

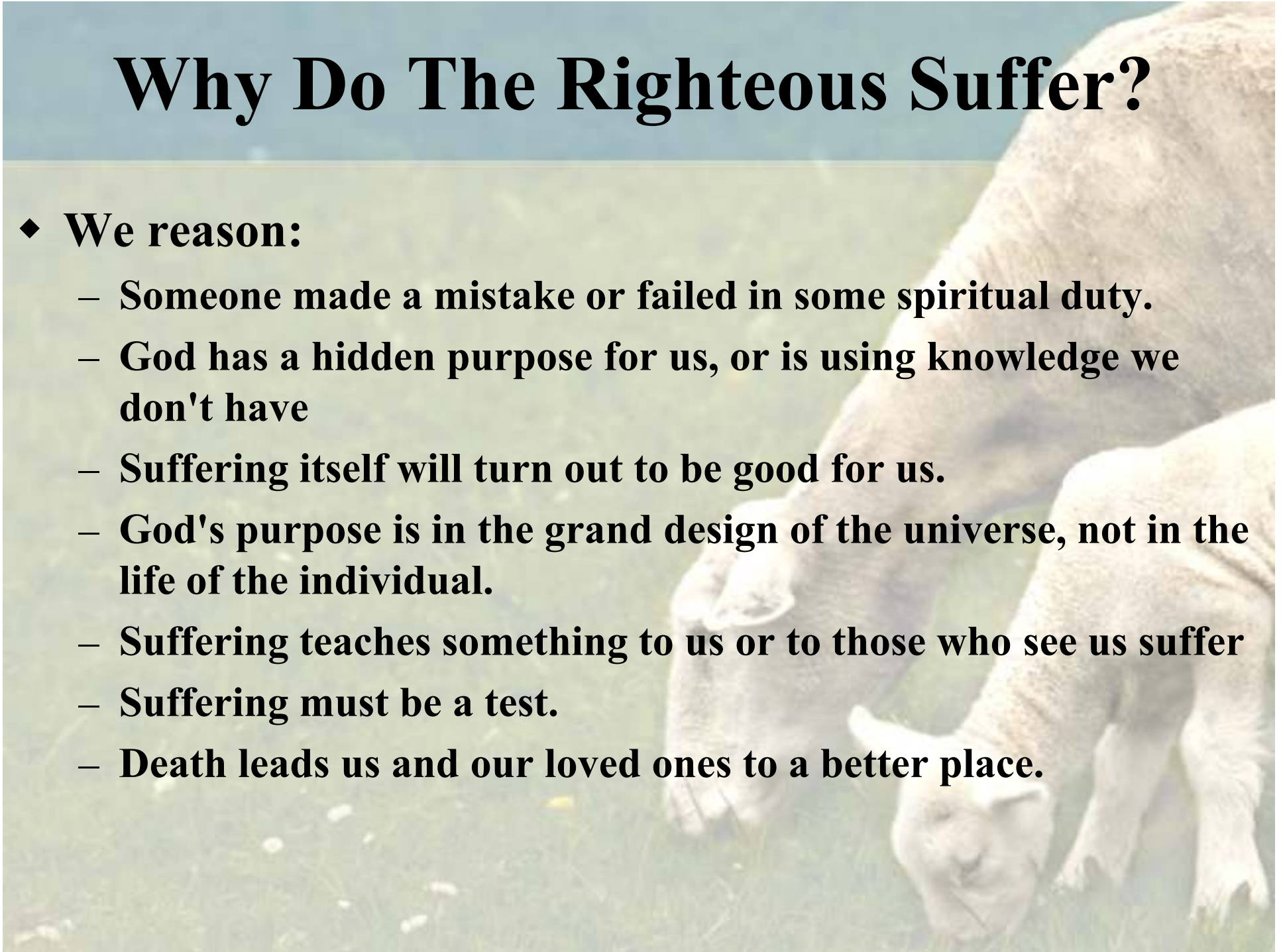
When **BAD THINGS**
Happen to *Good People*



Why Do The Righteous Suffer?

