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Sermon Notes

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The Happy Ending

Job 42:7-17

Everyone loves a happy ending... especially if the story has been filled with peril, with suffering, with extreme valor and many obstacles overcome. Obviously there are some super mature literary folks in our midst from time to time that require more convoluted and murky ends to their stories. They look on the standard happy ending as trite and overworked. So the hero of the tale dying unfulfilled, without the quest having been achieved or without him making it safely home... they get excited about such lofty stories. It seems to them more "realistic." After all, we're not children... they might say.

But amazingly, God agrees with all us children. Jesus himself said,

Matthew 18:3 "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

And children's bedtime stories always have happy endings. The usual fairy tale ending is "And they lived happily ever after." JRR Tolkien understood the need for a happy ending, for within his famous Hobbit stories, Bilbo Baggins is the historian of the whole proceedings. And he was speaking to Galdalf the wizard, describing how he wanted to finish his life:

"I want to see mountains again, Gandalf – mountains; and then find somewhere where I can rest. In peace and quiet, without a lot of relatives prying around, and string of confounded visitors hanging on the bell. I might find somewhere where I can finish my book. I

have thought of a nice ending for it: and **he lived happily ever after to the end of his days.**"

That sounds pretty good... a happy ending to our story. But it is only "to the end of his days." The standard fairy tale has it a little better... "they lived happily EVER AFTER." That sounds infinitely better – happily ever after, for all eternity.

The Book of Job ends on a triumphant note... Job was completely vindicated by Almighty God. Vindicated in every way. Job's friends were rebuked soundly. Job's earthly wealth was restored DOUBLE. Job and his wife had the joy of ten more children. Job lived to a very old age. But what then? Job got none of his questions answered in this life. Job and his wife did have ten more children, but any parent knows that new children cannot replace dead children. And we also know that Job understood the vulnerability of all earthly situations better than he ever did before. If the first pile of wealth can be taken away in a single day, so can the next one. True security cannot be found IN THIS WORLD... in this present age of pain, sorrow, and death.

The Book of Job, as we've seen, does not give all the answers. The problem of death and eternity are not clearly addressed. But the Holy Spirit has assigned to different books of the Bible different dimensions of the story. And we know the final chapter of Job's life is actually UNENDING... eternity in the presence of God, glorious, wealthy with a wealth that can never be taken, with perfect relationships with his wife and children that can never end. Christ Jesus, the Savior, the Lord of Heaven and earth must come along in the fullness of time and write Job's final chapter with his own blood on the cross and his own mighty triumph over the grave. To Christ alone must belong the right to open wide the gates of eternity and give the true final chapter to the lives of all his elect children... eternity in resurrection bodies in a resurrected world called the New Heavens and New Earth, dwelling in a glorious eternal city called the New Jerusalem... with an eternal education in the glory of God which will include a BACKWARD HISTORY

LESSON in which all of God's purposes are eternally revealed... to the everlasting joy and satisfaction of his people.

Job's final chapter was not written in the Book of Job, but will be in eternity. All questions answered. All love relationships restored. All wealth perfectly secure. All health perfectly and eternally guaranteed. This is the happy ending the Bible promises all believers in Christ.

That is where we are heading in this morning's sermon! Job living happily ever after, to all eternity!

I. God Vindicates Job

A. God Severely Rebukes Elihu and His Two Friends

Job 42:7 After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.

Imagine having the great God, the Almighty God, the God who had just spoken to Job out of a mighty whirlwind, now speak to you directly, and say to you "I AM ANGRY WITH YOU!!"

What terror could be greater than that?

Jeremiah 10:10 But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath.

Psalms 104:32 he who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

We don't know if Job heard these words... or if God spoke them later to Eliphaz in a dream or some other way

In any case, Eliphaz must have been stripped of all pride and levelled by these words

B. God Refutes Elihu's Doctrine, and Establishes Job's Doctrine

Eliphaz's faulty doctrine – the simple application of the law of retribution, "You reap what you sow... God sees to it! God blesses the righteous with earthly blessings, and he curses the wicked with earthly punishments" that simple doctrine is FALSE ABOUT GOD!

