

Hurricane Irma. You know where it happened. Antigua. St. Martin. Florida. You know when it occurred. September 9th, 2017. You know what destruction occurred. But the big question is why? Because of global warming? Because God is angry with America? Was it just a result of living in a sinful world, with nature being cursed? Is it one of the signs before Jesus returns? Or is there no specific “why?” That’s the tough question. Today, let’s find out more about our Why Questions? And let me assure you as you listen to this message: Trust God Knows What He is Best!

When Hurricane Irma hit, people naturally wanted to know “why?” Some claimed it was President Trump’s fault for breaking the Paris Global warming accord. Others claimed it was Satan’s fault. One pastor said that God did it because he hates the sinful path America is on. Sometimes the reason just can’t be determined. Sometimes, even when God does explain the why, it is hard for us to swallow. I think for instance of the command that God gave the Israelites. When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering destroy all the people totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. My mind naturally asks the question, “why? Why didn’t God allow at least the infants to live? It’s like the Dreamers act. Why punish the children for their parents coming here illegally?

God’s answer to the why question. I want you to put to death every last one of them so that you don’t fall into idolatry yourselves. I am trying to protect you. Accept my reasoning, even though it may be tough to swallow.

Or remember the story of Ananias and Sapphira. They had tried to cheat the Lord. They had sold a piece of property - but instead of deciding to give all of the proceeds to the Lord, they decided to only give a portion of it to the Lord. So when they brought their offering to Peter, they lied about how much they had given. As a result, God first struck Ananias dead on the spot, and then He struck Sapphira dead as well. I look at that situation and say to myself, “wasn’t that kind of harsh?” Why would God act in such a way? Maybe you’ve had similar questions.

God’s answer. I want you to see that all sin is a serious offense to me, and deserving of punishment and death. Even a sin that you may do regularly, that you don’t think is that bad, like telling a lie to someone. It is damnable. You need the remedy I have provided for your sins. At times, God may give us an answer to the Why Question, and it may be tough to swallow.

Sometimes the answer to our why question is found in the end result. The end result may be years down the road before we see it. Joseph may have wondered why God allowed him to be sold into slavery. But God’s wisdom showed through when he ended up the king of Egypt and saving thousands of lives. It took 17 years before Joseph had an answer to his “why” question. When Job ended up with humility as well as two times more than he started with, it all seemed to come out in the wash. It reminds me of a poem written by a Confederate soldier - who came to realize that God was wiser than he -I asked God for strength, that I might achieve. I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey...I asked for health, that I might do great things. I was given infirmity, that I might do better things . .I asked for riches, that I might be happy. I was given poverty, that I might be wise. . .I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men. I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God . . .I asked for all things, that I might

enjoy life. I was given life, that I might enjoy all things. . . I got nothing I asked for - but everything I had hoped for. Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered. I am, among men, most richly blessed!

Sometimes when we search God's Word we can find some satisfying answers. But how often is it that we are still left with questions. Life doesn't always end up neat and tidy - as it did in the case of Joseph and his family. Sometimes wives are left to fend for years and years alone after they lose their spouses. Sometimes couples spend a lifetime yearning for a child while thousands of others are given children they never wanted in the first place. Things never come together or end happily ever after - at least not physically. Many people - even Christians - die lonely and disheartened with life on this earth. It's at times like this - when things don't work out as planned - that we tend to cry out more and more - wondering to God, "why?"

It's kind of strange, isn't it? Dogs are content with their dogginess, and sheep with their sheepishness, but not human beings. When God does something that is beyond our understanding, we stomp our feet at God and demand to know "why?" We accuse God of not caring or being unloving. In the back of our minds we wonder if God really knows what He's doing. You might compare it to a husband and a wife that has been married for 34 years. The husband goes away on a business trip, but he can't tell her about it due to company policy. So the wife decides to hire a private detective to check up on him. Such a move would be a slap in the face to the husband, a vote of no confidence. We do that to God when we look at him with a questioning glance. How does God feel when we angrily question if he knows what he is doing. Listen to how he responded to Job. Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said: 2 "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? 3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. 4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. 5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Notice how God dealt with this situation. He never even gave Job an answer to his questions. His answer was, "don't question me! I know what I'm doing.

