

Considering Job
(Week 10 - Conclusion)
Job 38-42
“God Almighty”

Introduction

“Then The LORD answered Job from the whirlwind. He said: Who is this who obscures my counsel with ignorant words? Get ready to answer Me like a man: when I question you, you will inform Me.” **Job 38:1-3**

Job had been pretty much demanding that God show up and face him “in court” so that he could plead his righteousness before the God’s heavenly throne. Elihu had attempted to warn Job that this probably was not a good idea, for if a man could not even look directly at the sun with out going blind, how then could he expect to look into the face of Almighty God. Job had been relentless in declaring his own righteousness. While he was in fact correct by saying that his sufferings were not given as a result of some hidden sin, he was sadly mistaken to believe that his own “goodness”, as it were, would be sufficient to justify him in the presence of The LORD of The Universe. God had declared that Job was the most righteous man upon the earth in his day, but even the best among fallen man still falls short of God’s glory.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” **Romans 3:23**

If Job was going to be able to stand in the presence of The LORD, it certainly would not be as a result of his own righteousness. No. Job would need much more. What he needed, but was unable to comprehend, was a remarkable act of grace and mercy. Even the very best of us need to be redeemed, no man can claim perfect righteousness, except The LORD Jesus, The God-man who lived up to God’s perfect standard.

Elihu, the young man who witnessed the back and forth between Job and his three friends, had been offended by them. He had tried to set the record straight and explain to any who would listen that no one could claim to be more righteous than God. He had preached to them all a message of God’s Grace, Goodness, and Greatness. As soon as he had finished describing the majesty of God, comparing Him to the sun’s blinding light that breaks through after a storm has passed (**37:21-22**), God Himself showed up cloaked in a “storm”(a tornado to be exact), and called Job to task for his ignorance.

It is important for us to be reminded that God did in fact love Job dearly. It was God Who chose him to endure suffering to prove to Satan that Job was a loyal and trusted servant. But, even the most trusted of servants must be corrected when they are in error. Job was no exception. He was a good man, who had said some pretty ignorant things, and God wasn’t about to let him get away with it. God most definitely will discipline the ones that He loves.

“...My son, do not make light of The LORD’S discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, because The LORD disciplines the one He loves, and He chastens everyone He accepts as His son.” **Hebrews 12:5b-6 (NIV)**

When God shows up in a mighty whirlwind, He is not in the mood to play games. He gets right to the point. If Job thinks that he knows so much, if he truly wants his “day in court” with God, then perhaps he would be willing and able to answer a few of God’s questions. If he can answer them, then God will concede that Job’s own righteousness can save him. God proceeds to ask Job 77 questions. Sadly for Job, he hasn’t the wisdom to answer even one of them. Job realizes very quickly that the time has come for him to stop speaking and to simply listen to the words of God. He needs to **Hear** the wisdom of God, **Humble** himself, and only then will He be **Healed** and restored. It is a message that each of us must come to learn, if we are to receive the grace of God.

Hear

Seventy-seven questions (7 is the number of completeness), that is certainly a lot isn't it? You would think that Job, who over and over again has proclaimed himself to be both righteous and wise, would have had a least one answer, but he did not. In his defense, it must have been more than a little overwhelming when God showed up in such power and majesty. I'm pretty sure that all of us would have been speechless. When I read the Word of God, I find myself in awe. Just imagine what it would have been like to actually hear God speaking His Word! I bet ol' Job wished that he could have taken back some of the things that he had said about God being unfair and unconcerned.

God begins His series of questions by asking Job exactly where he was when He (God) had created the world (**vs. 4**). I mean, it is a pretty fair question to ask. If Job knows so much about fairness and how the earth should be managed, then it stands to reason that he must have been there, when the whole thing got started. How else could he expect to know how that things should be run? We have a plethora of people in this world who like to play "Monday morning quarterback". Do we not? It is simple to stand back and make judgments about what "should have been", when we weren't actually on the playing field, when it was happening in real time! God had created a perfect world. When He stepped back and looked at His creation, He declared, **"It is good."** (**Genesis 1:10,12,18,21,25**). It wasn't God who messed up this world... it was **us!** Job hadn't been there when it all happened, but God was. In fact, it was God who had been constantly working to keep everything from being destroyed by fallen man.

In **Chapters 38-41**, God reminds Job that it *is* He who not only created everything there is, but it is also He alone who sustains it. The questions that God asked of Job can actually be broken down in three sections.

