

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 3-18-12 PM NOTES
"JOB"
#19 in Series, "The Glory of God in the Old Testament"

Job 5:7 (NKJV) "Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward."

Galatians 6:7 (NKJV) "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

- No one will escape this life without suffering.
- We sometimes understand why we suffer and sometimes we don't.
- We should always trust God whether we understand or not.

I. Job's Distress (Chapter 1-3)

A. Job's Prosperity (1:1-5)

Job 1:1b (HCSB) "He was a man of perfect integrity, who feared God and turned away from evil."

B. Job's Adversity (1:6-2:13)

1 Peter 5:8-9a (NKJV) "8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith..."

2 Samuel 12:14a (NKJV) "However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme..."

*The prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*

- Martin Luther (1529)

C. Job's Perplexity (Chapter 3)

James 5:11 (NASB) "We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful."

II. Job's Debates (Chapter 4-37)

Round One – Chapter 4-14

Round Two – Chapter 15-21

Round Three – Chapter 22-26

Job's Closing Monologue – Chapter 27-31

"If we turn back and look at the three long cycles of dialogue, we can summarize all the arguments of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar pretty easily: 'Job, what has happened to you is really bad. You must have sinned most extraordinarily, because God is just and punishes sin. And though you deny having sinned, we know you must have. There can be no other explanation.' And every time Job responds, 'Oh no, I didn't'. By that Job does not mean he has never sinned; indeed, he confesses his sinfulness along the way. Rather, he is saying that no great, hidden sin has marked his life that would have called for such calamity. Yet again and again, Job's friends respond with proverbial wisdom, 'You get what you deserve.'"

- Mark Dever

III. God's Dialogue with Job (Chapter 38-42)

A. The Revelation of the Lord (Chapter 38-41)

B. The Repentance of Job (42:1-6)

C. The Rebuke of Job's Friends (42:7-9)

D. The Reward from God (42:10-17)

IV. Practical Lessons on Suffering from Job

A. Suffering Must Be Seen in Light of God's Love, Goodness, and Sovereignty

1 John 4:16a (NKJV) "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love..."

Psalms 52:1b (NKJV) "The goodness of God *endures* continually."

Romans 8:28 (NKJV) "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose."

Ephesians 1:11b (NKJV) "...Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will".

Psalms 135:6 (NKJV) "Whatever the Lord pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places."

Isaiah 55:9 (NKJV) "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

B. Suffering Must be Seen in Light of Eternity

Job 19:25-27 (NKJV) "²⁵ For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; ²⁶ and after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, that in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷ whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. *How* my heart yearns within me!"

C. Our Main Concern in Times of Suffering Is That God Is Glorified

Philippians 1:20 (NKJV) "according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death."

Job 13:15a (NKJV) "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

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“JOB”

#19 in Series, “The Glory of God in the Old Testament”

The well known preacher of London just over 100 years ago, Joseph Parker, gave a young Pastor this counsel: “In every pew there is a broken heart. Speak often on suffering and you will never lack for a congregation.” Suffering takes many forms – sickness, grief, rejection, abuse, failure, family break-ups, poverty, and so many more. **Job 5:7 (NKJV)** “Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.” The book of Job is all about suffering. The theme of the book is not so much “why” the righteous suffer as it is about “how” the righteous are to suffer. The book of Job deals primarily with a special kind of suffering (though there are principles that apply to all suffering). Much of the suffering in this world is what I would call “reaping what you sow suffering”. The Bible says in **Galatians 6:7 (NKJV)** “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” This is a law of God just as real as the law of gravity in the natural realm. If you sow laziness and have a bad attitude about your work, you will reap the suffering of being fired, rejected when promotion time comes, or at least lack the satisfaction of knowing you’ve glorified God in your work. If you sow abuse toward your body with the wrong kind of and too much food and you get no exercise, you will reap physical suffering. This “reap what you sow” suffering is not the type of suffering Job was experiencing even though that’s what his so called “friends” said. What about when a person has a great attitude toward his work and works consistently hard and effectively, but he is fired because the boss doesn’t like the fact that he won’t go along with dishonest activities the boss demands that they participate in? What about when someone cares for their body, they eat right, and exercise and suffer with heart disease or cancer? I would call this the suffering of the righteous (by “righteous”, I mean those in right standing with God and walking with God). It was this kind of suffering that Job was experiencing, but his friends had no room in their theology for this kind of suffering.