It is partly true... God sometimes does reward the righteous with earthly blessings and he sometimes does bring immediate earthly judgments on the wicked

but as theologian J.I. Packer said "A half-truth masquerading as the whole truth becomes a complete untruth."

The sheer authority of Almighty God... to shut down these three men and all their river of words just like that. "You are wrong!"

1. Notice that God does not directly vindicate Job concerning the wicked things Eliphaz said about him... like "Is not your wickedness great? Are not your sins endless?" (Job 22:5)
2. God doesn't focus on that... "You have not spoken what is right about Job!" No... the issue is their view of GOD—"You have not spoken what is right about ME!"
3. YET, God DOES vindicate Job by calling him "My servant"... and not just once but twice
4. Just like at the beginning of the book, when he said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?" Now, in effect, he is saying the same thing to Eliphaz... and through Eliphaz, to Bildad, to Zophar, and to the entire community who knew Job... they will all hear of God's words concerning Job
5. Furthermore, God vindicates Job's DOCTRINE... again, TWICE:

Job 42:7 "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.

Job 42:8 You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has."

6. Now we know that God is not here validating EVERYTHING Job said about God! Else why would God have said this about Job:

Job 38:2 Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?

7. Else why would Job have repented of his words:

Job 42:3 Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

8. So, how did Job speak what is right about God? I think just go back to the beginning:

Job 1:21 "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."

Job 2:10 Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

This was Job at his best... and it did line up with reality!

C. God Honors Job as His Servant

1. It is powerful vindication for God to say "My servant Job, my servant Job"
2. What could be higher commendation than that?
3. The essence of our rewards in heaven will be praise from God... commendation from the Lord

John 12:26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

4. To have Almighty God speak your name from his heavenly throne and commend you as a faithful and true servant is the highest vindication one could ever experience in time or in eternity!

D. God Restores Job's Ministry as Intercessor

1. Just as powerfully, Eliphaz is humbled by God requiring him to go to Job to intercede for him

Job 42:8 So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly.

2. Job's piety was established at the beginning of the book by his intercessory life for his children... he would "send and have them purified, thinking perhaps they had sinned in their hearts"... Job was a prayer warrior!
3. Now that role has been reestablished, and actually enhanced, because God specifically spoke of it
4. And how humbling for Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar... to have their lives in Job's hands as intercessor!
5. There is a clear threat from God... if you don't go to him, I will deal with you according to your folly, your foolish words; but if Job intercedes for you, I will restore you and you will not be punished as you truly deserve
6. Also notice, this is a foretaste of the priestly work of Jesus Christ for us... only he offered up his own blood as a perfect, final sacrifice, and he always lives to intercede for his people:

Hebrews 9:13-14 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

II. God Restores Job's Earthly Blessings

A. Sequence: First Job Prayed, Then God Blessed Him

Job 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job's prayer.

To some degree, it seems like Job's own restoration awaited his intercession for his friends... they would be restored together!

Mark 11:25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

B. God Made Him Prosperous Again: Twofold Restoration

Job 42:10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before.

All of his earthly prosperity was restored and actually DOUBLED!

Job 42:12 The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys.

If you go back to Job 1, you realize that this chapter did the math for us... from 7000 sheep to 14,000 (doubled); from 3000 camels to 6000 (doubled); from 500 donkeys to 1000 (again, doubled)

We need to realize this did not happen all at once... it took time for his flocks and herds to grow; but Job could watch it happening year by year

C. God Healed His Reputation

1. Remember one of the bitterest aspects of Job's trial was his loss of reputation... the public shame
2. Before all this came upon him, he was like a prince in the city... he was honored at the city gate, and men came to get his wisdom and help them make key decisions

Job 29:24-25 When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it; the light of my face was precious to them. ²⁵ I chose the way for them and sat as their chief; I dwelt as a king among his troops; I was like one who comforts mourners.

3. All of that went away when his sufferings came upon him

4. It seems the friends were representing the normal view of Job's sufferings—he must be a truly wicked man to have such an immense set of sufferings
5. His wife couldn't stand him—Job has his breath was offensive to his wife; and it seems all his family kept away from him
6. Remember how he lamented how his name had become a laughingstock

Job 30:9-10 And now their sons mock me in song; I have become a byword among them. ¹⁰ They detest me and keep their distance; they do not hesitate to spit in my face.

