

## **JOB: A MAN OF FAITH IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING**

### **JOB 4: JOB IS HUMBLED**

#### **Read Job Chapter 38**

**We have now arrived at session 4 of 5 in our series on the inspiring book of Job.**

*“There was a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.”*

#### **Job 1: 1**

**We have followed the story in how God allows Satan to visit calamity upon calamity. We have heard Job’s lament, his faith in the midst of intolerable suffering. How his “friends” judge him with their “theology of retributive justice” - how if you are suffering it must be because of some great sins! How Job who feared God fired so many questions to God, even to the point of; have you lost control? Where has my friend God, gone?**

**There is a famous book written by Rabbi Kushner, where he tries to answer the question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” He explains that the reason for suffering is God’s lack of power. God would have said to Job, “I wish I could have helped you Job, but I wasn’t powerful enough” This is a description of how although God would like to have stopped suffering, it was because he didn’t have enough power to stop it.**

**IF WE STUDY THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF THE SCRIPTURES, THIS IS NOT THE CASE, BECAUSE SCRIPTURE TELLS US THAT GOD IS OMINIPOTENT, which means that God is ALL POWERFUL!**

**So how does God respond to Job’s questions, to Job’s charge?**

**Job is looking for answers - do we ever look for answers like Job? And what does God do? God answers Job’s questions with many questions of his own?**

**GOD DOESN’T EXPLAIN - HE EXPLODES!!!**

**God doesn’t reveal his grand design, he reveals himself! As for Job and his situation, God says to Job “You have only one thing to worry about - How you respond to me?” So today, we shall reflect on 3 themes -**

#### **1. The Lord Speaks**

**2. The Mystery and Majesty of God**

**3. How Job is humbled.**

**1. The Lord Speaks, read Job 38: 1 - 3**

**Why had Job suffered so severely when he had done everything humanly possible to maintain a good relationship with God? What strikes us here is not what God says, but what he does not say?**

**There is no attempt to answer Job's questions with regard to Job's suffering, and no hint that Job has been caught up in a cosmic struggle with Satan. God spoke out of a whirlwind and surprisingly he didn't answer any of Job's questions:**

**“WHERE WERE YOU?  
WHERE WERE YOU?  
WHEN I LAID THE EARTH'S  
FOUNDATIONS”  
God thundered!!**

**Job's questions you see were not at the heart of the issue. Instead God used Job's ignorance of the earth's natural order - to show him his place, before God.**

**He even asks Job to consider the HIPPOPOTAMUS!!! (Job 40: 15 - 23) Here is a man who has lost his money, his wealth, all his possessions, and worst of all his beloved children - and God asks him to “consider the hippo”!!!! Is God really being serious? Would any of us dare to treat one so needy with such detachment?**

**So the question we have to ask ourselves, as to why God is giving Job the most amazing nature lesson you will ever hear. Why? God answers Job's questions with questions. What we have to take from this piece of inspired scripture is this. If Job could not and cannot understand all the workings of God's physical creation**

## **- HOW COULD HE POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND GOD'S MIND AND CHARACTER??**

**There is no higher standard or criterion higher than God himself, by which to judge - God himself is the standard. Our only option is to submit to his authority and rest in his care - Job couldn't even begin to know and understand all of God's resources or His ways. What about us?**

**The result - JOB IS SPEECHLESS!! It is a test in which Job is to learn of his lack of wisdom; his own human limitations, and this leads him to;**

### **2. The Mystery and Majesty of God.**

**At last, what Job has asked for has happened, God has answered him, but certainly not in the way Job had expected - or hoped! For a reason that remains a mystery of God, Satan has been given room and permission to test Job's faith. Throughout the whole book remember God never appears in conversation, until now. What is God saying though? Why is he giving Job a nature lesson - to show that no one can completely understand even common occurrences such as rain or snow, and certainly no one can command them - only God who has created them has that power!**

**There is an incomprehensible element in the nature of God, and the conclusion therefore must be this: There are elements of God which are incomprehensible, in other words we can comprehend or understand, not the greatness and height of God's doings - FURTHER THAN IT PLEASES HIM TO GIVE US SOME AWARENESS OF THEM - AND AT LEAST ACCORDING TO OUR CAPACITY - WHICH IS WE ARE HONEST, IS OVERSMALL.**

**Yes God has revealed himself in so many amazing ways:**

**Revelation: the whole of creation, Romans 1: 19 - 20.**

**Special Revelation: Jesus Christ, John 1: 14, Colossians 1: 15 - 20**

**: Holy Scripture: 2 Timothy 3: 16 - 17, 2 Peter 1: 19 - 21**

**: Testimony of the Holy Spirit in our own experience, John 14: 25 - 26.**

**Job has been questioning God, so God sets before Job a magnificent vision of the wonders of his creation. So the Lord**

**speaks, God reveals his majesty, his creation, his order and sustaining of creation, and Job's lack of any contribution or knowledge of this, and how it works. The result of this:**

### **3. Job is humbled**

**We must stand in awe of God. Throughout the book remember, Job's friends have asked him to admit his sin, and ask for forgiveness and eventually Job did indeed eventually repent. However, it is very important to note at this point, that he is not repenting from the "sin" his 3 friends were calling him to. He asked forgiveness not for committing secret sins but for questioning God's sovereignty and control!! Job repented of his wrong attitude and thoughts towards God's great power and perfect justice. What God is pointing out is that Job that was in the right, but we go too far if we accuse God of moving away from relating to us, and of his control and sovereignty.**

