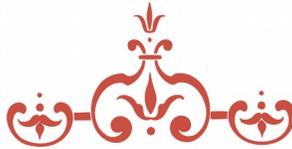


*Thrift-Store Theology*



# Why Did God Do This?

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# Why Did God Do This?

## *Why us?*

How many times have we heard the wail "Where was God when..." and they fill it in with some disaster that has attacked them? What can you say to someone in this situation? Words fail us when others are so hurt, so angry, that they ultimately have to blame God just to try to make some sense of the situation. By blaming God there is a reason, someone causes it and therefore there is a cause-effect outcome. But what do you say?

I have written a few reflections based on situations I read about in the wonderful book [God@Ground Zero](#) by "Chaplain Ray" Giunta. This book deals with truth that comes out of real situations. We can actually see the work of God instead of speculation or theologizing. But regarding the question I began with, listen in on how Chaplain Ray answers just such a question when confronted by a grieving survivor.

"Why did God do this?" she'd ask.

I explained what I believed that such evil was against the nature of a creator I called my "heavenly Father."

"Then why did God allow it?" If God could have stopped it and didn't, this survivor had to believe that something was wrong with us or something was wrong with God.

Beth and I, sitting there in the morning sun, explored the very basics of the Christian faith and its mystery—our free will, God's sovereignty, and God's grace. Yet despite all the theological talk, she still could not get past the deaths that had occurred so near her. It was the memory that had her locked tight. "But those people standing right by me," she said, "What about them?"

Throughout all I've seen in this work, all the things I've heard, and all the things I trust, there is one belief I rest in. It is what allows me to keep doing this work, no matter how

grim it becomes. And that belief, I realized, was what would give Beth comfort she needed. I told her where I believed God was during the disaster.

"Let's say you're right and that God did allow this to happen," I began. "To have such influence, that would mean God is all-powerful, right?"

"Yes..." she agreed.

"Then, in the time the buildings were hit and then collapsed, can you believe that God was also powerful enough to help every single one of the people who died?"

At that, she paused. She was silent for a long moment, and then tears came to her eyes. "You mean if God could have helped them to live, then he could have helped them to die?"

"God could have wrapped his arms around every single one," I said, "and helped them to go into eternity. Even those who may have lived on the pile for several days before dying, he could have been right there in the ruins with them.

She gazed back at the spot where the ones around her had died, and so did I.

The struggle still existed, I admitted to her. We still had a choice—to believe that a God big enough to allow a disaster was also big enough to help everyone affected, or to believe that either God wasn't big enough or that He didn't care. "Believing one will bring you peace; the other one will bring you hopelessness," I added. "But anybody who would come back here for fourteen days straight already knows the answer. What really mattered was the testimony of those who felt God's presence and lived to tell about it, be it a still, small voice showing them the way out of a subway or the mercy of fellow survivors who walked them all the way home.

But what matters most of all is the hope of God's presence for those who did not live to tell about it. (P. 174-176)

Throughout the book Chaplain Ray states "God chooses to work through "flesh suits", through flawed, fragile human

being, for reasons the Creator of the universe only knows..." He sums up all of our ministries when he says "We are there just to love those in our path for the life in them, caring compassionately in the moment because moments are all we really have." (P. 193)

What more can I add but that God is always with us no matter what is happening around us. That is the faith that will save us and the faith that preserves us. Amen.

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