



sermon notes

So, what you're trying to say is...?

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I. What would lead us to saying things that are TRUEish?

What is "truth" when it comes to God and what are the hard questions we ask of God in times of uncertainty or ambiguity?

II. So what are the flaws in saying "Everything happens for a reason"?

- Part of being a disciple of Jesus Christ is not only learning the ways in which we live out our beliefs, but also how we _____ them.
- The half-truth in this statement is that certain actions will have certain consequences or results. That we can agree on.
- Saying this calls two understandings about God into question:

_____ -How God is at work in us and the rest of Creation.

_____ -God's unique realm of divine authority.

In practice, these play out in either one of two belief patterns:

- _____ -God's will is in every detail and personal choice is absent.
- _____ -God is far removed once Creation is complete.

But who do we believe God to be?

- We spend so much time trying to define God in spaces of suffering when alternatively; we could be welcoming God's presence recognizing that it has always been always will be.

Seek first [God's] kingdom and [God's] righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well...

Matthew 6:33-34, NIV

- God's relationship with us is one rooted in _____ as opposed to _____.
- We are not responsible for dictating God's _____; instead, we support the healing work God is already doing.

III. Three Concerns

A. Justification for our Actions

- This concern suggests that God's will _____ one's personal agenda.

"Everything happens for a reason" is a free pass that gives permission for us to say that God is behind any and everything we say or do.

There were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you...

2 Peter 2:1-3, NIV

B. Putting the Blame on God

- This concern implies that God wills for us to suffer.
- _____ is not of God...God has desired _____ from the beginning.
- We share in a responsibility to Creation with God and God wants us to delight in what we have been given.

C. Fatalism

- Fatalism does not leave room for _____.

Leave her alone...It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.

John 12:7-8, NIV

- Hope is crucial to the gospel message because it seeks to overcome the injustices or suffering we would otherwise ignore.

I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

John 11:25, NRSV

IV. How can we repurpose our language around suffering?

- God *isn't* the suffering, but God *is* with us or alongside us in the midst of our trying times.

We know that God works all things together for good for the ones who love God, for those who are called according to God's purpose.

Romans 8:28, CEB

V. Alternative ways to avoid this half-truth:

- Begin by naming and affirming your feelings or the feelings of one another.
- Ask the question: "What does God's faithfulness look like in the midst of the scattered fragments of life?"
- Look at God's providence through a lens of _____.

Primary sources for today's sermon include [Half Truths](#) by Adam Hamilton Duke Divinity Theology Lectures by Rev. Dr. Willie Jennings.