

Considering Job
(Week 1)
Job 1
“Suffering Servant”

Introduction

His name was Job. In the Hebrew text, it is pronounced *ee-yobe'* and means “*one who is despised*”. He lived in a place called Uz (pronounced *ootz*, meaning *forrest*). No one is exactly sure of the exact time in which he lived or the location of the Uz, but more than likely, Job was a descendant of Esau, the brother of Jacob, and was born many years after Abraham and before the time of Moses, making the book of *Job* the oldest of all the books of *The Bible*. There are many theories as to Job's lineage and place in history, but I believe that *The Bible* omits these details purposely, so that Job becomes identifiable to each of us as one who shows us how we are called to endure suffering. The book of *James* tells us that we should look to Job as an example to follow, when we find ourselves in the midst of persecution.

“See we count as blessed those who have endured. You have heard of Job's endurance and have seen the outcome that The LORD brought about — The LORD is compassionate and merciful.”
James 5:11

The point that James makes in this verse of Scripture is vital for us to be able to understand how we must face various trials. We must always remember that no matter the circumstance... God is good! It is only by understanding this unchangeable truth that we will be able to endure hardship. Our God will never abandon us.

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid of them, for The LORD your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you.”
Deuteronomy 31:6

You see, there is nothing to be afraid of, when we know that we will never face anything alone. Even though we do not deserve it, God is faithful to us, if we belong to Him. When you surrendered your life to Christ, He made a covenant with you, a promise to keep you, and even when we aren't as faithful as we should be, God never waivers in His commitment to us.

“If we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”
2 Timothy 2:12-13

So you see, If we belong to God, which means that we are abiding in Christ and not denying Him, then we are God's children, and even when our faith is shaken, God will remain faithful in us. Why? Because He is good. This is the truth that we must cling to in the storms of life.

God allows trials and tests to come into our lives for the purpose of strengthening our faith. So then, every time we are called upon to suffer, that suffering has a purpose and is for our own benefit (**James 1:2-4**). We live in a world that always wants a life of ease and luxury, but God wants us to grow and to be strong. No one can ever learn endurance without having something to endure! A loving God understands that a life lived free of struggle produces weaklings. The trials of life are necessary to mold us into what God desires for us to become. These are the “growing pains” that allow us to mature.

One of the great misconceptions of this world's wisdom is that people are always being punished when they suffer. This is absolutely not true, and Christians should refrain from passing judgment when they see others enduring hard times. We like to think (arrogantly) that we have God all figured out, that we understand everything that He is up to. When the truth is... we have no earthly idea how to even begin to fathom the wisdom of God. This is a lesson that Job would come to learn firsthand. He loved God, but he found that he had only begun to scratch the surface in his understanding of just how vast God truly is. What started out as a test of Job's genuine faith, eventually turned into a genuine face to face encounter with the Awesome God, Who created the heavens and the earth. Job suffered

immensely, but he was never to be the same. He was formally introduced to the God he had faithfully worshipped from a distance. Yes, God had a purpose for all of Job's trials, and it was ultimately for Job's benefit.

As we begin our study of this faithful servant of God, let us start in chapter one and see Job's DEVOTION, Job's DEVASTATION, and finally Job's DECISION.

Job's Devotion (vs. 1-5)

"There was a man in the country of Uz named Job. He was a man of complete integrity, who feared God and turned away from evil." **Job 1:1-2**

Job was a man who had fully devoted himself to God. The CSB translation of these two verses is a very good description of his character. Some translations, such as the KJV, say that he was "perfect and upright". While this is a good representation of the original text, they can mislead us into believing that *The Bible* is telling us that Job was sinless, and this is certainly not the case. Job was person just like the rest of us, and as such, of course he had occasion to sin. But the words used to describe him in the original Hebrew actually tell us that he was a man who lived in such a way that his life was pleasing before the Lord. There are two words that are used to describe Job's life, "tam", meaning *complete*, and "yashar", meaning *straight*. So, when The Holy Spirit is describing Job for us, He is saying in essence that Job was a man who was "completely straight" with God. Many of you may recall that we have discussed this before, it is the same description that **Psalm 1** describes as being "Blessed":

"How happy (esher meaning perfectly straight) is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway of sinners or sit in the company of mockers! Instead his delight is in The LORD'S instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers." **Psalm 1:1-3**

So, what the Spirit is telling us is that Job was a "Psalm 1 kind of guy". He followed God to the best of his abilities and was not led astray by sinful men. And, because of his devotion to God, Job had been richly blessed. In a age where a man's prosperity was not measured in gold, but by his crops and livestock, Job was a very wealthy man indeed. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys and a very large number of servants. *The Bible* tells us that he was among the greatest men of the region.

