

## Home Group Discussion Questions

### Sunday March 20th Christ & disasters

**Ice-breaker:** What is the worst weather you have ever had to experience?

**Question:** Was there anything that particularly spoke to you in the sermon this Sunday? Or that you disagreed with or were confused about?

#### **Intro and Summary:**

This Sunday Martin addressed the subject of natural disasters and why God allows such catastrophic events following the recent earthquake & tsunami which devastated Japan. His points were:

- **God is Sovereign/on the throne**
- **The state of Creation**
- **God's megaphone**
- **Not the last word**

The difficulty skeptics have with this issue goes something like this: "if God is good and all-powerful, why didn't He stop the earthquake and tsunami from happening? If He was all-powerful, He could have stopped it, unless of course He *isn't* good. And if He *is* good, He *would* have stopped it, unless of course He *isn't* all-powerful."

#### **God is Sovereign/on the throne**

**Read: Job 37:9-13, Isaiah 40:12-26**

Then consider this quote from Dorothy Sayers, the American novelist: "We have declawed the Lion of Judah & made him a housecat for pale priests & pious old ladies."

**Question:** Do you agree with Dorothy Sayers? What are the implications of 'declawing the Lion of Judah' (diminishing our understanding of God's power)?

#### **Read Job 38:1-7**

Job's questions are not answered, instead he gets a revelation of the sheer majesty and splendour and authority of God and in the face of encountering God as He really is Job falls to His knees in worship and His questions fall away.

**Question:** If this perspective on God's majesty and power is so crucial, how can we ensure we do not lose sight of it, especially in our understanding of the storms of life?

#### **The state of Creation**

Romans 8:20 says, '*For the creation was subjected to futility*'. See also Gen 3:17

Some synonyms for futility are: 'pointlessness, uselessness, vanity'

**Question:** Why was creation subjected to futility by God?  
What implications does this have for us?  
If creation is cursed, what should be our attitude to the environment?

Paul says that creation was subjected to futility *in hope...* In hope of something else, in hope of something better.

**Question:** What is that hope?  
What should be our response to such expectation? How should it affect how we live?

### **God's megaphone**

#### **Read Luke 13:1-5**

In his book, the Problem of Pain, C.S. Lewis said 'God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.'

**Question:** Is Lewis right? Do you agree that God shouts to us in our pain? Does pain & suffering bring us closer to Jesus? How & why? Can you give any examples of how God has used this in your own life?

Jesus used natural disasters as an opportunity to preach repentance and faith.

**Question:** How might you explain Jesus' approach to disasters to someone else?

### **Not the last word**

In **Romans 12:15** Paul says 'weep with those who weep'. There are times when silence and weeping are the appropriate responses to tragedy rather than talk.

**Question:** When someone is suffering, when should we be silent and when should we speak up?

#### **Read Romans 8:18-22**

Martin said, 'The gospel is not pessimistic. The gospel has as its end, not disaster, but glorious future.'

**Question:** What is the difference between birth pangs and death pangs? Does the pain feel any different at the time?

**Question:** what is the future hope the gospel holds out? What does that mean for you?