

God in Tragedy 2 Kings 5:15 3/07/22 Pastor DJK

Our world is in bad a place – isn't it?

I was reading the other day about a 13 year old girl – over there in some Arab country. She was playing in the back yard of her home when a gang appeared from nowhere and grabbed her and dragged her away kicking and screaming – she was kidnapped. While they were there killed her mother, they killed her father, they killed her brothers. We don't know exactly what they did to her but we do know what they said before they invaded her home.

They said, "Let's go in there and tear those people apart".

That much is recorded – we can only guess what happened to her mother and father and brothers before they were killed.

We can only guess what happened to this girl held in captivity.

We do know she was forced to live with the gang leader – she had no choice – she was a prisoner in her own worst nightmare.

This girl was a believer – one of God's very own children – she trusted God.

You have to ask where was God in this?

We know that a week ago the Russians bombed a shopping centre; they said, "there was no one there" – the Ukraine's said, "there were hundreds of people there".

You have to ask where is God in all this?

A week before all this an earthquake killed thousands in Afghanistan.

You have to ask where is God in all this?

And we are Christians – we are the God people – surely we have something to say.

When do we say it?

What do we say?

There is a time for **silence** after tragedy.

You might know the story of Job who lost everything.

All of his children were killed when a cyclone ripped their home apart.

A Bushfire destroyed all his stock, and all his property.

His wife survived - only to nag him every day to curse God – (probably sounded like a good idea at the time)

But Job grieved in silence.

His friends came and sat with him.

He was suffering so much that he couldn't speak.

They sat with him for 7 days – not saying a single word.

There's a time for silence – especially if you are prone to saying silly things that just come out because we are struggling for words:

“They have gone to a better place.”

“This is God’s will”

“This is God’s will so there be a good reason for it”.

When you analyze these they are really saying:

- **this tragedy is God’s will**
- **this tragedy is part of God’s big master plan.**

This is so much in the face of what we really know: ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29)

There is a time for God’s comfort in the face of tragedy.

But first we must be clear – tragedy is not part of God’s master plan.

God’s says over and over:

In Isaiah, “**God takes no delight in the death of anyone**”.

In Jesus time there was a slaughter in the temple – the blood of those innocent people was swept up and made into a mock offering to God.

The people asked Jesus if God was punishing those people.

Was this a part of his master plan?

Jesus said, I tell you, no!

Another time a tower fell and crushed 18 people. The people asked Jesus was God punishing these people.

Was this a part of the master plan.

Jesus said, I tell you no!

There is a controversial Victorian Pastor Nahlia who proclaimed that the Victorians who were burned to death in the Black Sunday Bushfires were burned because of the abortion bill that was passed in the Victorian parliament.

This church leader is saying that our God would burn innocent people to death because of a political decision.

Victorians are outraged, and Christians have to bear the rage of someone’s nonsense.

To blame God is to name him a monster.

But we like to blame – Even faithful old Job finally gave into his suffering and blamed God.

God speaks very sarcastically to Job and to us all:

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?”

- Surely you were there Job.
- Who knows about the earth and its measurements—Surely that’s you Job!”
- Who knows about the mysteries of the beginning of the world – Surely it’s you Job..
- Who knows about the mysteries of human suffering? Surely it’s you Job”

Job is sorry and admits: “I have spoken about things I do not understand.”
Job had blamed God for his suffering but Job was completely wrong.

Peace be with you Jesus says – this is our God.
While you were still sinners I died for you – This is our God.

We think we have to explain God. That is not our job.

We are only to speak the truth.

God is not the author of evil.

God allows us free will

- so that we can have a relationship with him
- he refuses to makes us love him
- he refuses to manipulate.

He gives us a free will so that we can follow the call of the holy Spirit.

The price of us reckless people having a free will is that someone will light a fire despite our prayers,

Someone will start a war and suffering will continue despite our prayers.

But no evil is the will of God – less we have a Reverend Nahlia God – a monster God.

It’s good for us to know that evil is not God’s Business.

Bringing peace into the world is God’s Business.

But I’m not sure if those in the ashes, in the floods, in the war would really be interested that God is not the cause of the tragedy they are in.

But they are all ears to someone giving a hand – showing love.

I don’t think we have a right to change people’s feelings.

But we have a right to reveal a God of love to all people especially suffering people.

I think John (9) helps us with tragedy – he says, "This happened so that the works of God may be revealed".

Instead of blaming, he just says "This happened so that the works of God may be revealed".

When we call Jesus “Immanuel” we are saying God is with us.

If he is with us then he is also with others when we are there for them.

Our business in tragedy is to answer that question: “where is God in all of this” by being there – being Immanuel for them.

Where is God in all this – he is Immanuel – with us!
 How sad is it if someone who in tragedy doesn't see God.
 Closer to home – how sad it is if someone in this town, in our hospital, in our old folks homes and schools – that doesn't see God in us.

Let's go back to the girl kidnapped by the Gang.
 The gang leader got very sick – he was in agony and close to death. And this Christian girl said to him “my God can make you well”.
 Somehow this brut – saw compassion in the girl he had used and abused.
 Somehow he saw, Immanuel, God in this girl and listened to her and he was healed and saved.
 John would say: . "This happened so that the works of God may be revealed".
 In that girl's tragic situation – God was revealed.
 In her daily fear – and his daily misery – where people normally ask, “where is God in all this” – God was there in her compassion.
 We pray and sing palm 23 “though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil **because you are with me.**

God is there in all this!

That girl is my inspiration.
 Despite the horror of the situation someone he saw God in her
 – a real monster was changed and became a believer in the one true God.
 She became living proof of Immanuel – God with us!
After He was healed he stood up and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in one true God of Israel.
 We read of those texts that faith can move mountains – well here it is – and it's the faith of a little girl.
 You too can read about this girl in the second book of 2 Kings in chapter 5.
 The Gangster is Naaman – the little girl has no name.
 I hear so often people say - I have no skill in ministry – all the words come out wrong - there are other to do that sort of thing.
 Occasionally you are the only one.
 This girl in the home of the gangster was the only one there – a little girl, a small voice – God used her – God blessed her.
 Jesus said, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you. (Luke 17)
 Don't look for mulberry trees – look for those around you.

Lord bless all we do and say that the toughest, meanest, adversaries of you come to faith.

We thank you that you privilege us with your ministry. Amen.