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Sermon Notes

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God's Wisdom in Creation Should Lead Us to Trust Him

Job 39

Job, a righteous man in anguish over the cascading sorrows and afflictions that have devastated his world, has been vocal about his displeasure toward God. Job lost all his wealth, all his children, and his health in one wave after another of painful assaults and sorrows. Though he initially praised God and trusted him and did not sin against God in what he said, the trial wore him down, broke him down, and at some point, he began to speak disrespectfully of God. He portrays God as somehow delighting in crushing his people, and even worse, of denying Job justice... that all of this has been unjust

Job's friends have sought to counsel him, but he says at one point:

Job 16:2 miserable comforters are you all!

And again,

Job 13:4 you are worthless physicians, all of you!

But at the end, God descends to speak to his suffering child... he comes down to counsel him, and he is not a miserable counselor... in fact, he is a wonderful counsellor!

God also comes to Job to heal him... first, his soul – then his body.

And God is not a worthless physician!

God's methodology is surprising! He does not come in the "still small voice" he used with Elijah on Mt. Horeb. Instead, God comes

HUGE, in a whirlwind, with a MIGHTY VOICE and words to match.

Last time, we saw God put Job in his place, and also re-establish himself in his own place – as the infinitely powerful and perfect God of the universe.

God uses his own achievement in creation... both in the original work of creation and in his power and wisdom in sustaining creation.

And he asks Job questions to humble him:

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

Job 38:4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand."

God's point is to expose Job's LIMITATIONS: limited in time, since he has not existed very long compared to God; limited in power, because God asks "Did you do this? Can you do that?" Limited in knowledge, because he asks, "Tell me, if you understand! Surely you know!"

But God is infinite... NO LIMITATIONS! Infinite in time, for he is eternal. Infinite in power, for he did all these things effortlessly. Infinite in wisdom, because everything God made was exquisitely well constructed.

God is saying TRUST ME... and STOP TRUSTING IN YOURSELF

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths.

Last week: Job 38:1-38... God's activity in creating the heavens and the earth, as well as managing the activities of these **inanimate objects**... the earth, the sky, the wind, the clouds, the weather, the stars

Basically, you could look at Job 38:1-38 as the establishment of a blank canvas, woven thread by thread, stretched out perfectly flat on a wooden frame that he also made expertly... a large, blank canvas of inanimate objects – rocks, water, air, light, sun, moon, stars, hills, valleys, rivers, oceans... all of it ready for his animate creatures – animals and man, to live out an unfolding history. The blank canvas ready for the master to paint a masterpiece brushstroke by brushstroke. The animals will come in, each with their nature and habitats and instincts and populations... and God will manage their lifecycles and their interactions in an ecosystem.

Higher than all that is the unfolding of human history... something God never mentions in the book of Job. But it is the **WHOLE POINT!** The God who made such a magnificent canvas knows how to paint a masterpiece on it with the unfolding of human history. It culminates in what goes vastly beyond anything the Book of Job focuses on – the salvation of sinners by the life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

The God who does all these things is **WORTHY OF OUR TRUST!**

I. God Delights in His Creatures

A. God Made Everything, Declared Everything Good... and Has Delighted in them Ever Since

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Psalm 104:31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works

In the heavenly realms, God boasted about Job ... he said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?"

But God is boasting about his creatures in this chapter...

"Have you considered my creature, the mountain goat? Have you considered the wild donkey and the wild ox? Have you

pondered the attributes of the horse as it runs, or the eagle as it soars? Aren't they all magnificent?!"

MAY THE LORD REJOICE IN HIS WORKS!

B. Each Creature Pondered in Order

- The lion
- The raven
- The mountain goat
- The doe
- The wild donkey
- The wild ox
- The ostrich
- The horse
- The hawk
- The eagle

1. What God discusses:

- a. God delights in both their capabilities and their limitations!
- b. God created their instincts and their behavior patterns
- c. God decided where they would live, what they would eat, how large their population would be
- d. God oversees everything for his glory and his delight
- e. THEN God actively manages it... God feeds and governs all his creatures!

2. The lion/lioness

Job 38:39-40 "Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions ⁴⁰ when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket?"

3. The raven

Job 38:41 Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?

God is declaring that he feeds both of these species – but their feeding needs and patterns are very different... lions hunt their prey, and God provides it for them in the form of zebras, wildebeests, gazelles or other large animals; adult lionesses eat about 11 pounds of meat every day, while adult lions eat 16 pounds

On the contrary, ravens are scavengers – eating anything from small mammals to nesting birds, eggs, berries, and even carrion.

