1. Pastor Pacey directs us to first consider just who God is. See Mark 10:17-18, 1 John 4:8, and Revelation 4:8. What qualities of God are plainly evident in these verses?

   God is the only One who can rightly be described as “good,” for only He is completely benevolent toward us. Likewise, God is “love,” and not any old love, but the selfless agape-flavor of love, which is given to you by God giving up something in self-sacrifice. And God is also “almighty,” all-powerful or omnipotent, entirely capable of dealing with anything, even with the problem of evil.

2. Pastor Pacey also instructs us to consider just what evil is, and what it isn’t. See Genesis 1:31, 3:15. How does God describe every single thing that He had made in His creation? Did He create anything that was “evil?” How did evil come into this world? Did the devil create it? What exactly is “evil” if it isn’t a thing that was created?

   Everything God created was good, actually very good. Completely good. Perfect and evil-free. But Satan, having rebelled against God and His good and gracious will, was cast from heaven, and landed smack-dab in the middle of the Garden. He tempted Eve and Adam to rebel against God and His will as well. When they did, that sin corrupted the perfect creation, removing some of its “goodness” as it were. So evil is not a “thing” created, but it is actually a “lack of goodness” which Adam and Eve, and all their descendants now sadly know, all too well.

3. So we now come to understand Pastor Pacey’s first point in his article, that God is not the author of evil. See Romans 3:23. How is it that you, too, like Adam and Eve, now also know of evil? So what is the root cause of evil in this world?

   Sadly, Adam and Eve’s eyes were opened when they sinned, and the unfortunate promise of the serpent was fulfilled, they knew the difference between good and evil, experiencing the latter now for the very first time. You are in the same boat as our first parents. You, too, have sinned, as they did, and now you know evil in your life. You get hurt, grow tired, suffer ills, and see the corruption of the formerly all-good creation all around you. Sin itself is the reason evil is in the world.

4. Since God is perfectly good in and of Himself, yet evil abounds in the world, He must have some sort of good purpose for it, right? Read Job 1-2 and Romans 8:18-28. Is God the one who causes evil in your life? How does it come about? Is God in control through all of your suffering? For what
purpose does God allow your suffering for a time?

As we see in the story of Job, God Himself does not do the “afflicting,” but He does permit Satan to inflict suffering, but always with a limit. (He may be the devil, but he’s always “God’s devil.”) The sufferings of all creation are intended by God to direct our hope to the new creation, the paradise restored that we are to long for. And we are comforted by God’s Own Spirit as we await the new heavens and new earth to know that God is using all these things, even our sufferings of evil, for our ultimate good. For you have been called to the purpose of His good and gracious will in Christ!

5. Read Isaiah 45:7 and Amos 3:6. These passages sound like God is the direct creator and cause of evil, don’t they? How do we view such verses in the overall context of what we know from the other clear Scriptures of the Bible?

Since we know evil is not a “created thing,” we can look to other creations, Satan and our own sinful flesh, as the sources of evil. But remember, it’s not that God created man or the devil “flawed” initially. God cannot be blamed for Satan’s rebellion or man’s fall into sin, for they come from their own choices. So when you read such Bible passages that tell of God being the “cause” of evil calamities, remember that He is not the “direct” cause, but rather is allowing for evil circumstances in this now-corrupted creation, for a time.

6. How should we view, then, our sufferings from the evils of this fallen world? See Romans 5:1-11.

I know it sounds odd, but you actually rejoice in the midst of the sufferings you endure as a Christian in this evil world! Not that you have to go around smiling, 24/7 as though you are always super-happy. For happiness is not the same thing as joy, exactly. You have joy, a fruit of the Holy Spirit, deep down, because you recognize that God is actually at work in your sufferings, to produce all kinds of good things, the ultimate of which is hope! For, although you suffer evils now, you know that the time will come soon when you will no longer experience anything of the sort!

7. Pastor Pacey directs us to the One and Only solution to this problem of evil—Christ Jesus! See 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13. How does Jesus deal with the cause of evil for you, to rescue you from its plight?

Since the rebellion of sin is what caused evil in the first place, Jesus came to earth to take on the problem, head-on. Or better said, “full-body-on,” since He Himself became sin, bearing all your sin and mine, and even the sins of the entire world in His Own body on the tree of the cross. There, He was willing to suffer the wages of evil-causing sin, which is death—eternal death and separation from His heavenly Father. That what Jesus experienced at the cross, being “cursed” by God in your place, so that you are now blessed with His forgiveness, life and salvation. Jesus was willingly forsaken by His Father at Calvary so that you will never be forsaken by God. Jesus solves the problem of evil by having your sin nailed to Him on the tree.

8. Close with the following prayer.
Merciful and everlasting God the Father, Who did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us that He bear our sins on the cross, grant that our hearts may be so fixed with steadfast faith in our Savior that we may not fear the power of any evils; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.