

Member Meditations on the Book of Job

Mt. Zion Church of Christ

Ryan Barrick...

Hardship Doesn't Always Indicate One's Living Wrong

Sometimes when we encounter hardships and suffering we conclude "we must not be living right". However, the book of Job reveals that sometimes bad things happen to good people. No, Job wasn't perfect and none of us are ALL good in and of ourselves, but the word acknowledges that God was pleased with Job's righteousness and didn't set out to attack him because of a specific sin or evil. Hardships and tragic situations are not always a result of unrighteous living (i.e. Job, Joseph, Paul, Naboth, John the Baptist, etc.), but sometimes they can be (plagues on the Egyptians, Jezebel, Onan, Jonah, the Flood, Korah, etc.)

Satan is the Attacker, God is Not

I don't know all things about God or entirely how He works, but I see a theme repeated here from the book of Genesis and the Garden of Eden. For whatever reason, Satan has power and influence in this world. Ephesians refers to him as the "Prince of the air" . But in Job, Satan comes onto the scene and doesn't necessarily strike with a blatant temptation, but attacks Job's faith, financial security, family, and friends. Satan is the attacker--God is not. God is all-powerful, in full control, and while not the attacker, allows for certain things to occur in His creation. To me this gives humanity the option to cling to God and hope for better. It cultivates genuine faith. If God protected us from tragedy and always showed up to save the day, it could cause some to take advantage and be shallow in their relationship with Him. Satan will stop at nothing when he knows we're seeking God--He tries to destroy, distract, and get us focused on ourselves; He wants us to give up on God. So like in Genesis, in Job we see an attack by Satan on humanity followed by humanity being disrupted and needing God.

We Can Put Too Much Stock in Our Own Righteousness

While Job was blameless and lived righteous before God, he questioned God's way and as a result wanted to know what he had done to deserve his circumstances. He reflected on his goodness and took stock in it (Job 29, 30, & 31). He accused God of being unjust (Job 27:2). Our own righteousness doesn't always exempt us from experiencing the pains of this world. Self-righteousness can be a dangerous trait in our relationship with God and functioning in His church.

Job Repented--Was Able to Say "I Was Wrong"

Confessing wrong seems to be a lost art in our society. Job wrestled with God, was confused, and sought to go before Him and reason with Him (Job 13:3). After God's conversation with Job, Job repented (Job 42:6). To me it seems to have been for something he said. Perhaps he better realized his creaturehood before an eternal God.

Hardship & Tragedy Can Bring Growth and Closeness with God

Job was stricken with deep anguish and heartache. He could have easily given up on God and turned bitter. And while he sinned in some way in how he ended up wrestling out his faith, he never gave up on God. In the end, Job's situation made him stronger and brought him closer to God. Relationships thrive when we don't give up--when we walk through the good and the bad.

In the Midst of Job's Hurt, He Knew His Redeemer Lives

Even the book of Job points to Jesus. Job talked about how he knew His redeemer lives--that in the end He would stand upon the earth, and in his flesh he would see his God (Job 19:25-27). His heart yearned for this.

Bad Advice Can Come From Those Close to Us

Mrs. Job advised Job to curse God and die. Job's friends dissected his life and concluded his pain was a result of wrongdoings. Sometimes our thoughts can become clouded by those closest to us, even when they may confess to be spiritual people.

Even in Loss, God is to be Praised

Job lost his financial security and family in an instant. His first response was to worship God--"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21). The power of this scene is holy and beautiful.

We Don't Begin to Know What It Means to Be God

Job 38, 39, & 40 - His ways are higher and beyond our comprehension. He is the creator--we aren't His equals. Sometimes we're tempted to think we can think like God and know all the answers. God helped put things in perspective for Job and explained the complexity of Himself and His creation.

Younger People Can Be More in Tune with God Than Older People

No doubt the reverse is often true, but friends Zophar, Bildad, & Eliphaz misinformed and discouraged Job. The younger friend, Elihu spoke more accurately concerning God and like God, acknowledged Job had spoken without wisdom and knowledge.

Sometimes We Don't Get the Answers We Search For

No verbal answer was given to Job as to why he went through what he did. I like this interpretation by James B. Coffman: "God is not so much concerned with strengthening man's faith by giving him answers to his questions, as he is with encouraging the kind of faith that does not demand answers." Perhaps farther along we'll know all about it--maybe farther along we'll understand why. In Job's case, I do think he knew in the end--the result of his suffering was for a more intimate relationship with His God. Satan lost.

What did this book teach me about God? He is just, He is creator, He is all-powerful, His ways and knowledge are superior to our own. He is merciful, abounding in love, and faithful to forgive. He is the blessing. He knows us uniquely.

What did this book teach me about people? People are weak, misinformed, doubtful, and can offer bad advice. People are also capable of living righteous lives and repenting of wrongs. People have hope because of a loving God. People can endure great pain and persevere with His help.

What did the book teach me that I should do? Trust God in all situations. Know that He is working for my good no matter how tough and complicated life gets. I should also encourage those hurting and facing hardship--I should direct them to God and not dissect their lives.

What can I pray from this book? That humanity and the church will know God as Creator--the One who sustains us in all situations. I pray we know Him to be a just God and trust in Him even when we don't understand our circumstances.

Anonymous Member...

I love how the book of Job allows us to see a very human, real, and raw portrayal of loss and grief. Job did not accept that "bad things happen to good people." He wanted to know why, and I think that is something we can all relate to. God did not condemn Job for asking questions. We serve a God who can handle our questions and big emotions. He sees our hearts and knows our struggles anyway, so why not be honest with Him? It's in those times when I've poured my heart out to God unhindered that I have felt the greatest peace.

