

Midweek Sermon
Why Me?
March 22, 2006

The question tonight is:
“Why me?”

This past Saturday and Sunday,
the question was:
“Where is God when it hurts?”
And I gave a short answer.
What was that short answer?

God is with us.

And that’s a great comfort to us
in times of suffering and pain.

But there’s another question we ask,
often when things aren’t going the way we hope.
That question is:
“Why me?”

I’d like to give you a short answer
to that question as well.

The question is:
“Why me?”
The short answer is:
“I don’t know.”

I don’t know.
God’s ways are not our ways.
God’s thoughts are not our thoughts.

Why me?
I don’t know.

There was a tower of Siloam
mentioned in the Bible.
It fell and killed 18 people.
And everyone wanted to know why.
(Luke 13:1-9)

And Jesus didn't answer the question.
Instead he said:
"Do you think that they were worse offenders
than all the others living in Jerusalem?
No, I tell you;
but unless you repent,
you will all perish just as they did."

Sometimes,
when we say "Why me?",
we are crying out to God—
—saying: "I just want to understand."
I don't get it.
I want my world to make sense
and sometimes it just doesn't.

There is a reality to that cry.
Because we do want things to make sense.
We do want things to fit.
We do want to understand.

But we don't.
And we won't.
And we can't.

There is a certain hiddenness,
a mystery,
an element of the unknown
in our lives.
Especially as it relates to understanding God.
Sometimes we just aren't going to know.
And as hard as that is to live with,
that's the way it is.

God is still with us.
God still cares for us.
Nothing will separate us from God.
We know all that.
But we don't get all the answers.
And we won't get all the answers.

But sometimes our "Why mes?"
are more than just wonderings.
Sometimes there's an element
of saying:
"It's not fair".

You're feeling great.
And then you get the results from your doctor's physical.
And there's something wrong.
Something that they might not be able to fix.
And you cry out—
—"Why me?"

Or,
2 cars are speeding along the highway.
You're the one that gets stopped.
The other just keeps on going.
You say:
"Why me?"

Or,
you and your sister both study the same amount.
The test comes back.
You got a C.
Your sister got an A.
And you say,
"Why me?"

I'm sure you can think of a lot more.
Can you think of any examples
of a "Why Me?"
that means:
"It's not fair."

Once again,
these cries of "Why me?"
are real cries.
Cries of pain.
Cries of anger.
Cries of despair.

And it's good to cry out to God
with your pain
and your frustration.
The Psalmists do it all the time.

But there can be a negative twist
to these "Why mes?"
It's possible,
that if we keep comparing ourselves to others,
thinking that they get everything good
and we don't—
—Why me?
—It's not fair.

What happens over time?
Our lives become turned in on ourselves.
We become focused on what we want.
We draw into ourselves—
—perhaps becoming bitter,
—feeling like victims
—feeling like we aren't cared for
—so we'll build a wall around ourselves
—to keep others away
—separating from others
—and from God.

And our lives
become cold, dark places.
As we cry out bitterly,
“Why me–God?”
It’s not fair.
I deserve better—we say.
We think God owes us something.
Even though God doesn’t.
And we lose touch with grace.
And we curve in on ourselves.

Does our reading from Philippians
speak to this situation?
Quite a bit.

Look at verse 3:

**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,
but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.**

And 4:

**Let each of you look not to your own interests,
but to the interests of others.**

And 5:

**Let the same mind be in you
that was in Christ Jesus...**

Jesus,
who emptied himself.
Took on the form of a slave.
And became obedient to the point of death—
—even death on the cross.

There’s a possibility out there.
The possibility that God might work in us
so that we are not so focused on ourselves.
So that we see the love of God
and reflect the love of God

This past weekend,
 someone came up to Beckie Fingland
 and said
that he wanted to make a gift
 to pay for the costs of those going on the trip next week
 to help with Katrina relief.

The 10 from Good Shepherd
 are giving their time
 and their energy.
And this person's schedule didn't work to go along,
 but he wanted to help, too.
And so he paid their \$100 each.

And I was thinking about that
 after Beckie told me.
And I thought,
 that's a neat picture of the Body of Christ.
 It's a neat picture of grace.
Each of us using what we have
 to make a difference—
 —working together as a body.

And you know what I think it does.
 I think grace builds upon grace.
When we are loved,
 we love.
When people give in a way that benefits us,
 we are inspired to give.
When we see people who are thankful for what God gives them
 instead of bitter,
 we give thanks for what God has given us.

Sometimes we are the givers.
 And sometimes we are the receivers.
And that's the way it should be.

And sometimes in our lives,
 things happen where we say: "Why me?"
 because a bad thing has happened.
And sometimes in our lives,
 things happen where we say: "Why me?"
 because a good thing has happened.

I'm the age where,
 when I hear the question: "Why me?"
 a song pops into my head.
It's been stuck there
 most of the week
 while I've been thinking about this.

Why me, Lord?
 What have I ever done
 to deserve even one
 of the pleasures I've known.
Lord, what did I ever do
 to deserve loving you
 and the kindness you've shown?

The why me question.
 The answer is still "I don't know."

But I do know the answer to the second question in that song.
 What have I ever done to deserve even one
 of the pleasures I've known?

The answer is:
 Nothing.
It's a gift.

And knowing that life is gift,
 maybe it's easier to trust in the giver
 even though we never know all the answers.

Why me?

I don't know.

But what I do know is so much more important.

God is with me.

God loves me.

God will never leave me.

No matter what makes me wonder "Why me?"

In Jesus' name,

Amen