

International House of Prayer of Greater Fort Wayne

...a day and night , city-wide, multi-church prayer and worship ministry

So Who Do I Blame...?

About 10 days ago I discovered that my runny nose, chills, and headache had a name - Covid 19 - What? I have been vaccinated for months! Even the clinic that confirmed my over the counter test was surprised by my infection. I mean, I have prayed for break through for years but not this. (a little humor lol) Then reality began to settle in - Donovan, our son, would leave for 4 months while I would remain in quarantine - and what is that emotion stirring so steady under the surface? Anger - 'If more people had just gotten vaccinated I would not be in this mess'. (not a statement meant to entice debate-just revealing my wrestle). The traffic in my head was at rush hour status. The last 10 days the world seems to be coming apart at the seams - 'what a mess in Kabul'.... 'another Cat 4 hurricane in the south'. And the headlines reflect our internal rush to encapsulate the Covid surge, war withdrawal, and changing weather that points to climate change. Everywhere you turn we hear another angle? Yet, its the internal noise that bothers me and convicts me because I have noticed my internal bent to assign blame and judge. Just before all this Covid mess hit me personally I read an article by Greg Boyd on his blog site ReKnew titled '*The Point Of The Book of Job*'. Below is the conclusion of his article (bold emphasis mine).

Most of us do not like ambiguity. Life is generally easier if we convince ourselves that everything is clear and simple. This, I believe, is part of our legacy of eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:1-7). In our fallen delusion, we feel it our right, and within our capacity, to declare unambiguously who and what is "good" and who and what is "evil." We are not omniscient, but having eaten from the forbidden tree, we have a fallen misguided impulse to judge matters as though we were. We have difficulty accepting our finitude and the massive ignorance and ambiguity that necessarily attaches to it.

*In point of fact, however, the creation could only be experienced by finite beings such as ourselves as unfathomably complex and therefore mostly ambiguous. We have no means of ascertaining more than a minute fraction of the variables that factor into each and every event within this unfathomably complex creation. This is not because we are fallen: it is simply because we are finite. **This is why our original job description – a job description God is yet calling on us to fulfill – involves very little knowing but a great deal of loving.** Our limited domain of responsibility is primarily to love God and others as we are ourselves filled with God's love. Hence the Bible repeatedly calls on us to love and refrain from judgment (Mt 7:1-5; Rom 2:1-5; James 4:11-12).*

Because of our fallen addiction to the forbidden tree, however, we want to know and judge. If our finite knowledge can't adjust to the complexity of reality, we simply try to readjust the complexity of reality to our finite capacity to know. Hence we bracket off the complexity of reality and act like things are simple enough for us to understand.

This is why many of us are compulsively inclined to judge people on the basis of the surface behavior we see, bracketing off the vast complexity of variables that affect and perhaps explain this perceived behavior. Though the Bible expressly forbids it, pretending like we can know and judge a person's heart gives us a sense of ethical superiority and personal security. And this is also why we are inclined toward simplistic, formulaic theologies. Like Job's friends, and like Job himself, we feel secure and justified when we bracket off the complexity and ambiguity of reality and convince ourselves that the world unfolds according to a divine blueprint. We assume that everything can be explained simply by appealing to God's will and/or the will of people.

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And the secret is simply this: **Christ in you!**

Yes, Christ in you bringing with him the hope of all glorious things to come. Col 1:27b, JB Phillips

Yet, this theology works only so long as we can in fact bracket off reality. But when reality in all its unfathomable complexity and war torn horror encroaches in on us, our theology suffers and victims suffer. When we compromise what we do know because we forget what we don't know — when we make the mystery of evil a mystery about God rather than creation — we tarnish God's character and indict victims of war. As depicted in the book of Job, some blame God, others blame people. But, as the book of Job teaches us, both responses are fundamentally mistaken.

*A healthier perspective, and a perspective which both honors God's character as it is revealed in Christ and refrains from indicting people, is one that acknowledges the ambiguity and the warfare up front. **We must with confidence anchor ourselves in what we can know – that God looks like Jesus – and simply confess ignorance about everything else.***

If we are going to blame anyone, the book of Job and the ministry of Jesus would have it be Leviathan, Behemoth, hostile cosmic waters or (what comes to the same thing) the devil. Though we can't know the "why" of any particular instance of suffering, we can and must know that our whole environment is under siege by forces that hate God and hate all that is good. We are by our own rebellion caught in the crossfire of a cosmic war, and we suffer accordingly.

This article was written in 2018 and for me it feels very relevant to embracing a lifestyle that looks like the open secrets of Matthew 5-6-7...now more than ever let us ask, seek, and knock, now more than ever let us seek to forgive and bless, let us give to those in need, let us fast and confront those things that control our mind body and spirit, now more than ever let us give ourselves to a life of communion with Jesus building on the solid foundation that will not shift or change! Anchoring our life in loving *is* the solid ground in the midst of what feels like sinking sand all around. This is our joy in the midst of chaos. This is our hope!

Awakening the Song of the Heart—Musings of a Jesus Lover by: Denise Bouwers

My purpose in writing this Journal was to invite you to connect to your story with Jesus—to your own unique song! As you read and ponder the quotes, musings, and Scriptures presented in these pages take the time to consider the following questions:

- What is Holy Spirit revealing to me?
- What is Jesus' invitation to me?
- What is Father asking me to do or say?

You can order your own copy online at www.thebookpatch.com click the bookstore and search for Denise Bouwers.



Join Us As we Pray for our City, Nation, World

- Thursday 6—7 am—phone call meeting. Contact Ben @ 260-403-4948 to join.
- Friday—7pm
- On Zoom—833 669 278

With gratitude and integrity we steward your gifts. Thank you for partnering with the mission the Lord has given us in this hour as we partner with Him in His kingdom purposes.

Please make your **tax deductible** contribution to:

**IHOP Fort Wayne
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Ben and Denise, Please agree with us over these prayer needs for the next month...

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