

### Question No. 1: “Why, Lord?”

**Answer:** Every experience is sent to us by God with the desired goal of building and maturing our faith. “Faith-storms” come upon all of us in our journey heavenward.

**Truth:** Every life-storm threatens to sink our “little-life-ship” into despair and fear MUST **first** pass through the Omnipotence will and Omniscience of Almighty Sovereign God **before** the life-storm beats down upon us.

This truth helps us to fully trust that All experiences are filtered through God's **absolute sovereign control over His entire creation**. Unassailable Truth: God is continuously working out **His purposes of eternal good for His glory and for the good of us, His eternal family**.

We must understand and agree that we inhabit God's universe and that He is in total command of **every molecule** of creation. When we agree with God, we are then in the position to correctly understand this valuable-beyond-human-comprehension truth: **Every** storm is designed / allowed by God for our blessing! **Storms are eternal blessings disguised** as trouble and pain.

- Romans 8:28 And we know that **all things** work together **for good** to those **who love God**, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

- Romans 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For **I am persuaded that neither death nor life**, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord**.

Once we have settled **by faith** the above truths in our hearts, we will have the certain trust-peace that the Lord **is in control of ALL the winds and waves of life** which seem about to drown us. We will be able to see with “eyes of faith” the eternal truth that storms are given to us to mature [grow] us **into Christ-likeness**. This spiritual growth **makes us better able to be a light in this dark evil world** and giving us an increase in our own eternal joy.

- Matthew 5:13-14 [Jesus said] “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. **You are the light of the world**. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

This truth, firmly planted and lived out, helps us to be occupied with our own part of God's sovereign puzzle to give the **light of Jesus Christ** to the world which hates Him and hates God's children. We, the children of God, are **lights** in this Christ-rejecting world as we point others to Jesus.

Trust-peace comes to us upon exercising the faith that God is in control. Not only is Omnipotent God in total control of every molecule in His universe, but **He does NOT need our “help”** to run it.

**We gain nothing by worrying** in the vain human attempt to “help Almighty God” bring about His perfect conclusion to all pain, suffering and tears that come to us, His children.

We have come to understand Jesus’ clear declaration of the cost of becoming a Christ-follower:

- John 15:20 [Jesus said] Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If **they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you**. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

*Because everything Jesus declared is true, we are NOT to be overwhelmed when persecution comes our way.*

How we react to persecution is the hallmark, or the mark of authenticity, for the Christ-follower. When we find in our hearts a “love for our enemies and a desire to pray for their eternal welfare” we will also find therein the sweet answer to our question: **“Why, Lord?”**

- Matthew 5:44-45 But I say to you, **love your enemies**, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and **pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you**, that you may be **sons of your Father in heaven**; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Do you now see the clear connection? **ONLY the children of God can supernaturally love and pray like Jesus, those who are our enemies and actively persecute us!**

This truth gives us the unshakeable foundation of having been spiritually born again by the Spirit of Christ. We are given the very nature of Christ upon receiving His Spirit in our new spiritual birth with His supernatural ability to love our enemies and pray for them. This gives us supernatural courage and joy in our pain-filled, overwhelming life-storms.

Supernatural love helps us also answer our second question:

**Question No. 2:** *“What do You want us to do now?”*

**Answer:** Forgive, love and pray for our enemies.

*What does loving our enemies and praying for them look like when we are going into or coming out of a life-storm that threatens to sink us and our families into hopeless despair, fear and trembling?*

- Matthew 18:21- Then Peter came to Him and said, **“Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”** Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but **up to seventy times seven**.”

**Forgiveness from our side** toward our enemies in our pain-filled experience as Christ-followers is the sweetest reminder that we have, indeed, **been given the very Spirit of Christ**.

*Only the Christ-filled spiritual man or woman possess this kind of supernatural ability to love their enemies.*

What is man's Greatest Need: **Forgiveness!**

No other need is more important! Without forgiveness we would be assigned a place forever separated from God. The unimaginable tragedy of hell was clearly first declared to be a place established by God for Satan and the fallen rebellious angels. We remember this stark reminder so clearly: The devil and fallen angels can NEVER be forgiven because Holy God decreed there would **never** be a plan of forgiveness and redemption for them!

- Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness."

Mankind is as sinful as the fallen angels, but mankind, made in the image of God, are the only part of creation who have the inconceivable treasure of **receiving forgiveness** from Holy God and being **reconciled** back into fellowship with Him as eternal **family members**.

*What does this revelation from God mean to us in these difficult circumstances involving our brother's death?*

*Because we have been "born again" by the very Spirit of Christ, we are given the power and expected to **live out a Christ-like** walk with respect to forgiveness, love and prayer.*

**Forgiveness** of our sins and separation-from-God is a **judicial act by Holy God in heaven**. He promises to take the life and death of His perfect Son and credit those actions to our sin-account. This judicial sovereign act wipes away all records of **our** sins, never to be held against us in judgment. Amazing grace!

What value then, is our forgiveness extended to the killers of our brother from our side? *We gain supernatural joy and treasure in heaven as we SHINE BRIGHTLY the **love of God** begotten in our hearts.*

*This supernatural joy **prevents and excludes the possibility of an evil root of bitterness from taking root**. When bitterness takes root in the human heart, it is inevitable that it will spiral downward into bitterness against the Holy Sovereign God who allowed such pain.*

*The devil has won many eternal souls because they have NOT forgiven those who have harmed them or their loved ones. Bitterness kills the heart by making it unresponsive to the love of Jesus Christ.*

The following truth keeps us in and through every storm!

- Hebrews 6:18 It is **impossible** for **God** to lie!

*What promise by Jesus gives us so much comfort today?*

- John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place for you**. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and **receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also**."