1. Can you explain My creation (**Job 38**)
2. Can you maintain My creation (**Job 39**)
3. Can you restrain my creation (**Job 40-41**)

If Job longed to have his "day in court" against God, then he needed to prove himself to be a credible witness against God. His inability to answer this series of questions was indeed proof that he was not. The time had come for Job to be silent and listen. So many people think that they have all the answers. This world would be a far better place, if more of them were made aware of just how little they know. Isn't it time we just shut up and listen to the voice of God for a change?

"But The LORD is in His holy temple; let the whole earth be silent in His presence."
Habakuk 2:20

Midway through God's presentation, Job managed to get out a few words. He finally had received what he had been asking for, an audience with God. Here he was, in all his wretchedness, covered with festering sores upon the ash heap, and there was God wrapped in a tornado, restraining Himself, so that Job could even survive the encounter. And all Job could bring himself to say was:

"I am so insignificant. How can I answer You? I place my hand over my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not reply; twice, but now I can add nothing." **Job 40:4-5**

Here is the most righteous man on earth finally beginning to understand that **"Our righteousness is as filthy rags"**, when compared to the Holiness of God (**Isaiah 64:6**). What was true for Job is also true for us. We cannot be good enough to save ourselves. We need to not just listen to The Word of God. We need to HEAR it. Too many people try and compare themselves to others to justify themselves. Compared to everyone else alive at the time, Job was a great man. Even God said that there was none like him (**Job 1:8**), but compared to God, he was woefully inadequate. I've met a lot of people over the years who put way too high a value on their worth, and I've also met a great deal of folks who think that they have no value at all. Neither assessment is true. We are most definitely worth a great deal to God. He created us and gave His Son to die in our stead, but we certainly do not even

come close to the righteousness of Christ. Stop comparing yourself to other people, and start comparing yourself to Him. Then you will understand how far you have fallen short of God's glory. We need to heed what God's Word says about us, and then do something about it. We, like Job, need to be willing to humble ourselves in His Presence. This is our only reasonable response to the Holiness of God.

Humble

When Job answered God the first time (**Job 40:4-5**), he was getting close, but he still didn't completely get it. So, God gave him another round of questioning. When God had finished speaking in round two, Job understood perfectly clear just where he stood. Truth was that he had no standing whatsoever. Earlier, he thought that he was actually worthy to challenge God's justice (**vs. 8**). God accused him of declaring The LORD guilty in order to justify himself. God's response was to ask Job a few "simple questions" (simple for God anyway). He told Job that if he could answer His questions, then He too would confess to Job that he indeed was good enough to save himself.

"Adorn yourself with majesty and splendor, and clothe yourself with honor and glory. Pour out your raging anger; look on every proud person and humiliate him. Look on every proud person and humble him; trample the wicked where they stand. Hide them together in the dust; imprison them in the grave. Then I will confess to you that your own right hand can deliver you." **Job 40:10-14**

The LORD declared that He alone could subdue the wicked, and that even the most ferocious of beasts were completely subjected to Him. The LORD gives two examples of fierce creatures that a man has no hope of taming, but they too must bow to the will of Almighty God. The beasts that He describes for us, he calls Behemoth (Bhemowth in the Hebrew) and Leviathan (Livyathan). Many have tried to speculate as to what these two fearsome creatures may be. Some have speculated that they are the hippopotamus and the Nile Crocodile, but honestly, I've never seen a hippo with a tail like a cedar tree (**40:17**), nor a Crocodile spew forth a blast of water spray that resembles a column of steam (**41:19-21**). I honestly believe that God is speaking about dinosaurs here. I've seen plenty of pictures of dinosaurs that are a much better fit for what God is describing to Job. If this is true, then it is also true that dinosaurs roamed the earth during Job's lifetime. I'm just speculating here, but that definitely sounds like the case to me.

At any rate, Job is shown that he cannot even explain God's creation, much less sustain it, or restrain it. Before God, Job is as helpless as a baby. He has no other option, but to admit it. He must withdraw his claims of purity and wisdom, and concede that God alone is sovereign.

"I know that You can do anything and no plan of Yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this who conceals My counsel with ignorance?' Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things too wondrous for me to know. You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak. When I question you, you will inform me.' I had heard reports about You, but now my eyes have seen You. Therefore, I reject my words and am sorry for them; I am dust and ashes."

