

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Boy Swept Away By Floodwaters: Why Didn't God Save Him? | With Dr. Clay Jones and Dan Hodges

(October 4, 2024)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, why does God allow evil? Some will say God allows evil because He gives us free will and we need free will to love. But why does God allow natural disasters like the devastation of Hurricane Helene? What does that have to do with free will, if anything? And why do bad things happen to good people? Why didn't God save that seven year old boy named Micah who yelled?

Last thing he was heard to yell was, please help me, Jesus, as he was being swept away by floodwaters. His body was found about a quarter mile downstream. We're going to get into those difficult questions today with Dr. Clay Jones and Dan Hodges. Clay, providentially, has been scheduled for months to teach a new online course for us, 'Why Does God Allow Evil?' And it's scheduled to start later this month. He's taught for many years online courses for us and at Colorado Christian University and also at Biola University.

My friend Dan Hodges is a graduate of Biola University. He's also a board member here CrossExamined.org and he experienced Hurricane Helene when it hit his house and community in western North Carolina just last week. I'm going to start with Clay, and we're going to bring Dan in a little bit later in the program to talk about what's happened with Hurricane Helene, what's going on right now.

But let's start with Clay. Clay, it's very providential that you're teaching this course here later this week. This hurricane, of course, has just hit, not only that, but you personally have been going through pain and suffering yourself. You're in cancer treatment right now. So, God has us right now at this time talking about this topic for a reason. Why don't we start very broadly? Let's start at the top. Why did you decide to write a book and do an online course called why does God allow evil?

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CLAY:

Well, you know, it's interesting, at least to me, but that I think we know why God allows evil, frankly. Many of the books on why God allows evil are, well, you know, I mean, this isn't evidence that God doesn't exist. I mean, they kind of do this. Whatever arguments you lodge against God when it comes to evil, that doesn't work. God can still exist.

My book's very different in the fact that I argue that we know why God allows evil. The Bible tells us why God allows evil. And Martin Lloyd Jones, famous preacher of Westminster Tabernacle in London, said most of our problems are due to a double failure. We fail, on one hand to understand the depth of our sinfulness.

And we fail, on the other hand, to understand the height, the greatness of our salvation. And I think he's absolutely correct. And years ago, in fact, it was in the early 80's, I began to understand the glory that was awaiting us in heaven forever. And it was life changing.

In fact, it's all I really want to talk about is what the Lord has done in us, that we become temples of the Holy Spirit and that we're going to live forever and ever and ever. In fact, we're going to reign over God's kingdom, Revelation 22:5 says, and they will reign forever and ever. And then I decided, now I know where we're going. Where did we come from?

And I started studying the depth of human sinfulness. I've spent a lot of time in genocide studies and realized that genocide is precisely human. They're not monsters. They are us. And as I began to realize these two things, frankly, the problem of evil went away. I just didn't see it. And I had questions I still needed to answer. But the larger problem of evil was just not much of a problem to me.

And so, somebody said one day, well, you should write a book. And so, I did. And for years I taught at Talbot School of Theology on why God allows evil. And so, anyway, so I think we know why God allows evil, and that's what made me write the book. And I'm honored to be able to teach the class for Online Christian Courses.

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FRANK:

Well, I'm not just saying this because you're on the program, Clay, but this is in the top three books all time that I've read on the evil question, your book, 'Why Does God Allow Evil?' And now you're bringing it to an online audience where they can actually ask you questions via Zoom. The class starts October 23. We'll talk more about that later. But you say the problem of evil vanished in your mind because you discovered what exactly?

CLAY:

The depth of human sinfulness, that humans really are. We are all, as I like to put it, we were all born. Auschwitz enabled that. When you study genocide, when you study the Holocaust, which is just an example of genocide, you find that genocide is something that humans do very easily. Not to get off in the abortion issue much, but the fact that we're suctioning, scraping, and scalding to death millions of children over the years, babies, shows you something's really wrong with humankind. But humans do genocide very easily.

And also, then the glory that awaits us in heaven forever. Man, I'll tell you, once you begin to wrap your mind around that. See, the Gospel of Jesus is not about an improved lifestyle here. It's not. And I'm afraid, you know, I used to be a huge Campus Crusade for Christ. Now it's called CRU fan.