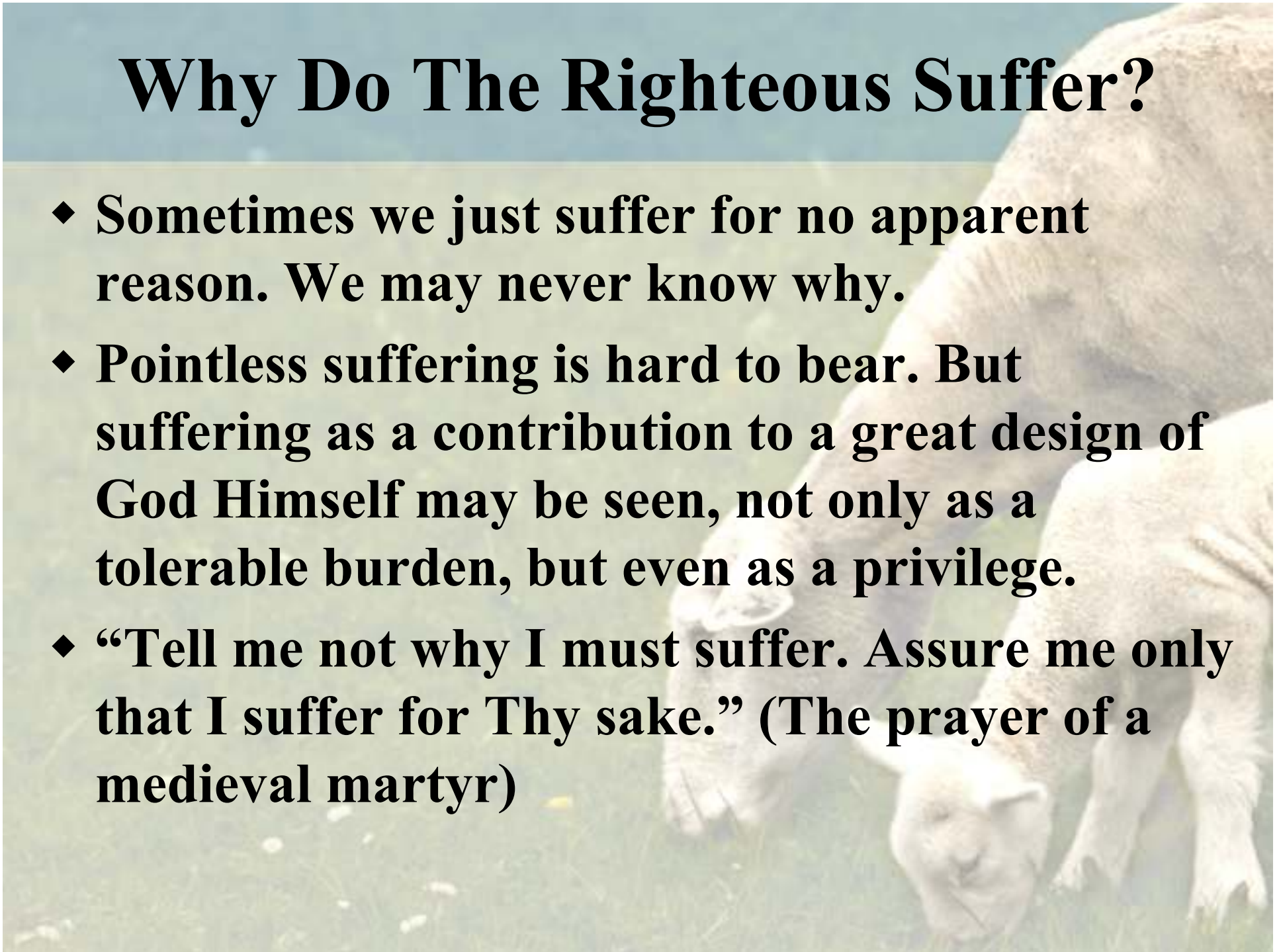
♦ We reason:

- Someone made a mistake or failed in some spiritual duty.
- God has a hidden purpose for us, or is using knowledge we don't have
- Suffering itself will turn out to be good for us.
- God's purpose is in the grand design of the universe, not in the life of the individual.
- Suffering teaches something to us or to those who see us suffer
- Suffering must be a test.
- Death leads us and our loved ones to a better place.



