

Theme 3, Part 2: God Both Just and Loving

God's Compassion, the Problem of Suffering and the Life of Faith

1. The Triad/theodicy (all good, all powerful, suffering); retributive justice
2. The Bible speaks to five categories of suffering
(result of sin; leading to a greater good; caused by 'forces';
mystery of suffering/human wisdom has limits; permission to lament)
3. How human beings construct reality (pleasure, power, meaning)
Three withdrawals from society (aggression, depression, addiction)
4. The biblical witness as theological narrative: Is Job's conclusion satisfactory?

Biblical Attributes of God: Can God Suffer?

John 10:30, 14:24, 16:15, 14:9 (*I and the Father are one.*)

metaphor

anthropomorphism

theomorphism (Gen 1:26)

πασχω, pascho

Is 59:2; Ps 44,74,89

theophany

Ps 78:40–41

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea

ENGAGING SELECTED TEXTS

1. Exodus 20:1–21, or “Covenants and Covenant–Keeping”
2. Exodus 34:6–7, or “Renewing the Covenant”
3. 2 Corinthians 5:16–21, or “A Gospel of Friends and Neighbors”
4. Psalm 6, or “Honestly God, I've Had Enough”
5. Jeremiah 8:18–9:1, or “The Judge Who Cries”
6. 1 Peter 4:12–19, or “In Solidarity with Oppressed People”

Thou Hidden Love of God

Text: Gerhard Tersteegen, 1697–1769; trans. by John Wesley, 1703–1791

Music: Geistliche Lieder; harm. from J.S. Bach

Tune: VATER UNSER, *Meter:* 88.88.88

A Litany

Thou hidden love of God, whose height, whose depth unfathomed no one knows,
I see from far thy beauteous light, and only sigh for thy repose;

Is there a thing beneath the sun that strives with thee my heart to share?
Ah, tear it thence and reign alone, the Lord of every motion there;

O Love, thy sovereign aid impart to save me from low-thoughted care;
Chase this self-will from all my heart, from all its hidden mazes there;

Each moment draw from earth away my heart that lowly waits thy call;
Speak to my inmost soul and say, “I am thy love, thy God, thy all!”

My heart is pained, nor can it be at rest, ’til it finds rest in thee.
Then shall my heart from earth be free, when it hath found repose in thee.

Make me thy duteous child that I ceaseless may “Abba, Father” cry.
To feel thy power, to hear thy voice, to taste thy love, be all my choice. Amen.

