



THE BIG QUESTIONS

A Bracket-Style Bible Study

WEEK 1

SUFFERING VS. SILENCE

John Wesley Church | Wednesday Bible Study | March
4, 2026



THE STANDARD

The Berean Standard

"Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

— Acts 17:11

They Were Called NOBLE

Not rebellious. Not faithless. **Noble.**
The Bible honors those who bring their questions to the Word.

Questions Are Not Doubt

You are not losing your faith when you ask hard questions. You are doing exactly what the noble ones do.

What Made Them Noble?

They brought their questions to the Word — with eagerness, with honesty, with open hands.

The Church Has a Question Problem

What We Trained People To Do

- Leave their questions at the door
- Sound spiritual without being honest
- Say "I'm blessed and highly favored" — while inside saying "God, I don't understand You right now"

What God Actually Wants

When lament reaches God's ears, it doesn't turn into bitterness. **It turns into a conversation.**

"Pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge."

— **Psalm 62:8**

God is not threatened by your honesty. He is waiting for it.

SERIES OVERVIEW

How This Series Works — The Bracket

Each week: Two real questions face off. Both taught from Scripture. Both given full weight. Tables discuss. Then **YOU VOTE**. The winning question advances. **April 22 = Championship Night**.

| Date | Matchup | Status |
|---------------|---------------------------|---|
| Mar 4 | Suffering vs. Silence | ← TONIGHT — YOU ARE HERE |
| Mar 11 | Anxiety vs. Temptation | Coming Up |
| Apr 1 | Forgiveness vs. Grief | Coming Up |
| Apr 8 | Failing vs. Unsure | Coming Up |
| Apr 22 | CHAMPIONSHIP NIGHT | The Winning Question Gets Everything |

 **YOUR VOTE IS REAL. YOUR VOICE MOVES THIS.** Both services combined. Winner announced the following Wednesday.

TONIGHT'S MATCHUP

Week 1 — The Face-Off

Question 1

"Why does God allow suffering?"

Romans 8:18 · Romans 8:28 · James 1:2-4 · John 16:33

Question 2

"What do I do when God feels silent?"

Psalms 13:1-2, 5-6 · Psalm 22:1-2 · Habakkuk 2:1-3

Both are real. Both are in this room right now. **Both deserve the Word.**



Why Does God Allow Suffering?

1

God Never Promised a Smooth Road

He promised to **ride with you**.

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." — John 16:33

2

God Is Working IN the Suffering

Not just after it. **"All things"** includes the thing you thought disqualified you.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good..." — Romans 8:28

3

God Doesn't Explain the Pain

He **enters it**. The cross is not God's explanation of suffering. It is His declaration that He will not watch from a distance.

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory..." — Romans 8:18



We don't have a God
who explains
suffering from a
distance.

We have a God who
was acquainted with
grief.

What Do I Do When God Feels Silent?

1

The Silence Is Not the Answer

It is part of the **process**. God is not absent just because He is quiet. Even Jesus cried out:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" — **Psalm 22:1**

2

Habakkuk Got a Station, Not an Explanation

God may not explain the silence. But He will give you **a place to stand while you wait**.

"I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts." — **Habakkuk 2:1**

3

Psalm 13 Ends in Praise

Not because circumstances changed — but because **David did**. He moved from complaint to covenant. Trust the character when you can't track the activity.

"But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation." — **Psalm 13:5**

You can trust the
character of God
even when you
cannot track the
activity of God.



Discussion Questions

On Suffering

- 1 Have you ever felt like suffering meant God had abandoned you?
- 2 What has God produced through a painful season you couldn't see at the time?

On Silence

- 1 When God felt most silent, did you lean in or pull back?
- 2 What do you hold onto when the feeling runs out?

 **Take 8–10 minutes at your table.** Every voice matters. There are no wrong answers — only honest ones.