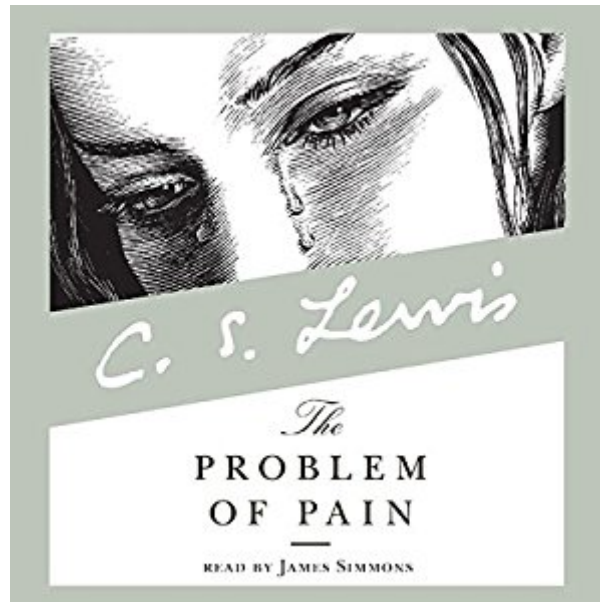




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The Problem Of Pain



Synopsis

Why must we suffer? "If God is good and all-powerful, why does he allow his creatures to suffer pain?" And what of the suffering of animals, who neither deserve pain nor can be improved by it? The greatest Christian thinker of our time sets out to disentangle this knotty issue. With his signature wealth of compassion and insight, C. S. Lewis offers answers to these crucial questions and shares his hope and wisdom to help heal a world hungering for a true understanding of human nature.

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Customer Reviews

As always C.S.Lewis at his best. This is part of a sweet triage of the gains we are to achieve through life's many depths of. despair. Always with the Masters hand.

This is a masterpiece of a treatise on the problem of pain. CS Lewis with both an ultra wide lens and also with great precision maps out the Christian solution to the problem that has dogged the individual sufferer and theologians and philosophers through the ages. Einstein once said no problem can be solved when we remain at the state at which the problem was created in the first place. Well CS Lewis here succeeds in lifting his readers to a higher plane from which to view the problem. At this new plane somehow pain seems to diminish and Christ and His works takes on a presence of greater significance. I personally am very grateful that this book is still available and am especially grateful that the audio version came bundled with the kindle edition.Sandeep Thomas

Perhaps, my favorite of Lewis's for his bravery and clarity in tackling this subject. It remains a mystery, but certain restraints upon God make sense....the intrinsic impossibilities...are core ideas. God is on a mission to make us lovely, like it or not.

Love the insight and genius of SC Lewis. A complete smarty pants ... sometimes my ADD gets the better of me, and I have to re-read the heavy writing style but he is funny and genuine.

How does one review any book by CS Lewis? He is one of my favorite authors... this book approaches pain as only CS Lewis can. Always an unexpected depth.

The pages are yellowing on my modest collection of C.S. Lewis paperbacks. I've read them several times over the years, and they ring as strong and true as the first time through them, if not more so. In the Problem of Pain, Lewis deals with the difficulty of suffering in a world created by a good and all powerful God. As a Catholic, I understand that suffering exists to bring about a greater good, but why is that? Basically, it comes down to our free will; if humans are beings free to choose and not simply automatons, we have to have the ability to go bad: we are self-absorbed rebels and, as Lewis explains, "the human spirit will not even begin to try to surrender self-will as long as all seems to be well with it." There are plenty of great, informative reviews already written, but I just want to highlight two passages that stood out to me; I'm a sucker for dogs, so these both had added impact. The first passage is an analogy to help explain why pain is involved - even necessary - in God's plan for us to reach perfection: "Man interferes with the dog and makes it more lovable than it was in mere nature. In its state of nature it has a smell, and habits, which frustrate man's love: he washes it, house-trains it, teaches it not to steal, and is so enabled to love it completely. To the puppy the whole proceeding would seem, if it were a theologian, to cast grave doubts on the 'goodness' of man: but the full-grown and full-trained dog, larger, healthier, and longer-lived than the wild dog, and admitted, as it were, by Grace to a whole world of affections, loyalties, interests, and comforts entirely beyond its animal destiny, would have no such doubts." How true. House breaking must be a complete mystery to that furry, little, tail-wagging barbarian; and the concept of bathing must be as linked in the mind of a puppy to torture as food is to pleasure. Lewis continues: "It will be noted that the man takes all these pains with the dog, and gives all these pains to the dog, only because it is an animal high in the scale - because it is so nearly lovable that it is worth his while to make it fully lovable. He does not house-train the earwig or give baths to centipedes. We may wish, indeed, that we were of so little account to God that He left us alone to follow our natural impulses -

that He would give over trying to train us into something so unlike our natural selves: but once again, we are asking for not more love, but less."The next passage, near the end of the book, deals with the idea of vicariousness in Christianity. As we are saved and resurrected in the man Christ, so too, Lewis supposes, our pets may - may, mind you - be taken up through us as we are taken up through Christ:"And in this way it seems to me possible that certain animals may have an immortality, not in themselves, but in the immortality of their masters. And the difficulty about personal identity in a creature barely personal disappears when the creature is thus kept in its proper context. If you ask, concerning an animal thus raised as a member of the whole Body of the homestead, where its personal identity resides, I answer `Where its identity always did reside even in the earthly life -- in its relation to the Body and, specially, to the master who is the head of that Body.' In other words, the man will know his dog: the dog will know its master and, in knowing him, will be itself. To ask that it should, in any other way, know itself, is probably to ask for what has no meaning. Animals aren't like that, and don't want to be."Since reading that passage, I have often wondered, petting my dogs as they rest so blissfully on the couch, if one day I may find that in return for the adoration and companionship they have afforded me, if, in 'civilizing' them, I have not done a greater thing than I know.

As usual CS Lewis is masterful in his logic and reasoning, guiding the reader through one of the most challenging aspects of the Christian faith: suffering, mourning, sadness, and pain. In this book, Lewis tackles "the problem of pain," with his signature penchant for syllogistic reasoning followed by analogy after analogy until you are left with so many angles of understanding that you may have to read the book two or three times just to be able to straighten out your own explanation of the ideas involved. Wonderfully written. Challenging. Thoughtful. Enduring. Highly recommend.

C S Lewis is a great author!

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