A common question today and the subject of many books is, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” In a sense, there are no “good people” when it comes to being deserving of God’s grace, mercy, and a suffering free life. Jesus is the only perfect sufferer. But I know what most people mean by that question. They usually mean someone who walks with God and seeks to please Him and yet suffers. All of our questions in this arena will not be answered from the book of Job, but we will see some of the “whys” and even more of the “hows”.

Let’s look at a little of the technical background of Job. The book of Job is the first of five books in the wisdom section of Scripture. The book of Esther completed the historical books and Isaiah will begin the prophetic books. The books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon make up the wisdom books of the Bible. The book of Job contains a lot of Hebrew poetic wisdom, but it is a book of history also. Job was a real person. He is referred to by name in Ezekiel 14:14 and James 5:11. Job was not a fictional character. Job lived in the land of Uz which was in northern Arabia. From what is mentioned in the book and what is not in the book, it is estimated that Job was probably alive about the time of or slightly before the time of Abraham. We aren’t sure who the human instrument was that wrote Job.

The book of Job can be summarized by three statements:

- No one will escape this life without suffering.
- We sometimes understand why we suffer and sometimes we don’t.
- We should always trust God whether we understand or not.

With that introduction, let’s begin to unfold some timeless truths about God and suffering in Job.

I. Job’s Distress (Chapter 1-3)

This section of Job switches back and forth from earth to Heaven. Through divine revelation, we are made privy to information that Job did not have.

A. Job's Prosperity (1:1-5) [Read Verses 1-5]

The book begins almost like a fairy tale, but it is a description of how things really were in Job's life. Notice that Job was prosperous in his character. Verse 1 tells us that he was "blameless and upright". **Job 1:1b (HCSB)** "He was a man of perfect integrity, who feared God and turned away from evil." That is not saying that he was without sin; it is saying that the pattern of Job's life was to obey and fear God. Job was also prosperous in the area of family. In the Bible, many children were considered a blessing from God. Job was prosperous in family because he had 10 children. His 10 children did something that is rare in families today. They seem to have gotten along with each other. They got together often to eat and spend time with each other. Even though it seems that his children were all grown, Job still prayed for them and was concerned with their holiness. Job was also prosperous in his possessions. In that period, a man's material prosperity was determined by the animals and household employees he had. Verse 3 tells us that he had both.

Most people who have a very simplistic view of things would like to leave things right there. If you have integrity before God, if you fear and obey God, God will bless you in every way. These folks would close the book of Job after verse five and simply end the book by saying, "and Job lived happily ever after and after a long trouble free life, he died in his sleep and went to Heaven". But that view not only fails to line up with real life; it fails to line up with the Bible.

B. Job's Adversity (1:6-2:13) [Read 1:6-8)

This passage tells us as much about the doctrine of Satan as any other single passage in the Bible. First, there is a truth about his limitations. To hear some people describe Satan, he seems sovereign. From this passage we see that he can do nothing in a person's life that God does not allow. Far from being sovereign, he is summonsed to appear before God. That is the implication of 1:6. He is required to give an answer as to his actions on the earth in verse 7. There are two dangers when it comes to our view of Satan. The first danger is to underestimate him. He is a supernatural being (a fallen angel) who has power much superior to ours. We, in our own strength are no match for his power and his knowledge and his ability to deceive. Peter describes him in **1 Peter 5:8-9a (NKJV)** "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Resist him, steadfast in the faith..." The "faith" is speaking of our faith in the One who has all power and thus power over Satan. The other danger is to overestimate him and ascribe to Him attributes (such as the "omni" attributes) that belong only to God. Second, we learn a lesson about Satan's character. He rebelled against the most high God and was cast down from his high angelic position (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:2-8). He is the adversary of God and the accuser of man. In Revelation 12:10 he is called "the accuser of our brethren". In Zechariah 3:1-2 he comes into God's presence to accuse a priest who was a leader of the Jews as they came back to Judah from Babylon named Joshua. When Satan is summonsed to come before God in Job 1, he starts his accusing work against Job. Notice the area of his accusation. He accuses Job of having a selfish motive for serving God [Read V 9-12]. Satan's character is evil to the core. The reason he hates God's people because of God's love for His people. He knows that in bringing God's people down into sin, lost people blaspheme God's name because of the failures of His children. That is what was so horrible about David's great sin with Bathsheba. The prophet Nathan said to David in **2 Samuel 12:14 (NKJV)** "However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme..."