7. But when God spoke and vindicated Job, all of that was reversed!

Romans 8:31 If God is for us, who can be against us?

8. His family—both the close and the extended family, and many others from the community as well—now wanted to be close to him

Job 42:11 All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought upon him

9. Job could have been bitter! He could have said, “Where were all of you when I needed you the most?!” But he didn't. He accepted their changed demeanor toward him with grace and dignity

D. God Began Restoring His Wealth... (Long time frame!)

Job 42:11 They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought upon him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring.

One preacher I listened to said this was something like the ancient version of a “Go-Fund-Me” account set up for Job! This once wealthy man was now destitute... they wanted to help

These gifts were significant... and perhaps became the basis of the Lord's restoration of his earthly wealth. It came back to him gradually, over a long time-frame

E. God Blessed Him (and His Wife) With Children

Job 42:13-15 And he also had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴ The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. ¹⁵ Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.

Job's wife is not mentioned here... but we should assume it was his same wife as earlier. So she was elevated back to joy along with her husband.

Again, the number ten children is significant. I will speak more about them at the end

And this shows how gradually God restored Job's earthly blessings... you don't get ten children in a month! This restoration to earthly prosperity unfolded over years, even decades.

It is also noteworthy how prominently Job's DAUGHTERS are mentioned; the Bible is generally written from a masculine point of view, as especially seen in the genealogies... sons are listed, daughters sometimes skipped or barely mentioned at all

But Job's daughters are singled out... we know their names, and none of the names of his sons; we also know that they were stunningly beautiful, and that Job dearly loved them and gave them an inheritance along with his sons... again, very unusual

There is nothing like a daughter to an older man, to comfort him in his old age! Perhaps that was part of the reason for them being singled out. Job was a happy man to have such lovely daughters to lavish attention on him!

F. God Blessed Job with Long Life, and Descendants—fourth generation!

Job 42:16 After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation.

G. BUT... He Still Died! (More in a moment)

III. God Uses Job's Story for the Rest of Time

A. Job Could Never Have Known How Much His Suffering Would Strengthen the Family of God

1. The larger purpose of God was hidden from Job
2. God could never have told him how many of his despairing children in every generation for centuries and centuries would derive strength from this Book of Job
3. How could Job possibly know how many of his spiritual children, for his is somewhat a father in faith to us all... how many of us would be strengthened in suffering, taught to persevere and trust in the Lord and never give up... just by reading his story
4. His mind would be overwhelmed by the testimonies... they would be in the hundreds and hundreds of millions in heaven, coming to him to greet him and tell him, "By your example, the Lord gave me strength when my child died." Or "Reading your story enabled me to see the kindness and compassion of God when I had to walk with my wife through two years of cancer treatments, only to see her succumb in the end."
5. God positioned Job for this role by the Holy Spirit recording this book for every generation of his elect to read

B. James Makes This Plain

James 5:11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

James refers to Job as his story is clearly known... "You have heard of Job" ... the story is well-known to you, centuries later.

God has used Job's experience of extreme suffering to strengthen every generation of God's people since then. It is almost incalculable how many people have been blessed and sustained in their sufferings by the wisdom of this book

“You have seen what the Lord finally brought about” is NIV’s translation of a phrase “the *telos* of the Lord” – *telos* is the purpose, the final end, the goal, the destination

God’s final purpose in Job’s suffering is the salvation of his people

C. God’s Purposes Go Beyond Earthly Blessing

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

God actively causes all things, including our suffering, to work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose...

And the next verses in Romans tell us what God’s purpose is:

Romans 8:29-30 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

God’s purpose for the elect is to shape them and prepare them for eternal glory.

