

Life & death are part of the plan

- o Rmbr, the world is cursed by God – Gen 3:17-18, go read it.
- Some believe that God does not *ordain* natural disaster but only *permits* it. This will mess w/ your mind b/c why would he permit it? Clair at pool. He's not obligated
- o Psalm 135:6-7, "Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses."
- o Deut 28:63 – read it! "Just as it pleases the LORD to make you prosper..."
- o Nature displays his beauty and his justice/wrath: The Flood (Gen 6:17), the plagues in Ex, Earthquake (Numb 16:31), Jonah, Earthquake to help Jonathan w/ philistines (1 Sam 14:15), Jesus in boat (Mk 4:35), Earthquake for Paul & Silas
 - Ill: If you don't believe that he is involved, then let me ask you, have you ever prayed for the weather? Wedding? School? Storm? Etc. my wed dy
 - He is the giver of life and therefore can take life. Not confined by 10 com.
 - Is 55:8-9, "My thoughts are not your thoughts... my ways are not..."
- God does not delight in the suffering of His people (different than Allah). Ps 86:15, "You...are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding..."
- APP: Trust Him b/c he is always working with an eternal perspective. John Piper, when writing about the earthquake in Turkey said, "[God] has hundreds of thousands of purposes, most of which will remain hidden to us until we are able to grasp them at the end of the age."
- He said to Moses in Exodus 4, "I am who I am [not who you want me to be]"

IF GOD LOVES EVERYONE AS MUCH AS HE SAYS HE DOES, WHY DOES HE LET PEOPLE STARVE AND SUFFER?

- Some what answered above – His ways are not our ways. He knows this we don't. This gives us a chance to respond. Even though he created the laws of nature, he calls us to help and serve those in need. We give thanks for this and get involved.
- We must never be quick to speak or shove guilt onto the hurting (like Job's friends), they will absorb it and soon be drowned by remorse. A human community needs to be honest and renovating, but also comforting and cultivating. Ppl over projects! – this week for me: Keith, at Panda Express, at the coffee shop, family. Etc.
- Lamentations 2:19, "Arise, cry out in the night, the beginning of the night watches! Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord! Lift your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint for hunger at the head of every street."

WHY SHOULD I PRAY IF GOD ALREADY HAS A PLAN?

- BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT GOD. And you are not in control. ☺ but I get why you are asking – If God knows everything and it already taking care of the outcome, then why should I pray. Like in my situation with Keith –
 1. Because I am invited and commanded to do so. "Ask... knock... seek..."
 2. Because I trust that God knows better than me.
- This is one of the 'Parallel' teachings in the bible – like Predestination (don't shoot) and Free Will, Christ's Humanity and deity, trinity: 3n1 – like all these both truths exist in scripture. Don't have to figure them out b/c "god's ways are not mans"

AS A BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN, WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSE TO THINK ABOUT CREMATION? (wow, a Q on death – am I boring you that much? ☺)

- The bible is not specific on this. Burning of people in Kings but we don't have to
- Not common in NT and Israel - there were many tombs & burial sites mentioned.
- Some ppl think it is not okay because we will all be resurrected when Christ returns – 1 Thes 4:16, "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a

cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first." ("Bummer" not from JC)

- o If God can raise dead, it is not more difficult for him to raise ashes. just cooler ☺
- o He created them in the first place, so he can re-create them pretty easily.
- o If anything, cremation just expedites, "From dust I cam and dust I return in Ecc.
- Bottom line: It is an area of Christian freedom – do what glorifies God most.

Last Q: most embarrassing moment – Fire shoes, ripped Jeans, 11K ppl, spinning stg

CLOSING THOUGHT ON SUFFERING AND GUILT:

- Another type of suffering is guilt – over the past, over sin, over loss, over what you can't change. Guilt can make a man hide from God because they cannot face God feeling that they have wronged Him, someone else, or themselves. People will separate themselves from God, becoming a fugitive from His presence b/c of guilt.
- The reality is that we are all living in a fallen world. The only change that can be done is in the future. We have to rely and relate with God to give us the strength to make it through the pain and guilt.
- We all suffer in all different ways. Our hope must be built on God and we forever must trust His sovereignty.

Forgiveness on forehead

Finally – God is not another version of us. Don't think of his word as if it is from other 'being' like yourself. Don't try to peg His actions and reactions as how a person should be. God is Holy and wholly different. Trust him with your life. Get to know him better.

PRAY

Closing thoughts:

- Connection Card
- Next Week
- Woman's event tomorrow
- Giving
- "All About Jesus"

He is love but His ways are a mystery

New orleans