

## Common Questions from Widows & Their Answers

As you can imagine, when giant, life-altering events happen such as the death of your husband, many questions come to mind about God. Often times, we don't have clear answers, but that doesn't mean that God leaves us with nothing to say. Here are some common questions and answers:

### Why did this happen to me?

-I don't know. And I am so sorry that this thing happened to you; it is truly terrible. But, while I don't know why this happened to you, there are some things I can tell you:

-Jesus makes it clear that bad things happen to all kinds of people; it's not because you're a worse person or because of some specific sin that this happened to you.

**(Luke 13:1-5)**

-While I don't know why this happened to you, I do know that the Bible says, *"God is faithful, and He will not let you be tried beyond your ability, but with the trial He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it"* **(1 Corinthians 10:13)**. And *"The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials"* **(2 Peter 2:9)**. So, I know that with God's help, this is something that you can handle. With Him, you can get through anything, even this!

-Jesus also says, *"Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age"* **(Matthew 28:20)**. He is with you right now and always. God has all power and is able to get you through this; He is also all love and wants to get you through this. He is with you always to comfort you, strengthen you, and help you. And, you should also know that Jesus knows exactly what you're going through right now, He experienced loss in His life and can empathize. He lost His friend Lazarus. He lost his earthly father, Joseph. And God the Father lost His Son to the cross. The Bible says, *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses...Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need"* **(Hebrews 4:15)**.

-I know you're wondering, and that your upset. And I wish I could give you a better answer, but this is just one of those specific questions that we just won't know the answer to until we get to heaven. But I do know that you can trust God. I know that He loves you so much and cares for you so deeply! How do I know? Well, because He died for you. Jesus says, *"I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends"* **(John 15:13)**. Jesus willingly gave His life

for you, that's how much He cares about you! He's not going to just stop caring about you now; no, He's all-in for you!

-Take your hurt and uncertainty to God in prayer.

### How could God let something like this happen?

That's a good question and it's not something that we can totally understand. I will tell you a few things that we do know, though.

-First, we know that God doesn't like death or suffering any more than we do. He didn't create death – in fact, He created the world perfect and eternal. Rather, it was us as human beings who caused death and all the bad things in the world by our sinfulness. The Bible says, *"Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned"* (**Romans 5:12**).

And we know that God has actually done what it took to defeat and to destroy death – He died so that He could rise from the dead to overcome it! The Bible says, *"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?...Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (**1 Corinthians 15:55,57**). Death is absolutely defeated, and though it will be, it is not yet destroyed; *"He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death"* (**1 Corinthians 15:25-26**)

-If Jesus has defeated death, why did your husband still die? Why is there still death all over the world? Well, all we can say is that God is all-knowing, and He in His infinite wisdom has decided that it is not yet the right time to return to earth and to do away with death once and for all. The Bible says, *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts"* (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). In **Matthew 13:24-30**, Jesus tells the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares; in the parable He explains that the reason He has not yet returned to the earth to do away with death once-and-for-all is because the harvest is not yet ready; in other words, everyone who is going to believe has not yet done so. God is waiting until the full number of people believe and are thus saved before returning to the earth to do away with death forever.

-So, we are still here left in this suffering, but God has not left us alone to suffer. In fact, the most amazing thing of all is that God Himself has entered into our suffering in order to prove to us that death and suffering is not forever. Jesus, true God, left the paradise of heaven and came down into our world to suffer alongside us. And

suffer He did! Though He lived a perfect life, He was convicted, beaten, mocked, shamed, punished, taunted, scourged, abused, degraded, and hung on a cross. There He slowly suffocated to death as He bore the weight of the sins of the whole world. There He was also forsaken by the Father – He was separated from God who is everything good. He experienced utter and total hell in that moment. Then God died and was buried.

-On the one hand, this helps us to see and understand that God must have a really good reason for allowing our suffering to continue. If there was any other way for God to do away with suffering, He would have done it! But there wasn't. The only way was by entering into and undergoing suffering Himself. The only way was by facing and enduring death Himself. God suffered immensely and died, so He can empathize with us when we face such struggles.

-On the other hand, Jesus' death and resurrection proves to us that our suffering is not forever. It gives us hope, even in death! If your husband was a believer in Jesus Christ, he is not gone; in fact, he is in a much better place! He is enjoying perfect peace, love, warmth, goodness, joy, and 'shalom.' Still, you are suffering and grieving – but loss, finality, 'the end' is not added to that grief. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection allow you to grieve with assured hope. And because of what He has done, you can know that you will not grieve nor suffer forever. Instead, one day you will be reunited with your husband, and at the same time, be united with Christ. Then you will share in all the blessings that your husband is experiencing right now, also.