Job, more than likely, was in some type of export business, shipping goods all around the country, for this is the only possible explanation for his having so many camels, which were an extremely expensive commodity to possess. No one would own that many camels just for the novelty of it. Camels were the "shipping trucks" of Job's time, so in today's terms, Job would be the owner of a trucking company supplying various types of good to merchants throughout his country. God had immensely blessed him just as *Psalm 1* tells us "Whatever he did prospered", because he was straight with God.

Not only was he blessed in his business and financial wealth, but also Job had been blessed with a very large family. He had seven sons and three daughters. The young men were all grown at the time of this story, but apparently his daughters were younger and unmarried, for their older brothers would send for them seven times a year to have a feast at each brother's home, more than likely as a celebration for the young men's birthdays. Job's family was not only large, but they were close. How fortunate the old man must have felt to raise so many children, and yet, they all still loved one another and were committed to family unity.

Job knew exactly where his blessings came from, and he acknowledged God in all things. He continually served as a intercessory priest for his family, even to the point of sending for each of them after their birthday celebrations and offering sacrifices for them in the event that one of them had sinned in the sight of The LORD as they had celebrated. Job's children saw first hand the commitment that their father had to be ever mindful of God and to never take the LORD'S blessings for granted. Job was indeed a devoted man of God. We could learn much from his example of devotion. Would to God that

every father who calls himself “Christian” serve such a priestly role in his household for all his family to witness. There would be a lot more children out there with a Christ-centered foundation upon which to stand in this ungodly world were that the case. Unfortunately, too many dads these days have devoted their time and energy to far less important matters, thereby abdicating their responsibility to serve as the priest of their household. Job never shied away from his responsibilities. His devotion to God was lived out every day of his life.

Job’s Devastation (vs. 6-19)

“Have you considered My servant Job? No one else on earth is like him, a man of perfect integrity, who fears God and turns away from evil.” **Job 1:6**

It is in this incredible passage of scripture that we are given a rare and brief glimpse into the throne room of heaven. The “Sons of God”, which is an *Old Testament* term for the angelic hosts of heaven, are coming before the throne of God Almighty and giving a report of their activities. Satan, the fallen angel, is among them. The word Satan in the Hebrew is not intended as a proper name, but rather a title. The word actually means “*the adversary*”, and it is a perfect description of the Devil’s personality.

“Be sober-minded, be alert, your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.” **1 Peter 5:8**

Now Satan could have cared less about Job’s well being. He merely wanted to bring Job down in an effort to discredit God. God knew that he would quickly take the bait and seize the opportunity to persecute Job. It was God Who initiated the challenge by asking Satan if he had noticed Job. Satan quickly responded that Job only worshipped God because God had been good to him, because He had kept him safe from persecution by building a hedge around him. God knew better. He knows the hearts of those who call upon His name. He can spot the phonies from lightyears away. God knew that Job was indeed faithful and pure in heart. Job didn’t follow God because the televangelists had promised him worldly possessions if he did. No, Job truly loved God, and God knew it. Now Job was going to have an opportunity to prove that his devotion was genuine. It was a truth that could only be proved through testing. It is important for us to understand that Satan could have never laid a hand upon Job without God’s permission. When we face difficulty, we must constantly remind ourselves that God has allowed it to happen, and we must rely upon His promise that it is for our own good (**Romans 8:28**).

I once heard an old preacher say, “It is only when you get squeezed, that what is inside you comes out”. This is a statement of absolute truth. Anyone can pretend to be pious when times are good, but no one can fake piety when they are being crushed. I have seen many a person run from God when times get tough, but I have also seen many a true believer draw nearer to God when they were faced with tremendous difficulty. God already knows the difference, but we really do not until we see how we react to trials. Job was about to find out that his faith was indeed the real thing. He was about to undergo some of the most severe testing that any man has ever faced. God gave the devil permission to inflict devastation upon Job, but not to lay a hand on the man himself.