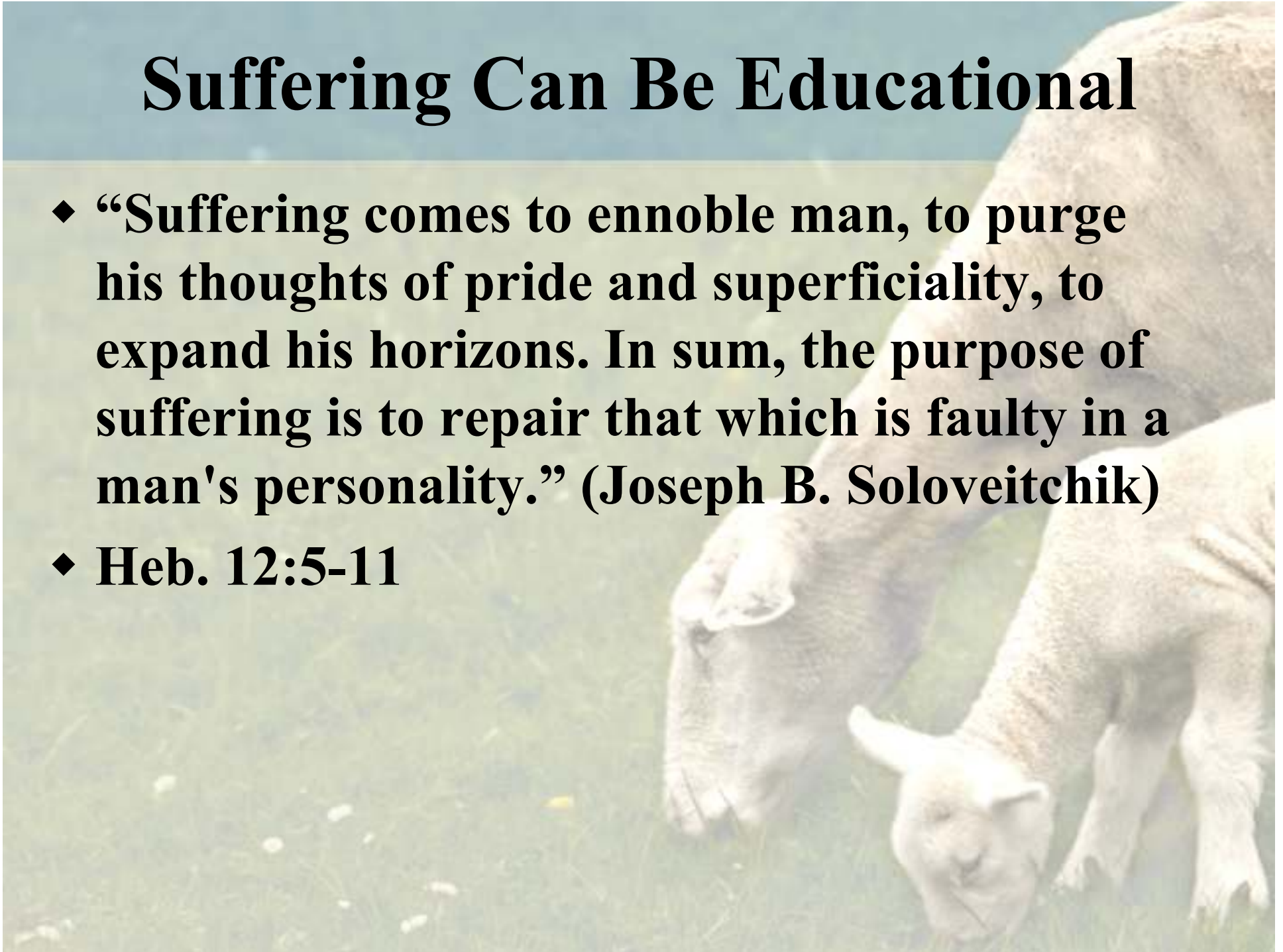
Why Do The Righteous Suffer?

- ♦ **Sometimes we just suffer for no apparent reason. We may never know why.**
- ♦ **Pointless suffering is hard to bear. But suffering as a contribution to a great design of God Himself may be seen, not only as a tolerable burden, but even as a privilege.**
- ♦ **“Tell me not why I must suffer. Assure me only that I suffer for Thy sake.” (The prayer of a medieval martyr)**



Suffering Can Be Educational

- ♦ “Suffering comes to ennoble man, to purge his thoughts of pride and superficiality, to expand his horizons. In sum, the purpose of suffering is to repair that which is faulty in a man's personality.” (Joseph B. Soloveitchik)
- ♦ Heb. 12:5-11



