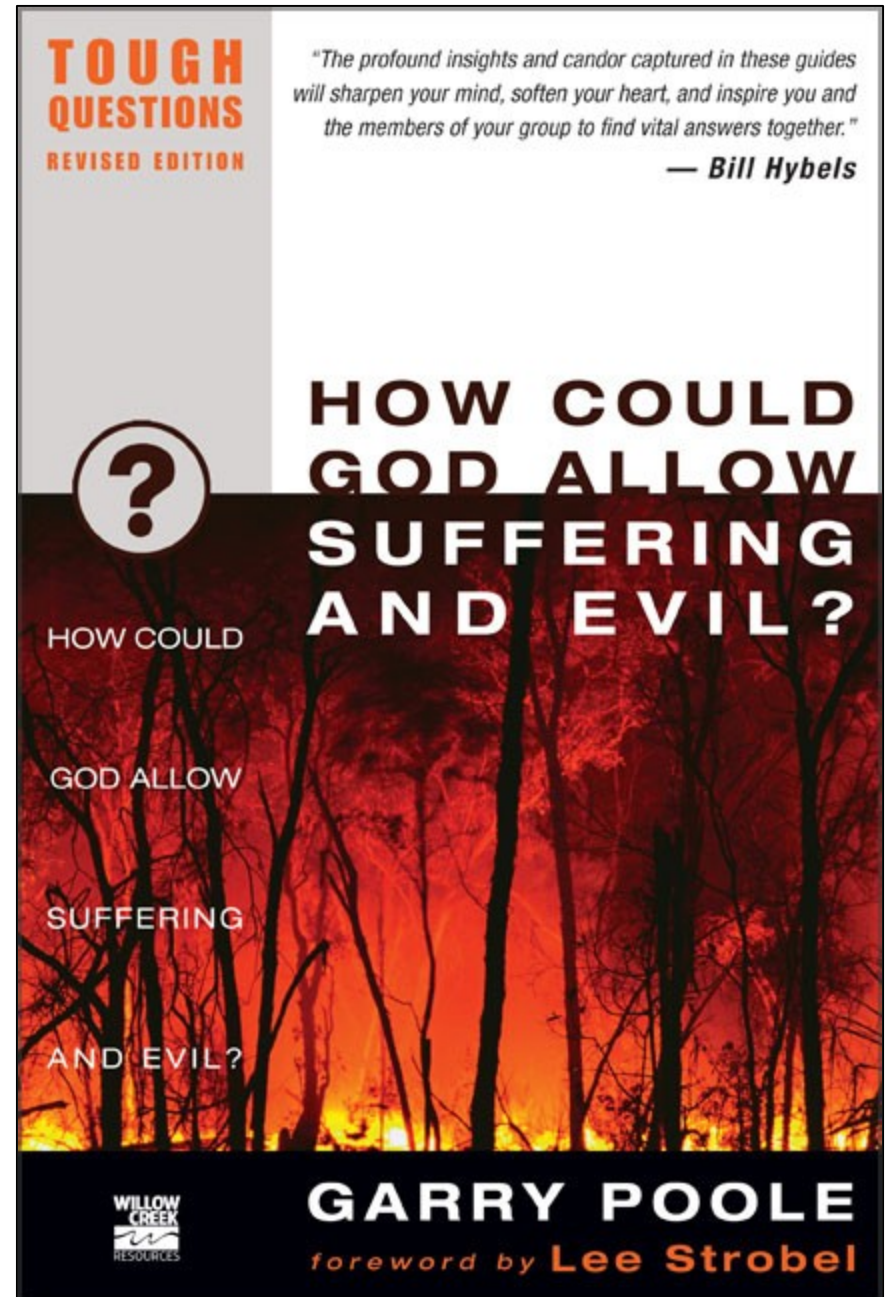
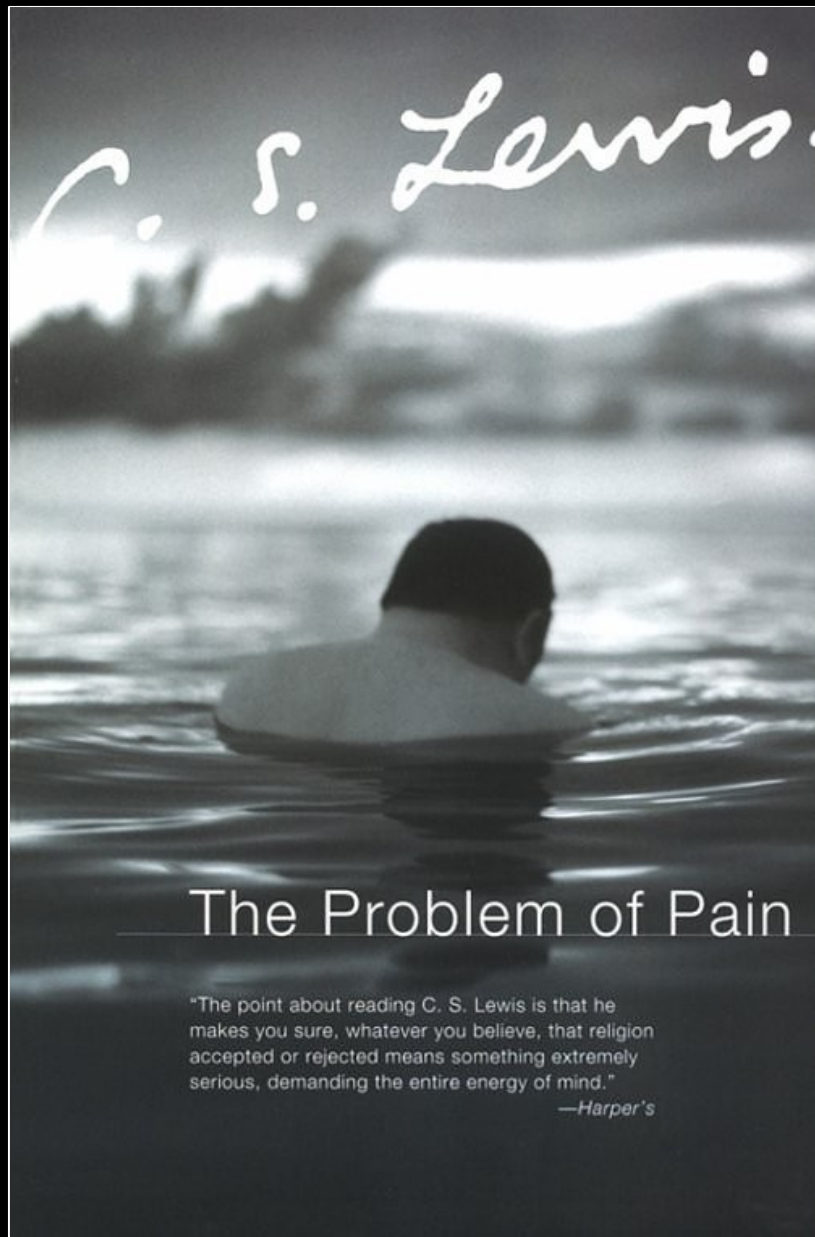


