

Some Thoughts from the Book of Job

The Book of Job teaches us many things that we need to know when we suffer
Job 13.15

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • March 23, In the year of our Lord, 2014
Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – No suggestions

Prelude:

I. You are sailing along wonderfully in life.

- A. In fact, you have one of those “Life is Good,” bumper stickers.
- B. Then, out of nowhere, life hits you hard.
 - 1. What happened?
 - 2. Nothing makes sense.
 - a) Why you?
 - b) Why now?

II. Why do we suffer,

- A. especially Christians, because
 - 1. we seek to be blameless and upright,
 - 2. we fear God and shun evil?
- B. We honor God with our possessions, and
 - 1. we teach our children to love God, and
 - 2. we pray for our children without ceasing.

III. The Bible shows us a man in such a life when everything was good,

1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil (Job 1.1).

4 And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, “It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did regularly (Job 1.4–5).

- IV. Then on one dreadful day,
- A. he lost all his wealth, and
 - B. he lost all ten of his children.
 - C. Sometime later, he lost his health.
- V. Yet, the Bible paints a picture of him as a very godly man.
- A. The Book of Ezekiel highlights the righteousness of Job,
 - 1. although the point in these texts is
 - 2. that while Job was a righteous man,
 - a) he would only save himself,
 - b) when the Lord decides to punish a nation.
 - (1) Job's righteousness would not automatically save others,

14 "'Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,' says the Lord GOD" (Eze 14.14).

20 "'...even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness'" (Eze 14.20).

- (2) Nevertheless, to a man of that godly stature suffering came.

- B. The New Testament says this of Job,

11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful (Jam 5.11).

VI. The Lord preserved the Book of Job in the Bible for Christians, because

- A. the Book has much to teach us.
 - 1. Since I learned the lessons of the Book of Job,
 - 2. that Book has blessed me whenever I have suffered, because

- a) I remembered the story of Job, and
- b) what God wants me as a Christian to know.

B. Here is what I mean.

Persuasion:

I. The Devil Attacks God-Fearers

9 So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" (Job 1.9–11).

4 So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" (Job 2.4–5).

A. Satan hates you for fearing God.

- 1. Satan hates God for loving you.
- 2. Therefore, Satan will
 - a) do anything, and
 - b) try anything,
 - (1) to make you curse God, and
 - (2) Satan knows the easiest way to do that
 - (a) is to make you suffer, because
 - (b) you may believe that God keeps you from all suffering, then
 - i) if you suffer
 - ii) you might turn God for not helping you.

B. Satan is ruthless.

- 1. Satan is relentless.
- 2. He will use everything and everyone against when he can.

C. Satan will even argue with God about you!

D. However, God is also relentless.

1. He does not want anyone to perish.
2. Therefore, He gave us the example of His Son suffering,
 - a) that we might be saved from our sins, but also
 - b) that we might learn how to win through our suffering.

II. **Human Wisdom Fails** [A main point of the Book of Job]

13 “With Him are wisdom and strength,
He has counsel and understanding.”
(Job 12.13)

17 “He leads counselors away plundered,
And makes fools of the judges.”
(Job 12.17)

A. Job’s friends accused him of having sinned to bring on his suffering.

B. Job defended himself as innocent, not having done anything wrong.

1. His friends accused him of wrong, but did not tell him what it was.
2. He acted as if he had never sinned, and challenged God to answer.
 - a) God shows up and rebukes both parties, Job and his friends.
 - b) These men were intelligent, spiritual men.
 - (1) Yet, they got it wrong.
 - (2) Only God has all the answers, and sometimes
 - (a) He just wants us to trust Him,
 - (b) even if we do not have the answers.

III. **God Does Make a Hedge Around Us**

10 “Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land” (Job 1.10).

8 “He has fenced up my way, so that I cannot pass...”
(Job 19.8)

A. Only God knows how much and how often

1. He has saved us from danger, but
2. we still experience some bad things.

B. Think on some of the ways God protects us on the Earth.

1. He uses the atmosphere to protect us from most meteors.
2. He uses the ozone layer to absorb most solar radiation.
3. He uses the greenhouse effect to absorb and trap some heat.
 - a) Our lives are like the Earth.
 - b) God protects us from most dangers, but some still get in.

C. I just happened to use the example of the Earth, but

1. we could compile a list for parts of our lives,
2. showing how God does make a hedge around us.
 - a) Sometimes we think we have it really bad, but
 - b) if God removed the hedge completely,
 - (1) we would not survive in the flesh or in the spirit
 - (2) for hardly a moment.

IV. Never Argue with God

1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

- 2 “Who is this who darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?
- 3 Now prepare yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you shall answer Me.”
(Job 38.1–3)

1 Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said:

2 “Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him?
He who rebukes God, let him answer it.”

