

7th Sunday after Pentecost, July 7, Study Guide

Why do the Innocent Suffer?



Key Themes

Doubt as a Spiritual Tool: Doubt can be a motivator and a tool in our spiritual lives. It pushes us to seek deeper understanding and stronger faith.

Suffering & God: Everybody suffers, both visible and invisible suffering. Doubt leads us to examine our assumptions about God, suffering, and ourselves.

Common Misconceptions About Suffering and God:

- “God will protect you from harm if you have faith.” Jesus suffered, and so will we.
- “Suffering is punishment for sin.” Consequences vs. punishment. Story of Job.
- “Everything happens for a reason.” Misuse of God’s name.

God’s Work Amidst Suffering:

- Healing the brokenness and pain caused by human actions.
- God’s presence and comfort in suffering.
- Bringing good out of suffering without causing it.

Causes of Suffering

- Human Actions: Consequences of free will and poor decisions.
- Natural Disasters: Earthquakes, hurricanes, and the natural order.
- Illness: Physical and mental health challenges.
- Self-sabotage: Personal decisions and their impacts.

Scripture Reading

Book of Job
Romans 12:21

Romans 5:3-4
Genesis 1:27-28

Discussion Questions

- *Think about a personal experience with suffering. How did it challenge your faith? How did it deepen your understanding of God?*
- *What are some common misconceptions about suffering that you’ve encountered?*
- *In what ways can we see God bringing good out of suffering in our lives and communities?*
- *Discuss practical ways to support those who are suffering in your community.*
- *Explore how you can use doubt as a tool for deeper faith and understanding of God’s character.*

Reflection

- *How can we reconcile the presence of suffering with the belief in a loving and powerful God?*
- *Reflect on Genesis 1:27-28 and consider the implications of being created in God’s image, particularly in the context of suffering.*