

confusion. Are you frustrated when bad people prosper and are even applauded by the public? Are you frustrated by the lack of blessings you receive even though you are living a good and just life? Think about these questions and write your thoughts here.

### **Thursday, April 18**

Pastor Jack introduced a “25 cent word” from his seminary days: Theodicy. It’s basically the question of how in the universe, created by a loving and caring Creator, can suffering and evil exist. Of course, you’ve heard the message and know how this question of theodicy was answered. The question of theodicy wants to make sense of the world and in essence, address the statements and question that Epicurus developed. Are there times when the world doesn’t make sense to you? Like Asaph are you frustrated with the flagrant evil and injustice in our world? Are you offended by that evil and injustice? Meditate on these questions and write your response here.

### **Friday, April 19**

Read Revelation 21:1-7. The answer, at least in part, to the question of theodicy is free will. God is love and in order to allow us to love God in return, we must have free will. If you are coerced into loving someone then that is certainly not love. Love is a choice and if God gives us the choice to love, then we also can choose evil. In short, creation itself – specifically humanity – is the reason for evil in the world. The choice between loving and doing evil is ours to make, however, there is one constant for certain: God is good all the time and all the time God is good! Praise God our loving Creator for the opportunity to love in this world where evil and hatred is so prevalent! Write your thoughts here.

## **Message Notes – April 14, 2024**

### *Ever Wonder Why?*

### *Why Did God Let It Happen?\**

- I. Have you ever doubted the \_\_\_\_\_ of God?
  - A. It is helpful to examine our \_\_\_\_\_ and in fact ask questions about our doubt through the eyes of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - B. If you've ever questioned the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, today's message is for \_\_\_\_\_.
- II. Why did God let it happen? Three hundred years before the birth of Jesus, there was a Greek philosopher named Epicurus who came to these conclusions about the nature of God concerning \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- III. He had two \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. First he said, "If God is not able to prevent evil, then God must not be \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_."
  - B. His second statement was this: "If God's not willing to prevent evil, then he must not be \_\_\_\_\_."
  - C. That led him to ask this question: "If God is both willing and able to prevent evil, then why does evil \_\_\_\_\_?"
  - D. Our purpose today is to demonstrate that Christianity makes \_\_\_\_\_ of, gives \_\_\_\_\_ to, and offers a \_\_\_\_\_ for the evil and suffering that we experience.
- IV. The Bible doesn't avoid \_\_\_\_\_, evil, and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Jeremiah the prophet, he's known as "the \_\_\_\_\_ prophet."

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\*Psalm 73:1-17 and Revelation 21:1-7

- B. Throughout many of the Psalms King David asked this question, “Are you \_\_\_\_\_ God? Can you \_\_\_\_\_ us?”
  - C. I can imagine John the Baptist sitting in his cell wondering, "\_\_\_\_\_ in the world are you, God?"
  - D. Asaph was frustrated that the \_\_\_\_\_ people of his day prospered and got ahead in life.
- V. One of the most common questions that must struggle with is “If God is a good God, if God is loving, then why would he allow \_\_\_\_\_?”

- A. We cannot use the presence of evil and suffering as proof that \_\_\_\_\_ does not exist.
- B. In reality, the fact that we do believe in evil and suffering is more \_\_\_\_\_ that God does exist.
- C. Our loving Creator exists and our loving Creator also \_\_\_\_\_ something about suffering.
- D. That's how good our God is. He knows in your life, something \_\_\_\_\_ is coming.
- E. The takeaway from this message is to understand that the problem of evil and suffering is not contrary to the story of the \_\_\_\_\_.
- F. The good news is by the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, something better is coming!

## ***Daily Devotional Guide***

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

### **Monday, April 15**

The Message began with a question: Have you ever doubted the goodness of God? In the very first chapter of the very first book of our Bible – Genesis, Chapter 1 – all that exists is created and

God calls it good. On the sixth day when humanity is created, God calls creation “very good.” Yet there is plenty of evidence to suggest there is a great deal about our little portion of creation that is not good and in fact evil. So think again about the question with which we began the message, Have you ever doubted the goodness of God? Meditate on this question and write your reflections here.

### **Tuesday, April 16**

Epicurus was a Greek philosopher who lived 300 years before Jesus. In speaking about God and evil, he came up with two statements and a question. First he asked, “If God is not able to prevent evil, if he can't stop bad things from happening, then God must not be all-powerful.” Second he said, "If God's not willing to prevent evil, then he must not be all good." Then Epicurus asked, "If God is both willing and able to prevent evil, then why does evil exist?"

Rabbi Harold Kushner, in his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* suggested that while God is all-powerful, he gives up his power so that we may have free will. What do you think of Epicurus’ statements and questions? What do you think of Rabbi Kushner’s comment? After some quiet meditation and prayerful thought, write your reflection here.

### **Wednesday, April 17**

Read Psalm 73:1-17. If you have time, read all of Psalm 73. This is one of twelve Psalms attributed to Asaph. He is disturbed about the wicked that prosper and are arrogant. Asaph was close with our loving Creator and the world did not make sense to him as he believed that God was a just and good God. Skim over Psalm 73 and look for words that are evidence of Asaph’s frustration and