Hebrews 12:5-11

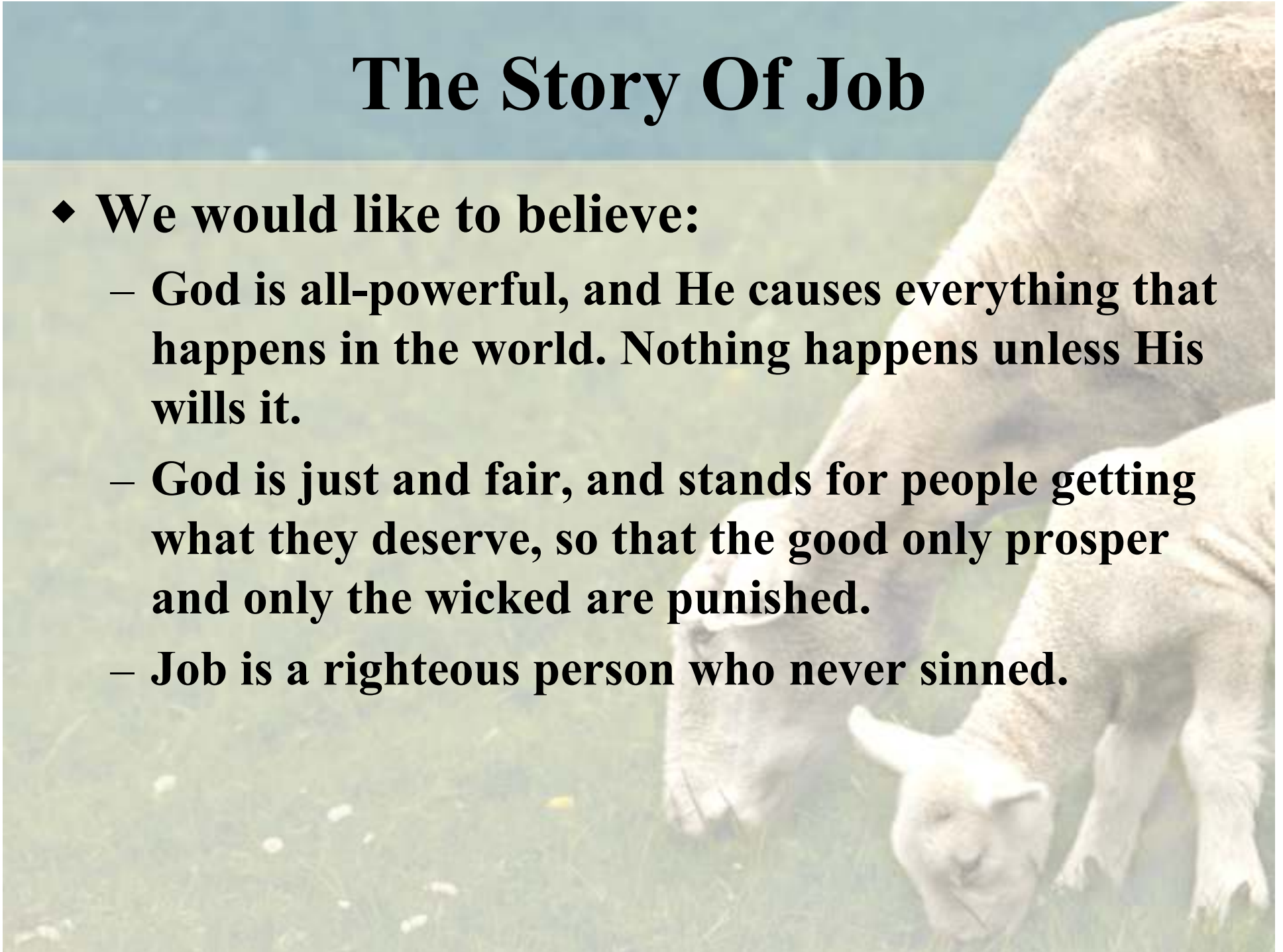
- ♦ **“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives. 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”**

The Righteous Are Not Exempt From Suffering

- ♦ **Isa. 3:10-11 - “Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, For they shall eat the fruit of their doings. 11 Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, For the reward of his hands shall be given him.”**
- ♦ **Gen. 38:7 - “But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him.”**
- ♦ **Prov. 12:21 - “No grave trouble will overtake the righteous, But the wicked shall be filled with evil.”**
- ♦ **Job 4:7 - “Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off?”**