3 Then Job answered the Lord and said:

4 “Behold, I am vile;
What shall I answer You?
I lay my hand over my mouth.
5 Once I have spoken, but I will not answer;
Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further.”
(Job 40.1–5)

1 Then Job answered the Lord and said: [This is the end intended by the Lord,
Jam 5.11]

2 “I know that You can do everything,
And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.
3 You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
4 Listen, please, and let me speak;
You said, ‘I will question you, and you shall answer Me.’
5 I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But now my eye sees You.
6 Therefore I abhor myself,
And repent in dust and ashes.”
(Job 42.1–6)

- A. There are some brilliant and powerful men with whom I wouldn’t argue.
1. Once Steve Lloyd and I were listening to a preacher refute
 2. a position that needed refutation.
 - a) The preacher did such a powerful job
 - b) that we looked at one another, and said, “I’m glad he’s on our side!”
- B. Everyone who has ever argued with God, lost.
1. Cain tried it and lost.
 2. Pharaoh tried it and lost.

3. The Canaanites tried it and lost.
 4. Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome tried it and lost.
 5. Islam tried it in centuries past and lost.
 6. The Soviet Union and all communist nations tried it and lost.
 7. Nazi Germany tried it and lost.
 - a) Oh, but you think you can succeed where all these failed!
 - b) What have you got up your sleeve that they did not try?
- C. What happened with Job is that he overly defended himself,
1. doing so at the expense of God.
 2. Job believed he had been perfect and thought God was unjustified,
 - 21 "I am blameless..." (Job 9.21)
 - 1 "I will give free course to my complaint,
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
 - 2 I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me;
Show me why You contend with me.
 - 3 Does it seem good to You that You should oppress,
That You should despise the work of Your hands,
And smile on the counsel of the wicked?"
(Job 10.1–3)
 - 18 "See now, I have prepared my case,
I know that I shall be vindicated.
 - 19 Who is he who will contend with me?
If now I hold my tongue, I perish."
(Job 13.18–19)
 3. Yes, Job was blameless, upright, and shunned evil, but
 - a) he went too far.
 - 2 Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth;
A stranger, and not your own lips.
(Pro 27.2)

b) As someone said,

“Pride is the only disease known to man that makes everyone sick except the person who has it.” (Buddy Robinson?)

V. Christ Answers the Longings of Job

33 “Nor is there any mediator between us,
Who may lay his hand on us both.”
(Job 9.33)

14a “If a man dies, shall he live again?”
(Job 14.14a)

19 “Surely even now my witness is in heaven,
And my evidence is on high.”
(Job 16.19)

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!”
(Job 19.25–27)

A. Christ answers the longings of all people,

5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (1Ti 2.5).

B. You have someone who stands with you.

1. Jesus has experienced suffering even more than Job.
2. Jesus died, but He rose from the dead,
 - a) showing you that in spite of all that you suffer,
 - b) you shall live as He did.

VI. Let Adversity Drive You to God

A. Whatever life throws at us, we can use as

1. a stepping-stone or
2. a stumbling-stone.
 - a) Prosperity
 - (1) pushes some people away from God, and
 - (2) pushes other people to God.
 - b) Adversity
 - (1) drives some people away from God, and
 - (2) drives other people to God.
3. Why does it happen differently?
 - a) Life is a stone.
 - (1) Do we use it to step closer to God, or
 - (2) do we use it to find fault with God?
 - b) You make the decision what kind of stone you have in your life.

B. What did Job do?

1. He let prosperity drive him to God, and
2. he let adversity drive him to God, because
 - a) to Job life was not about himself, but
 - b) about connecting with God.

C. Listen to Job as horrendous suffering knocked him over,

20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said:

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
And naked shall I return there.
The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

(Job 1.20–21)

9 Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!” 10 But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips (Job 2.9–10).

1. Some people suffer and their first thoughts are to stay away from worship.
2. Other people suffer and their first thoughts are to worship.

VII. Life Does Not Last Long

7 “Oh, remember that my life is a breath!
My eye will never again see good.”
(Job 7.7)

16 “I loathe my life;
I would not live forever.
Let me alone,
For my days are but a breath.”
(Job 7.16)

- A. How long does your breath last?
- B. You breathe it out and immediately take in another one, because
 1. the preceding one disappeared, and
 2. you need a fresh breath of air.
 - a) The older you get,
 - b) the faster life goes.
- C. You have kids.
 1. Your kids have kids.
 2. Your kids kids’s have kids.
 - a) Meanwhile, you kid yourself that you are still a kid.
 - b) You kid yourself, but you kid no one else that you are a kid.
 - (1) Then you have your kid’s kids over.

- (2) You can no longer kid yourself that you are a kid.
 - (a) You kid yourself on where the time went.
 - (b) Then your time comes and all kidding stops.

VIII. Trust God When You Do Not Understand Life

15a "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him..."
(Job 13.15a)

- A. When I grow up, I want to be able to say what Job said.
- B. God, please help me
 - 1. to grow up and
 - 2. to have the child-like trust that Job had in you.
- C. Right now your heavenly Father has open arms,
 - 1. waiting to receive you,
 - 2. watching for you to run to Him.
 - a) What will you do?
 - b) Cast all your burden and yourself on Him, because He cares for you.