

A. What is God doing in all this?

- a. **We** don't know, specifically and in detail. It's important not to rush in and try to explain things we don't know, put words in God's mouth, or apologize for Him.
- b. **Had** it all figured out, they thought about the man born blind (Jn. 9). Someone must have sinned! Yet Jesus said God had something else in mind, making His works manifest in that man.
- c. **At** a funeral, one man heard the words from Job, "the Lord has given, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," and the man blanched. Then he asked himself just what he was objecting to. He realized it was the first part that he didn't like, that the Lord had given.
- d. The fact is that God will not quit being God – in the first, middle, or last place. "Who can explain His decisions? Who can understand His ways?"

B. Could we say at least that God is teaching people something through troubles?

- a. I don't have to be a Christian to figure that sufferings can teach me something. Ancient Greeks said, "*pathein, mathein*." Still, not everyone draws the right lessons from hardship. Maybe they draw no lessons at all.
- b. **Sinners** – that's what disasters remind us that we are. "Why do bad things happen to good people." Well, there is no one good, not one! We ourselves are no better than the victims of terrible tragedies. They need to repent, and so do we. Luke 13:1-5 -- Note what Jesus did here. He took their sights off abstract, unanswerable questions about God's will. He said, repent.

C. Doesn't the Bible say that everything works together for good to those who love God?

- a. **Go** on quoting Romans 8:28, though. It goes on and says, "to the ones who are called according to His purpose." The key is not our goodness, but instead His gracious calling. And His gracious calling is always in and on account of Christ.
- b. **O** people, do you want to know how God is disposed to you? Look at Jesus! You can't look at progress, or the lack thereof; at prosperity, or the lack thereof; or even personal health, or the lack thereof. Look, with eyes of faith, to Christ. Whoever has seen Him has seen the Father.
- c. **Disappointing** is what Jesus seemed to be as He died on the cross, battered and bloodied. Yet in Him, God was carrying out His promises, reconciling the world to Himself. It may have seemed that nothing good could have come out of His violent and unjust death, but look at Who was dying there, and what God was doing there – as shown in the resurrection!

D. So . . . we need to trust what God says more than what we see?

- a. **Drawing** attention back to Romans 8:28: Paul really meant it when he said "all things." We can't see, for the life of us, how some things could be good. This is a matter of faith, not sight.
- b. **Or** 1 Cor. 12:7-10: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
- c. **Inculcating** discipline: Hebrews 12:7 says, "God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?" The same event that may be a display of God's wrath against the unbeliever is for the believer the loving discipline of a concerned Father. You can't sort these two out just on the basis of observation.
- d. "**No** condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Don't guess at what you don't know, but cling to what you *do* know from His Good News. No condemnation for you!
- e. **Glory** lies ahead for the sheep who hear the voice of Christ the Good Shepherd: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Ps. 23:6).