Went to the headquarters many times back in Arrowhead Springs and memorized the four spiritual laws in law. One of the four spiritual laws was God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. The trouble with that is that that can be very misleading. The Lord does not promise you an improved lifestyle. He does not promise you that. And I've had people get very angry with me, some Christians get very angry with me, that I would say that.

But if you're living in Afghanistan and you become a Christian and your daughter is abducted and gang raped and forced to sign a confession to Islam, and then they start, they try to set you and your wife on fire, that's not an improved lifestyle here. And I just don't know how, you know, I don't know how to make it, make it clearer than that. That's not an improved lifestyle, you know?

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But what the Gospel of Jesus, the message of Jesus is, well, John 3:16 that ends with, shall not perish, but have eternal life, that you can live forever, and ever, and ever, and ever, and ever. So anyway, that's the hope of the Christian life, is that you can live forever. It isn't about an improved lifestyle.

FRANK:

Yeah. God's plan for Micah, the seven year old boy that was swept off the roof to die at seven, that wouldn't fit with the first promise of the CRU statement, as you mentioned.

CLAY:

No, but, you know, I believe and argue, and I have a chapter on the destiny of the unevangelized. And the destiny of children is one of the issues. I think Micah is in heaven right now, and that's where he's going to always be. Because I believe that there actually is an age of accountability. I think the Scripture actually does teach that. And I think he's in heaven forever.

So, his existence, Micah's existence hasn't ended. And I think there it is again. People go, well, yeah, but his existence no ended. No, it didn't end. And he's still alive, and he's now in a place where he can never be hurt again. And so, that's the hope of the Christian life. And we need to wrap our minds around this.

And I'm afraid that a lot of Christians have thought, no, it's about, I've got to live the American dream, and then eternity is the P.S. to the Christian life. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then we get to go to heaven when we die. Well, that's not enough.

FRANK:

No. And in fact, in the online course and your book by the same name, 'Why Does God Allow Evil?', we talk about when we experience evil and suffering, we need to have an eternal perspective. So, what do you mean by that? And why do you say that?

CLAY:

Well, if Christianity is true, and Jesus really was raised from the dead, and I know you're going to have a resurrection course soon, I taught in defense of the resurrection at Talbot for years.

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Jesus really was raised from the dead. And if He really was raised from the dead, the promise is eternal life, that we can also be raised from the dead. And here's the key.

If eternal life is true, if eternal life's not true, then Christianity is a false religion. And frankly, we should all be doing something else. If Christianity is true, then we're going to live forever, and ever, and ever. And here's the way I like to put it, eternal life will dwarf our suffering here to insignificance.

FRANK:

And we're going to unpack that further with Dr. Clay Jones. We're also going to talk to Dan Hodges about what happened in Hurricane Helene, and it's not pretty ladies and gentlemen. You're not hearing much in the media, but we're going to give you the truth here. So, don't go anywhere. We're back in just two minutes.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio Network. Our website is Crossexamined.org. If you go there and you click on online courses, you will see 'Why Does God Allow Evil?' It starts October 23. That's the topic we're talking about today.

But before then, just next week, the new course that Mike Licona and I put together called 'Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?: Evidence and Objections for the Modern Mind' is going to start. Not only do we give all the evidence, up to date evidence as to why we believe Jesus rose from the dead, we also deal with objections.

I mean, can you answer these objections? We can't believe in miracles because they break the laws of nature, or miracles are too improbable, or historians can't grant miraculous claims, or extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, or other religions have miracles too, so why believe Christianity? Or we just don't have enough evidence?

Or what about the dying and rising gods of these other religions? What about that? Did Christianity just copy from all that? We're going to deal with all of that in the course, 'Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?' Go to Crossexamined.org, click on online courses. If you take the premium version, you'll be live with

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me and Mike Licona on several occasions for live Q&A. But let me go back to my guests, Dr. Clay Jones.

Clay, just before the break, you were talking about the fact we have to have an eternal perspective, and you mentioned that our sufferings will pale in comparison once we get to heaven. They'll be insignificant in relation to the glory we'll have in heaven. But those sufferings that we go through now still shape us in some way, don't they?

CLAY:

Well, they certainly do. And by the way, Frank, you and I chatted about this yesterday a little bit. But if somebody has just suffered a major loss, I don't sit down with them and explain to them God's larger plan in the universe and what He's doing. The Scripture says to weep with those who weep.

