

Where is God When You Need Him

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The presence of God powerful. We are calm when He is near. When He is present, we can rest and find shelter in His strength. As the Psalmist poetically said, "in Your presence is fullness of joy, at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Ps. 16:11). David could walk through the valley of the shadow of death because God was present with Him (Ps. 23). Jesus instructed His disciples to "ask, and it shall be given to you." But what happens when God is silent? What do we do when pain shouts louder than the whisper of God; when doubt and fear are more present than faith and courage. Why does God seem so distant when we need Him so badly? How could He sit silently by and watch His children suffer without intervening? This workshop will address these questions and others and offer a behind-the-scenes view of God's involvement, though it may be difficult for us to see at times.

Disaster: a calamitous event, especially one occurring suddenly and causing great loss of life, damage, or hardship, as a flood, airplane crash, or business failure (dictionary.com).

Synonyms (some): misfortune, accident, adversity, affliction, calamity, catastrophe,

A disaster may be caused by carelessness, negligence, bad judgment, or the like, or by natural forces, as a hurricane or flood.

Types of Disasters:

- Natural Disaster (Hurricane, flood)
- Man-made (Oil spill, crime, terrorism, war, fire, hazardous materials, and car accidents.
- Self-made (Israel in Babylonian captivity) (addictions, mismanagement, neglect, disobedience, etc. consequences)
- Other's made (betrayal, Theft,
- Confusing and unexpected (infertility, miscarriage, divorce, Bankruptcy, Failed Business, Chronic pain or illness, cancer, death, etc.)

Bible stories of disaster:

- Job
- Joseph
- The Crucifixion of Jesus
- The Disciples following his death
- The Apostle Paul

Themes that flow through disaster:

- God allows tragic circumstances to occur
- He is aware of these circumstances before they occur in time (There are no surprises with God)
- He limits the effects of disaster
- Disaster brings suffering
- He uses disaster for His glory
- He teaches us to trust Him
- He is present in our disaster

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God is Always Present

Hebrews 13:5 - Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Matthew 28:20 - ...I am with you always, even to the end of the age...

Isaiah 43:1-3 - But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. 3 For I am the LORD your God...

How do you know if God is present?

- Circumstances do not tell all
- Emotions are unreliable
- Expectations are confusing (2 Kings 5:10-11)

Reframing Disaster

- Paul's Disaster Reframed (2 Corinthians 12)
- God is present (items in a room)
- God is in our darkest hours (Ps. 97:2; 139:11-12; Pr. 3:5)
- Elisha's Servant (2 Kings 6)
- Road to Emmaus (Luke 24)
- Defining "Normal"

John 16:33 - These things I have spoken to you, that **in Me you may have peace**. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.