

ACCESS, 9/15 - Hurricane Harvey

Read:

Romans 8:28 // ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 // ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Romans 5:3-4 // ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

Romans 8:35 // ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

John 16:33 // ³³ I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Big Questions:

- How could God allow this suffering to happen? Is he not able? Not willing? Not good?
- Why is this happening? Is it my fault? What good could possibly come from this?
- What should our response be to suffering and disaster?

Teaching Points:

- God is ultimately concerned with our long-term good, not our current happiness
- Just because we can't see the point in suffering doesn't mean there is no point to it
- We don't know why these things happen (and no one can know for sure)
- Suffering is temporary, we look forward to the greater glory that is to come through
- Jesus knows our suffering in a real, experiential way

Discussion Questions:

- How should we react to disasters and suffering in this world as Christians?
- What would make you doubt God's goodness? Why? What does that reveal about your relationship with God?
- What do you value most in your life, and could you "lose it all"?
- Share a time you suffered in the past. Do you see your circumstances now than you did then?

Further Resources:

- <http://fervr.net/teen-life/the-reality-of-suffering>
- <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/trusting-god-when-the-pain-seems-pointless>