And so, our first response to those who've just suffered a major loss is to weep with them. Maybe bring them some meals to love them. But then sooner or later they're going to want to know. But so, why did God do this? Why did He allow this? And I just cannot...

Christianity, if you read the Gospels carefully, and I'm afraid an awful lot of Christians don't read them very carefully, you'll see Jesus will say things like, if anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, pick up his cross daily and follow Me. The only cross that the people at that time would have thought of was the one that you were stripped naked and had spikes driven through your wrists and through your feet and that you lifted yourself up and down to breathe. And I mean, that was the only cross that they knew about.

And so, when He said, pick up your cross daily, He was saying, you need to have a life of denial, of self-denial. And also, then what? Again, John 3:16, the ending, shall not perish, but have eternal life because Jesus is promising us eternal life, which, as I said, will dwarf our suffering here to insignificance.

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FRANK:

Let me go to my friend Dan Hodges. Dan is a board member at CrossExamined. He's also a graduate of Biola University, where Clay taught for many years. And Dan, you live in western North Carolina, right where Helene hit. You were there when it happened. Give us a sense of what really happened with this hurricane because we're not getting at least as much coverage as I would expect given the damage that's been done.

DAN:

Yeah, thanks, Frank. You know, first I'd like to make a shameless plug for Clay as well. You know, eight years ago, I went to Biola University. By far the thing that changed my outlook on things and made Christianity real to me was Clay's class.

So, this is an extreme privilege for people to be able to take and to jump on the bandwagon just for a few seconds. I think what Clay was saying is oftentimes best summed up in a Dostoyevsky quote. I believe, like a child, that suffering will be healed and made up for in the world's finale.

At the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass. It'll suffice for all hurts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity, for all the blood they've shed for to make it not only possible to forgive, but to justify what's happened. And that'll blow your mind.

When you think about it, it justifies what's happening now? And so, what we saw in Helene was a, you know, meteorology is an imperfect science at best, you know, and they got it slightly wrong. It came right through the mountains. The eye came right over our cabin on top of the mountain in little Switzerland and western North Carolina, and it was a bad storm all night.

We've then gotten rain for three days. The ground was soaked. And then at about 9:00 a.m. what we believe now is that a line of small, short-term tornadoes marched up the mountain there. We were seeing and hearing snapping of oak trees and maples that were as much as 4ft thick were being snapped off at, you know, 6 to 8ft above the ground.

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Some were being, because of the soggy ground, were coming right out with the roots and all and being pushed around. Luckily in our cabin, not luckily, but for divine providence, all the trees fell away from our cabin. None hit it, and they should have.

So, we're grateful for that, trying to get out after that, all the roads were blocked. About every hundred yards down the roads there were huge trees over power lines. The neighbors had come out after the storm subsided a bit and were cutting in the rain with chainsaws, huge logs to try and drag them out of the way.

We got on our tractor and using chainsaws to help out, and it took literally all day to go about three quarters of a mile with people pushing just to get to the little town of little Switzerland. From there, the alpine lodge had gone down the hill, took out another house with a friend and his wife in it. He broke his back.

You know, we hiked out a half a mile to get people to come help him get his wife out. Took about four hours to extract her. All the roads were undercut, caved in, mudslides and landslides taking things out. So, even today, there is no power, there's no communications, cellular communications in there, unless it's satellite.

The roads are opening and then closing again because of the danger of the landslides and the undercuts. You could take cars with it, but I'll tell you, the community has come together, Frank and Clay, maybe you can expound on it more. What makes a community of people that wouldn't talk to each other for years all of a sudden, hugging each other around the neck, helping each other, doing welfare checks, taking water, cooking meals, and having them in the homes?

And unfortunately, our government was a little late. About two or three days to get National Guard on scene, about five days to get other military personnel on scene. And a lot of people have suffered and died in the meantime. But believe it or not, the spirits are buoyed and they're high in the mountains right now.

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FRANK:

Yeah, Clay, what is that? Because you, on one hand, in the course, 'Why Does God Allow Evil?' and in your book, you talk about how...

And the chapter on 'Why Does God Allow Bad Things to Happen to Good People?' will shock you ladies and gentlemen. I'm just telling you, you need to take the course and or read the book, because it's unlike anything I've ever read. And you talk about how easy it is to do evil to one another.

