

April 9, 2023  
Easter Sunday  
Pastor Matt Duerr

## “Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?”

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen. I'm sure you've all heard it before. You've probably been asked it, the big question. Why does bad stuff happen to good people? I know that question has come to me a number of times, over the years. For instance, the time when a young mother of three young boys passed away from cancer, why? Why does bad stuff happen to good people? Or when again another mother, very active in the church, serving as a leader, develops a glioblastoma brain cancer and dies from it. Or why does it happen that a 12-year-old boy, one of my students, dies in a freak bike accident? Or a young father with three daughters dies in a car accident. Or a father, who is bi-polar, in one of those strange moments commits suicide. When we get those questions, or we hear those things happen, a lot of people want to know why. Why does God do that, or why does God allow it to happen? And probably about now you're thinking to yourself, pastor it's Easter, it's the big one, why are you being so depressing? What in the world does this have to do with Easter? My answer is everything! It has everything to do with Easter.

Let me introduce you to the four points or four corners of the Christian faith, of Easter itself. The first corner is this; there is one humanity. When we go to the book of Genesis, we see only one kind was created in God's image. Only mankind was called to tend to the garden, to the earth. Only man, was called to give a name to all the animals that had been created. Only mankind walked with God in the garden. Only that mankind, that one humanity, made up of many equal races. All the genetic material, the DNA for those many races coming from one man one woman. And by the way, even the evolutionary camp says that is what happened. All from one. We are one humanity.

But here's where the Christian view starts to move away. There is one depravity. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23 and as we continue down that Romans road to Romans 6:23, we read that the wages of sin is death. In fact, you might find this a little bit shocking coming in an Easter sermon; but hey let's give it up for sin! Sin is absolutely amazing because it is truly D.E.I.! It is as diverse as possible. There are so many sins to go around the world. Why, just think about the whole LGBTQIA+ movement. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, plus 47 additional terms. Sin, I would say it's the origin of all D.E.I. training. When you take a look at it, what comes with all of that? Well, racism is wrong which we as Christians totally agree with. But what is the answer? Racism is wrong, we must stop racism by using racism.

And then we've got the world of social media. What a plethora of sin, with many options. Whether it's pornography or cultic teachings or I don't know cyber bullying, body shaming, ghosting, etc. It leads to a whole other acronym F.O.M.O. fear of missing out. I need to know what's going on, I need to be a part of this, and it's all consuming because if I don't, I will be ghosted, or I will be bullied, I will this... and I don't want that to happen to me. Which leads to an addiction to social media. The government is talking about wiping out certain parts of it because it is so addicting. But what really comes about from it, is it leads to fear, depression, anxiety, and suicide rates that are eight times higher than they were a decade ago. Altogether the list, the diversity of sin, is mind blowing. But you have got to hand it to sin, it's equitable because all of us share in the same effect of sin. We live in a chaotic, sin-marred world where sin shows no partiality and no favoritism. It's truly equitable. Anybody can die, anybody can suffer, life can just really stink. It's not because God sends it. It's because we've chosen it because we are a depraved humanity. And we don't like the inclusiveness that sin has because it includes all of us, because all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

But the third corner is the antithesis of the depravity of the one humanity. There is only one remedy. Why does bad stuff happen to good people? I now answer that question by saying you understand that's only happened once. Right? There is one humanity but that one humanity shares in one depravity. Scripture is very clear, whether we're looking at Psalm 14:1-4 or Ephesians chapter 3. There is no one good, no not one. Except, of course, the righteous Son of God. That one teacher of the law was correct when he came to Jesus and he said, 'good teacher what must I do to inherit the Kingdom of heaven?' Do you remember, Jesus came back and said, "Why do you call me good? Only God is good." And Jesus, the son of God, is the one who came into this world for this one humanity that was suffering from the one depravity of sin. He came to be the literal scapegoat. The one on whom the sins of the entire community or humanity were laid. And He was taken outside of the city where those sins were nailed to the cross with Him. He's the One who made atonement, not the scapegoat in the Old Testament sacrifices. He was also the Passover Lamb. The One whose blood was shed to cover us, to wash us, and make us clean, and give us His white robe of righteousness; so that judgment might pass over us just like the Angel of death passed over the Israelites who had the blood of the Passover lamb over and around the door to their home. This Jesus is the One who put us ahead of Himself, who came to serve, instead of be served. Christ alone is good and God, and only God can save all.

You know they say that it is the history of American advertising "accept no substitute." I believe it started with slinky. Slinky, that wonderful metal toy. Accept no substitutes, make sure you get an original slinky. After the slinky came nerf, The nerf ball, accept no substitutes. That kind of advertising campaign became so popular that even the Germans joined in with Porsche, accept no substitutes.

Only Christ. He's the one remedy. Accept no substitutes. And yet when we look at Christ, we know He's the One, because only Christ can say, 'God the Father spoke from heaven and said: "this is my beloved son," at my baptism, when I was in the temple, and on the mount of transfiguration. But if God himself speaking from heaven's not enough

for you, how about the demons from below speaking on my behalf when they proclaimed, 'we know who you are.' And in Mark 3:11 said 'you are the son of God' or Luke chapter 4:23 where they say, 'you are the Holy One of God.' Or that man in the Gerasene's with the legion of demons in him, 'we know who you are Jesus, son of the Most High God.' Christ, the one remedy for the one humanity, that suffers one depravity.

What's the 4th corner? There's one community. The community is called The Redeemed. The definition of redeem is "the action of regaining possession of something in exchange for payment." Christ came according to Galatians 4, to redeem those under the law. Who were those under the law? All of us, because God's law applies to every one of us. And all of us fall short. But He came to redeem those under the law. All of us are under the law. He came to redeem all of us, so all are redeemed, but not all are saved. Because some don't like that definition, the action of regaining possession. They don't want to be owned. They don't want to be Christ's possession. They want to be; well, I want to be me, yeah part of depravity, pride. We don't want to be owned.

It would be kind of like, I don't know if you've watched that show Pawn Stars; but someone walking into a pawn shop to buy something that's been pawned. They're coming to regain possession of something that was once theirs. And they had to sell something. They needed some money so they had a Morgan silver dollar and they sold it to the pawn shop and they're coming in to redeem it to take it back so that they can have it again. And they go to pay for it and just imagine that Morgan silver dollar speaks and says, 'I don't wanna be owned. I just wanna be me and just sit on a shelf and look good by myself.'

You know when we think about the question that is asked, "Why does bad stuff happen to good people?" We're asking the wrong question. The real question we should be asking, in light of these four points, is simply this: **"Why in the world does good stuff (forgiveness, redemption, salvation) happen to bad people (depraved humanity)?"**

And that's the message of Easter because God loves us. We are one humanity, created by Him in His image, and He sent His son, His one and only Son, as the one remedy to redeem us. And He did that by dying on the cross, paying the price of sin, for the wages of sin is death. And then on Easter overcoming sin through His resurrection.

Whereupon as we will see at the end of the Easter season, He ascended into heaven and He said that He goes there to prepare a place for us so that where He is, there we may be also. Those who He redeemed. "Why in the world does really good stuff happen to us bad people?" Because God is God and He has a remedy. He has a remedy for those who don't mind being His possession, being owned by Him, the loving Creator and Redeemer of His world.

In our Savior's Name, Amen.