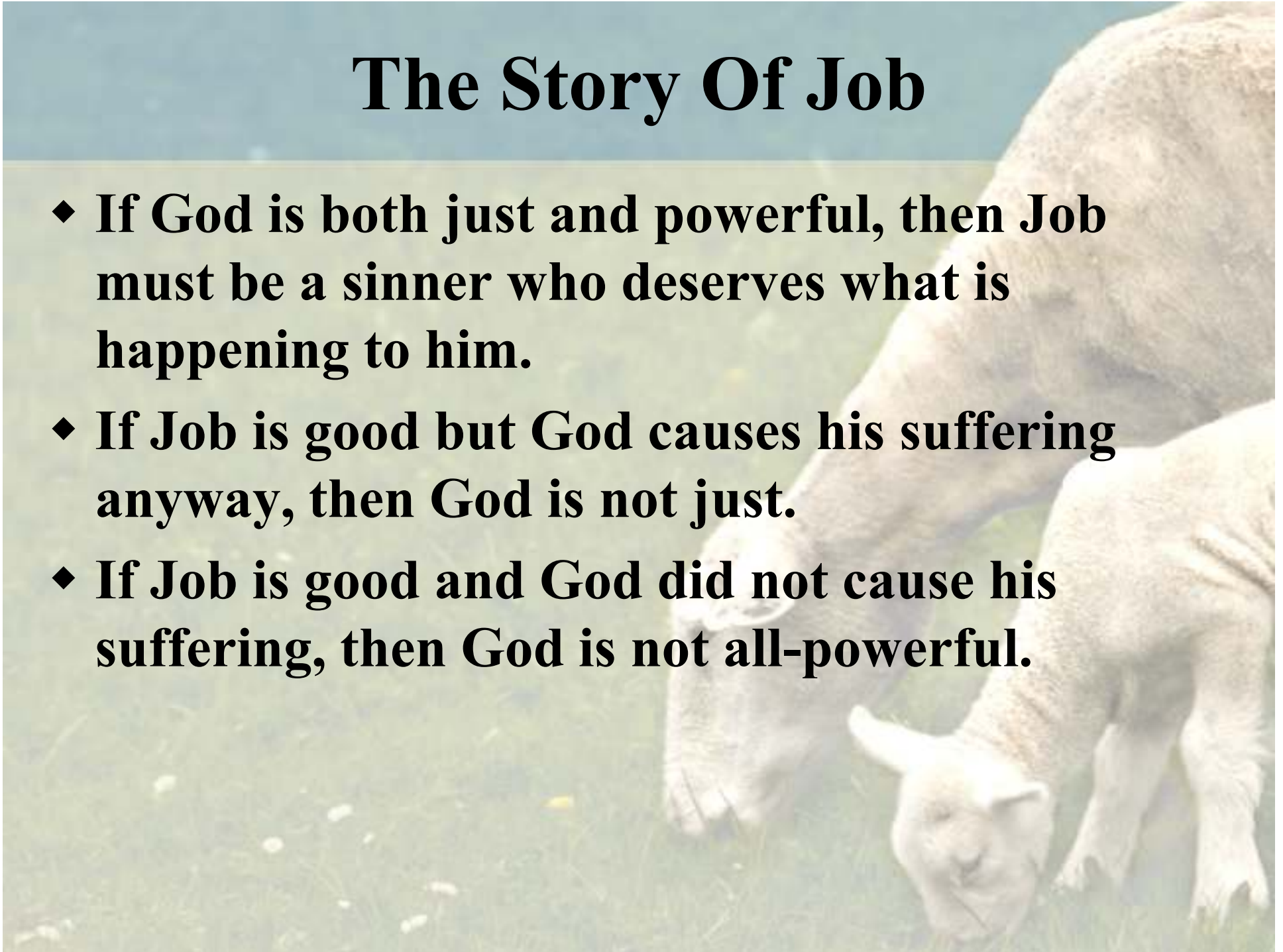
The Story Of Job

- ◆ **We would like to believe:**
 - **God is all-powerful, and He causes everything that happens in the world. Nothing happens unless His wills it.**
 - **God is just and fair, and stands for people getting what they deserve, so that the good only prosper and only the wicked are punished.**
 - **Job is a righteous person who never sinned.**