One of the things that we learn from his section of Job is that there is a cosmic battle going on and we need to understand the enemy and his ways and his goal, but we also must understand what God is doing in this battle. This battle is not one where the outcome is in doubt and the battle goes back and forth with the ultimate outcome yet to be determined. That is a laughable concept when you understand the power and the sovereignty of God. Remember that third verse in the great hymn of the Faith by Martin Luther, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"?

The prince of darkness grim,

*We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*

- Martin Luther (1529)

That little word is God's Word. Let's get back to this cosmic battle. Satan seeks to have the name of God blasphemed by the failure, the fall, the giving up of those who claim His name. God desires that His name be glorified through His people. Why doesn't God just annihilate Satan and be done with it? It is because God uses the devil to accomplish God's purpose. God's purpose is that we magnify His name among the lost. Martin Luther called the devil "God's lackey". That means God's servant. When we continue to worship God and to refuse to back down when the devil attacks, God is greatly glorified.

Look at what Satan does. First, he takes away Job's possessions [Read 1:13-17]. Second, Job loses his children [Read 1:18-19]. Don't just lightly go over this! Put yourself in Job's place. One moment all is well and the next moment Job's life has fallen apart. Some of you have lost a child and know the heartbreak of that; Job lost 10 all at once! Was Satan victorious? Did Job fall? Did he turn his back on God and curse Him and become angry with Him? [Read 1:20-22]. Keep in mind that Job did not know what we know about what had gone on in Heaven. He glorified God in the midst of his unimaginable suffering.

Satan isn't through. He was summonsed once again to Heaven. Once again, God brings up Job and his integrity. He wasn't worshipping God for what he got from God at all. Satan continues to accuse [Read 2:4-5]. God gives permission for Satan to take away Job's health, but to spare his life in 2:6. Look what happened to Job [Read 2:7-8]. Job has lost his possessions, his children, and now his health. Even Job's wife joined the enemy of his soul and encouraged Job to just curse God and die. Still Job stood firm [Read 2:10]. Things couldn't get any worse could they? Yes, they could. Three so called "friends" come on the scene [Read 2:11-13]. Remaining silent for a week was probably the most helpful thing these "friends" did.

C. Job's Perplexity (Chapter 3)

Job is hurting. His wife is about as much help as a pat on the head for a drowning man. Would these three "friends" comfort him? No, as we'll see, they were about as much help as Job's wife. Job opens his heart before these three in chapter three. Basically he shares his desire that he would have died at birth so he did not have to go through all of this [Read 3:11-13]. Don't misunderstand this chapter. Job did not curse God as Satan predicted he would do and as his wife encouraged him to do. He cursed the day he was born. Job is struggling because he could not see the end purpose of God. **James 5:11 (NASB)** "We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful." We are at such an advantage over Job. We see the end of all his suffering and God's righteous purpose in it. Job saw none of that.

II. Job's Debates (Chapter 4-37)

Rather than do an in depth study of these debates between Job and his three "friends" I am simply going to summarize. This section is not really very interesting but we need to see the false views of his friends which are still around today. There are three rounds of these debates – each one increases in emotional intensity, but they are short on truth. Let me give you the logic of these three "friends". "All suffering is because of sin in the sufferer's life; Job is suffering; therefore Job has sinned to cause this suffering". Actually, the opposite is true. Job was suffering because of his life of integrity and his fear of God. The problem of these three "friends" is that they got the primary premise wrong. All suffering is not because of some specific sin in the sufferer's life. Some suffering may be God's discipline for sin in a believer, but certainly not all of it.