But also, there are times when evil like this can bring people together. And we see people, as Dan just said, who have been at odds for years over petty little nonsense in the neighborhood are suddenly helping one another. How do we explain that? And I guess that's a good thing that comes from this kind of suffering.

CLAY:

It is a good thing. And I think the explanation is, well, if you look at one of the most amazing events in the last hundred years, of course, was D Day. And it's hard to imagine men storming the beaches, the Normandy beaches. But there was a camaraderie that was developed among them. And we find that in every time there's a battle and men fighting, and Dan was in the Air Force and when the years passed. But there's a comradery that develops when you go through suffering.

It's interesting because Jeanne and I weren't able to have children, and we took in abused foster children for years. And one night, the girls I'm talking about were preteen teenage girls. Oh, they were just so rude that night, but most of them had been molested and whatnot and abused for sure.

But anyway, I went outside, and I said, Lord, what if these girls never come to know you? And I started to tear up a little bit and the words came to mind, then you will know the fellowship of my suffering, that there is a fellowship that develops in suffering. And the fact that we've all gone through, or we're all going through this extremely harsh world is something that we're going to bring with us into heaven, that we're a part of the fellowship.

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And so, anyway, suffering does have that effect on us. And we are learning here the horror of sin, the horror of rebellion against God, the penalty for it. We're learning that and we're going to take that knowledge with us into heaven, and that's valuable eternally. What's happening to us here is eternally valuable knowledge.

FRANK:

Dan, people will say that this kind of evil disproves God, but in reality, of course, it doesn't. Why doesn't evil disprove God?

DAN:

You know, ironically, Frank, and if you don't mind, I'll focus on what people are calling natural evil. You know, and the truth of the matter is, in Hurricane Katrina, the Army Corps of Engineers put up dikes surrounding that city. They were never meant to withstand a category five hurricane, and they said it's not going to withstand it. And yet, people continue to build, and a lot of suffering occurred because the engineering was spot on, it gave way, it was flooded, there was a lot of suffering, a lot of death, but then it becomes God's issue in people's minds.

And the fact of the matter is, let's specifically address hurricanes. If you talk to Dr. Hugh Ross or Steve Myers, both very, very close friends, they'll tell you, without hurricanes, we don't have life on earth. If hurricanes don't wick away the temperature of the surface of the ocean, the oceans go septic on us and no life will exist on the planet.

So, what we consider natural evil are actually very important for any life at all to exist. And we unfortunately continue to ignore signs. And when hardship comes, oftentimes we blame God for these sorts of things. So, you know, the existence of evil as, oh C.S. Lewis said, I wouldn't know what a bent stick was unless I saw a straight stick.

We wouldn't know what a privation of good is. And that's really what evil is. Evil's not necessarily a noun, right? It's like a clean skin versus skin with an open boil on it, is the evil part of the skin. So, therefore evil cannot exist without God. We all know that. I'll let you expound on that one.

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FRANK:

Yeah, there's much more. Right after the break, we're talking to Dr. Clay Jones and Dan Hodges about if God, why evil? Particularly natural disasters today. But the course, 'Why Does God Allow Evil?' goes into a lot more than that, which you can go to Crossexamined.org. Click on online courses, you'll see it there. We got a lot more. Back in two minutes.

Why does God allow evil? Why does he allow natural disasters? Why didn't God save seven year old Micah, who yelled please help me, Jesus as he was being swept away by floodwaters? By the way, his grandparents perished as well. His mother survived. We'll tell you more about that in a few minutes.

But I want to address a perennial question, and you address it so well, Dr. Clay Jones, in your book and in the course, 'Why Does God Allow Evil?' The question we hear all the time, Clay, is why do bad things happen to good people? How do you respond?

CLAY:

Well, my major response, as you know, Frank, is there are no good people.

FRANK:

What? I'm pretty good, Clay, come on. [Laughter]

CLAY:

It's interesting to me, one of the most fascinating facts, I think a lot of people that write on the problem of evil, and I started to do this myself. I thought I need to find a really bad example of genocide. Somewhere in the Holocaust is where I looked and put this in my book to say, now let's see how God can answer this.

But something strange happened. And that was I kept reading and I started, I've read one book after another book, after another book, after another book on genocide. And one of the things that is fascinating to me, and that is every genocide researcher I know, to a person there are no exceptions, agrees that it's the average, that genocide is what the average ordinary person does, that they agree to it happening, that this is not something that's inhuman.

