

ASKING FOR A FRIEND

SEEKING ANSWERS TO CONTROVERSIAL
QUESTIONS THAT WE ALL WANT TO ASK



PRAYING

FOR

OTHERS

- Pray silently for the prayer request printed in your worship guide.
- Our Second Grade students
- Our small group led by Dean & Raney Haney
- Our North Katy Campus
- Neighboring church service this morning at Mercy Church
- The Raj*put of India
- Conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe

We ask all this for the glory of Your name.

Global Week of Prayer, September 6–13: We sense God's invitation to unite together as a House of Prayer for All Nations, to lift up the name of Jesus with a corporate Prayer Gathering each night from 7-8PM, Monday-Friday, and then a Non-stop Prayer Gathering Burn on Saturday from 8AM-6PM. Come join the Prayer Gathering in the Community Prayer Center.

Need Prayer? Prayer opportunities in the Community Prayer Center:

- **Prophetic Prayer** – 2nd Sundays, 10:30AM
- **Healing Prayer** – 4th Sundays, 10:30AM
- **Submit a Prayer Request** – WhatIsGrace.org/prayer-wall

Scan the QR code for the full schedule of prayer opportunities.



Asking for a Friend

“The Problem of Evil” – Genesis 2-3

August 16, 2026

Back to School Sermon Series

ASKING FOR A FRIEND	
<i>Seeking Answers to Questions That We All Want to Ask</i>	
Date	Message Title
Aug 16	PROBLEM OF EVIL: If God is Good and All-Powerful, Then Why is There So Much Suffering, Disease, and Tragedy in the World?
Aug 23	OUT-DATED BOOK: Doesn't the Bible's Views About Slavery and Women Make It Unreliable and Not Relevant for Today?
Aug 30	HYPOCRITES: Why Should I Come to Church When It's Made Up of a Bunch of Hypocrites?
Sept 6	INTOLERANCE: Isn't It Intolerant and Unfair to Claim That Jesus is the Only Way to Heaven? What About Other Religions? What About Good People Who Have Never Heard of Jesus?
Sept 13	SCIENCE: How Do You Reconcile Scientific Evidence Like Evolution with the Creation Story? Don't Science and the Bible Contradict Each Other?
Sept 20	PURPOSE: What on Earth Am I Here For? What is My Purpose?

The #1 Question I Hear People Asking for a Friend

- The #1 question I hear people asking: If God is good and all-powerful, then why is there so much suffering, disease, and tragedy in the world?
- This is my question, too!!! Although I know some of the answers, I do not know all of the answers in this life.
- **1 Corinthians 13:12** - *Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*
- C.S. Lewis: “The first words that will come out of our mouths when we get to heaven will be ‘Of course!’”
- Today's bottom line:

God can _____ what we cannot _____.

Some Answers That Have Significantly Helped Me (Partially) Understand Suffering and the Problem of Evil

- 1. Suffering is a result of _____ and free will.**
 - Erwin McManus' radio story
 - **Genesis 2:7-9,15-17; 3:1-7,22-24**
 - If you want to know why such-n-such happened, the answer is because of Adam and Eve's original choice to sin which brought sin and death and suffering and pain into this world. Before Genesis 3, there was no pain or suffering in this world.

2. God's definition of _____ is higher and better and longer term than our definition of _____.

- We tend to define good in terms of our happiness this minute or this month or this year or this decade or this life. God defines good in terms of billions of years!!!!
- **Romans 8:28** – *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.*
- **Genesis 50:20** – *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*
- **Isaiah 55:8-9** - *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."*
- **Romans 8:18** – *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*
- Randy Alcorn: "God's sovereignty is the biblical teaching that all things remain under God's rule and nothing happens without either His direction or permission. God works in all things for the good of His children (Romans 8:28). These 'all things' include evil and suffering. God doesn't commit moral evil, but He can use any evil for good purposes. Ephesians 1:11 says that God 'works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.' 'Everything' is comprehensive, allowing for no exceptions. God works even in those things done against His moral will, to bring them into conformity with His purpose and according to His plan. God can and will redeem the worst thing that ever happens to His child."

