He asked, “So, you’re a minister huh?” I said, “Yes I am.” He asked, “How do you deal with death and funerals? How do you get through them? That’s got to be tough?” I said, “Yeah, it is. But God gives me the strength to be able to minister in those situations. It is never easy but God helps me.” He replied, “You really believe all that stuff?” I said, “I sure do. With all my heart.”

The next day at the funeral I read some scripture and said a few words about Andrew. After the funeral Andrew’s friend approached me and said, “This faith stuff is real to you, isn’t it?” I said, “It sure is.” Then he said, “I’ve never read the Bible very much. Could you recommend a translation I should read?” I said, “Here, take mine. It’s yours.” Now, it was my favorite Bible, but I thought it was for a good cause!

God took a very ugly situation and did something beautiful with it. He provided an opportunity for me to share with someone that my strength comes from God. And the message I want to leave you with today is that God take what is ugly in your life and make it beautiful. If your patient enough and open to what God wants to do in your life, He will take what is ugly and make it beautiful. Give to God what is ugly in your life. Just hand it over to Him. And He will do something beautiful with it. Amen.

The ultimate example of this is Jesus’ work on the cross. Before Jesus, the cross represented suffering, shame, punishment, and death. But he came and transformed it into a symbol of victory, forgiveness, love and life. So whenever we gaze upon the cross we are reminded that God can take what is ugly and make it beautiful.

My friend Andrew’s funeral that I mentioned earlier was an ugly experience but God did do something beautiful with it. The night before the funeral I was talking with one of Andrew’s childhood friends. We were sitting on a dock looking out at a lake. He confessed that he was not very “religious.”

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I want to offer some things that have helped me as I have struggled with the question of why bad things happen to good people. My prayer is that they will help you too.

**We Never Suffer Alone**

I want to lift up a passage of scripture that tells us exactly where God is when we suffer. It comes from the Old Testament, from the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah was prophesying about Jesus and he said something that I think all of us need to remember when it comes to our own suffering. In fact, what I am about to read may bring healing to you today. Isaiah 53:3–4 reads: “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows.” Did you see that? He carried our sorrows. He carries our sorrows.

I want you to hear that today. Wherever you are, whatever you are going through, whatever pain you are in, God carries your sorrows. He shares it with you. He cries with you. He aches with you. He loves you too much for you to deal with it alone. You see, Jesus’ death tells us that when we suffer, God suffers with us. The cross and resurrection reveal that God suffers when we suffer and He has the power to redeem our suffering.

**Look for the Helpers**

Mister Rogers said it so well: “When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’”

Harry Emerson Fosdick once said, “Goodness is a far greater problem for the atheist than evil is for the believer.” Instead of focusing on the evil and suffering in the world, look at all the goodness that abound! Where does all this goodness come from? It can only come from a loving God who cares for us. Allow the goodness in the world to lead you back to the goodness of God. And may the goodness of God lead you to help heal the suffering in the world. Because God wants to heal the suffering in the world. But God wants you to try to heal the suffering in the world. And may the goodness of God lead you to help heal the suffering in the world.

You want to see God at work in the midst of suffering, just open your eyes. He works through people all the time. And he wants you to work through you!

Recently, Sherriff’s Deputy Darren Goforth was gunned down at a gas pump in Harris County, Texas. And, of course, the deputies in Harris County can’t help but feel anxious. And we can’t help but wonder what’s wrong with this world. But let’s follow Mister Rogers advice and look for the helpers. I want to show you a picture.

This is Tommi Jones Kelly and she is a law enforcement officer in Harris, County, Texas. She posted this selfie with a teenager who asked if he could stand watch over her while she pumped gas in the pouring rain. Here is what happened in Officer Kelly’s own words:

“Ok, so early this morning I was pumping gas in my patrol car (reason: I look like a hot mess!!)... and add it was pouring rain…When this teenager I’ve never met before is standing right behind me and says, ‘ma’am, do you mind if I stand here behind you while you get your gas?’ My initial response was ‘and why?’ His reply, ‘to make sure you stay safe!’”

“I finished pumping my gas and he was still standing there, in the rain. Then he just walked off and started to get into the passenger side of a car. I asked the driver if she was his Mom & indeed she was. I told her she has an amazing son. The mother said, ‘He wanted to make sure no one hurt you.’”

“Yes, I’m the one with the gun on my hip while he stood there empty handed, but he for sure had my back!”

The teenager’s name is Mckinley Zeolnerner. He said, “It was amazing to see her face. Afterwards she gave me a big hug.” And Zeolnerner said he had never been hugged by a cop before! Of course, before they left the gas station they snapped this selfie and the picture has gone viral on the internet. Kelly said, “I hope people understand that we will risk our lives for them.”

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What if Christians just did their job? A lot of suffering in this world would be alleviated. What is our job as Christians? To help God alleviate suffering in the world. So often we complain to God and wonder why he is not doing something about the suffering in the world and I’m sure His reply is, “I am trying to do something, through YOU! You are my hands and feet in this world!” Look for the helpers and be a helper.

**What Happens to Good People When Bad Things Happen to Them?**

I believe the best help I can give as we grapple with the question of why bad things happen...