

**21 If God is so good, how do you explain all the wickedness in the world. Doesn't God care?**

*If God is so good, how do you explain all the wickedness in the world. Doesn't God care?* For Christians it's the FAQ above all FAQs, the most frequently asked question we get.

Deep down people want to believe there's a good God. When they encounter horrid things and horrid people that faith crumbles. To believe in a good God in the face of all the wickedness in the world seems either harsh or soft minded depending on people's stance.

The best approach to this question is to tell a powerful story.

For example you can't explain the wickedness behind Auschwitz but you need to hear about Maximilian Kolbe. This priest sheltered some 2,000 Jews from the wickedness of the Nazis in his Polish friary to be finally arrested by the German Gestapo and be sent himself to Auschwitz.

A man from Kolbe's barracks vanished in the summer of 1941. The camp commandant ordered that 10 men be chosen from the same barracks to be starved to death so as to deter further escape attempts. As these men were selected one of them cried out lamenting the family he would leave behind. Kolbe, a celibate priest volunteered to take his place.

In the starvation cell Fr. Maximilian led the men in songs of praise to God. After three weeks only Kolbe and three others were still alive. We are told by witnesses that Kolbe's death was heroic. Each time the guards checked on him he was calmly standing or kneeling in the middle of the cell while the others lay moaning or complaining around him.

In the end they murdered him by injecting him with carbolic acid. Those present at the injection say he raised his left arm to welcome his death just as Christ welcomed his Cross.

I can't explain Auschwitz but I can point to God being there in Maximilian Kolbe. We can't explain the wickedness in the world but we can point to God's goodness in the midst of it.

If God were less good he'd have made us puppets lacking freedom to love. Because he's made us free we're capable of both great good and great evil. The world God made produced both Maximilian Kolbe and Adolph Hitler. Both were also baptised Christians. One lived out his baptism as a man of God, the other forsook his baptism to build his own kingdom, the ill-fated Third Reich.

So much misery in the world traces back to how people use the freedom they've been given. When, as in the case of Hitler, they make bad choices the whole world can end up feeling the consequences.

If you condemn the Creator for the wickedness in the world you're condemning him for granting human beings the freedom to mess up.

70% of all website 'hits' worldwide are to pornographic sites. Would you use that as an excuse to condemn the internet when it hosts so many valuable social networks? When it generates so much creativity through the sharing of ideas?

You have to take the rough with the smooth and that's a truth that goes right into the heart of God. The Cross of Jesus shows what wickedness does to God (1 Peter 2:24). Can you look at the Cross and say he doesn't care about it? In Christian faith we have a God who suffers along with us, and comforts us in our weakness. God uses our suffering, as he did even in Auschwitz, to help us comfort and help one another in the face of evil.

God can take our pain and suffering and turn it around for good.

The story of Joseph in the first book of the Bible is a roller coaster of a story. In the last chapter of the book of Genesis Joseph forgives his brothers who had tried to murder him out of jealousy. *'Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people'* (Genesis 50v20) Joseph says, referring to his stewardship in Egypt which his brothers made happen and which saved the land from the consequences of famine.

*If God is so good, how do you explain all the wickedness in the world? Doesn't God care?* There's no perfect explanation of wickedness but there's abundant testimony to a God who helps his people live through it and rise above it.

More than that - in the ultimate picture wickedness will receive its come-uppance only if there's a God to give it.