

Growth Group Questions

8th Sunday after Pentecost, July 23, 2023

Introduction

“If there is a God, why does he allow so much evil in this world?”
It’s the most common question of the atheist skeptic and the first doubt Satan brings to us in times of difficulty. How have you answered that question when someone asked you?

Into the Word – Isaiah 44:6-11

1. In the first half of the text we find God sarcastically asking those who think they are his equal to stand before him. What do each of the four names of God in verse 6 tell us about this one true God?
2. In Isaiah 44 the prophet is describing his people in captivity in Babylon. God says in verse 8 that he knew Israel’s exile would happen though – it wasn’t outside his plans. How does understanding God’s omniscience (all-knowingness) help us endure evil in this world?
3. How does the coming judgment God describes in verse 11 help us endure evil in this world?

Into the Word – Romans 1:18-25

4. In verse 20 God talks about what we call the “natural knowledge of God.” What evidence does God give to all people that he exists and what can people know about him from those sources? Why then do we need Scripture?
5. Verses 21-23 talk about idolatry. What kind of idols tempt us?

6. “God gave them over...” For some, living a sinful life contrary to God’s will is itself a kind of judgment from God already. Explain how “letting them have it their way” is a judgment and not a blessing from God.
7. How does that (question 6) help us endure evil in this world?

Into the Word – Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

8. There is a weed in Israel that is indistinguishable from wheat until late in the growing season when the fully grown heads of grain make it obvious. Read Jesus’ explanation of the parable and identify the different kinds of “people of the evil one.”
9. One type of “people of the evil one” would be hypocrites in the church. We can’t always identify the hypocrites among us but God knows the heart. How does that help us endure evil in this world? And in the visible churches?
10. We might be tempted to focus on the burning fire of judgment described here for the lost, but what blessing does Jesus promise for the righteous? How does that help us endure evil in this world?
11. Pray for a friend, family member, or neighbor who is currently lost in their sin. Ask God to miraculously bring them into his harvest as a fruitful “person of the kingdom.”

Closing Prayer

Jesus, we thank you for every blessing that you give to us in this evil world. Turn our eyes to the eternal home that awaits us, and help us to endure in faith until we see your glorious return. Amen.