-Finally, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection also proves that God loves you immensely! Knowing this, you can be certain that He is with you now as you are suffering. He is caring for you. He already did what was worst for Him in order to do what is best for you, and He is not going to leave you now. God promises: *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (**Hebrews 13:5**). God loves you so much that He gave his life for you! In this act, God shows that He cares even more for you than He cares for Himself; certainly He will not leave you now, nor stop caring for you now – He is with you!

-Take your suffering and grief to God in prayer.

### Will anything good come out of this?

-Absolutely. We can't know exactly what or when, but we can say for certain that good will come out of this. In fact, the Bible says, *"And we know that for those who love God*

*all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose"*  
**(Romans 8:28)**.

-For starters, some good may have already come out of this. If your husband was a believer in Jesus Christ, he is in heaven right now. He is experienced more joy, love, and peace than you can even imagine! I know you miss him terribly, and I know it's not good for you. But he is in no more pain and is instead in total bliss. I know you're sad, but I know you're also happy that the man you love is in such a good place.

-Additionally, other good very often comes out of terrible situations like this, and the Bible gives us so many examples of that.

-First, the Bible says, *"Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us"* **(Romans 5:3-5)**. In other words, when we face suffering, we are brought to rely on God – that strengthens our hope and our faith. Faith is the most important thing that we have because it's the only thing that receives eternal life. One oft, and important benefit of suffering is the strengthening of our faith.

-Second, suffering equips us to help others in their suffering. The Bible says, God *"comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God"* **(2 Corinthians 1:4)**. In other words, when we suffer, it enables us to better care for others who are suffering.

-Third, the Bible says, *"Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved"* **(Psalm 55:22)**. In other words, suffering drives us to God and helps us to increasingly trust in His promises. When we have nowhere else to cast our burden, we take it to God and as He cares for us, our relationship with Him is strengthened.

-Fourth, suffering prepares us for eternal life. The Bible says, *"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him"* **(James 1:12)**. In other words, just as a victory is so much sweeter to the one that worked hard and suffered for it, we are prepared for the "crown of life" by going through trials – eternity will be that much sweeter for us.

-Fifth, suffering has historically and biblically provided Christians with excellent opportunities to witness. Consider Paul and Silas imprisoned in a Philippian jail – because of the joy they showed in their suffering, the jailor and his family were saved. As Christians endure suffering, it gives them opportunities to share with others how they are getting through that suffering – with God’s help. This can be a powerful witness and can help other people come to know Jesus.

-As you grieve and suffer, look to the Lord each and every day, then good will come out of this. Your relationship with Him, your love for Him, and your faith in Him will all grow and be strengthened, and as you live that out, others will notice and their faith will be strengthened, too. You are suffering now, but God will absolutely do ultimate good through it.

-Finally, if you need proof that God does good through things that initially appear bad, look to Jesus. What could possibly be worse than the death of an innocent man? Than the destruction of God? Yet, it was through this seemingly horrific act that God worked ultimate, total good! Through this, He forgave all sin. Through this, He, by coming back to life, defeated death once and for all! Through this act, God saved all of mankind! And there is nothing better than that!

-Pray that God would not only work good through this situation but reveal it to you and bring you comfort in that.

### I’m mad at God. Is that okay?

Yes, it is okay. God can take it, and he wants you to come to him even in your anger. However, it’s not okay to stay mad at God forever. You may be mad for a while, but always work towards relieving yourself of that anger as you realize that God has not left you, He has not forsaken you, and He loves you immensely – even though right now it feels like none of those things are true.

-I think perhaps the best way to handle this question is to look at the first part of **Psalm 22**:

*“<sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?*

*Why are You so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?*

*<sup>2</sup> My God, I cry out by day, but You do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.*

*<sup>3</sup> Yet You are enthroned as the Holy One;*

*You are the one Israel praises.*

*<sup>4</sup>In You our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and You delivered them.*

*<sup>5</sup>To You they cried out and were saved;  
in You they trusted and were not put to shame."*

-In the first couple of verses, we see a person who is mad at God, a person who feels like God has abandoned them and left them to suffer. It's okay to be mad at God. But rather than staying mad at God, he looks to God's history and is reminded that God is all-powerful (v.3) and that God uses his power for our good. In the past He has "delivered" them, "saved" them, and did not allow them "to be put to shame." In the past, God had proven that He loves and saves, and God is "the same yesterday and today and forever" (**Hebrews 13:8**). Not only has he loved and saved, he still does! He always has been a deliverer, and He always will be. In this truth, in the fact that God has proven himself to be a Savior again and again, the writer of this Psalm finds peace and the conviction that God will deliver him; he does not stay mad at God.