Although Job's friends were not very helpful in his season of loss, and said some untrue things about God's character, God showed them mercy, in the end. Job 42:8 says that God would "not deal with them according to their folly." We should be so grateful that God shows us this same mercy every single day. He gave us His son, whose blood covers our sin and folly.

Anonymous Member...

In Ephesians chapter three starting in verse 14, Paul writes, "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

In verse 19, there is "know" and there is "knowledge;" in Greek, these are actually two different words with two different meanings (and this information is from a preacher at a church where I used to attend, not from my own study, but he is trustworthy); the first "know" represents the Greek word "ginosko," which in Greek means "knowledge through experience." The word "knowledge" spoken of next represents the Greek word "oida" meaning factual knowledge. The account of Job brings this theme of experiential knowledge versus factual knowledge of God to life for me.

The book of Job begins with the portrait of Job as a blameless and upright man—even God compliments Job as being blameless and upright. I infer that Job is a guy who is living right, doing good, loving God and loving his family. It seems to me that Job obviously had the factual knowledge of God down pat—he knew how to live right. And that is no doubt important; Job seemed to live a life that was a great example.

However, as Paul states, having an experiential knowledge of God passes factual knowledge. And not that factual knowledge is not important, but it will only take people to a certain depth in their relationships.

For example, if a husband and wife only knew all the *facts* of each other's lives—birthdays, birthplaces, genealogies, number of siblings, names of parents, etc. they would have a very limited relationship together. However, when a husband and wife spend time together, learn each other's character and see that character in action, have good times together and struggle through the bad times together, then there forms a depth and an intimacy to the relationship. A factual, surface relationship is not the kind of relationship God wants us to have with Him. God knows us deeply and intimately—look at how God described Job in the first chapter of the book—and He wants us to know Him deeply and intimately too. David (in Psalm 51 verses sixteen and seventeen) reflects this aspect of God's heart toward us when he writes, "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise." And so many times, how do we get to the point of having a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart? Those come through suffering—be it of our own making or from some other source. And why do we have to have broken spirits and contrite hearts? Because then we will quit trying to do things our way and listen to and be willing to yield to God's leading. And when do we most need a Friend? a Rescuer? a Redeemer? When we CANNOT fix it ourselves.

So, maybe in Ephesians 3:19 we find at least one way to embrace suffering—regardless of how that suffering came about. Maybe through our suffering He is calling us “...to know (knowledge gained through experience) the love of Christ which passes knowledge (factual knowledge).” Job himself echoed this theme in verses five and six of chapter forty-two. Job says, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.” Job had factual knowledge of God before his suffering, but *through* his suffering, Job gained a deeper and more intimate experiential knowledge of God—the kind of experience that causes one to cry out “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” (Job 19:25-27) God wants us to know Him deeply and personally and when we walk through suffering WITH Him by our side and as our guide, we *experience* His love for us and come to love Him more.

Lynn Barrick...

There was trouble, suffering, and comfort in this book. Because of Job's faith, he told his wife in Job 2:10 “you are talking like a foolish woman, shall we accept good from God and not trouble?” I have always believed Satan cannot bring bad on us unless it is God's will and God can use the bad for good. I think God deserves our love and praise regardless of the good or bad we receive in life. God will deliver us from all suffering either in this life or the life that is to come.

Courtney Barrick...

My greatest take away from Job was that we cannot always attribute our suffering to our lifestyles. Sure if someone is an alcoholic they may end up with liver cancer. However, sometimes suffering is allowed in our lives to purify, test, or strengthen us. God still deserves praise in all circumstances. As humans we have very finite minds and understanding of an infinite God! We do not always know God's plan, but we are still to praise him in the middle of the storm.

[Job 38:1-2](#), "Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said, 'Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?'"

Anonymous Member...

All things written in the Bible are done so for us to learn how to properly live.

The book of Job is an example that good people like Job, will have to suffer from bad things at times in our earthly lives.

Having lost all of his children to tragic deaths, as well as all of his massive amounts of livestock & all in the same day, but still yet he never turned his back on God. Yes, he did inquire & had many questions to God as to why, but he never doubted that God is good & almighty!

He had Satan trying to break him away from Godliness. He even had his wife & others whispering in his ears, curse God & die. His body was covered in painful sores. He had 3 men to travel to visit him & they tried to undermine his Godliness & plant seeds of doubt into Job's faith in God. But, Job never fledged in his faith in God & at the end of this Satan driven mental & physical torture test, Job stood strong in faith & as we all know, God rewarded him hugely.

HOW DOES THIS PARALLEL TO OUR LIVES TODAY:

We will all face trials & temptations here, some of us will face more than others & I can't begin to explain as to why it is that way. I can only say that I & we all must always keep the faith just as Job. We may or may not receive earthly rewards from God, but I do know that we can & will all receive that home in heaven with God, if we stay steadfast & keep the strong faith in God & always try to lead others to him, as we are instructed to do, as this is the whole purpose of man. Gaining heaven is far above all riches & earthly possessions!

Pam McGonigal...

In my opinion the book of Job gets to your heart and mind by asking one of the most asked questions! Why bad things happen to good people and why God allows these things to happen. It made me reflect on God's love and how weak or strong my faith is in God to know what's best for me as a Christian. Sometimes I trust what I can see rather than having faith in Him!

Job lost everything--his children, his possessions, and his own health. But he didn't blame God. Sometimes when loved ones are sick and we ask God to heal them and they pass away, we don't understand that he did heal them.