

Series: Job

Preached @ ECCC by Grant Peers on 7th August, 2011

Scripture: Job 38-42

INTRODUCTION (203)

Today we only have 4 chapters to cover to finish our series. Compared to the 33 we did last week it seems easy, but I think this is the sermon that I have look forward to preaching the least. That may sound funny to you, but this is the conclusion of the book – we have seen over the last three sermons the problems and pains that this book presents to us, the problem of humans suffering. And now we have one last sermon to see God’s response! I really feel the pressure because this is a big question! Just look at what Job said:

Job 30:20-22 "I cry out to you, O God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me.

21 You turn on me ruthlessly; with the might of your hand you attack me.

22 You snatch me up and drive me before the wind; you toss me about in the storm.

How do you respond to the widow at a funeral; the mother who lost her children; the young man who received the news that he has cancer; the spouse whose husband has walked out on them; the multiplying pains of old age?

In this series I have NOT said that you can't feel the reality of the pain and suffering in your life – as if Christians walk six inches above the ground in all things. We grapple and struggle and cry out and agonise like anyone else. The difference is that we have faith in God. BUT you should not allow our pain to drive us into an accusatory, prideful, you-have-no-good-reason kind of ‘why’?

SUMMARY

God calls Satan’s bluff. Satan accused Job of just serving God because of all the things God has given him, and the hedge God has put around him. The question is: is God worthy of being served just because he is God. So God intends to disprove Satan by taking everything away from Job: his wealth, his children and his health.

JOB’S SIN¹

In chapters 4-37 Job’s counsellors have alot to say, but it is basically all the same: Job you must have done something really terrible to deserve this from God. Job does not claim innocence, but

¹ Headings and outline taken from Mark Dever’s Sermon “Job’s God”

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contends with them that he is certain not guilty of a sin to gross that God should punish him like this. And all this time God has been silent. And even Elihu ends his speech saying:

Job 37:23a The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power;

And just to show how badly wrong these friends are God speaks out of the storm!

Read Job 38:1-41

And chapter 39 continues like this, and chapter 40 continues like this, and chapter 41 continues like this! After all Job's questioning of God, God himself turns to Job and puts him in the dock and pounds him with questions – *like a machine gun that takes no break for four chapters!* And Job suddenly realises that he has completely misjudged God and himself.

Job is confronted with his own sin: he has accused God of wrongdoing – but he is the one who is wrong. God confronts him with his limitations of knowledge. As much as Job many know (which isn't very much) he actually knows almost nothing when compared with God. In other words: God has reasons for events that Job just knows nothing about! When we look with our eyes we see

He had forgotten that God is great and powerful and might and all knowing. All he can do is answer, 'no, no, no, no, no...' to God's questioning! He asks him about animals, the universe, and the act of creation, and the water cycle, and science, and astronomy, and provision, and plants, and ostriches. And Job is silent!

In fact he tells Job that he will give him an answer but on one condition:

Job 40:8-14 "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?

9 Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his?

10 Then adorn yourself with glory and splendour, and clothe yourself in honour and majesty.

11 Unleash the fury of your wrath, look at every proud man and bring him low,

12 look at every proud man and humble him, crush the wicked where they stand.

13 Bury them all in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave.

14 Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you.

Not likely! Job has doubted God, he needed true knowledge of God.

But notice also that God shows his kindness here. In Job 41:11 it says that God does not owe anyone anything. He is no answerable to his creation. All of his goodness to us is his mercy!

Job 41:11 Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.

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And yet God comes and he speaks to Job. He does not owe Job this conversation, and yet he takes the initiative in love and mercy WHEN Job has been... opposing and slandering and accusing God! Perhaps you would notice how unlike God we actually are: we do we act in love and mercy and compassion to someone who is opposing us, come out of our corner when we are absolutely not at fault and seek conversation and reconciliation!

MINI-APPLICA

Here we have a picture of the gospel. Paul will tell us in the New Testament that while we were still sinners God sent his one and only Son to die a traitor's, a criminal's death – yet he was innocent. He came to rescue us when there was nothing to endear us to him; he came purely out of love and mercy and goodness. If you were converted to Christ later in life most frequently people will say, 'I was not looking for God, in fact I have purposely turned my back on God and the church and yet...'

