The reality of evil

Some content from Robert Mohler.

So, If the wages of Sin is death (Romans 6:23) then we need to address the question of why does God allow Sin and evil in the world. The reality of evil and suffering in the world has caused many through the ages, to question or deny the existence of God.

This brings us to something called **The evidential problem of evil** which seeks to show that an all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving God could not exist. It states that:

* God cannot be all powerful (omnipotent) for if He were, He would prevent all evil and suffering from ever occurring;
* or, God cannot be all knowing (Omniscience) for if He were, He would prevent all evil and suffering from ever occurring;
* or, God cannot be all loving/Good (omnibenevolent) for if He were, He would prevent all evil and suffering from ever occurring.

Therefore:

1. Why follow a God who is powerless, ignorant, and unloving?
2. or, God does not exist.

In answer to this we have the **Augustinian Theodicy** which attempts to answer the question of why God permits evil.

Wikipedia tells us that The Augustinian theodicy, named after the 4th- and 5th-century theologian and philosopher Augustine of Hippo, rejected the idea that evil exists in itself, but regarded it as a corruption of goodness, caused by humanity's abuse of free will. Augustine also influenced John Calvin, who supported Augustine's view that evil is the result of free will and argued that sin corrupts humans, requiring God's grace to give moral guidance.

These ideas have been around for a long time as the Greek philosopher Epicurus asked these same questions long before Jesus was born (300BC):

* “Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent.
* Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent (evil minded).
* Is he both able and willing? Then why does evil exist at all?
* Is he neither able nor willing? Then why do we call him God?

This reasoning is based on the assumption that God and evil or God and suffering cannot co-exist. But they do?

As Christians we can’t simply explain all evil and suffering as the consequence of sins. Some suffering can be directly traced to sin.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Many in prison can testify to this reality but then there are those who will suffer innocently by the sinful acts of others. Jesus tells us that not all suffering is related to sin:

John 9:1-3 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

So, we cannot always trace suffering back to sin. So, where does it come from?

We find that Evil and suffering can come in different forms:

* There is natural suffering. That is suffering from natural causes, like hurricanes, earthquakes, cancer or other illness.
* There is moral suffering. Suffering that is caused by an evil act, such as genocide, War, meaningless shooting, or even things done in the name of God like the destruction of the twin towers in New York

Different causes yet the results are the same – painful suffering. In the midst of our pain we naturally wonder and ask: “Where is God?” Some take advantage of these kinds of moments to create doubt. They will reason:

A good and loving God would never allow evil, pain, and suffering in His world. Yet Evil, pain, and suffering do exist.

Should we demand an answer to the question of evil? How could a good God allow these things to happen? How can a God of love allow killers to kill, terrorists to terrorize, and the wicked to escape without a trace? Do we take a stand with God’s as he reveals himself in the Bible, or do we deny his existence?

So, what does the Bible say about God:

Romans 1:18-20 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

The Bible reveals that God is omnipotent - All powerful

Colossians 1:16 ESV / 31For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

John 1:3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

Jeremiah 32:17 ‘Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you

The Bible reveals that God is omniscient – all Knowing

Psalm 147:5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

Isaiah 40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

The Bible reveals that God does not Cause evil. Good does not so much define God as God defines good.

1 John 3:8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

Mark 10:18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

Note: We do find in some cases, like with Job, that God allows evil or other cases where God may harden someone against good, like with Pharos.

**🡪How can we reconcile God’s power and Goodness with the reality of evil?**

We cannot explain why God has allowed sin, but we understand that God’s glory is more perfectly demonstrated through the victory of Christ over sin. We cannot understand why God would allow sickness and suffering, but we must affirm that even these realities are rooted in sin and its effects.

The fact that there is only one God, that he is all-powerful, that he is omniscient, that there is none like him, doesn’t mean he uses His power and authority in an all-controlling way. If God removed all evil then he would remove your choice to do good. Then we would be like Robots.

To say that there is none like him, he does what he pleases, does not mean that it pleases him to give you cancer and cause you to face depression so you’ll suffer. If he is doing that to you, he is evil.

Sovereign simply means the one in charge, the one with the authority, the supreme ruler, it doesn’t automatically mean he’s controlling everything.

God is God, and God is good. As Paul affirms for the church, God’s sovereignty is the ground of our hope, the assurance of God’s justice as the last word, and God’s loving rule in the very events of our lives: “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to His purpose.” [Romans 8:28]

God had an answer to the fall? Redemption! We come to appreciate the redemption provided by Jesus Christ all the more especially in the face of evil and suffering. After all, God choose to enter this world, that He created good, yet became broken, And the very people he created and loved, pridefully rejected Him. Man’s evil nature nailed Him to a cross to die.

Yet, the story does not end with evil and suffering. God rose! God overcame evil and suffering – for us. The Redemptive Resurrection reveals God’s omniscience, His omnipotence, and His amazing love. Bringing goodness out of evil and suffering! That is what redemption is all about – it brings goodness out of evil. It is through Christ suffering, death and resurrection that we gain life and if we reject Christ, we reject God’s payment for our sin