Why did God deal with Job like this? Why does He often not give us reasons for what He does in our lives? Paul gives us basically three reasons that I could find in today's text. Number One - Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" The simple fact is that often times we can't understand! It's like when a little child comes up to you and asks you, "Where did God come from?" Do you give him a long in depth explanation. Or do you just say, "He was just there." Or if someone started to talk to you about quantum physics. You would say, "This is Greek to me. I don't understand a word of what you are talking about." So it is with God. At this point, we just can't understand it with these minds of ours. And that's what Paul says - God's judgments are UNTRACEABLE! Our minds are not able to comprehend the how and why.

Then Paul proceeds with the second reason why God doesn't always explain Himself: "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" This is a quote of God's response to Job in Job 41. For us to even ask "why" insinuates that we think God owes us something. But

what does God say in Romans 3:23? All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. God doesn't owe us a thing. He graciously gave us a body, food, clothing, shelter, and we repeatedly break his commandments. If anything, we should be cast aside from Him into hell for the times we have broken his commandments. And we are going to question his judgments. Answer 2. He doesn't owe us an explanation. We don't deserve one.

This is where God's ways seem to be completely irrational to the human mind. Instead of giving up on the human race and just annihilating it and starting from scratch - He kept Noah alive through the flood. And then, He even sunk so low as to send His own Son to become one of these weak human beings. He even allowed His own Son to be mocked, flogged and crucified for the sins of the world. Instead of making us suffer for questioning His judgments, God decided to suffer for us and judge His own Son! He decided to love us when there was no reason to! Even when we reject Him, He never stops reaching out to us - taking every step possible to bring us back into His fold! Why would God send His only Son to die for a world of sinners who hated Him in the first place? Why would He blame His Son for what WE did and send Him to hell instead? Why would Jesus volunteer for such a thing - when He would know that a majority of the world would still reject His free gift? Who of us can really understand this judgment? Who of us can really comprehend such mercy? It's beyond our mind and our sense of justice. Oh the depths of God's love. He owes us nothing, including an explanation behind His actions.

The third reason that God doesn't need to explain Himself is as follows: All things are from Him and through him. The sun wouldn't shine if God didn't let it. The earth wouldn't move if God didn't move it. The Detroit Lions wouldn't win if God didn't let them. Let's take it a step further. Cancer, AIDS, and every other epidemic wouldn't exist if God didn't allow it or even cause it to happen. The devil would have no power if God didn't give it to him. Hell itself would cease to exist if God didn't keep the fire burning.

That's hard for us to swallow, until Paul tells us "to him are all things." You might compare it to a runaway train. Imagine that you owned a country - and within this country a train had gone out of control and was going to do a mass amount of destruction. But you had the power to direct the train. Instead of having the train wreck a palace or a nice building, you could use it to destroy an abandoned warehouse that needed to be destroyed anyway. You could use it to wipe out a decent building that you wanted to rebuild even better. That, in a sense, is how God controls evil. The evil seems out of control in this country. Yet all things somehow work out to God's glory. As Paul said to him are all things. The devil, as evil as He is, somehow ultimately serves God's purpose either to punish those who reject Him or to discipline His children. When we know this, we can be content when God doesn't give an answer to our specific questions.

Paul understood that sometimes we may never know the "why" in this life. In 1 Corinthians 13:12 he said, Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror. Instead of being frustrated over this, think of how glorious it will be then, on Judgment Day, for God to reveal to us His whole plan. A time when every Why question will be understood. So for now people, be assured, "God Knows What He is Doing!" Trust Him! He won't let you down.