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People sometimes say, Clay's saying inhumane. No, I mean inhuman. It's very human to do genocide. But it's not only every genocide researcher that I've read, every single genocide victim I've ever read to a person. There are no exceptions. Elie Wiesel, who survived Auschwitz, said spectator, perpetrator, victim, they're all one. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who wrote 'The Gulag Archipelago' and spent eight years in the Soviet gulag, said, where does one, I mean, find an affirmative meaning in life, if humans can do this kind of thing?

And he goes on and he says, you know, that what we're dealing with here is, he says, people ask, where did this wolf tribe arise from among our people? He says, is it our own flesh? He says, is it our own blood? He says, it's our own. He says, and just so that no one too quickly goes around flaunting the white mantle of the just, let each person ask himself, if my life had turned out differently, might I, too, have become such a perpetrator?

And then he says, it's a terrible question if one answers it honestly. And of course, his answer is, yeah, this is genocide is something we can all do. There's something about humankind that's very wrong in that regard. And if he who hates his brother is a murderer, the Scripture says, I've got a book over here called 'The Murder Next Door.'

And this sociologist got his staff working for a long time to interview people all over the world. And he came to, well over 90% of everybody that they interviewed at one time or another had a fantasy about murdering somebody. Why is that the case? And I mean, I don't mean just like, hey, this is a fun thing to think about.

They wanted to kill somebody that they felt had wronged them. What's going on here? Humans are not good. And what we need to do is realize that evil is a matter of the heart. And that's what Jesus was always trying to emphasize, is that evil is a matter of the heart. And even if you don't do it, if somebody is committing adultery in their heart, why aren't they doing the deed?

They're not doing the deed because what, I don't want to get pregnant, or I don't want her to get pregnant, or I don't want to get a disease and have my spouse say, well, that's new, honey. Where'd you get that? If somebody is thinking about murdering somebody, why don't they actually do it?

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Well, but they don't. Consequences, right? And I've asked my classes, why do gangbangers stop at red lights? And they go, first time I ever asked it. They kind of like... Everybody's like, I don't know, why did they stop? And one person raised their hand.

This woman says, because they don't want to get a ticket. I said, sure. I said, that's probably part of it. But isn't there a more compelling reason? Isn't the more compelling reason that they don't want to be hit by an 18 wheeler and turned into red asphalt? Sure. That's why they're stopping at red lights.

But notice that when it comes to if you're fantasizing about having sex with someone or you're fantasizing about murdering somebody, or you wish you could kill somebody, you're an adulterous murderer. And the fact that you don't do it is not because you're a good person, it's because you don't want the consequences that might ensue from that. And so, humans aren't good.

FRANK:

It's more about self-interest, as you point out in the course. And can you also make another distinction, which I thought was brilliant, is the difference between being good and being nice?

CLAY:

Yeah, that's an important one, because people go, well, you can be a good person. Because I've known some good atheists, and if I know someone who's a good atheist and there's good, you can be a non-Christian and be a good person. There's a big difference between being good and being nice.

And just because you are nice to people doesn't make you good. And one of the greatest, most popular examples is, well, what about Gandhi? Gandhi was a good person, and he wasn't a Christian. Gandhi was not a good person. I've got news for you. He went to bed naked with his nieces every night.

And the only time he interrupted going to bed naked with his nieces every night is when he was going to bed with other men's wives or whoever, naked. And some of the people watching or listening to this are going, probably going, I never knew that. Google it.

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I mean, Gandhi was not a good person. There's no such thing. Look, it's hard for a Christian to live a righteous life, but non-Christian, it's not happening. It's never happened. It's never going to happen. That's why we all need to come to Jesus and be born into a new family. We need to be born again.

FRANK:

Yeah, absolutely. And the course, 'Why Does God Allow Evil?' and the book by the same name will go into all of this, ladies and gentlemen, in a lot more detail than what we can do right here. But I can almost hear people now, Clay, thinking, oh, I would never be a guard at a concentration camp. I would never commit genocide. What are they missing, Clay, when they think that?

CLAY:

One of the things that they're missing is... Let's go back just for a moment to the abortion issue. Again. We are suctioning for since 1973, we've been suctioning, scraping and scalding to death, and now dissolving hundreds of thousands of babies every single year. Who keeps that legal? It's your neighbors, right? It's your friends, right? It's your coworkers, right?

