

Why Me, Lord?

Scripture Reading — Psalm 103:8-18

[God] does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. — Psalm 103:10

Is cancer a punishment for sin? Does God authorize our suffering because we haven't faithfully followed his law? This ages-old question plagues people who wonder if God follows a cause-and-effect policy: You sin, you suffer.

In the Old Testament we read of a man named Job who loses nearly everything but his life in a test of faith in God. Job's friends accuse him, saying he must have brought this on himself by sinning against God. Job even asks God, "If I have sinned, what have I done to you . . . ? Why have you made me your target?" (Job 7:20). And God responds by showing him that God's ways are higher than human ways.

The psalmist declares that God "does not treat us as our sins deserve." Instead, God uses a sin-removal policy based on his everlasting love: God pays the price of our sin. If God let us pay for our wrongdoing, every living person would be stuck forever in a slimy mud pit of their own making.

Some people have come to me as their pastor, tearfully taking the blame for their own health diagnosis or life challenge. I have confidently assured them that God does not operate that way. Even so, when my cancer returned, I, too, wrestled with whether God was displeased with me about something. And God reminded me of his abounding love and grace that is greater than all our sin.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for your mercy, compassion, grace, and forgiveness. Your love is as high as the heavens. When we suffer, may we not doubt but stand firm on your promises. Amen.

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