



God, Evil, & Suffering

WHAT SHALL WE SAY?

Why talk about Evil & Suffering?

- ▶ Crisis will come – will it precipitate a crisis of faith?
 - ▶ For you?
 - ▶ For your children or grandchildren?
- ▶ We are all in relationship with Agnostics and Atheists who use Evil and Suffering as the chief road block to faith.
- ▶ Responsibility of Pastor to “Equip the Saints”.

Theodicy

- ▶ A defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of evil .

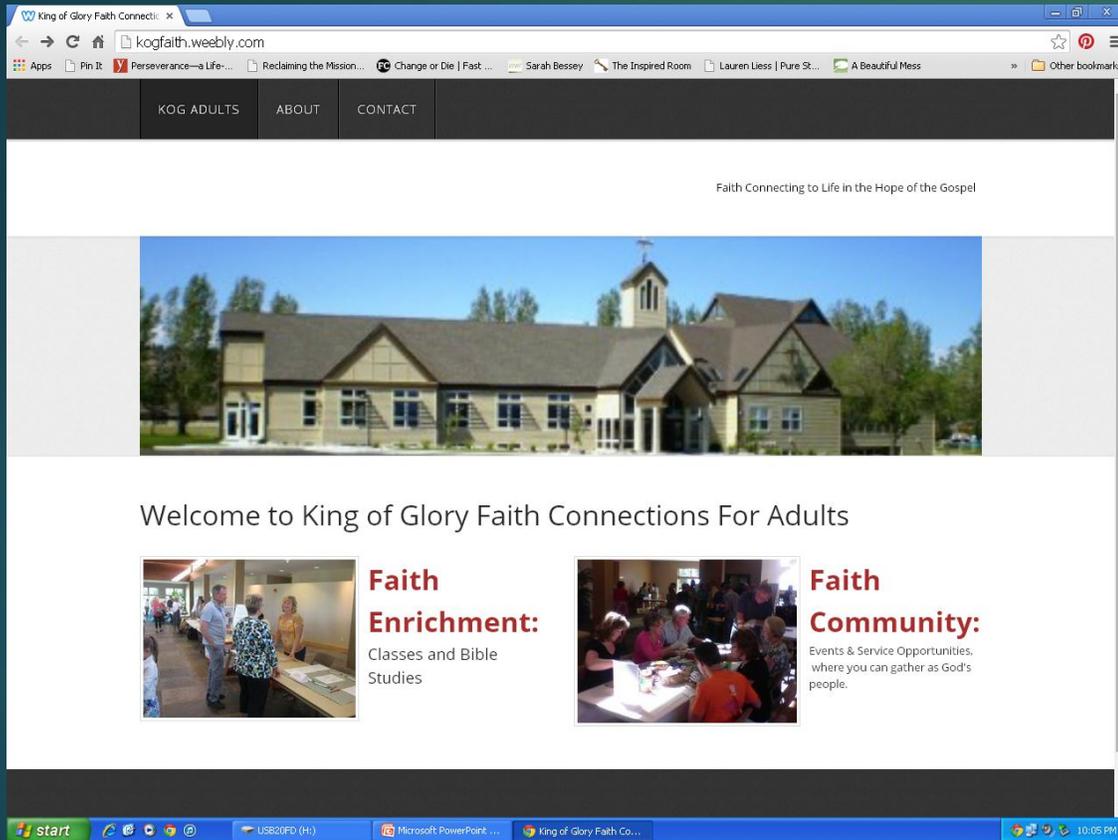
Our Goal For This Class

- ▶ Acknowledge the challenge of Theodicy
- ▶ Develop language to respond to incidents of suffering and acts of evil as they are manifest in this world.
 - ▶ Learn language for a Pastoral Response
 - ▶ Learn language for an Intellectual Response
- ▶ Develop sensitivity to know how to best respond.

Schedule

- ▶ Week 1 – Sept. 14 - Introduction
- ▶ Week 2 – Sept. 21 – How did we get here.
- ▶ Week 3 – Sept. 28 - What others have said...
- ▶ Week 4 – Oct. 5 – What others have said...
- ▶ Week 5 – Oct. 12 –Evil & the Devil.
- ▶ Week 6 – Oct. 19 - What we shall say.

