

The Gift Of LOVE

Part 3: Giving Love in a World of Pain

APPETIZER – 20 Dead Children

- December 14, Newtown Connecticut, twenty children murdered.
- Today, and every day, preventable poverty kills more than 50,000 innocent people – mostly children. (World Health Organization)
- These statistics account for one third of all human deaths. More people die as a result of extreme poverty than any other cause.
- While we can only *grieve* for the children of Newtown, we can *prevent* the deaths of many of the global poor.

DINE IN – Why Doesn't God Intervene...*MORE?*

Matthew 2:13-18

QUESTION: Why doesn't God intervene to prevent bad things?

- ATHEISTS: No God. No problem.
- GREEK/ROMAN: The gods are fickle.
- ISLAM: It is blasphemy to question Allah.
- HINDUISM: All suffering is justice.
- BUDDHISM: All suffering is illusion.

- STANDARD CHRISTIAN ANSWER #1: God does intervene. Just not the way you want.
- STANDARD CHRISTIAN ANSWER #2: God intervenes as *much* as possible. If he intervened more, he would overthrow our freedom to choose.
- MY BEST BIBLICAL ANSWER: God intervenes as *little* as possible. Because he has given us the role of taking care of this planet, and each other.

God wants to partner with his image-bearers. He has given us this planet. He has made us in his image. He has remade us through Christ. He has given us his Spirit. It's our move now.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:5, 15

We were made to bear God's image in this world, as creators, rulers, servants, and protectors. This is our unique calling; our unique enabling; our unique privilege; our unique responsibility.

TAKE OUT – Giving Love to Those Who Need It Most

I will give love by...

- a) Pledging to our Transform mission.
- b) Committing to volunteer where needed at church.
- c) Writing my sponsored child.
- d) Inviting _____ over during the holiday.
- e) Choosing to forgive _____.
- f) Apologizing to _____.
- g) Loving _____ better by refusing to enable them any longer.
- h) Entering social contexts looking for the most alone, potentially hurting person and initiating conversation.
- i) Other _____



Home Church Questions...

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic]

1. Why do you think people react so strongly to tragedies like the Newtown shooting and less strongly to the daily preventable deaths of starving children around the world?

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture]

2. Read **Matthew 2:13-16**.
 - a. What verse or word or idea stands out to you? Why?
 - b. Why did God warn Joseph to run instead of making Jesus invincible to destruction, like Superman?
 - c. What is the significance (transferable lesson) of Joseph responding to his dream right away?
 - d. How would you respond to the question – Why didn't God intervene?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together]

3. Talk about how you responded to this week's TAKE OUT. Have you acted on it yet? If so, how did it go? If not, why not?
4. If you're having trouble with your follow through...Take time before you leave Home Church to meet with a member of your huddle to identify one specific step you can take this week, a specific plan on how to carry it out, and a specific time to follow up with a phone call.

*Sunday, December 23 / 30 | Bruxy Cavey
#TMHTheGiftOfLove*

Quotes...

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under.
~ **The Gospel of Matthew**

Matthew wants us to know that despite despotic rulers, political refugees, ethnic hatred, the slaughter of the weak and the tears of heartbroken parents, nothing escapes Immanuel, the God who suffers with us and for us.

~ Matt Woodley, *The Gospel of Matthew*

Absolutely nothing can happen that is outside God's larger plan. But how does this explain the hard times, when God seems to have disappeared and left us to our fates?

~ Grant R. Osborne, *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*

The first Christmas was the beginning of the end for evil on earth. Satan knew this and fought to keep his realm when Jesus invaded it in the incarnation. He used the malice, the mania, and the lawlessness of Herod to destroy the Christ, if he could. In this way, Satan kept fighting even though his defeat was and is sure.

~ Daniel M. Doriani, *Reformed Expository Commentary*

It was the fact of unspeakable suffering...This was the reason I lost my faith.

~ Bart Ehrman, *God's Problem*

Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

~ **Jesus**