**If God is good, why does evil exist?**

I. Introduction

A. “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” –C.S. Lewis. Christianity answers our most significant questions and puts the pieces of life together into a coherent whole.

B. The problem of evil. There is an intellectual side to this and a very emotional side to this. When engaging people who are wrestling with this issue, we have to acknowledge and be sensitive to both sides.

II. An apologetic for the question: If God is good, why does evil exist?

A. God did not create evil; evil is the result of the moral accountability of humanity. Evil is simply the absence or the corruption of the good things God created.

B. God may have morally sufficient reasons to allow evil and suffering to exist.

1. Consider the analogy of a parent taking a child to the doctor to get a shot.

2. Parents may allow or even cause pain for the good of the child may not understand because the gap in knowledge between a parent and child is so great.

3. How much more is the gap in knowledge between an infinite God and his finite creatures?

C. Evil is actually evidence for God

1. If there really is no God, then there is no absolute moral law to appeal to in saying that evil seems wrong and unfair.

2. Only if there is some objective standard of good, can a person complain that such a standard has been violated, but that objective standard would actually point to, not away from, the existence of God.

3. Analogy: In a soccer game, to appeal to the ref when a foul is committed only makes sense if there are some objective rules built into the game of soccer.

D. The soul-making defense

1. God’s purpose for humanity is not simply happiness (the accumulation of pleasurable experiences) but rather character (becoming the kind of people who glorify God)

2. We all know how suffering can produce character (see James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:3-5)

E. Eternal Perspective

1. Analogy: 80 years of life can change the perspective we have on an early painful experience (such as circumcision)

2. Likewise, eternity can change our perspective on the pain of this relatively brief life (2 Cor 4:17-18)

F. What’s the atheist’s alternative to Christianity’s answers to these questions?

III. Conclusion

A. What are my expectations of God? What obligations does he have to me? Am I owed a life of pleasure free from pain?

-Consider Hebrews 5:7-9 where even Jesus himself had to learn obedience through suffering. Surely, we too will need to suffer in this life.

B. What are we doing about the evil and suffering around us?

-How are we using our time, treasure, and talents to share the good news of the cross with the world?

**Discussion Questions**

1. What was the most helpful answer for you personally regarding the question: “if God is good, why does evil exist?” What specifically was helpful or was a new idea for you?

2. Are there any other answers to the question of evil not mentioned on Sunday that have been helpful for you in the past?

3. Consider the question posed in the conclusion of Sunday’s message: What are my expectations of God? What obligations does he have to me? As you consider how you actually live your life day-to-day, what answer do you tend to give to that question, implicitly or explicitly ?

4. Is there anything specific you feel called to do as a result of Sunday’s message?