Resources <http://kogfaith.weebly.com/>



King of Glory Faith Connections

kogfaith.weebly.com

KOG ADULTS ABOUT CONTACT

Faith Connecting to Life in the Hope of the Gospel

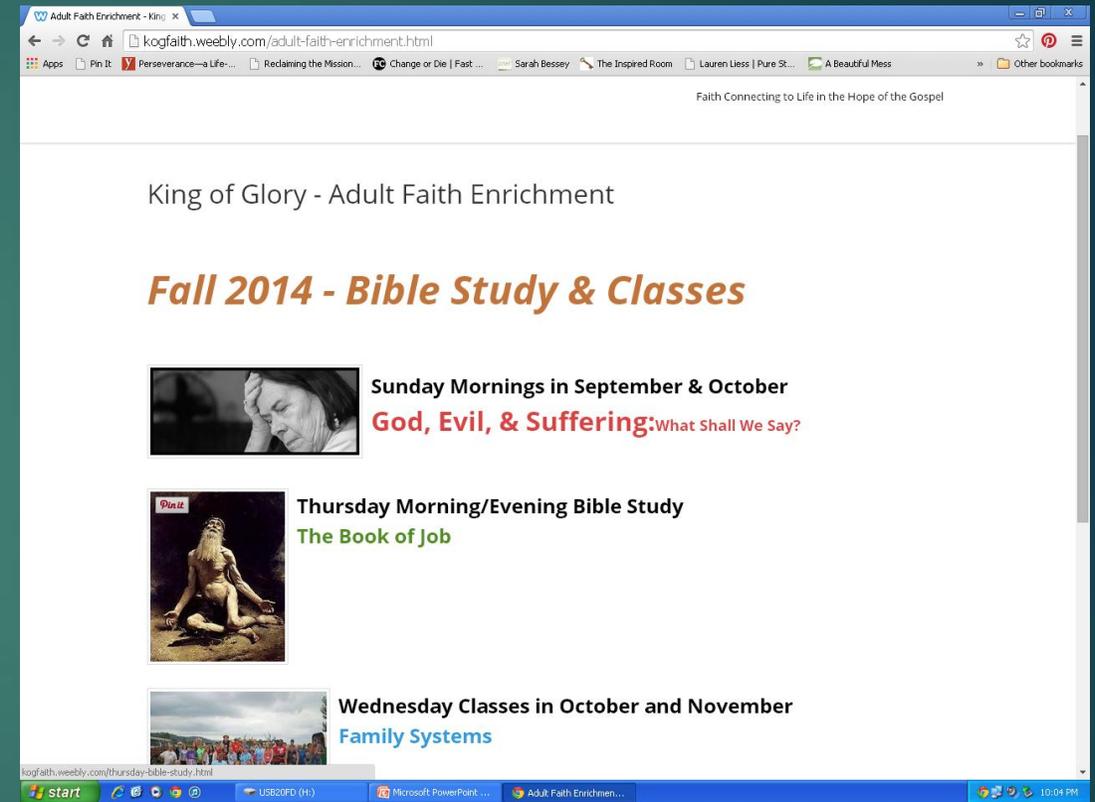


Welcome to King of Glory Faith Connections For Adults

Faith Enrichment:
Classes and Bible Studies

Faith Community:
Events & Service Opportunities, where you can gather as God's people.

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Adult Faith Enrichment - King of Glory

kogfaith.weebly.com/adult-faith-enrichment.html

Faith Connecting to Life in the Hope of the Gospel

King of Glory - Adult Faith Enrichment

Fall 2014 - Bible Study & Classes

 **Sunday Mornings in September & October**
God, Evil, & Suffering: What Shall We Say?

 **Thursday Morning/Evening Bible Study**
The Book of Job

 **Wednesday Classes in October and November**
Family Systems

kogfaith.weebly.com/thursday-bible-study.html

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God, Evil, & Suffering: What shall we Say?

2014 Fall Schedule:

When: 9:40 - 10:20

Where: In the Fireside Room at King of Glory

September 14 - The Problem of God and Evil

September 21 - What is Evil part 1

September 28 - What is Evil part 2

October 5 - Why do we suffer?

October 12 - Where is God?

October 19 - Conclusion: What shall we say?



LISTEN: to Luther Seminary Professor [Kathryn Schifferdecker](#) answer the question:

Why do we suffer?



Read: Professor Terence E. Fretheim's full essay online.

"To Say Something - About God, Evil, and Suffering"

Word & World, XIX:4, Fall 1999.



Watch: Professors [Marc Kolden](#) and [Dan Simundson](#) address the topic of suffering in the Bible

What do you say? Suffering and Disease



What do you say?