Here is an outline of this lengthy section:

Round One – Chapter 4-14

Round Two – Chapter 15-21

Round Three – Chapter 22-26

Job's Closing Monologue – Chapter 27-31

Elihu's Intervention – Chapter 32-37

We could spend a long time going over these debates, and while there is a lot to learn in these chapters, I simply want to summarize what goes down in chapters 4-37. I think the best summary is from Mark Dever: "If we turn back and look at the three long cycles of dialogue, we can summarize all the arguments of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar pretty easily: 'Job, what has happened to you is really bad. You must have sinned most extraordinarily, because God is just and punishes sin. And though you deny having sinned, we know you must have. There can be no other explanation.' And every time Job responds, 'Oh no, I didn't'. By that Job does not mean he has never sinned; indeed, he confesses his sinfulness along the way. Rather, he is saying that no great, hidden sin has marked his life that would have called for such calamity. Yet again and again, Job's friends respond with proverbial wisdom, 'You get what you deserve.'" [Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament*, Page 473].

III. God's Dialogue with Job (Chapter 38-42)

When I am reading through the book of Job, I endure through Job's debates looking forward to getting to his section of the book. These are some of the greatest chapters of the Bible. We've heard what man has to say, so now let's hear from God.

A. The Revelation of the Lord (Chapter 38-41)

In this section of the book, God asks Job a series of questions about the universe and its operation. God is getting Job's eyes off of himself and onto God and His power, wisdom, and glory. Job no doubt knows that he is in trouble after God speaks in 38:3 [Read]. Let's look at a sample of this section [Read 38:4-5, 16-18, 22-23] In chapters 39-41, God focuses on His animal creation [Read 41:11]. Job says almost nothing in this section where God reveals His perfection and power. When Job does speak, it is with great fear [Read 40:3-5]

B. The Repentance of Job (42:1-6) [Read]

We have it so much better than Job. We have the complete revelation of God in the Scriptures. When Job turned his focus on God as God revealed His wisdom and power, Job repented of his failure to completely trust God even when He could not understand God's ways. Job learned that God was worthy of trust even when we can't understand. The message of Job is this: God is trustworthy!

C. The Rebuke of Job's Friends (42:7-9) [Read V7, 9]

Take comfort that God has the last word. Even when it seems that no one understands and false accusations are coming from the right and the left, God is the only one that counts.

D. The Reward from God (42:10-17) [Read V10, 17]

IV. Practical Lessons on Suffering from the Book of Job

In this concluding point I want to tie together some of the lessons in Job we learn about suffering.

A. Suffering Must Be Seen in Light of God's Love, Goodness, and Sovereignty

Even when we don't understand, we hang on to what we know. We know that God is love. **1 John 4:16a (NKJV)** "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love..." It is not just that God loves us; God at the very essence of His being is love. God is good. He is not capable of being not good. **Psalms 52:1b (NKJV)** "The goodness of God *endures* continually." Because He is good, everything He causes or allows in our lives is for good. **Romans 8:28 (NKJV)** "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose." God is Sovereign. That means that God is in control and everything that happens is either because He caused it to happen or allowed it to happen. **Ephesians 1:11b (NKJV)** "...Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will". **Psalms 135:6 (NKJV)** "Whatever the Lord pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places."

When I do not understand God's ways and God's allowings, I trust Him because I know that I read in **Isaiah 55:9 (NKJV)** "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your

ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” I trust Him when I am perplexed, when I am confused, and when my heart is breaking because I know that God is love, God is good and God is sovereign.

B. Suffering Must Be Seen in Light of Eternity

Things that make no sense do make more sense when we see them in light of eternity. Job even though he had no Bible and no indwelling Holy Spirit found comfort in the fact that God is eternal and those who go to be with Him will be with Him eternally. Job didn't have near the fullness of revelation we have, but he knew this much: **Job 19:25-27 (NKJV)** “²⁵ For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; ²⁶ and after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, that in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷ whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. *How* my heart yearns within me!”

C. Our Only Concern in Times of Suffering Is That God Is Glorified

This ought to be our consuming desire in suffering: **Philippians 1:20 (NKJV)** “according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.”

CONCLUSION

- No one will escape this life without suffering.
- We sometimes understand suffering and sometimes we don't.
- We should always trust God whether we understand or not.

Job 13:15a (NKJV) “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” (3353)