Job 42:2-6

Did you hear that last sentence? **"Therefore, I reject my words and am sorry for them; I am dust and ashes."** Now **that**, my friends, is repentance. No more arguing. No more questioning why, just a humble and contrite spirit before a Holy God. When we finally get to the point of surrender, no more excuses, and just putting it all out there on the altar of God, then something wonderful happens. God lifts us up! **He resist the proud, but gives grace to the humble!** Guess what Job? Things are about to get much better! You have responded correctly, and you are about to see a miraculous work of grace in your life. You are about to experience firsthand the goodness of God!

And Be Healed

After Job hears The Word of God, after he finally “gets it”, he humbles himself in the presence of The Holy One and gets restored. You see, even in the oldest book in *The Bible*, God’s formula for the salvation of mankind remains the same. Hear His Word. Humble yourself in repentance and be healed. I imagine that as soon as Job opened his eyes and stood up after lying prostrate upon the ash heap before God, he noticed that the boils were healed. The nightmare and disease had finally ended. God had restored his health. I cannot help but wonder if the boils had left permanent scars upon Job’s body to remind him that no man can be justified before God apart from a redeeming act of God’s amazing grace.

After Job is forgiven, God turns his attention to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar and harshly rebukes them for their lack of wisdom. They had pretended to be wise, and yet, they were ignorant of the ways of The LORD. Rather than punishing them, He requires them to repent in Job’s presence, offering sacrifices to God. Job is commanded to pray for these three men, so that they will be forgiven. That is exactly how grace is supposed to work my friends. We are to forgive others, as we have been forgiven. I am reminded of the powerful parable that Jesus shares in ***Matthew 18:21-35***. It is a story of a servant, who is forgiven an immense debt by his master, and then he goes out and has a man who owes him a paltry sum thrown into debtors prison! If we have been shown the wonderful grace of God, then we are required to extend that same grace to others who repent. Job’s three friends had been unbelievably cruel to him, and yet, he obeys God and prays for their forgiveness. I imagine that it was quite the humbling experience for all of these men.

After Job repents, and forgives those who have wronged him, God restores his fortunes. He blesses Job richly. Job’s brothers and sisters all come to see him and give him gifts as tokens of their love and support. God gave Job back twofold of all that he had lost. Let us look at the final tally. Job had lost seven thousand sheep and goats, and God gave him fourteen thousand more. He had lost three thousand camels, and God gave him six thousand in return. He had lost five hundred yoke of oxen, and God restored him one thousand. He had lost five hundred female donkeys, and God gave him one thousand. God possibly even doubled Job’s lifespan. Jewish tradition says that Job was seventy years old, when his disasters struck him, and God gave him one hundred forty more years. This meant Job lived to be the ripe old age of two hundred and ten years!

Now, I know what you are thinking. “Pastor, you did not mention the children. Job had lost ten children, and The LORD only gave him back ten more. Did God make a mathematical mistake here?” Well, you see, it is passages of scripture like this that make me fully believe that *The Bible* is not simply a collection of man-made stories, but rather, it is the infallible Word of God. For I do not believe that if the story of Job were a mere fable, that anyone would have remembered this wondrous truth in the telling. You must understand, that *things*, when they are lost, are gone forever, but people? No, my friends, God designed the soul of a person to endure for eternity. So, what happened to Job’s first ten children; his seven sons and three daughters who tragically perished? Were they lost forever? Did God need to replace them? No, of course not. Those children were in the presence of God. They were not lost forever. They had just simply gone on to be with God. Job would one day see those children again!

So you see, God did double the number of Job’s kids, just like He had doubled everything else that Job had lost. Would you like to know what Job has been doing for several thousand years now? Spending time in the presence of God with his twenty children! Oh, the rest of all that stuff is lost again, but the stuff that matters... It last forever! Do you have loved ones on the other side this morning? Well rest assured, that if you belong to Christ, and they belong to Christ, you will most assuredly one day take part in the greatest family reunion in the history of all time. But, you must make sure that you have your invitation ready, when day time comes. You must **Hear** The Word of God, **Humble** yourself and repent, and then, God has promised that you **will** receive your Healing! It’s as simple as that. Just ask Job. He will tell you that it is pure foolishness to believe that you are good enough to stand in the presence of a Holy God, unless you have first received His amazing grace! There will be no exceptions.

An ALL of God’s people said... TRUTH!!!