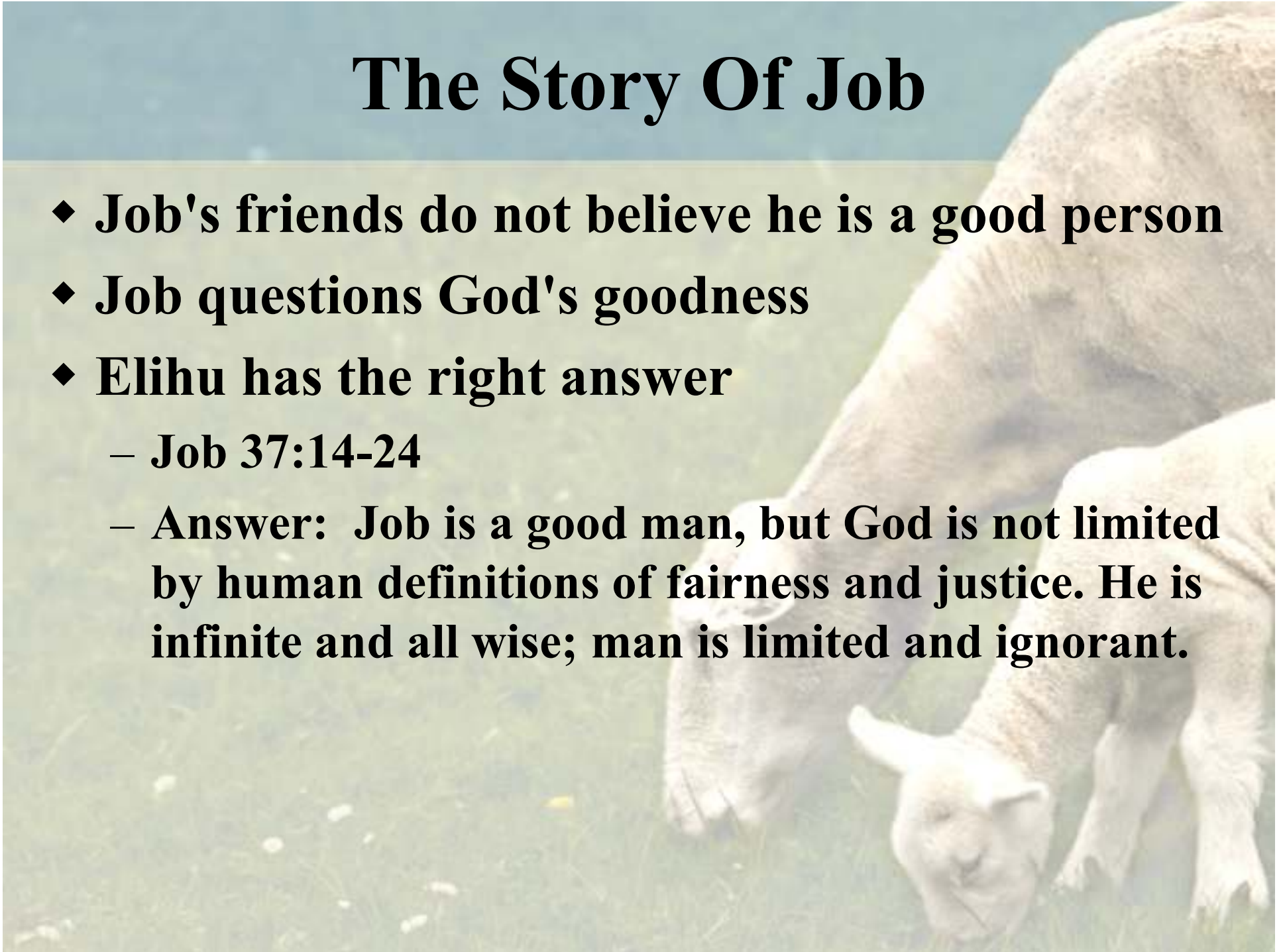
The Story Of Job

- ♦ **If God is both just and powerful, then Job must be a sinner who deserves what is happening to him.**
- ♦ **If Job is good but God causes his suffering anyway, then God is not just.**
- ♦ **If Job is good and God did not cause his suffering, then God is not all-powerful.**



The Story Of Job

- ♦ **Job's friends do not believe he is a good person**
- ♦ **Job questions God's goodness**
- ♦ **Elihu has the right answer**
 - **Job 37:14-24**
 - **Answer: Job is a good man, but God is not limited by human definitions of fairness and justice. He is infinite and all wise; man is limited and ignorant.**

