

# **WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING? PART B**

**John 10:11; 11:1-16**

**Theme: Jesus is the answer to life's hard issues**

**Purpose:**

- **To provide biblical insight on questions that are hard and universal to every culture.**
- **To point the listener to Jesus as the ultimate answer to these questions.**

**Episode 5 of 7  
HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD SERIES  
(15 MIN. FORMAT)  
CHRISTIAN RADIO DRAMA  
“THE STORY WITHIN”**

**005**



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**Editor: Dr. Art Criscoe**          **Suffering? Part B**  
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## **DIRECTORIAL INFORMATION**

**CAST OF CHARACTERS:** (note voice quality required)

- **Each voice should be recognizably different from any other character.**
- **Some characters appear in multiples episodes of this series. Use the same voice for the same character.**

**Thomas:**              **Narrator, a disciple of Jesus** (voice of a mature man)  
**Philip:**              **Disciple of Jesus** (voice of a mature man)  
**Jesus:**                **The Son of God** (warm voice of a mature man)

### **Director's notes to all readers:**

- These are radio **dramas**. The action and emotions are in the words. Take your time in reading the story; remember that the listener will hear these words only once; speak distinctly with appropriate emotion; carefully observe all punctuation (i.e., pause at commas, stop at periods, intensify at exclamation points, and give special emphasis to words in **bold** type).
- Observe all **music** cues (bold/small print) throughout the script.
- Observe **sound effects** directions (bold print) throughout the script.
- Observe all **voice** instructions (bold print) in parentheses throughout the script.

**Note to translators:** When Scripture is used, the print is in italics, and it is the NIV (1984). Scripture references are given to aid the translators and should not be read as part of the script.

## **WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING? PART B**

**Scripture references: John 10:11; John 11:1-16**

**(Music: Theme music begins, then gradually fades to underscoring during comments of Program Host)**

### **Program Host**

Welcome to “The Story Within.”

For the last four broadcasts, we have considered four questions, each of them hard, and with no easy answers. Last time, we took up the question of suffering: why do some experience nothing but terrible, unbearable misery, while others nothing but ease and comfort? In a world where the sun shines and the rain falls equally on us all without discrimination, where is the justice in that? If there is a God, and if He is aware of our situation, why does He allow such inequity?

Dear friend, if you have ever found yourself in a situation of terrible suffering, and have asked this question, I have good news for you: God is not only there, He sees what you are going through, and He deeply cares for you.

Join us now as we continue our search for answers to hard questions, as we again take up the issue of suffering, based on events and people found in God’s Word.

**(Music: swells to indicate scene change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**Notice that scene changes are depicted with music.**

## **Scene One**

**INSERT: (Sound effects: nighttime; a soft breeze and crickets chirping in the background)**

**Thomas: (narrating)** My name is Thomas, and I was a disciple of Jesus. For most of my life, I had not been a religious man, and in fact did not even believe in God, so finding myself at this stage in my life a disciple and follower of a religious Teacher was, at the very least, ironic.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: add the sound of a softly crackling fire)**

**Thomas: (narrating, sighs)** But as I spent more and more time with Jesus, I began asking questions – hard questions – and raising doubts which I soon realized seemed to be on the minds of some of His other disciples as well, but which none of them were willing to voice.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: add murmuring voices around the campfire)**

**Thomas: (narrating)** By the third year of my time as His disciple, Jesus was drawing huge crowds and attention everywhere He went. He performed hundreds of miracles, right before our eyes – giving sight to the blind, raising the crippled and lame to their feet, and healing men, women and children from all manner of illnesses and disease. It was all very amazing and wonderful, and I was there to witness it all. But one evening, a few days after Jesus had given

sight to yet another man who had been blind from birth, I was struggling with yet another question.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: someone laughs softly, and the murmuring continues)**

**Thomas: (softly)** Jesus . . . may I ask You another question?

**Jesus: (chuckling)** Thomas, I would be disappointed if you did not.

**Thomas:** It is about the man You healed a few days ago, the one who was born blind.

**Jesus:** You are still concerned about his future?

**Thomas:** Well, no, my question is actually about the others.

**Jesus:** The others?

**Thomas:** Yes. There are surely others around the city who likewise suffer with blindness or some other disorder, and beyond the city there must be many more, perhaps hundreds, or even thousands.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: the murmuring dies out as the other disciples listen in to the conversation)**

**Jesus: (softly)** Yes, Thomas; there are many others.

**Thomas:** Do You . . . do You intend to heal them all?

**Jesus:** Oh, Thomas; you raise a very difficult issue, and I am moved by your concern. But you must understand that My Father in Heaven did not send Me into the world to heal all diseases and take away all suffering. As long as there

is sin, there will be brokenness and suffering. No, my Father sent Me to deal with the **cause** of so much brokenness and suffering – sin itself.

**Philip:** You have spoken of this terrible purpose before. Jesus, are You again alluding to Your . . . to Your own death?