It might even be you that's keeping this legal. And, of course, oh, well, yeah, but that's not really murder. Blah, blah, blah. Yeah, everybody, the murder that they want to commit, the killing that they want to commit is always, you know, for some reason, we find a way of going, no, this is really okay.

It's just a clump of cells. The four inches, you know, of the vaginal, of the vagina. You know, if it's on one side of that four inches, it's just a clump of cells on the other side. It's a baby. Anybody that's honest with themselves realizes the folly of that. And, uh, anyway.

FRANK:

So, if it wasn't a baby, then Planned Parenthood wouldn't have been caught selling baby body parts. And they were caught doing that. In fact, David Daleiden, back in 2014 and 2015, exposed them on hidden video that they were literally selling baby body parts.

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And the Attorney General in California at the time was a lady by the name of Kamala Harris. You may have heard of her. And she did not go after Planned Parenthood for selling baby body parts. She went after the guy who recorded them selling baby body parts.

And so, it seems to me, the most articulate Kamala Harris gets is on abortion. It's all about abortion. It's all about... That's her issue. And it's sad when that's the central issue of your campaign, that you want not only to allow people to do this, you want the government to pay for it. But I digress. That's where we are.

CLAY:

You know, if I might jump in and add one thing to that, Frank. One of my latest blogs at clayjones.net, is on the need for abortion. And what I was saying, the point of the blog is that the average, well, I quote the gal Elizabeth Warzell, who wrote 'Prozac Nation', and she talks about the first time she had a sexual encounter.

And she says, I never knew that it could be that exciting. She says, it gave my life meaning. It gave my life importance. I had something. There was something about life that I didn't know before. And I find again and again what's happening when it comes to abortion...

You see, the trouble is, a lot of people, sex is the only meaningful thing they do. I mean, obviously, that's not true for many people. A lot of people settle down and get married and have children and so on. But for a lot of single women, the most meaningful thing they may ever do is have sex with another person. That's meaningful to them. And you can't take away their life's meaning very easily. But anyway, so.

FRANK:

In order to keep doing that, we have to kill the product of our sexual encounter. Yeah, that's a problem. Now, Dan, I don't know if we'll get to this completely before we have to go to break. But the hardest question that I think we need to answer, at least address we won't have a complete answer on this broadcast, is, why does a seven year old boy like Micah get swept away claiming his aunt said the last thing he said was, Jesus, help me?

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And he and his grandparents perished. His mother survived, but the aunt who saw it all happen is actually in a newspaper article that we will put in the show notes. But why would God allow that to happen, Dan? Do we know, do we have any way of addressing it?

DAN:

You know, Frank, I think probably the best response to this actually comes from the late Dr. Tim Keller. When someone asked him, very similar with the loss of a child, why would God let this happen? As Clay said earlier, there's times you come along, and we don't want...

When people ask a question, they don't really want an answer. They just want presence, and they need the presence of another person. And in this case, I think it's best not to wax perhaps philosophical, but to actually put the response back that we don't know exactly why God allows things to happen.

Ironically, I'm reading in Job this morning, second chapter, I think it's verses six or seven. Job's wife says, why are you clinging to your integrity? Just curse God and die? And what does Job say? He says, hey, don't talk like a foolish woman. Should we accept only the good from God and not the bad? And even that is somewhat of an inadequate answer when we're looking at a child who's seven years old making a plea to Jesus to please save his life.

But one thing we do know that I think is an adequate response, is we know what it can't be. We know it can't be that God doesn't care because God came into this world. God came in. He suffered the worst things He could suffer: betrayal, torture, death for us. So, it can't be that he doesn't.

FRANK:

Yeah, we got a lot more to say on that right after the break. In fact, you're going to be shocked to see what this young boy's aunt said about all this. And we'll put the article in the show notes. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Back in two minutes.

Why does God allow evil? Why does he allow a seven year old to be swept away by floodwaters? We're addressing these difficult topics today here on I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. My name is Frank Turek. Our website is Crossexamined.org. There are several

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books you can get on evil. One of the best you're going to read is 'Why Does God Allow Evil?' by my guest today, Dr. Clay Jones. Joining Clay is my friend Dan Hodges, who is also a Biola graduate.

