



Introduction to the Problem of Evil



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Slide 1 - The Traditional Statement of the Problem of Evil

Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then He is not omnipotent.

Is He able, but not willing? Then He is malevolent.

Is He both willing and able? Then whence cometh evil?

Is He neither willing or able? Then why call Him God?

Epicurus 341- 270 B.C.

“Where is God when it hurts?”

“Why do bad things happen to good people?”

Slide 2 – Watch a 5-minute video from Reasonable Faith–*Suffering and Evil: The Logical Version*

Slide 3 - Background information

- To be honest, if all we knew of the world was its evil and suffering, then God would seem improbable to me.
- But a reasonable person must consider all available evidence.
- There is strong evidence for the existence of God and for the truth of the Gospel.

Slide 4 – Within a Christian framework, evil has a reasonable explanation.

Four divine options: no creation – no good or evil – no choice of evil – true choice of good or evil

Slide 5 - Christian Doctrine 1 ~ Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and His purposes.

Most rational beings are aware of three situations:

- I recognize an objective moral standard that I should follow.
- I am unable to meet my own moral standard.
- There is a gulf between what “is” and what “ought” to be.

Slide 6 - What is Evil?

- Moral Evil is a disorder of the will in an image-bearing creature.
- Natural Evil is the environmental consequence of the moral disorder. A sinful creature by necessity must inhabit a fallen world.
- Evil is not a substance, but a deprivation. Like cold is to heat or darkness to light, so is evil is to good.

Slide 7- Christian Doctrine 2 ~ The chief purpose of life is not human happiness.

- God’s intention is not to make us “happy” but to make us “holy”.
- Love always has the best outcome of the beloved in mind.
- Both joy and pain can lead to a knowledge of God. He chooses the instrument.

*Slide 8 - **Christian Doctrine 3 ~ Knowledge of God is an incomparable good.***

- God may have morally sufficient reasons to permit an evil in your life.
- If God knows that pain will best lead you to Him, He will allow it.
- A “Complex Good” is only possible in an environment of evil.

*Slide 9 - **Christian Doctrine 4 ~ God’s purpose is not restricted to this life, but spills over into the grave and into eternal life.***

- We are eternal beings. Good and evil can only be assessed in light of eternity.
- We may not live in the best possible world, but this world may be the best possible means into the best possible world to come.

*Slide 10 - **Four Steps that make sense to me as I wrestle with problem of evil***

Evil >
Choice >
Love >
God

*Slide 11 - **Two forms of unbelief that may result from hurt***

- I hurt therefore ... God does not exist (this is modern atheism)
- I hurt therefore ... God does not care about me (this is the theodicy of the Bible)

*Slide 12 - **How to address suffering in a person’s life***

- The head response – intellectual argument, apologist needed
- The heart response – compassionate counsel, pastor needed

*Slide 13 - **Showing and Knowing***

- Remember there is a difference between **SHOWING GOD EXISTS** and **KNOWING GOD EXISTS**.

*Slide 14 - **The “Defeater-Defeater”***

- A “defeater” is any argument or narrative that is able to defeat a believer’s faith in God. The problem of pain can sometimes defeat the Christian’s Faith.
- The indwelling Holy Spirit is a personal, living, and direct witness to the reality of Jesus Christ. He is the Defeater-Defeater.

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:6)

*Slide 15 - **For those with an ear to hear, the ultimate resolution to the problem of Evil is:***

The Christ who hung on the Cross. †

*Slide 16 - **Watch an 8-minute video from Reasonable Faith–Suffering and Evil: The Probability Version***