The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of parched, cracked earth. The cracks are irregular and form a complex, web-like pattern across the entire surface. The color is a warm, brownish-orange, suggesting a dry, arid environment. The lighting is somewhat uneven, with darker shadows in the crevices and lighter areas on the raised surfaces of the cracks.

Why Does God Allow Suffering & Evil? Pt. 1

Small Group Curriculum





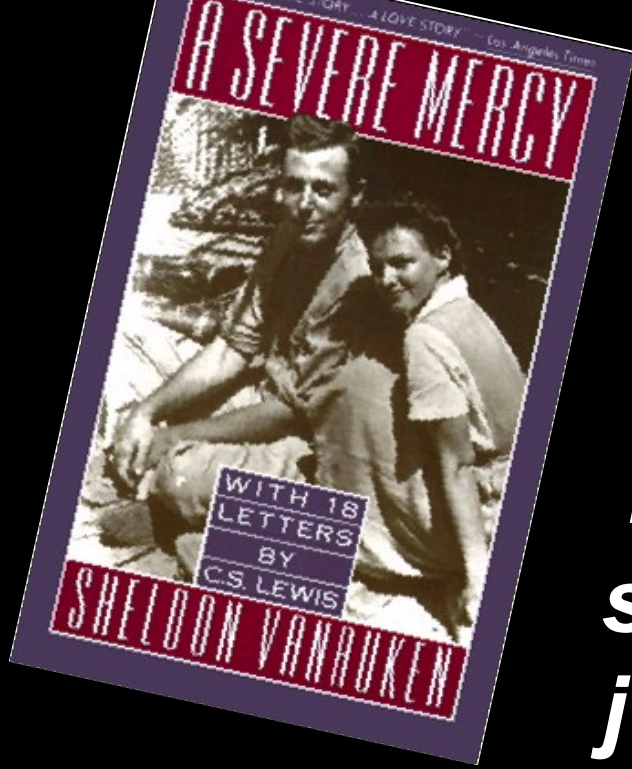
C. S. Lewis

The Problem of Pain

"The point about reading C. S. Lewis is that he makes you sure, whatever you believe, that religion accepted or rejected means something extremely serious, demanding the entire energy of mind."