And before the break, we were talking about the young boy Micah swept away. Clay, why would God, why does God allow these things? We can't always explain them. What would you want to say about it?

CLAY:

One of the things that's interesting to me, in fact, I've got an article people can Google it. It's in the Christian Research Journal entitled 'Why Did God Let that Child Die? I talk about it at length in my book, but whenever anybody brings that up, I, for lack of a better word, I universalize it.

And I said, well, it's not just that child that drowned, right? You don't think God should ever let any child drown, right? And they go, oh, no, of course. God should never let any child drown. I said, and well, you don't think God should let children die of cancer either, do you?

No, of course, God shouldn't let children die of cancer. And you don't think they ought to be raped, or maimed in automobile accidents or, and on and on. And they say, of course God should never let that happen to children, ever. And I keep pushing this, and finally I'll say, so to what age do you think children should be indestructible?

See, you're talking about the world being radically different. How does God protect all children at all times from any serious injury? How does he keep them from being in the car with a parent who's driving drunk or are on their cell phone? How does He do that without radically changing the world and making His existence completely apparent to everyone at all times? He can't do that.

And so, natural laws have to work in regular ways if our actions are going to mean anything. And so, when it comes to children, nobody ever asks. I've never been asked, why does God let children die? They always ask, why did God let this child die? And the trouble with that is that I don't know the answer.

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Well, I don't know the answer why God lets a particular child die at a particular moment. Of course, how would I know the answer to that? But I do know why God lets children die, because natural laws have to work in regular ways if our actions are going to mean anything at all.

As I said, one last comment at the beginning, though, we need to weep with those who weep. If somebody just lost a child, I would not, I would say, hey, let me love you, and hug you, and weep with you, and bring you some meals and stuff. But anyway, so there's just an additional couple of thoughts on that.

FRANK:

Well, there's an article that was in the New York Post earlier this week. It's in the show notes. It's titled 'Heartbreaking Final Photo Shows North Carolina Grandparents Trapped on Roof Before Swept Away by Floodwaters with Grandson.'

Now, the aunt of that grandson, her name is Jessica Turner. She's in Asheville. And here's what she said in this article about seeing her parents and nephew drown right before her eyes. She said, if my nephew and my parents' deaths lead many to Christ, then their deaths were worth it. I will praise the goodness of God when he takes death to lead others into new life.

The last thing Micah yelled before he was taken was, Jesus, please help me. Is it possible that this death will lead to the salvations of several people? It is possible. There's always a ripple effect. Dan, I don't know how this woman, she must be a deep Christian to have this kind of faith after seeing her nephew swept away. Any comment on this? Do you want to add anything to this?

DAN:

Yeah, I believe it's in Isaiah. God says, when you're going through the floods, waters, and when you're going through the fires, I'll be with you. And I think He has made his presence, as I said before, it's not so much words as His presence is necessary in times like this.

And I think He certainly made His presence known to Jessica. As far as Micah goes, I can tell you another story. Three days ago, two young children under the age of five were found wandering

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in bad shape but found wandering naked up in the mountains of North Carolina. Two guys doing welfare check found them.

Apparently, their parents are swept away and killed. And here's two kids that didn't die who obviously are going to be deeply affected by this. But going back, I remember something from Biola that Clay said, and it stuck with me. And I went home, and I thought about it, and I thought about it, and I thought about it. He's exactly right.

And it's what changed my life, and my perspective was everyone you know, and love and Clay knows where I'm going. Everyone you know and love in this life is going to die from accident, disease, or homicide unless you first die of accident, disease and homicide. It's coming.

It's coming for everybody, and you're going to deal with it. No matter if you're a 16 year old and you haven't seen it yet, or you're an 80 year old and you've seen it far too many times, it's coming, and you need to be prepared. And God is not to blame. God is to be praised because He provided a way, as Clay said early on, we live forever.

The last plug I'll make for Clay's course is it does have the upside of changing your life. And as far as Christian apologetics, which is my graduate studies, and Clay was one of the professors, as far as Christian apologetics go, this is the toughest single argument that we ever face from people is if God, why evil?

So, it's very important to understand. And you have the opportunity of going through this course with whom I think is the very top person in the world to explain it. And that's Dr. Clay Jones.

CLAY:

Thank you, Dan.

DAN:

I just consider it a privilege.