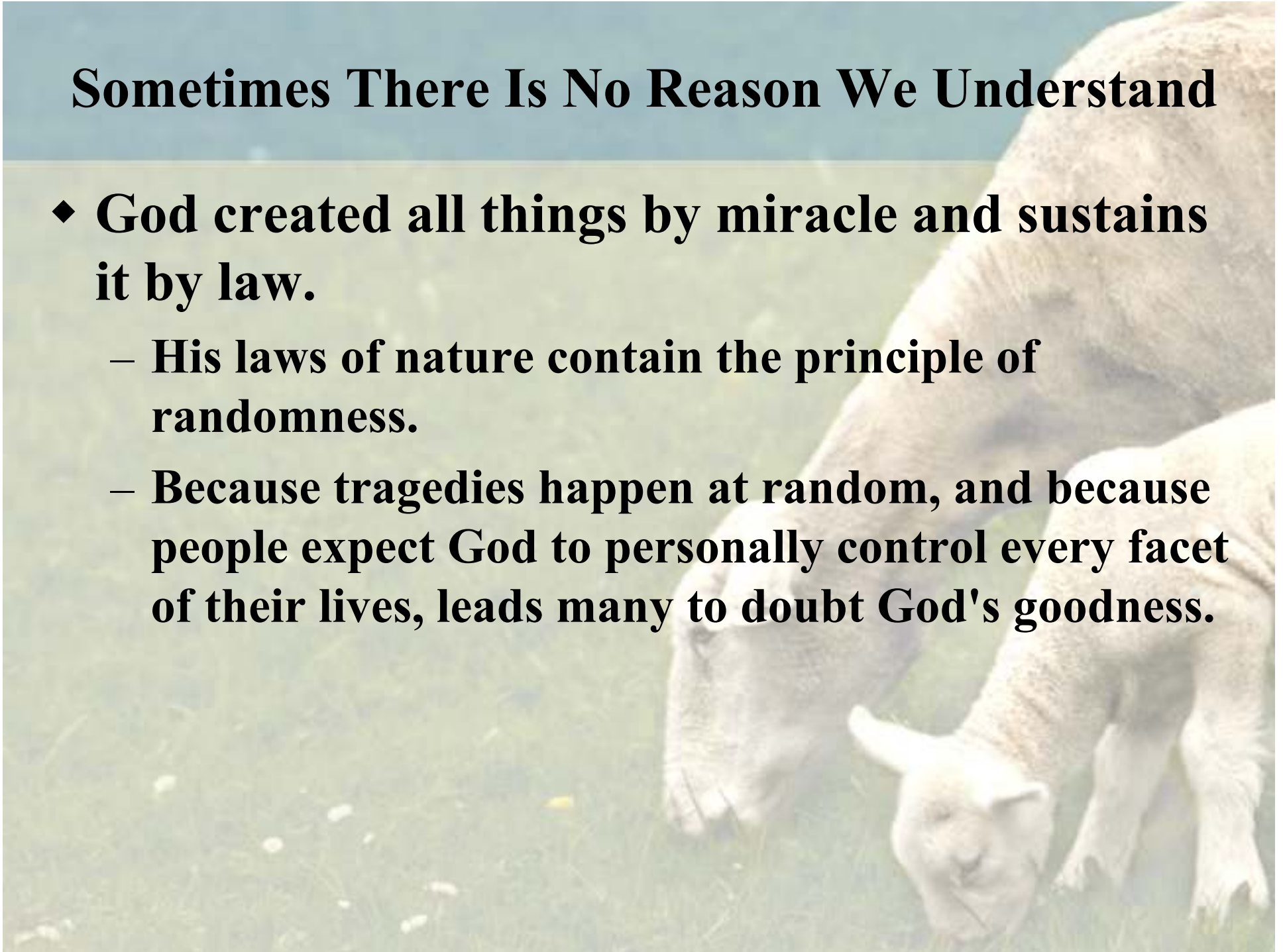


Job 37:14-24

- ♦ **“Listen to this, O Job; Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. 15 Do you know when God dispatches them, And causes the light of His cloud to shine? 16 Do you know how the clouds are balanced, Those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge? 17 Why are your garments hot, When He quiets the earth by the south wind? 18 With Him, have you spread out the skies, Strong as a cast metal mirror? 19 Teach us what we should say to Him, For we can prepare nothing because of the darkness. 20 Should He be told that I wish to speak? If a man were to speak, surely he would be swallowed up. 21 Even now men cannot look at the light when it is bright in the skies, When the wind has passed and cleared them. 22 He comes from the north as golden splendor; With God is awesome majesty. 23 As for the Almighty, we cannot find Him; He is excellent in power, In judgment and abundant justice; He does not oppress. 24 Therefore men fear Him; He shows no partiality to any who are wise of heart.”**

Sometimes There Is No Reason We Understand

- ♦ **God created all things by miracle and sustains it by law.**
 - **His laws of nature contain the principle of randomness.**
 - **Because tragedies happen at random, and because people expect God to personally control every facet of their lives, leads many to doubt God's goodness.**



There Are No Exceptions For Good People

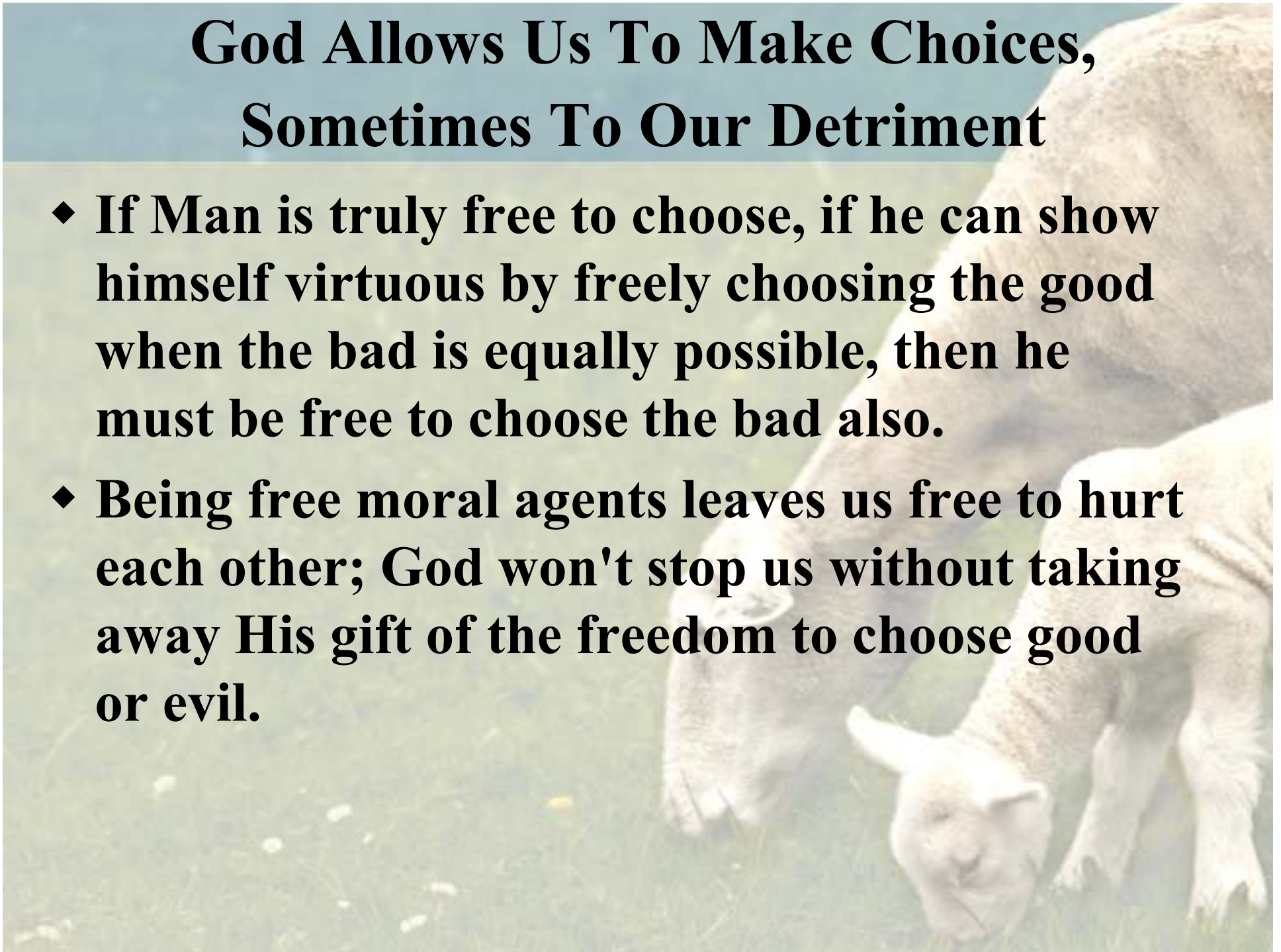
- ♦ **Did God rescue Jesus from the cross?**
- ♦ **Did He save the apostles from martyrdom?**
- ♦ **Are the righteous from the past still with us?**
- ♦ **What makes us think He will make special exceptions for us?**
- ♦ **God suspended His laws of nature only when He had a purpose.**
- ♦ **All men die (Heb. 9:27); sooner or later that is the price we will pay for sin.**

