

# THE MESSY MIDDLE

## Why Is There Suffering in the World?

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**Scripture:** John 1:14; 9:1–5; Mark 2:5, 7, 9–10; Romans 5:12, 17; 8:18, 22–24; Philippians 2:6, 8; Hebrews 4:15–16

**Idea:** Suffering is God’s megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

### Introduction

*[I think C. S. Lewis was correct when he wrote:]*

“God **whispers** to us in our pleasures, **speaks** in our conscience, but **shouts** in our pains:

*[Today, I want to talk about the next part of his statement:]*

it is His **megaphone** to rouse a deaf world.”

–Excerpt from *The Problem of Pain* by C. S. Lewis

*[Perhaps that’s your story. You were going along your merry way. Suddenly, you got bad news. You looked up and found yourself face-to-face with the God you weren’t sure you believed in, and you’ve believed ever since.]*

*[Maybe pain or personal loss had the opposite effect on you. It caused you to question God. How can people with similar experiences of pain or loss be led to such different conclusions? That’s our topic for today. You may be familiar with the name:]*

Admiral Jim **Stockdale**

*[He ran for Vice President in 1992. He was a Navy vice admiral and the...]*

Highest ranking United States military officer imprisoned in the “**Hanoi Hilton**” prisoner-of-war camp during the Vietnam War

*[Stockdale was held for almost eight years and tortured more than 20 times. He refused to cooperate with the North Vietnamese propaganda machine.]*

*[In the book Good to Great, Jim Collins records a conversation he had with Stockdale. He asked the admiral how he survived imprisonment.]*

