



Finding God in Times of Tragedy

Where Is God in Tragedy?

God is working through people like you to show compassion and care for the victims!

Living Compassion

Throughout the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we experience the story of Christ's life. Here we are introduced to Christ, God in the flesh, who ministered with those who suffered tremendously: the sick, the outcast, the grieving. God was present in this suffering. Following the story of this life, we learn about the followers of Christ and how they lived his teachings. Central in all of these stories is Jesus' commandment to love one another. Throughout the life of Christ and inherent in the lives of his followers, we are given examples of this commandment in action, shown through acts of compassion. As followers of Christ ourselves, we are called to practice compassion for one another, bearing witness to the fact that God is with us. By practicing compassion every day, whether in big or small decisions, we demonstrate that God comes to us in the midst of suffering.

Exodus 3:1–12

While the people of Israel found themselves in the midst of tragedy, as the victims of slavery in Egypt, God called a special person, Moses, to show compassion. How might God be using you in the midst of another person's tragedy? How can you be an instrument, demonstrating God's presence?

Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish.

*Henri J. M. Nouwen, Donald P. McNeill, Douglas A. Morrison,
in Compassion: A Reflection on
the Christian Life*

What Caused It?

Think about the last time you saw a tragedy on television or maybe when you were part of a tragedy or close to one.

- How did the television reports portray the victims of the tragedy?
- Did anyone blame the victims of the tragedy or try to explain why it happened? For example, did anyone say it was God's will?
- How long was the tragedy in the news? After awhile did the news stop reporting it? Were the victims all taken care of, or do you think others just got tired of hearing about them?
- Do you think God got tired of hearing about them?

Acting on Compassion

There are many biblical examples of compassion being demonstrated in the midst of tragedy. Use one of the stories of compassion below and figure out how your group can report it as a news story. Depending on the number of participants in the group, decide on the parts and who will portray them. There may be reporters, anchors, and witnesses being interviewed. Be sure to emphasize the highlights of the story and focus on the tragedy and the presence of God reflected in the acts of compassion that follow.

Luke 10:25-37

Luke 24:13-35

John 11:1-44

The book of Job is about a good man who faced many tragedies. All his friends told him he must have done something wrong to be a victim over and over again. But the lesson of the book is that, unfortunately, disasters happen. God is there when they do but does not cause them—ever.