Why All the Pain and Suffering?

Lesson 2

Class Goals:

- To gain a biblical perspective on suffering in the world
- To better understand the character of God
- To respond practically to suffering around us in a Christ-like manner

Review of last week:

- The Problem of Evil
- No one is "good"; we all suffer from a sin problem
- Evil is not necessarily the direct result of personal sin

1. Let's define our terms. Look up ALL of the verses for one term first, and then write a definition, based on the big picture of what you read.

   Good:
   (Genesis 1:31; Deuteronomy 32:4, Nahum 1:2-3, 7, Habakkuk 1:13; 1 John 1:5)

   Evil:
   (Isaiah 5:20, Psalm 5:4, Romans 3:10-18, James 1:13-17) Side-note on good and evil: how does the analogy of light and darkness help us understand the nature of evil?

   All-Powerful:
   (Psalm 139:5-6, Isaiah 43:13, Jeremiah 32:17, Matthew 19:26)

   All-Knowing:
   (Job 28:20-24, Job 34:21-22, Psalm 139:1-6, Hebrews 4:13)

2. Have your best reader at your table read all of Genesis 3. Look for answers to the following:

   - From where does the human sin/evil problem originate?

   - What are the results of sin?

   - How does human sin affect both "creaturely evil" and "natural evil"?

   - What other factors, outside of human choice, affect evil on earth?

   - How does God respond to sin?

Philosophical Problem of Evil:

(G) There exists a God who is all-good, all-powerful, and all-knowing.
(E) Evil Exists

Logical Problem of Evil says:

"It is logically inconsistent to believe in a God who is all-good and all-powerful and all-knowing given the evil that exists in the world."

Definitions:

- There are three types of logical inconsistency:
  o Explicit: one proposition is the denial of another.
    ▪ Example: premise 1, it's raining outside. Premise 2, it's not raining outside.
  o Formal: one that can be deduced by using only the laws of logic.
    ▪ Example, all men are mortal, Socrates is a man, and Socrates is not mortal.
  o Implicit: one that can be deduced using only the laws of logic and some necessary truth.
    ▪ Example: Kirt is older than Kevin, Kevin is older than Grant, Grant is older than Kirt.
    ▪ Needed necessary truth: you can't be older than yourself.

- Necessary truth: a truth that could not have been otherwise. (1+1=2)
- Contingent truth: a truth that could have been otherwise. (Denver is the capital of Colorado.)

The Logical Problem of Evil has a Missing Premise: An all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing God would have no _____ _____ for _____ _____.

Evidential Problem of Evil says:

"Given all the evil in the world, the probability of there being a God who's all good and all powerful, all knowing is very low."

Other considerations: probabilities can change dramatically with more information.

3. BRIEFLY discuss (Kirt will have you move on after 5 minutes) what reason, if any, could be provided for why God might allow evil to continue to exist. Don't worry, we will spend all of next week on this!

4. Read the following verses, and comment on what they have to say about God's judgment of evil. Will He judge evil? Do any of them give you a sense on why He is waiting? How does the idea that God will not allow evil to exist forever helps us reconcile the nature of God with the present existence of evil?

   Ecclesiastes 12:14
   Revelation 20:11-21:8
   2 Peter 3:8-10