

A remarkable week plus

Stumbles, Issues, Problems, Apologies, Suspicions,
Confrontations, Emminent departure of friends...Exciting stuff
And through it all a sense of peace...strange

I was preparing for this sermon...
I start a few weeks in advance...

Back sometime ago we did a study on the book Experiencing God
...look around for what God is doing and consider yourself invited
to join in

When I looked around I saw people trying to figure out how to
respond to evil or what they perceived as evil.

Along the same lines I watch and listen for what God is telling me
about the circumstances around me...what I am reading ...what
people are talking about
what I'm talking about to people...what my wife is talking about...

So if you hear me talk about something familiar and you said
it...thank you
If you already heard me say it recently...bear with me
If it sounds like something you did...names will be changed to
protect the perhaps not so innocent...so try not to perspire in an
obviously guilty way.

Nonetheless...the exciting part of all this at least for me was the
way events and passages and conversations seemed to reflect and
counter reflect on each other.

To give a complete sense of this would maybe take...about a week
so I will try to keep it short...shortish...or not long...well long but
not tooo terribly long.

John 1

The Word Became Flesh

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood^[a] it.

In our men's group we have been looking at A.W. Tozer's 'The Knowledge of the Holy'

Who God is...His Mystery...His splendor or what we can perceive of His splendor

His nature:.....That he is self-existent...has no origin

...origin applies only to created things

So there are two realms...God and creation

“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made”

So what about evil.

Buckle up ladies because this is where you will be touring Tuesday morning...

Who created it...evil?

Who created Satan?...and why?

Even if you choose to resist the idea of God creating evil...and I say this not to waffle but to continue moving forward...He allows Satan dominion over the earth and we certainly see evil around us everywhere and even in us...if I can be used as an example...

Consider Luke 4

...After Jesus had been baptized by John the Baptist and the Holy Spirit had descended on Him

Luke 4 ¹⁻²Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry.

³The Devil, playing on his hunger, gave the first test: "Since you're God's Son, command this stone to turn into a loaf of bread."

⁴Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: "It takes more than bread to really live."

⁵⁻⁷For the second test he led him up and spread out all the kingdoms of the earth on display at once. Then the Devil said, "They're yours in all their splendor to serve your pleasure. I'm in charge of them all and can turn them over to whomever I wish. Worship me and they're yours, the whole works."

⁸Jesus refused, again backing his refusal with Deuteronomy: "Worship the Lord your God and only the Lord your God. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness."

⁹⁻¹¹For the third test the Devil took him to Jerusalem and put him on top of the Temple. He said, "If you are God's Son, jump. It's written, isn't it, that 'he has placed you in the care of angels to protect you; they will catch you; you won't so much as stub your toe on a stone?'"

¹²"Yes," said Jesus, "and it's also written, 'Don't you dare tempt the Lord your God.'"

¹³That completed the testing. The Devil retreated temporarily, lying in wait for another opportunity.

If Jesus Christ was God incarnate...and I believe He was and is...then God incarnate stands before Satan to whom He has given dominion over earth and all flesh to be tempted/and tested in the flesh by His own creation...

If that doesn't make your head spin you're not really thinking about it...

...dominion yes but absolute power no

We really could spend a long time here but what we are after is the why.

If God is pre-existent and sovereign...Men's Study Group

If God is infinitely powerful, wise, and good...General consensus

And if God created all things...Bible

Then God created evil

<http://www.tentmaker.org/books/SpiritOfTheWord/027ThePurposeOfEvil.htm>

Given a God of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, and He is responsible for ALL things that exist; and this also follows, from the wisdom and goodness of God, that all things that exist are for an intelligent and benevolent end.

Evil included...

What we are really saying is this. God is a God with a purpose which He conceived in the beginning and planned through to the end. This purpose required the evil as well as the good, and God provided for the evil just as surely as He provided for the good. Had this not been so, then God's purpose would have been all good, but none of us would ever have been able to realize the

greatness of His goodness, for there would have been no evil to set it against.

Furthermore as evil gives God an occasion to reveal himself to us so that we may *know* him, so it gives us the opportunity to exercise the attributes of God so that we may become *like* him. The existence of evil in the world gives the child of God the opportunity for the exercise of the godlike attributes of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, forbearance, meekness, gentleness etc., and thus become *like* God; for if ye do these things "ye shall be the children of the Highest, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, and is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." Thus we see something of the purpose of evil in the blessing of mankind.

God's great plan "through sin, corruption, chaos and death, is moving on to holiness, purity, order and life eternal."

<http://www.tentmaker.org/articles/TheProblemofEvil.html>

Love Is Directing All!

Yes, the great fact that is such an assurance and a comfort to us all is that **God controls all evil**. As Paul tells us in Ephesians 1 : 11, He is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, and that all includes the evil as well as the good.

Ephesians 1.11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

In fact, He is able to turn all evil into good, and He is already doing this in our case. For we read in Roman's 8:28, "Now we are aware that God is working **all** together for the good of those who are loving God."

NKJ Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

God is working all together, both good and evil, for our good. What about afflictions? Should these get us down? No, says Paul, for "in all these we are more than conquering through Him Who loves us." Besides, afflictions and tribulations work in us patience and testedness, and patience and testedness are producing experience and endurance, and experience and endurance are producing hope or expectation (Rom. 5:3-5). So we should be rejoicing and glorifying even in such adversities for we are like vessels being tried in the refiner's fire.

To quote myself...

Without the evil forge there would be no refining fire...no high fired clay...no conflict...no resolution...no dependency on God's Holy Spirit to lift us up out of the ditch again...no bad jokes...no salvation by grace.

The existence of evil in the world gives the child of God the opportunity for the exercise of the godlike attributes of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, forbearance, meekness, gentleness and God the opportunity to do His thing.

...But sin created one thing more...the opportunity for God to demonstrate His greatest act of love for mankind through the persecution, death, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ ...God incarnate...victorious over evil...

Look around at what God is doing...do you feel invited
Consider what He could be doing...

Reading: BLUE LIKE JAZZ