

Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People, and Good Things to Bad People?

Why do bad things happen to good people? It is a question, I think, most of us have asked ourselves rather often, particularly when bad things happen to people we love and care about, or to ourselves. Well, most often it is not actually a question, I think, as much as an outcry; it is not really that we are looking for explanations or other kinds of answer. In asking, we air our frustration in order to alleviate our emotional agony.

The answer Holy Scripture gives, though, and as such the Christian faith, has much to give by way of alleviating emotional agony; well, it does for those who have ears to hear.

"The wages of sin is death," the holy Apostle Paul writes, "but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." It is on account of our sin that we die, all that in us, and in our lives, which is contrary to the goodness of God. For all that is contrary to His goodness is evil. And God is good, and whole and complete in His goodness, so that He hates evil; it is because of His goodness that "the soul that sins must die", as He has had His Prophet Ezekiel write it. And all our sufferings and sorrows are but the beginnings of death in our lives, warnings of the eternal death that awaits if we do not turn away from our evil and return to the goodness of God.

In this perspective, bad things actually do not happen to good people, for there are no good people; before God, only that which only is good, and has no element of evil to it whatsoever, is good, only that which corresponds to His own goodness.

Good things do happen to bad people, though; not only in that God gives us sinners good things in life to remind us of His goodness and call us to return to Him, but first and foremost in that "the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord". God forgives sinners. And this He does out of the greatest goodness of all, that He had the worst evil of all happen to Him who alone is good, that is: to Himself. The Son of God, who is Himself God, took it upon Himself to suffer His own judgement against sin for us sinners to make us right with Himself and give us place with Him in that fullness of good which is His eternal life.

This is the promise He has His Church proclaim to us sinners: on account of His goodness we shall not suffer for ever in His righteous wrath against sin, but live and be with Him for ever. And with His promise, all that He promises is given to all who hear His promise in faith. God is that good. And that is good.

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