does it mean to you that God incarnate enters fully into human grief?
- Jesus is also deeply moved—a term that suggests anger or indignation (v. 33, 38). What does it mean that Jesus responds to suffering with both compassion and righteous anger?
- How does the raising of Lazarus point forward to the hope we have in Christ's own resurrection?



Read Hebrews 4:14-16

- According to this passage, how does Jesus' experience of suffering equip Him to be our High Priest?
- How does this encourage you to approach God with your own pain and struggles?

Read Habakkuk 3:17-19

- Despite overwhelming hardship, how does the prophet Habakkuk express faith and hope?
- What can we learn from his response about trusting God even when life doesn't make sense?

Potential Responses to Suffering

- Many belief systems approach suffering in different ways—by accepting it (Hinduism), detaching from it (Buddhism), denying its meaning (Secularism), or hardening ourselves against it (Stoicism).
How have you seen people around you respond to suffering in these ways? How satisfying or incomplete do these responses seem?
- Christianity offers something unique: a Savior who weeps with us, gets angry at suffering, dies for us, and defeats death itself.
Which of these aspects of Jesus—Weeping Savior, Angry Savior, Risen Savior, Dying Savior—stands out to you the most? Why does that matter in times of suffering?

IV. Prayer

Spend time praying for those who are in the midst of suffering, including any struggles you may be facing. Thank God that we do not suffer alone and that Jesus understands our pain.

Pray for the courage to trust in God's goodness even when life feels uncertain, and ask for the joy that comes from knowing Christ as our weeping, angry, risen, and dying Savior.

V. Digging Deeper

Explore these additional Scriptures to reflect further on God's response to human suffering:

- **Romans 8:18-28** – How does Paul speak of hope in the midst of suffering?
- **Psalms 34:18** – What does this verse teach about God's nearness to the brokenhearted?
- **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** – How can we develop an eternal perspective on present suffering?