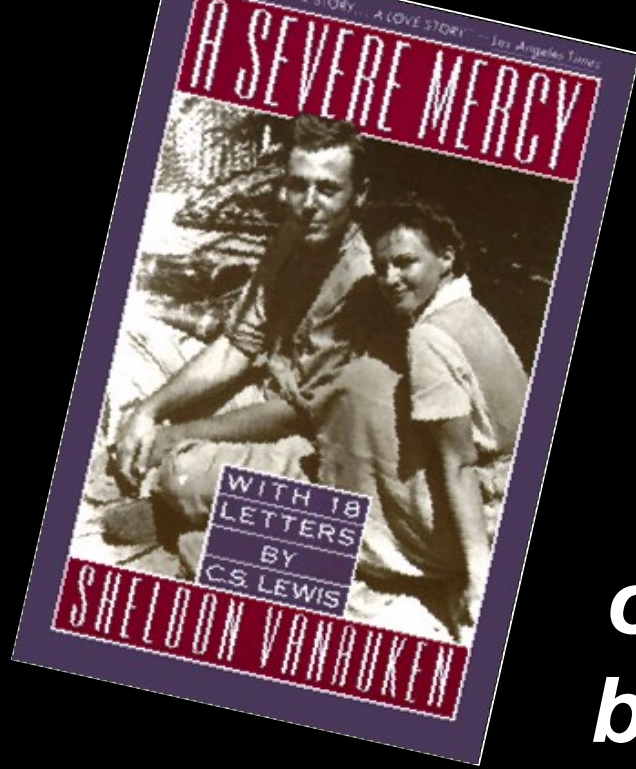
—Harper's





“If only villains got broken backs or cancers, if only cheaters and crooks got Parkinson’s disease, we should see a sort of celestial justice in the universe. But, as it is, a sweet-tempered child lies dying of a brain tumor, a happy young wife sees her husband and child killed before her eyes by a drunken driver; and . . .

— Sheldon Vanauken



***“ . . . we soundlessly
scream at the stars, ‘Why?
Why?’ A mention of God—
of God’s will—doesn’t help a
bit. How could a good God,
a loving God, do that?
How could he even let it happen? And no
answer comes from the indifferent stars.”***

— Sheldon Vanauken

***“This is what the wicked are like—
always carefree, they increase in
wealth.***

***Surely in vain have I kept my heart
pure; in vain have I washed my hands
in innocence.”***

— Psalm 73:12, 13



“THEODICY”

**The justification of God
in the face of evil**

- The Intellectual Problem of evil:

“concerns how to give a rational explanation of the coexistence of God and evil.”



- The Emotional Problem of evil:

“concerns how to comfort those who are suffering and how to dissolve the emotional dislike people have of a God who would permit such evil.”



I. What Do We Mean By Evil?



A. Two kinds of evil in the world:

(1) Moral

(2) Natural

B. What is evil? Different worldviews give various answers.

Worldviews On Evil

1. Evil is an **illusion**. (*Non-dualistic Hinduism, Christian Science, New Thought Metaphysics*).
2. Evil is **basic** to human existence—a brute fact. (*Buddhism*)
3. Evil exists because **matter** is evil. (*Platonic philosophy, Gnosticism*)
4. Evil is the result of two equal **powers**. (*Zoroastrianism, Taoism, Star Wars*).

Worldviews On Evil

5. Evil is the result of determinism—
God's will. (*Islam*)
6. Evil exists because God is either
limited or wicked.
(*Hinduism, Rabbi Harold Kushner*).

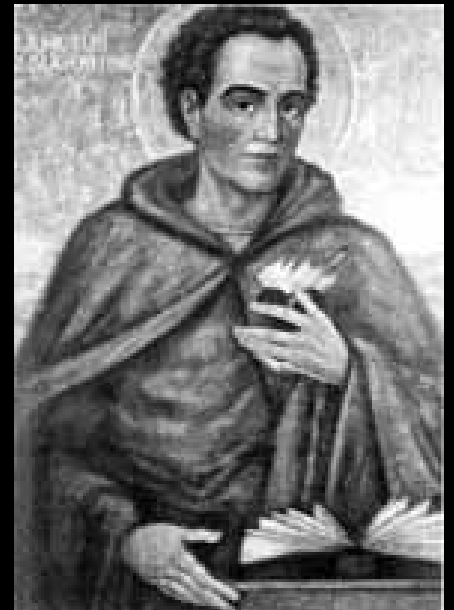
**ALL THESE OPTIONS ARE
UNSATISFACTORY!**

Christianity On Evil

- * **The Christian definition of evil:
Evil is a lack or twisting of the good
(a privation). It is not a “thing”
which can exist as an independent
entity, on its own, apart from good.
Augustine (354-430 A.D.) argued,**