He uses our suffering to prepare us for that glory

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

James says the story of Job is part of that process, teaching the people of God to have patience

As James made plain earlier:

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Job's example of patience in the face of suffering is powerful for us...
all Christians must display PERSEVERANCE in many
afflictions

If we do not persevere, we are not genuine Christians... we are like
the stony ground hearer:

***Mark 4:16-17 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and
at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last
only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the
word, they quickly fall away.***

As Jesus said,

Matthew 10:22 he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

D. So God's Purpose: Salvation for All the Elect

1. God has the long view in mind... dear Christian brothers and sisters, he had **you** in mind
2. He used Job to help you... he exchanged Job's children and his wealth and his health to assist you in your salvation
3. He did it knowing full well that Job would receive it all back DOUBLE... so Job himself suffered no permanent loss
4. But God wanted to feed your soul with strength, with wisdom... with the example of Job
 - a. His sufferings are greater than yours
 - b. His wrestling and anguish and words took you on a needed journey
 - c. God's powerful speech in the whirlwind spoke to you a necessary wisdom
 - d. But God's final word always is CHRIST... Christ, whose righteousness was infinitely greater than Job's, whose sufferings were also infinitely greater than Job's, who actually DID die, when God would not allow Job to die

e. This big picture was always God's plan... so that the scripture might FEED YOUR FAITH in your own time of sorrow

IV. God Blesses Job Eternally

A. The Vindication and Restoration of Job was Dramatic

1. It must have been so moving to Job to have God speak such words of vindication to Job's friend, Eliphaz... and through him to the other two friends and to all the community around Job
2. And it must have been so powerful to see his earthly blessings accumulate—not all at once, but in the end two-fold blessing
3. So this is an EARTHLY happy ending

B. However, the Vindication and Restoration of Job was Incomplete and in No Way Finally Satisfying

1. There is the simple matter of his ten children
2. Any parent that has lost a child to death knows that the later birth of another child can never take the place of the dead one
3. Children are unique... and the ten new children Job and his wife had must have filled their hearts with joy; but they could never drive away the memories of their ten lost children—those lost children were fully grown, with developed personalities and Job had his own loving relationship with each one
4. Now he would have new relationships developing with his new children... but the pain of loss, of death the FINAL ENEMY, could not be fully assuaged by these new children
5. Furthermore, Job got NO EXPLANATION AT ALL from God about his sorrows... no description of the original challenge from Satan in the heavenly realms; no explanation of the saving purpose he had toward subsequent generations of believers... no word at all—just the overpowering might of God in the whirlwind saying

Job 38:4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?"

6. AND Job knew as never before how vulnerable all earthly blessings are
 - a. There was no guarantee that these replacements would themselves not be subsequently taken from him
 - b. Everything earthly is temporary...

2 Corinthians 4:18 what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

James 4:14 you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Proverbs 23:5 Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

C. Job's True Vindication and Restoration Is Eternal... in the New Heaven and New Earth

1. Here is where we must finally end up
2. Everything in this world is temporary... for us Christians, earthly blessings are truly gifts from our loving Father and in some sense a foretaste of the eternal and heavenly ones
3. But we cannot build our lives on earthly blessings, for everything earthly is temporary
4. HOWEVER, we know that there is a new world coming, where all the sorrows will be swallowed up in victory

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

Revelation 21:1-5 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their

God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵ ¶ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

5.

D. Could Job's Two-Fold Blessings Include His Children?

1. One last detail
2. We have noticed that all of Job's earthly blessings were doubled when they were restored
3. However, his children were not doubled... he lost ten children; God gave him ten children after his restoration
4. But what if all ten of his children were truly believers in Almighty God as their father was? It seems like they may have been godly, because Job only worried about heart sins in their case—there was no open pattern of wickedness

Job 1:5 When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

5. Wouldn't it be marvelous if Job spent eternity with BOTH his original ten children AND the ten new children God gave him
6. Then even that blessing would have been doubled in the end! Twenty godly children with whom he could share the New Heavens and New Earth, with whom he could feast for all eternity!

V. A Final Invitation

Next week, we will fly over this Book of Job one more time to draw out some timeless lessons

The best thing I can do in closing today is to call all of you who hear me to a living faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world

His sufferings were done for us... his death was in our place, his resurrection victory was ultimately ours

IF YOU TRUST IN HIM, turning away from all sin in repentance, and if you cast yourself on him for the salvation of your soul, then nothing earthly can ever truly threaten you

You will have overcome the world by faith in Christ:

1 John 5:4-5 everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

As an overcomer, as a conqueror, you need fear nothing that will come upon you:

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

Romans 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.