If you are a non-Christian here with us this morning let me ask you: what do you expect of God? Do you think that God owes you something? What should God do to show you he is real? Is what Jesus did for you on the cross enough to show you that he loves you (even though you have been disinterested)?

JOB'S CONFESSION

Read [Job 40:1-5 and 42:1-3](#)

So Job confesses that he is unworthy, and that he does not have knowledge and he does not have power. But rather that God is all powerful, and God is all knowing!

Note he does NOT confess what his counsellors wanted him to. His in sin is misunderstanding and accusing and demand from God an explanation based on his own righteousness. But God did not owe him that! Job was wrong about his own goodness.

JOB'S REPENTANCE

Job's confession is followed by repentance.

Read [Job 42:4-6](#)

What does that mean? Job heard God and he saw the storm – but more than that Job's heart had been changed. He had not just learnt new information, his heart has apprehended new truth which changed the way he would now act and live. The point: Job's increase in knowledge led him to fear God more and trust God more.

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Mother or SMOTHER your husband...

The point is that when you see things in their correct perspective you, when you are seeing things rightly you respond rightly. And when your knowledge is limited your actions are often wrong.

MINI-APPLICA

If you want to repent of a sin with which you have been struggling for a while (months or years), if you want to deal a death blow to sin then don't look to behaviour manipulation techniques or a new methods (don't do this, do that, don't go here, don't watch that...). No, look at God and get to know him better.

Examples:

- if you fear man you don't need better self-esteem – you need to know the God who loves rotten sinner and make them his own – this give you identity and a sense of value;
- if you worry about finances don't need more money (!) – you need to know who God is: the God who provides for our needs;
- if you are nervous about security in South Africa you don't need a bigger dog or faster armed response – you need to know the God who is in control.
- if you want to be faithful in reading the Bible you don't need better bible-reading notes you need to know the God who has spoken, and if God speaks to man you want to hear what he has to say;
- if you are scared about death – you need to know the God of eternity who holds the whole of time in his hands.

JOB'S TRUST

Read Job 42:7-17

THE FRIEND'S JUDGEMENT (7-10)

Okay, so at first this does not make sense. I thought God just ripped a strip of Job... In chapter 1 & two God says nice things about Job and Job says nice things about God. Then from chapters 3-37 Job says bad things about God. Then in chapters 38-41 God says bad things about Job. Then in chapter 42:8b it says...

I think the point is that Job was always in the ball park. He may have blamed God and had unjustified expectations but he kept talking to God and looking to God to give an answer. The four friends were just completely wrong all the time!

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THE GOD WHO IS

Note what satisfied Job in the end. Because I am sure that most people think: if I had an encounter with God like this then I would also be satisfied. But in the end Job still does not have the 'why?' answered. Did you see that: the book ends with Job seeing who Job is but not having the question of why answered! God is teaching Job to trust him NOT based why but on who.

You know people make still statements like, 'When I get to heaven I'm going to go to God and ask him why... why did you allow this... why did you...?' I think probably not so much. It is actually a foolish question. I think when we see God as he really is, when we see WHO God is truly – not in a dim reflection in a mirror but face to face. I think what the Bible teaches is that we will be so taken with God, so satisfied with who he is, so full, so content in his presence that the 'why' questions will be the piddlings of our earthly existence. The 'who' will eclipse the 'why'. Job trusted God when he saw WHO God was.

CONCLUSION

The lesson that Job learns is that we can trust God NOT because of what we DON'T KNOW, but because of what we DO KNOW. So what is stopping you from trusting God? Is it something that you DO know or is it something that you DON'T KNOW? Look at the cross. What does that tell you about God – love, grace, acceptance, peace, mercy...

This is what makes Christianity different from every other religion and belief system – what did Buddha do, what did Allah do, what did Darwin do, or what did Confucius do? That is the glory of the cross – it is an objective demonstration of the love and power to save. And if God has done that for you how much more will he also give you EVERYTHING that you need in this life.