**Jesus:** As I told you, Philip, *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep”* (John 10:11).

**Philip:** But why? Why must You die? Jesus, do not the sheep need their shepherd to guide them?

**Jesus:** *“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep”* (John 10:14-15).

**Philip: (aside to Thomas)** It is those religious leaders in Jerusalem who are seeking His life that are causing Him to speak this way! They have spies out, scouring the countryside looking for us!

**Thomas:** Then we must stay away from those who would try to take His life. Jesus, we must stay away from Jerusalem.

**Jesus:** *“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again”* (John 10:18).

**INSERT: (Sound effects: footsteps approach rapidly)**

**Thomas:** Shh! Listen . . .

**Philip: (hissing)** Who would be approaching at this time of night? Do you suppose it is one of their spies?

**INSERT: (Sound effects: the footsteps draw near and come to a halt)**

**Jason: (out of breath)** Jesus! I am glad that . . . that I finally found You. You must . . . You must come quickly!

**Philip:** It is Jason, the servant of Your friend, Lazarus!

**Thomas:** What news do you bring, Jason?

**Jason: (catching his breath)** Jesus . . . *“Lord, the one you love is sick”* (John 11:3).

**Philip: (aside)** Jesus, we cannot go with him – Lazarus lives close to Jerusalem. It is simply too dangerous.

**Jesus:** *“This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it”* (John 11:4).

**Thomas:** There, you see? Your master will be fine. You may take this word back to him.

**Jason:** But, Rabbi Jesus, Lazarus is very ill . . . he is on the point of . . .

**Thomas:** He said that Lazarus would not die, young man, what more do you want? Now, I suggest that you turn around, and take your master these words of encouragement. I am sure that he will appreciate it.

**Jason: (disappointed)** Yes, sir.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: slow footsteps as he turns and leaves; no one speaks for a few moments as the sound fades into the background and we hear only the crickets and the fire)**

**Philip:** So, Jesus; Your friend Lazarus will be . . . fine then?

**Thomas:** You heard Him, Philip – Jesus said that he would not die.

**Jesus:** Actually, Thomas, that is not exactly what I said.

**Thomas:** What do You mean?

**Jesus:** I said, *“This sickness will not end in death”* (John 11:4).

**Thomas:** Exactly.

**Jesus:** Philip, how long will it take our friend Jason to return to his master’s house?

**Philip:** Let me see; if he travels all night and then all day tomorrow, he should be back in Bethany by the third watch tomorrow night.

**Jesus:** Mary and Martha will be there with him, keeping watch over their sick brother. So by the time they rise the following morning, Jason will have arrived with his news.

**Thomas:** Yes, with the good news that Lazarus will not die.

**Jesus:** No, Thomas; he carries with him the difficult news that I did not return with their servant to heal their brother.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: murmuring returns as the disciples begin to ask questions)**



**Philip:** But why would You need to go with him if Lazarus is going to get better?

**Thomas:** Yes, I do not understand.

**Jesus:** We will discuss this more in the morning. For now, I think you should all relax and try to get some sleep. The next few days are going to be . . . trying.

**Philip:** Very well then; good night, Jesus.

**Thomas:** Yes, good night, Jesus.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: someone yawns, and the murmuring fades into the background, leaving only the sound of the crickets and the fire)**

**(Music: swells to indicate scene change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

## **INTERMISSION**

**Program Host:** Thank you for tuning in. You are listening to "The Story Within." Today we are following a series called, "Hard Questions About God," based on events and people found in God's Word. Previously in our story, Thomas had once again raised the issue of suffering, asking Jesus if He intended to heal everyone who was blind or sick. Jesus reminded His disciples that He had come not to eliminate suffering, but to deal with the root **cause** of suffering: **sin**. Listen now, as we continue our story about a dear friend of Jesus by the name of Lazarus, who was himself suffering from a grave illness, and was at the point of death.

**(Music: underscoring fades out as sound effects return)**

## Scene Two

**INSERT: (Sound effects: daytime; birds chirping and singing, grasshoppers buzzing; after a moment we hear footsteps approaching, followed by the rising sound of the disciples murmuring among themselves; the murmuring continues as Jesus, Thomas and Philip speak)**

**Thomas:** Can I ask You one more question, Jesus?

**Jesus:** Yes, of course, Thomas.

**Thomas:** I have been thinking about Your friend who was taken ill.

**Jesus:** Lazarus?

**Thomas:** Yes, Lazarus.

**Jesus: (pauses for a moment)** What is it, Thomas?

**Thomas:** His servant was rather worried about him . . . was he not?

**Jesus:** Yes, I believe he was.

**Thomas:** I suppose Your friend is . . . very ill?

**Jesus:** Yes, Thomas – very ill indeed. What is your question?

**Thomas:** Well . . . I was just wondering, why do some people grow ill and die, while others – like Your friend – get better?

**Philip: (chuckling)** Thomas, I do not wish to alarm you, but you do know that we will all die someday?

**Thomas:** Oh course I know that, Philip; I meant only that it appears to me that some people suffer more acutely than others, even when they are righteous, decent people. I knew a man with palsy who suffered terribly day after day, and

would have welcomed death, but instead lingered in excruciating agony for years. And the man who was born blind – until You healed him the other day, he had suffered his entire life.