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FRANK:

And Dan, it's not just academic with Clay, because, Clay, you're also in a situation now with a cancer diagnosis. As far as you know, there's no known cure. Can you tell our listeners about that and how it is affecting your teaching in this course? The course again is called 'Why Does God Allow Evil?'

CLAY:

Well, you know, it's funny. Suffering is good for us. You know, Paul says, though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. And then he says, for the slight momentary affliction is, I wish I could talk about in the class, is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen, but the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are temporary, for the things that are unseen are eternal.

We're going to live forever. God uses suffering in our life. I had the same cancer in 2004. At that time, they were able to remove it, and it took half inch margins. And so, for the next 18 years or whatever I was cancer free. Now, it's come back, unfortunately, and it's metastatic. I shouldn't say unfortunately. The Lord is in charge here, but it's metastasized, and I've got it everywhere.

We're doing what I call whack a mole, where they go, oh, here's a place that needs to be whacked. And I was just, in fact, I was in having a procedure done where they were burning a couple of lesions on Monday, just this last Monday. But Jeannie and I are writing a book on suffering. As a matter of fact, I started that before I knew that I had metastasized cancer but were writing a book on suffering.

And it is honing. I'm more like Jesus because of the cancer 20 years ago. And now I'm much more like Jesus than I would have been without it, for sure. And that it, you know, as Paul says in Romans 5, we rejoice in our suffering because suffering produces perseverance, which produces character. That God makes us more like Him through suffering. And this is eternally valuable.

So, anyway, I mean, it's... We've come up with, and I'll talk about this in the class. We don't have time to talk about it here, of course, but Jeannie and I have come up with seven truths

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that we encourage each other with, and we use it all the time. That God loves us, that He works everything out for our good, and that we're to fix our eyes on Jesus, and we're going to live forever is the final truth. And that's the hope of all the suffering that we're going through, is that Christianity is about eternal life.

FRANK:

I'm reminded of what Dr. Peter Kreeft said in his book, 'Making Sense of Suffering.' Check out this quote, ladies and gentlemen. It echoes exactly what Dr. Jones just said. He said, "The point of our lives is not comfort, security, or even happiness, but training. Not fulfillment, but preparation. This world is a lousy home, but it's a fine gymnasium."

It's a difficult world, ladies and gentlemen. It's a fallen world. We made it fallen through our sin in Adam. Well, why would God blame us for Adam's sin? Clay is going to cover that all in the book and in the course. Why does God allow evil? You just need to go to Crossexamined.org. Click on online courses. You'll see it there. It starts October 23.

I want to make a plea. We personally do this, and I want to make a plea for everybody listening to give to Samaritan's Purse, ladies and gentlemen. Samaritan's purse was on the ground long before the government ever got to western North Carolina. They're there now, and they are not only bringing relief, they're bringing the Gospel.

I know, Dan, you know about Samaritan's Purse very close to where you live. Any other advice you want to give people if they want to help people in North Carolina as a result of this hurricane?

DAN:

No. I would. Well, number one, the very best thing people can do is pray. And that sounds so trite sometimes because all of us have said before, I'm going to pray for you, and we never do. But really, a concerted effort to take two times out of your day for about 30 seconds to a minute.

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Please commit to that and just pray for the people of western North Carolina, for those who are risking their lives in helicopters and hiking the hills and on RTVs, trying to get through the forest to rescue people, still, people are being rescued. They're still being rescued today.

So please, please pray. That is the very best thing you can do. If you want to contribute, I echo Frank's, your sentiment, Frank, that Samaritan's Purse is outstanding. Jars also has, which is the aviation wing of Wycliffe also has helicopters up in the area right now rescuing people. And there are private individuals with helicopters that have come in and are paying out of their own pocket for all the fuel and everything else.

FRANK:

That's right.

DAN:

Just to help people.

FRANK:

Well, thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Clay. Thank you, Dan.

CLAY:

Pleasure. Thank you.

FRANK:

Don't forget and pray for Clay, too. He's going through these cancer treatments, ladies and gentlemen, but he'll be your instructor beginning October 23. Go to Crossexamined.org. Click on online courses. You'll see it there.

I want to mention this week, I'll be in Melbourne, Florida, next week here near Charlotte, North Carolina, for the SES Apologetics conference. All the details on the website, check them out. God bless. See you next week.

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