There Are No Exceptions For Good People

- ♦ **The earthquake is not an “act of God.” The act of God is in the courage He gives His people to rebuild their lives after the earthquake, and in the rush of others to help them in whatever way they can.**
- ♦ **God did not promise to take away our troubles and temptations; He promised to give us the power to handle them.**
 - **1Cor. 10:13 - “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”**

God Allows Us To Make Choices, Sometimes To Our Detriment

- ♦ **If Man is truly free to choose, if he can show himself virtuous by freely choosing the good when the bad is equally possible, then he must be free to choose the bad also.**
- ♦ **Being free moral agents leaves us free to hurt each other; God won't stop us without taking away His gift of the freedom to choose good or evil.**



Some Need To Stop Hurting Themselves And Let God Help Them

- ♦ **Too often, in our pain and confusion, we do the wrong thing. We don't feel we deserve to be helped, so we let guilt, anger, jealousy, and self-imposed loneliness make a bad situation worse.**
- ♦ **Job's friends did do at least two things right:**
 - **First, they came.**
 - **Second, they listened.**
 - **It was when they opened their mouths and tried to tell him why he was suffering that they got into trouble.**

Some Need To Stop Hurting Themselves Before God Can Help Them

- ◆ **Getting angry at ourselves makes us depressed.**
- ◆ **Being angry at other people scares them away and makes it harder for them to help us.**
- ◆ **Anger at or avoidance of the church is not the answer. It makes the matter worse.**
- ◆ **Being angry at God erects a barrier between us and all the sustaining, comforting resources He has given to help us at such times.**
- ◆ **Put the blame away and be angry at the sin or the situation.**

God Sometimes Answers Prayer With “No” Or “Not Now”

- ♦ **Reasons people give for why others might not get what they pray for:**
 - **You didn't deserve it.**
 - **You didn't pray hard enough.**
 - **God is angry with you.**
 - **Someone more worthy was praying for the opposite result.**
 - **You prayed incorrectly**
 - **Prayed that God change what already is.**
 - **Prayed that God change the laws of nature.**
 - **You prayed that someone else be harmed.**
 - **You prayed that God would do something within your power, so that you don't have to do it.**

God Sometimes Answers Prayer With “No” Or “Not Now”

- ♦ **How about... God is all wise and all knowing, and I am limited and ignorant?**
 - How about... God, who is wise, simply said ‘No’?
 - How about... trusting God to give the best answer?
- ♦ **What things should I pray for in adversity?**
 - Fellowship and support from saints - Gal. 6:2
 - Strength of character to deal with adversity.
 - People who pray for miracles don't get miracles. But people who pray for courage, for strength to bear the unbearable, for the grace to remember what they have left is greater than what they lost, often find their prayers answered.

Some Suggestions On Preparing Your Mind To Deal With Hardship

- ♦ **Keep the problem in perspective.**
- ♦ **Focus on the present.**
- ♦ **Stop fussing over details.**
- ♦ **Do something new.**
- ♦ **Pray with and for other people.**
- ♦ **Keep your hopes realistic.**
- ♦ **Cultivate humor.**
- ♦ **Worry less about why bad things happen and concentrate more on making the most of your life on earth.**
- ♦ **Be kind to others.**
- ♦ **Ease up your grip on trying to control things.**
- ♦ **Clean up your home and create a space that is inviting to others.**
- ♦ **Trust God**

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Rev. 21:4)



Suggestions To Prepare Your Mind To Deal With Hardship

- ◆ **Keep the problem in perspective**
- ◆ **Focus on the here and now**
- ◆ **Stop fussing over details**
- ◆ **Do something new**
- ◆ **Pray with other people**
- ◆ **Keep your hopes realistic**
- ◆ **Cultivate humor**
- ◆ **Worry less about why bad things happen**
- ◆ **Be kind to others**
- ◆ **Stop trying to control things outside of your power**
- ◆ **Clean up your living and home**
- ◆ **Trust God**