**Jesus:** What is your question, Thomas?

**Thomas:** If the righteous suffer in the same way as the unrighteous, what point is there to any of this? In what way are we better off, who serve God and try to please Him?

**Philip: (under his breath)** Wow . . . Thomas . . .

**Jesus:** Our hope is not in a happy, safe life here in this world, Thomas.

**Thomas:** What then is our hope?

**INSERT: (Sound effects: the footsteps and murmuring come to a halt, and we hear only the birds chirping and singing, grasshoppers buzzing)**

**Jesus:** How about instead of telling you, I show you?

**Thomas: (puzzled)** What? How can You show me something like this?

**Jesus:** Come, *“let us go back to Judea”* (John 11:7).

**INSERT: (Sound effects: Jesus begins walking again, followed by the others, but there is no longer any murmuring)**

**Philip:** *“But Rabbi, a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?”* (John 11:8)

**Thomas:** Why do You want to go back, Jesus?

**Jesus:** *“Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up”* (John 11:11).

**Thomas:** *“Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better”* (John 11:12).

**Philip:** I agree. I think that we should just stay here in Galilee, and keep our distance from . . .

**Jesus:** *“Lazarus is dead”* (John 11:14).

**INSERT: (Sound effects: the footsteps again come to a halt, and we hear only the birds chirping and singing, grasshoppers buzzing)**

**Jesus:** *“Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe”* (John 11:14-15).

**Philip:** *(softly)* Jesus, I do not understand. You told his servant that Lazarus would not die.

**Jesus:** No, Philip, I said, *“This sickness will not end in death”* (John 11:4).

**Philip:** Exactly. So then . . . why would God let him die?

**INSERT: (Sound effects: the murmuring returns, supporting Philip’s sentiments)**

**Jesus:** You do not understand now, but you will understand. *“But let us go to him”* (John 11:15).

**INSERT: (Sound effects: a lone pair of footsteps as Jesus walks away; the murmuring dies out again)**

**Philip: (aside to Thomas)** I do not like this. We should not be going back to Jerusalem. They will surely kill Him.

**Thomas:** Most likely. *“Let us also go, that we may die with him”* (John 11:16).

**INSERT: (Sound effects: add a second pair of footsteps, followed by another and another, until all of them walk away, leaving behind only the sounds of the birds and grasshoppers)**

**(Music: underscoring music swells; then begins reprise of Theme music; softly underscoring comments of Program Host during Our Response to God’s Word)**

## **OUR RESPONSE TO GOD’S WORD**

### **Program Host**

Poor Thomas! What was this hope that Jesus was telling him about, and why would He say that He could show it to him? And what about His friend Lazarus? What were they going to find when they made their way back to his home? It looks like Thomas’ questions were going to have to wait; he was going to have to follow Jesus and trust Him.

And you know what? There is no one better whom we can trust.

God sent Jesus to change us to make us acceptable to His holiness and give us eternal life. Jesus can forgive sin. He said to a paralyzed man one day, *“Son, your sins are forgiven”* (Mark 2:5). Then to show that He had power to forgive sin, He said to the man, *“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home”* (Mark 2:11). The man was healed instantly.

Speaking of Himself, Jesus said, *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost”* (Luke 19:10). To show how God actively searches for the lost sinner, Jesus told about a sheep that got lost and how the shepherd searched

until he found the lost sheep and rejoiced when he brought it home. To show how God welcomes us when we come to Him, Jesus told about a wayward boy who wandered far into sin, then returned to his father. The father ran to meet the boy and welcomed him home. God longs for us to come to Him and rejoices when we do so.

I'm going to pray a brief prayer from my heart to God. Listen to my prayer, and then when I have prayed I will lead you to pray the same prayer.

**Dear God, Thank You that You gave Your Living Word, Jesus, to come to earth to be our Savior. Thank you that Jesus has power to forgive sin. And dear God, thank You that You welcome us when we come to You. Amen.**

Now repeat the prayer aloud after me. We will pray it a portion at a time. Make the prayer your very own to God. Mean it with all your heart as you pray.

**Dear God,** (pause for person to repeat)

**Thank You that You gave Your Living Word, Jesus,** (pause for person to repeat)

**to come to earth to be our Savior.** (pause for person to repeat)

**Thank You that Jesus has power to forgive sin.** (pause for person to repeat)

**And dear God, thank You that You welcome us when we come to You.**

(pause for person to repeat)

**Amen.** (pause for person to repeat)

Thank you for praying that prayer. In the next program we will learn more about how Jesus forgives sin.

**(Music: Theme music swells dramatically and fades to soft underscoring as broadcast ends)**

### **Note to Broadcaster, Program Host, and Director**

If this drama is to be broadcast as a part of the “Hard Questions about God” series, there should be a “listener tag” at the end of the broadcast, indicating that the next episode will be another drama on a hard question about God.

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