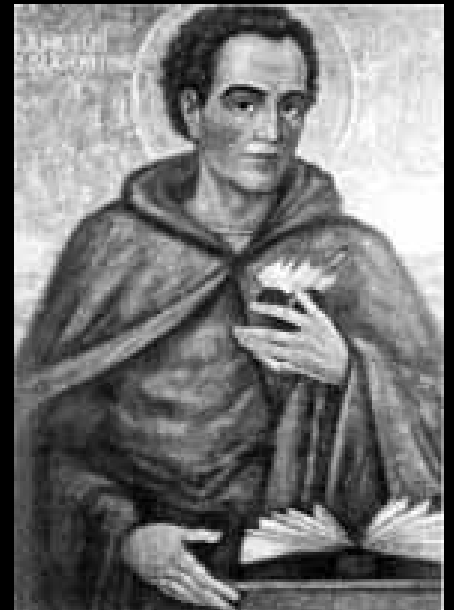
“Good can exist without [evils]. . . . Evils, on the other hand, cannot exist without goods, because the natures in which evils exist are good insofar as they are natures. Moreover, evil is removed not by removing any nature or part of a nature that evil brings to a thing, but by healing and correcting what evil has damaged and deformed.”

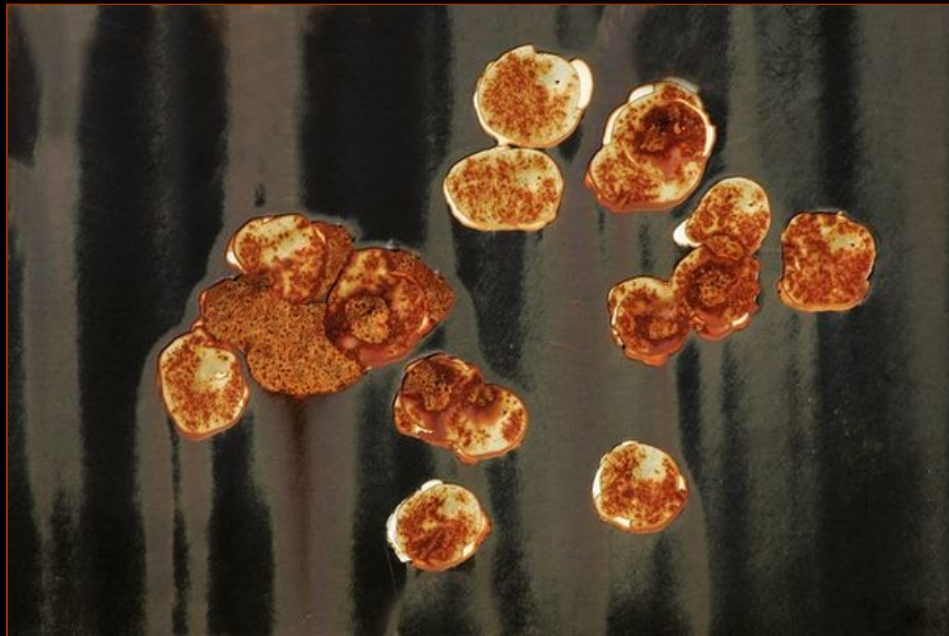
— St. Augustine of Hippo



“Malice can be a defect only where a nature has first existed without a defect. A defect is so contrary to a nature that it can only harm it. Therefore, turning away from God would not be a defect except in a nature meant to be with God. Even an evil will, then, is proof of the goodness of the nature. . . . [Satan] is good by God’s creation but evil by his own will.”

— St. Augustine of Hippo





I. **The Objection: The Christian God and a world in which there is evil cannot coexist (a logical problem).**

The Theistic, Christian assertion:

A. **An omnipotent (all-powerful), omnibenevolent (all-loving) God exists.**

B. **Evil exists.**

I. The Objection: The Christian God and a world in which there is evil cannot coexist (a logical problem).

The objection:

- A.** If God were all-powerful, he *could* abolish evil.
- B.** If God were all-good, he *would* abolish evil.
- C.** Evil exists.
- D.** Therefore, God is either not all-powerful or not all-good.

“A being is not morally culpable in allowing otherwise preventable evil to exist if that being has a morally sufficient reason for doing so. So long as it is even possible that God has a morally sufficient reason for permitting evil it follows that God and evil are logically consistent.”



— William Lane Craig

I. The Objection: The Christian God and a world in which there is evil cannot coexist (a logical problem).

Restatement of the Argument:

- A. An all-good God would abolish evil unless he has a morally sufficient reason for permitting it.**
- B. An all-knowing, all-wise, and all-powerful God can abolish evil.**
- C. Evil exists.**
- D. Therefore, God has a morally sufficient reason for permitting evil.**

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Next Week:

Why Does God Allow
Suffering & Evil?

Pt. 2