



Deeper Application Message Guide

"If God loves us why is there so much pain & suffering?"

Speaker: Pastor Jeff Love

Sermon Series: "You Asked for It"

Week of April 11, 2010

Getting Started

- 1) How do you view justice? Discuss what it means for something or someone to be just.
 - a) Do you think people from different backgrounds (ex: Muslim, Christian, non-religious, etc.) view justice differently? Explain.
- 2) Think of a time when a circumstance seemed unfair or unjust. Was your natural tendency to desire someone be held responsible or do you just accept the circumstance? Explain.
- 3) When we experience pain and suffering it can have an affect on our beliefs about God. Do you know someone whose beliefs were shaken, or have you ever questioned God's existence or love in times of difficulty? Explain.
 - a) Some people question God's love in times of trouble or suffering. Is it acceptable to question God in these times?
- 4) Jesus was very misunderstood by the people when he walked this Earth. It was only after he had completed His mission of death and resurrection that His own followers understood why He had to suffer. Is it possible for evil and suffering to have an eternal purpose, which we cannot see until its completion?
 - a) How might this change our view of God when we see suffering and pain?

Into the Bible

- 5) Read **John 16:33** Jesus, Who understands everything about this life, tells us we will have trouble, but to take heart because he has overcome.
 - a) What happens if we focus only on the trouble in life?
 - b) Why would Jesus tell us we would have trouble rather than just removing it?

- 6) Read **II Corinthians 1:4** It is apparent that God allows certain things in our lives so that in the future we can help others.
 - a) Think of a time when your past experience has been used to help someone else or perhaps someone else helped you. Were you able to see God's love through that experience? Explain.
 - b) Our struggles are very real and can be understandably difficult. However, do you feel people grow more during times of struggle or times of ease?
 - c) Is it possible not to grow in a time of struggle? Explain.
- 7) Read **Isaiah 55:8-9**. Scripture tells us that it is basically impossible for us to understand all the ways of God. We cannot even understand His thoughts.
 - a) Does this truth bring you comfort or does it make you uneasy? Why?
 - b) If we insist on knowing what we can't understand, or requiring God to be accountable to us, we are asking Him to justify Himself, even though we are the ones who lack understanding. What kind of affect could this have on our view of God?

Digging Deeper

- 8) When pain & suffering enter our lives it can be difficult, especially when we don't have a clear understanding as to why. It is important to remember the blessings in our lives and God's past faithfulness. Jeff shared that God knows what is needed to accomplish His will and that He never wastes a hurt.

There are only two choices during these times of trouble.

- 1) Turn to God
- 2) Turn away from God

Honestly ask yourself where you are with this choice and what it means to trust God in all things.