

Why? A Series in Theodicy Part 5: God's Sovereignty

Discussion Guide – June 22, 2025

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. Romans 8:28

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Phil. 2:5-7

Quotes:

“What you believe about God determines the quality of your relationship with him—and the kind of person you become.” Greg Boyd

God's sovereignty and his power is not about meticulous control but about co-suffering love.

“The death of Jesus on the cross is the centre of all Christian theology... It is in this helplessness that the omnipotence of God is to be found.” Jürgen Moltmann

God's all-powerfulness is not revealed in his control of all things but rather in his ability to redeem all things.

“A people without lament will soon forget how to long for justice. We need more weeping in our sanctuaries. More prayers that end in silence. More songs that tremble with ache. Hope and joy are ours in Christ, but we get there through repentance and lament.” Dr. Graham Joseph Hill

Discussion Questions

1. What's your gut reaction to the idea that God doesn't control everything, but can redeem anything? How does this view of God's sovereignty challenge or comfort you?
2. Why do you think we are so drawn to a view of God that emphasizes control and prevention, rather than one centered on co-suffering and redemption? What might that say about our assumptions about power?
3. Martin Luther said “A theology of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.” Why is it important to name suffering as evil rather than explain it away? How does this shape the way we respond to the suffering of others?
4. How does the image of God as a “wounded healer” shift your understanding of divine strength and love? What does it mean for you that God's power is most clearly revealed in self-emptying?
5. The sermon compared God's relationship with us to a good parent giving freedom to their kids. How does that metaphor help (or not help) you make sense of human suffering and divine love?