Satan was as cruel in his dealings with Job as one might imagine. He hit Job with a fierce fury from every direction. The Sabeans (a nomadic band of marauders) swept down and stole his donkeys. Followed by a destructive fire that fell from heaven and destroyed his flocks and servants. The Chaldeans (predecessors of the Persian Astrologers in Daniel) came and took all the camels and killed even more of Job’s servants. Job in an instant was penniless. And, as if this were not bad enough, a desert wind much like a tornado came and struck the home of Job’s oldest son as all Job’s children were gathered to celebrate his birthday. Job lost all ten of his children in one single moment. This man who once had everything, became bankrupt and childless in an instant. Few of us can even begin to imagine what Job must have been feeling at the time. The loss of wealth was one thing, but the children... That was the most cruel and devastating blow of them all.

Satan had left nothing to chance. He hit Job as hard as he was allowed to hit. God had set the limits, and Satan had pushed them right up to the line. Job’s life, as he knew it, was ruined. Now I have

known many people who have lost a child, and the hurt is indescribable, but only recently have I met someone who is in the process of losing all of her children. I was on a mission trip to Guatemala, when I met a woman whose oldest daughter was murdered and her youngest daughter is dying of cancer. The look of devastation in that mother's eyes has haunted me every day since. I was asked to pray over this dying child and her mother, and quite frankly, I have never felt so inadequate in all my life. All that I could do was to cry out to God for His goodness, for when we have no answers, that is when we need to cling to His goodness all the more. His goodness is our only consolation in times of devastation. We who believe, cling to Him when all else falls apart. And that is exactly what Job did.

Job's Decision (20-22)

When I counsel young couples about to get married, I always tell them (though many seem skeptical), that love is not a "feeling" it is a conscious decision. *We must **choose** to love.* If this were not the case, then a marriage vow would not say things like, "I promise to love in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad times, for richer or for poorer, till death do us part." Now, I have had many couples repeat that phrase countless times when they were just "crazy in love" and everything was going great on their wedding day, but I have found that many of them didn't mean a word of their vows when hard times came. You see, a marriage vow gets tested just like everything else in life. Love is a choice, not a feeling.

Now any fool can make a vow, but only a person of integrity can keep it. Life is hard. Everything doesn't always come easy. Sometimes, it's a struggle. In fact, **most** of the time it's a struggle. This is why it takes faith in God to survive in this wicked world. When Job lost everything, he had a choice to make. He could curse God and turn his back on everything that he believed in, or he could decide to love God and keep the faith. I personally believe that Job had made this choice long before the devil ever struck him. It is not the kind of decision one makes in the heat of the fiery furnace, but rather, it is a decision one makes in the event that he **might** one day face the fiery furnace. Job had decided many years earlier that God would be his God... no matter what. I find his actions in the face of such devastation to be such an inspiration for us all

"Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and WORSHIPPED, saying: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life. The LORD gives and The LORD takes away. Blessed be The Name of The LORD." **Job 1:20-21**

There was no part of this horrible trial that Job had ever wanted. He tore his robe and shaved his head, which, in those days, was a sign of complete brokenness and mourning, but immediately after this, Job fell to the ground and worshipped God! Nothing could alter his course. He had made a decision many years earlier to fear and honor God, for better or worse, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, through good times and bad. Job was given a chance to honor his heavenly Father, and he proved that his faith was the genuine article. Job kept his vows, just like God knew that he would. The devil must have been both shocked and furious all at the same time. The "father of lies" was once again shown for the liar that he was. He had been willing to risk everything that Job would turn on God once the hedge of protection had been withdrawn, but he was so very wrong. But, even in defeat, the roaring lion would ask for yet another chance to take down his prey. He rushed back to heaven to plead for more leeway.

Can I ask you a question this morning? Are you devoted to Christ. Will your marriage vows to Him hold up through good times, as well as, bad times? It is only through the storms of life that we can truly find out if our anchor holds. God is good, and He will never leave us nor forsake us, but He has called us to endure. I want to be the kind of Believer that keeps his marriage vows. Who is with me?

And **All** of God's people said... **TRUTH!!!**