**We are locked in time, unable to see beyond today, we cannot know the reasons for everything that happens. (Hebrews 11: 1) Thus we sometimes have a choice, do we doubt or trust? Will you trust God today, will you trust that He is still with you, and is still in control although everything around you might feel otherwise.**

**A very good friend of mine, who mentored and encouraged me in the early months of my Christian walk, moved to Stevenage, and married a local girl. Four months after they married I received a phone call to say that he had been knocked off his bike and seriously injured. I was in the hospital room when the consultant told the mum, dad and sister that "they had done everything to save him, but sadly he had passed away" The devastation as I spent the next 48 hours with the family. Now the issue was this, if he had fallen off his bike and down the grass verge on the left, he might have broken his leg. However, he fell off his bike on the right side, was hit by a van and killed! WHY? Why was our question, and this has always stayed with the family, but ultimately will never be answered, this side of heaven.**

- Job knew nothing of how the earth was made - Job 38: 4 - 7**
- How the sea was formed, Job 38: 8 - 11.**
- How the planetary rotations constitute day and night, Job 38: 31 - 33**

**The point is that Job, and we CANNOT EXPECT TO UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING THAT GOD IS DOING WITH HIS WORLD, WITH HIS UNIVERSE.**

*“Who is this that darkens my counsel?*

*With words without knowledge?*

**Job 38: 2**

**Job is humbled, as it says in Proverbs 3: 5 - 6:**

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart*

*And lean not on your own understanding;*

*In all your ways acknowledge him,*

*And he will make your paths straight.”*

**So, what do you think Job would have been thinking and feeling, right now? Ever felt like “I wish I had kept my mouth shut!” Hands up, yep, thought so...**

**In Job 40: 4 - 5 we find the answer to this:**

*“I am nothing, how could I ever find the answers?*

*I will put my hand over my mouth in silence.*

*I have said too much already*

*I have nothing more to say.”*

**In other words Job is saying these things are so much bigger than me, “I am so small, I can’t fathom the mind and power that made all these things and set them on their course.”**

**And yet, even in our smallness, even in our insignificance - and this is so important to take from today’s message - God comes to Job demonstrating his love and care for him. That when we reflect on how small we are, how little we know or understand, as it says in Psalm 8: 3 - 4**

*“When I consider your heavens,*

*the works of your fingers,*

*the moon and the stars*

*which you have set in place,*

*what is man that you are **mindful** of him?*

*the son of man that you **care** for him."*

**When we read of the creator of the universe, become man, and taking the time to talk to little children we realise and discover the wonder of God - that there is really nothing too small in his own eyes - how wonderful is this to reflect on?**

**My wife Ali and I are blessed with two beautiful children, two girls, and we are so blessed in our church to have so many wonderful children and a growing number of young people. It is so precious to see these little lives grow:**

- **Their births - who can ever forget this moment!**
- **Their first words**
- **Their first steps, you can always remember where they were!**
- **Their first day at school, their little blazers, and the price of the little blazer!**

**Growing up is such a natural process, and as they grow up we have to practice at letting them go, and it such a pleasure and joy to watch this. However, there is a rule in the Kingdom of God which runs counter to this natural law. In order to grow **SPIRITUALLY, WE NEED TO GROW DOWNWARDS**. Jesus says this in Mark 10: 4,**

*"Unless you can have faith like a little child,  
you cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven."*

**To grow up in Christ, we all need to grow down into lowliness, like a little child, and learn humility. As the famous theologian JI Packer states, "Christians grow greater by getting smaller." These closing chapters of Job show us that he realises he needs to shrink."**

***"WHERE WERE YOU"***

# **“SURELY YOU KNOW FOR YOU WERE ALREADY BORN.”**

Obviously Job was not around when God made the world. God is reducing Job to size, he is deflating any excess pride. Job has been shown a little of the majesty and splendour of God, an amazing display of God’s wisdom and power.

So 3 things to reflect on today:

## **1) What has God taught us today?**

God may choose not to reveal his reasons and purpose and we must in our finiteness and smallness trust in his sovereignty. Like Job, do we need to say sorry for accusing God of wrongdoing, of not being in control.

Jesus prayed on the point of his betrayal,

*“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”*

**Luke 22: 42**

Job has been silenced, he is fitted with remorse. Discouragement has caused Job to argue his good case; wrongly, he has gone just too far.

## **2) Secondly, we must grow smaller, not less significant, but smaller in our own eyes.**

As we have noted Job says, “Compared with you, I am nothing” Growing downwards in humility is the point which God wants to bring each one of us. Bursting the bubble of self-importance is what we need to do.

As I read out in our call to worship this morning, John the Baptist said in relation to Jesus, the Lamb of God,

*“He (Jesus) must become greater, I must become less.”*

**John 3: 30**

**Job, whose trust in God's ways has been wavering, is now expressing his complete obedience and dependence on God.**

**3) We must stand in awe of God.**

**Job also teaches us that the right response to a sight of God's majesty is one of awe. God has revealed himself to Job, from the whirlwind. God's majestic power ought to cultivate a sense of humility and awe in our hearts. We learn too that we overstep the mark when we angrily ask if God is still in control.**

**Because we are locked in time, unable to see beyond today, we cannot know the reasons for everything that happens. We must choose between doubt or trusting in the God who has created and sustains the universe and us.**

**Will you trust God today, and will you even trust him today with your unanswered questions? We can trust AN UNKNOWN FUTURE TO A KNOWN GOD!**

**Amen**

**Gary Torbet**

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