3. God understands our suffering because He has _____ Himself.

- C.S. Lewis: "Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: 'What! You too? I thought I was the only one.'"
- When God saw our suffering and pain, He did not send us a principle or a lecture of some helpful thoughts and sayings. He sent Himself. Pain is a personal problem, so God sent a personal solution in His Son Jesus Christ. The answer to suffering is not a principle but a Person.
- **Romans 5:8** – *But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
- **Isaiah 53:3-6** – *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

- **Hebrews 4:14-16** – *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

4. God uses suffering to _____ like His Son Jesus.

- **Romans 8:28-29** – *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.*
- **James 1:2-4** - *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*
- Rick Warren: “Character building is a slow process. Whenever we try to avoid or escape the difficulties in life, we short-circuit the process, delay our growth, and actually end up with a worse kind of pain – the worthless type that accompanies denial and avoidance. When you grasp the eternal consequences of your character development, you’ll pray fewer ‘Comfort me’ prayers and more ‘Conform me’ prayers.... If you are facing trouble right now, don’t ask, ‘Why me?’ Instead ask, ‘What do you want me to learn?’ Then trust God and keep on doing what’s right.”

5. God uses suffering to help us _____ and His Word more intimately.

- **Philippians 3:10** – *I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him....*
- **Psalms 119:71** – *It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn Your decrees.*

6. God patiently waits to end all evil so that evil (sinful) people will have _____ to respond to His invitation and be saved.

- **2 Peter 3:9** – *The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*
- God WILL bring an end to all suffering and evil one Day, but when He does, time is up!! So, every day that He waits is a day of mercy giving more time and opportunity for those who have not been saved yet.

7. The ultimate answer to the suffering question is the

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- **John 9:1-3** – *As (Jesus) went along, He saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."*
 - **John 11:4** – *When He heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."*
 - This point is so important that we are going to dedicate an entire message to this on Sunday, September 20.

Today's Application – My response to what I've heard from God's Word today is to...

- ☐ Acknowledge my own contribution to suffering in this world as I have made the same decision as Adam and Eve and have sinned. Lord, I am sorry for my sin. I repent.
- ☐ Receive and embrace the Person of Jesus Christ who suffered on my behalf so that I might be forgiven and have eternal life free of suffering for eternity.
- ☐ Trust God for the eternal good that He is working in my life through my circumstances and even through my suffering.
- ☐ Invite God to conform me to the image of His Son Jesus through the difficult things in my life.
- ☐ Have a sense of urgency in sharing the way of salvation through Jesus with others before time is up!
- ☐ Join a group or class at Grace Fellowship in order to get to know other people and to learn from the Bible. More info about groups at WhatIsGrace.org/SpiritualFormation
- ☐ Join a class at Grace Fellowship called "True and Good: Living and Sharing the Biblical Worldview" that is a great resource to help you explore questions and share your faith. More info at WhatIsGrace.org/Worldview
- ☐ Live for His glory above all else.
- ☐ Do something to relieve suffering in our world – feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned. Participate in The Church Has Left the Building on October 18. More info at WhatIsGrace.org/CHLB

Bottom Line: God can redeem what we cannot explain.



CARE MINISTRY CLASSES

Have you wondered what your next step should be? No matter what you are facing, you are not alone. See what God says! We offer the following groups to help guide you through some of the most challenging situations you may face, and registration is ongoing!

DivorceCare — Starts Monday, August 17
Marriage Matters — Starts Monday, August 17
Financial Peace — Starts Monday, August 17
GriefShare — Starts Wednesday, August 26
Parenting with Grace — Special event on Sunday, Sept 20

For more information and to register, visit WhatIsGrace.org/Care.
For confidential care email BMorton@WhatIsGrace.org

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Bible Studies and Groups

- Men's and Women's Bible Study (AM & PM)
- Emotionally Healthy Discipleship
- Alpha
- ibloom
- Men's and Women's Mentoring
- Small Groups
- Young Adults and Singles Communities

Scan the QR code for the full Fall schedule and visit the lobby to learn more about taking your next step as a disciple of Jesus!





You're Invited to **CONNECTING** at Grace

Two Sundays. One great experience.



Whether you're brand new to Grace Fellowship or ready to get more involved (ENGAGE, GROW, and SERVE), this experience will help you build relationships, find community and feel more at home.

You're invited to Two Sundays

Sunday, September 13 and 20 | 12:30-2:00PM

In the Chapel at The Gathering Place

Lunch and childcare are included both Sundays.

Visit the Welcome Center or scan the QR code to register.
Our pastors and ministry leaders look forward to meeting you!



Come Monday mornings or Tuesday evenings and grow in Christ with us! We meet weekly to share Christ-centered friendship, teaching, live speakers and video curriculum during large group time.

fearless **MOM**
PARENTING WITH COURAGE,
PURPOSE AND LAUGHTER



Starting September 14 (Mondays) or September 15 (Tuesdays)

- Mondays 9:30-11:30AM in the Gathering Place Chapel OR
- Tuesdays 6:30-8:30PM in the Gathering Place Large Room (126)



Grace Fellowship
MEN'S RETREAT
October 2-3 | Stoney Creek Ranch



**Registration
Now Open**

