

15. Is it okay to question God?

Mark 15:33-34

At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, '*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*' – which means, 'My God, my God why have you forsaken me'.

Here is God questioning God. To be more precise, here is God the Son questioning God the Father from the cross. If you have questions for God, you are in excellent company.

So many questions arise out of the shootings. In a society where God has no place in public discussion, it is no wonder that many of the questions which we would do better referring to God are demanded of government and society.

Instead of, "God, how could this have happened? How can you allow people to experience such pain?" the media ask, "Could the government have done more to regulate gun laws? How could society have produced a person capable of such violence?"

The disadvantage of turning all our confusions into petty questions of mere procedure is that the answers we get don't scratch where we are itching. The question we long to know the answer to, "Why did this happen?" is so significant that only God can answer it.

Again, it is such an important question that he will not answer in an instant slick one-liner. He will explain it to us gradually, giving inklings in this world and the full picture in the judgment and the world to come.

Around the time of Jesus' birth, two people asked God questions. One was commended, the other criticized. Zechariah, whose wife was barren, was told that she would have a baby. "How can I be sure of this?" he asked. He was struck dumb.

Then the angel announced to Mary that, though a virgin, she would have a child. She asked, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" She is held up as the supreme example of faith.

What's the difference between the questions? It lies in attitude. Zechariah's question arises out of unbelief. Mary's out of faith.

Both are faced with the unknown and the impossible. But Zechariah forgets the known facts of God's love and power and focused on the impossibility of what God had said. As a result, his question was impudent.

Meanwhile Mary allows the light of what she does know of God to shed light on what she has not yet seen. Her question is faith seeking understanding.

Both Mary and Jesus knew that there was an answer to their questions, even if they couldn't know it immediately. Neither forgot the big picture of known truth. Their questions credited God with wisdom and glory.

It's good to ask God questions, so long as it's in the Spirit of Jesus and Mary.