“[Ted Turner] was religious, and he decide that he was going to be a missionary. Then hi sister became ill. His was fifteen when Mary Jane, who was twelve, contracted systemic lupus erythematosus, a disease in which the immune system attacks the body’s tissue. She was racked with pain and constantly vomiting, and her screams filled the house. Ted regularly came home and held her hand, trying to comfort her. He prayed for her recovery; she prayed to die. After years of misery, she succumbed. Ted lost his faith. “I was taught that God was love and God was powerful,” he says, “and I couldn’t understand how someone so innocent should be made or allowed to suffer so.”

▶ Ken Auletta on Ted Turner in *The New Yorker*, 23 April 2001

What do you say? War & Genocide



What do you say?

Was God at Auschwitz?

If God is God: all-powerful, all-knowing, all good and loving, present everywhere, then of course God must have been at Auschwitz!

But how could God have been at Auschwitz without preventing Auschwitz? How could God have looked on when the gas streamed out and the cremation ovens were burning?

Hans Kung: Credo. The Apostles Creed Explained for Today, p. 89.

What do you say?

“Natural” Disasters



What do you say?

- ▶ The presence of evil and suffering in the world is the most potent rational objection to the existence of a all-powerful, all-knowing, loving God
- ▶ Hans Küng calls this “the rock of atheism.”

What do you say? Crime



What do you say?

- ▶ Judges 6:12-13 ¹² The angel of the LORD appeared to (Gideon) and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you mighty warrior." ¹³

Gideon answered him, "But sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened

to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our ancestors recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has cast us off, and given us into the hand of Midian."

What do you say?

- ▶ **1 Peter 3:15-16**
- ▶ *Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.*

Common Responses

- ▶ All part of God's plan
- ▶ It is not real...
- ▶ This can be overcome by positive thinking.
- ▶ It could be worse... Be thankful for what you have
- ▶ This is actually a blessing in disguise...
- ▶ Blame Game – If she didn't... then...
- ▶ God is punishing them/us ...
- ▶ God wanted to help but...
 - ▶ your sin wouldn't let him.
 - ▶ God didn't know
 - ▶ God was busy helping others
- ▶ The Devil did it
- ▶ The Devil made me do it
- ▶ I don't know
- ▶ I am sorry
- ▶ Silence
- ▶ Others?

The Logical Problem of Evil and Suffering

▶ There is a logical problem with the interrelationships among four truth claims that people of faith usually make.

1. God is all-powerful (Omnipotent)
2. God is all knowing (Omniscient)
3. God is loving and good.
4. There is innocent suffering.

* Logically, we can then conclude that God does not exist.

The Logical Problem of Evil and Suffering

Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able?

Then he is impotent.

Is he able, but not willing?

Then he is malevolent.

Is he both willing and able?

Whence then is evil?

▶ David Hume – Found in: *What Shall We Say* – Thomas Long pg. 25

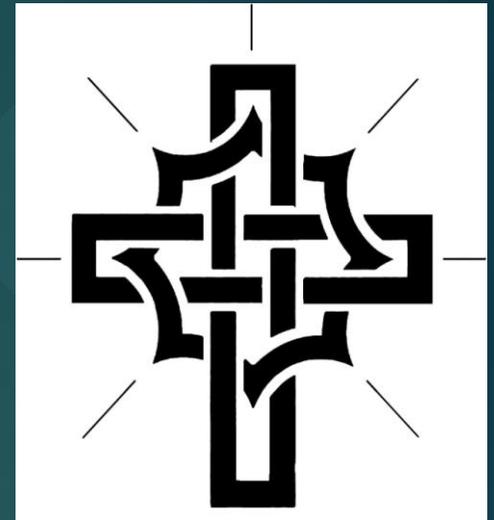
Can Faith Make Sense?

▶ “For Sisters Agnes and Iris, and my sister Nell, women who told me the tomb was empty, and for Ruth and Joe Brown Love, who told me my head need not be.”

▶ Dedication, James A Sanders, *God Has Story, Too* – Long pg. 19

Thesis

- ▶ Classical understandings of God's relationship with us in relation to evil and suffering fall short in offering hope to people of faith. Hope and Faith are possible, however, if we re-examine our understanding of God by viewing the events of this world through the lens of the cross.



Questions and Conversation



Next Week

1. Historical understanding of Theodicy and the break that happened with the enlightenment.
2. God – what we can say... what we can't say
3. Humans – who are we... what role do we play