Our brother has now been taken to the Father's home in heaven by Jesus. He is now living in perfect peace and joy **because he believed, trusted, followed and confessed Jesus Christ** as a Light in this dark, evil world. The occupants of this world, by and large, hate Jesus.

Evil doers in their attempts to harm or kill Christ-followers are living as followers of their father, the devil. The devil hates God and all whom God loves. Just as evil ones sought to persecute and kill Jesus, so will evil children of the devil today seek to persecute Christ-followers.

*Jesus took our beloved brother home to the Father, just **as He promised** and at the most perfect time, and in the perfect manner under **the Father's sovereign control of all things!***

We are greatly comforted by the truth that the only **safe and eternally secure** thing in this life is that which **we have transferred into the hands** of Jesus, who rightfully owns ALL things and ALL creatures as Creator of ALL.

Jesus, alone, is our ONLY security in this world and the eternal world to come! What we give to Him, including first and foremost our very lives, is safe. What we "hold back" in our own attempt to control we will lose! We have no power to hold onto **anything except** the Hand of Jesus by faith trusting Him to keep all of His promises.

#### **Commentary -**

**Truth: Forgiveness** is a **Spiritual Judicial Action** by God in the heavenly spiritual realms. We are reminded that we are eternal spiritual people existing in physical bodies subject to emotions, including joy, plus pain, sorrow, suffering and tears. We **cannot feel forgiveness with our physical selves because the Spirit, by definition, is NOT physical.**

**What point are we attempting to make?** We are attempting to explain what our Christ-like response should be in our Physical + Spiritual natures to the Curse of Sin which brought pain and suffering to all humanity.

*How do we specifically process this exceedingly painful news of our brother's death for confessing Christ?*

- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, **in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.** Do not quench the Spirit.

*How can we possibly do this when we are broken-hearted with sadness, suffering and even **fear for our own futures?***

We think the key to having this "peace that passes all understanding" is in Jesus' proclamation at His own death, coupled with His explanation of the Father's will concerning **forgiveness.**

- Luke 23:33-34 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.**"

**Truth: We all were born with the same sin-nature** as the murderers of **Jesus Christ.** We also would have been found numbered with the mob who cried out, "**Crucify Him, crucify Him!**"

- Luke 23:20-21 Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. But they shouted, saying, "**Crucify Him, crucify Him!**" Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go."

Before we were justified [forgiven] in Christ, our own sins made us GUILTY of being an accomplice in the murder of Jesus. In the greatest illustration of "**loving one's enemies**", *Jesus voluntarily accepted our death-sentence as His own and paid our death-debt in full!*

*Where would we be today without Jesus dying for us? **Forever LOST and unforgiven.***

Why is this truth important? Jesus gives us a very clear TEST of our relationship with God as a new-born family member:

**Forgiving others as we have been forgiven**, is the authenticity test of having received the life-changing Spirit of Christ.

How do we gain "level-spiritual-ground" from this earthquake-emotion-shaking experience? *Do we find the deep desire to forgive the killers as we ask Almighty God to forgive them and bring them into our eternal family to love forever?*

*Isn't this what we find in Stephen's testimony? Stephen was killed by evil men for declaring the truth and beauty of Jesus Christ to his generation.*

- Acts 7:57-60 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "**Lord, do not charge them with this sin.**" And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

When we find Christ's forgiveness in our own hearts for our own persecutors, we will also find the very same PEACE of Christ which will sustain and fill us with gratitude and thanksgiving that **we have been eternally forgiven.**

Remember Saul of Tarsus [Paul's] own testimony:

- Acts 26:9-11 "Indeed, I [Paul] myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of **the saints I shut up in prison**, having received authority from the chief priests; and when **they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.** And I punished them often in every synagogue and **compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.**

God works all things for good for His eternal purposes unseen at present by man. God allowed many of His children to suffer under the hands of Saul [Paul], but God **had a much greater plan in view for Paul.** God did NOT WASTE THE PAIN of those dear brothers and sisters whom Paul tortured and killed! God used their tormentor, persecutor and killer to bring an uncountable number of God's children to Himself.

God took all of Paul's sin and error, gave him the "new-birth" of the very Spirit of Christ. He then **sent him out to declare the truth and beauty of Jesus Christ to all the known world.**

**Result:** *Untold millions of eternal souls are NOW in heaven because God used Paul's life, death and commitment to confess Jesus everywhere and at all times.*

*What can we learn from our sober, yet rejoicing visit together?*

*This is **not the end of the story for our brother** who is now in heaven or ourselves.*

Our hearts will be "**enlarged in our own love for Christ**" because of our friend's life and death. We will behave more like Christ, as **we pray for the forgiveness and salvation of the murders.**

Also, let us join together in prayer that it would be in God's divine will **to bring forth a great harvest of eternal brothers and sisters in** Bangladesh and beyond because of the courageous confession and painful death of our brother.

Our loss has causes us to grieve for a period of time. Even in our sorrow, we find the Holy Spirit has combined our tears with gratitude for Christ's willingness to eternally rescue us from death. Jesus' provided **life, forgiveness for ALL who would believe, trust and follow Him.**

*What is our purpose as we understand God's perfect will, love and glory, that was clearly demonstrated yet again to a perishing world?*

We purpose, again and again, to declare the **Greatest Love Story Ever Told!** The Innocent One [Jesus] died for the Guilty [you + me] so we Guilty ones could be forgiven and live forever in perfect joy in heaven when we die.

- Matthew 6:14 [Jesus words] "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

*With the Light of the Spirit of Christ burning brightly and His love overflowing our hearts, may we be faithful in forgiving and praying for others as we have also been forgiven.*

- Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by **prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to God; and **the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding**, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

All our love to All,  
In Christ -  
Jon + Philis

The Love of God - <https://vimeo.com/912288970>