-This reality of God being a deliverer becomes all the more real when we realize that this Psalm was actually written about Jesus Christ and was quoted by Him on the cross. Jesus cried out: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" This demonstrates to us that God has actually forsaken His own Son in our place. Though we in our sinfulness deserve to be forsaken by God, we can be certain that He never will because He has already taken this judgement out on His Son and will forsake us no longer. As you meditate upon this and come to trust more and more that, while God has allowed something terrible to happen to you, He has not forsaken you, and in fact, He actually loves you so much that He died for you, then your anger towards Him will slowly subside.

-Pray in honesty to God. Tell him how you're feeling. And ask that he would help you to trust in his sacrifice so much that your anger subsides.

How can I cope with this? How can I go on?

It isn't going to be easy; in fact, it's going to be terribly hard. And there isn't any magic formula that I can give you to make the hurt and the pain go away. But what I can give you is hope. Hope is really what we need to survive. If we have hope, we can make it through anything!

-The Bible says, *"Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him"* (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-14**). Notice that it doesn't say that you won't grieve; the Bible affirms that you will. But, it also says that you don't have to grieve like the rest of the world who has no hope. You're your husband was a believer, you do have hope, even in death. You have a hope that will ease the burden of your grief. And what is that hope? It's that "Jesus died and rose again." Jesus didn't just die and rise because He felt like it or to show off. Rather, Jesus died for a very specific purpose: to forgive our sins. And Jesus rose for a very specific purpose: to defeat death! The sins that cause suffering and death are forgiven. The death that was so final has been overcome! So now we have hope! Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, "God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him." In other words, those who die in Jesus, in faith in him, are not really gone; rather, they have just gone to a different place, a better place – they have heaven and are with Jesus! They are better off than they ever were here on earth. They've been perfected – there's no more pain, suffering, or sadness. Instead, they now have bliss and paradise forever! And this is not some flimsy hope that we can have; rather, the death and resurrection of Jesus assure us of hope. It is a certain, absolute hope. Those who die with faith in Jesus go to be with him in heaven! Jesus assures us: *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die"* (**John 11:25-26**).

-Even if your husband was not a believer in Jesus, you still do have hope because you can believe in Him. First, Jesus also promises to be with you to and help you cope. Jesus says, *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls"* (**Matthew 11:28-29**). And *"Cast all your anxieties on God, because he cares for you"* (**1 Peter 5:6-7**). Second, if you believe in Jesus, you will go to be with him forever in heaven where *"He will wipe away every tear from your eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore"* (**Revelation 21:4**). There will be a day when you no longer mourn your husband's death – it may not be on this earth, but through faith in Christ that day will come!

-Pray that God would bring you comfort and peace even as you grieve.

I feel guilty for being so sad. Is it okay to grieve?

It is absolutely okay to grieve. It's natural and good to grieve. Grief doesn't show a lack of faith. Consider Jesus, even though he had perfect faith, He grieved at the death of His friend Lazarus (**John 11:35**).

Also know that everyone grieves differently; don't let anyone tell you that you're doing it wrong – you're just doing it how you need to do it, and that is good. Grieving helps to bring healing. Jesus never condemns someone for grieving, instead He comforts them in their grief just as He will do for you.

I feel guilty that I'm not as upset as I thought I would be. Am I a terrible person?

You certainly are not. Everyone grieves differently, and some people don't experience a huge amount of grief. That's okay! It doesn't make you a bad person, just as someone who is grieving a lot is not necessarily a weak person. Don't feel bad that you're not grieving as much as others tell you that you should be. But also, don't miss this opportunity to draw nearer to God and take refuge in Him. That really is the best thing that you can be doing right now and always.

I hope that these questions and answers were helpful. If you come across others that you don't know how to answer, please call (920) 467-6449, and we'll do our best to answer your questions and bring you the love and grace of Jesus!