Scripture makes it plain that God feeds every creature every day:

Psalm 104:27-28 These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. ²⁸ When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.

God also decides when every creature is born and when it will die

4.The mountain goat and the doe: birth patterns

Job 39:1-4 "Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn? ² Do you count the months till they bear? Do you know the time they give birth? ³ They crouch down and bring forth their young; their labor pains are ended. ⁴ Their young thrive and grow strong in the wilds; they leave and do not return.

- a.No birth clinic is available out in the wild; no midwives or OB-GYNs or veterinarians to aid in the birth process
- b.The mountain goat roams up high on the mountain peaks and scrambles on the rocky slopes of the mountain ranges; she is with young, and when the time comes, she gives birth
- c.So it is also with the doe... she is about to become a mother, but she has no assistance but God; God knows how long the fawn must develop within her, and when the right number of months have passed, six months (I searched it on Google)
- d.After the young mountain goat or deer is born, they stay with their mother for about a year... then, as God says, they leave

their mother and never return; they are independent from one year on... they thrive in the wilds on their own, on instincts programmed in them by God

e. God's point to Job: DO YOU KNOW THESE THINGS? Are you watching over them? Do you know what to do? Are you counting the weeks till the time comes?

f. God does this for every living creature on planet earth!

g. On the contrary, when God decides a creature must die, it dies

Psalm 104:29 When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.

Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.

5. The wild donkey

Job 39:5-8 "Who let the wild donkey go free? Who untied his ropes? ⁶ I gave him the wasteland as his home, the salt flats as his habitat. ⁷ He laughs at the commotion in the town; he does not hear a driver's shout. ⁸ He ranges the hills for his pasture and searches for any green thing.

a. Extremely territorial, more than dogs or horses; wild donkeys travel long distances in search of the sparse vegetation they need to survive

b. God assigned his habitat to him, and gives him enough food to survive... God says "I gave him the wasteland as his home, the salt flats as his habitat"

c. He laughs at the noise in the town... he doesn't live there! It's of no concern to him! He's running free wherever he wants to go! He has no driver beating him... he's not serving the interests of any master.

d. The donkey enjoys its freedom... and man didn't give it to him! God asks Job, "Did you let the wild donkey go free? Job... you had nothing to do with it!! That was my decision, my doing."

6. The wild ox

Job 39:9-12 "Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Will he stay by your manger at night? ¹⁰ Can you hold him to the furrow with a harness? Will he till the valleys behind you? ¹¹ Will you rely on him for his great strength? Will you leave your heavy work to him? ¹² Can you trust him to bring in your grain and gather it to your threshing floor?"

- a. Some animals are domesticated... man has been able to tame them and harness them and use them for his purposes
- b. Oxen are among them... they are known for their strength, and farmers have used them for millennia to pull the plow and harrow their fields

Proverbs 14:4 Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest.

- c. Oxen can weigh as much as 2000 pounds, and have been known to pull more than a ton of deadweight.... They are staggeringly powerful
- d. Now, many oxen are domesticated, and do in fact do all the things God asks about here—they consent to serve man, they stay at the manger at night. They do in fact submit to a harness and do all the plowing and farm work God mentions
- e. But not the wild oxen! They are roaming free
- f. In any case, God made the oxen to serve man in this way; man shows intelligence in harnessing that strength to serve his needs; but man did not make the oxen or its great strength; that came from the creative power of God

7. The ostrich

Job 39:13-18 "The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, but they cannot compare with the pinions and feathers of the stork. ¹⁴ She lays her eggs on the ground and lets them warm in the sand, ¹⁵ unmindful that a foot may crush them, that some wild animal may trample them. ¹⁶ She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers; she

cares not that her labor was in vain, ¹⁷ for God did not endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good sense. ¹⁸ Yet when she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider.

- a. What an odd-looking creature the ostrich is! God delights in her oddities!
- b. She is tall and gangly and ugly and grey; female ostriches are about 6 feet tall; males can get as tall as 9 feet; they weigh about 200-280 pounds
- c. Her wings do not enable her to fly, though she uses them for balance as she runs
- d. God says her pinions and feathers do not compare with those of the stork... God gave BETTER pinions and feathers to the stork—he said so himself
- e. God zeroes in on the foolish behavior of the ostrich concerning her eggs; Ostrich eggs are the largest on planet earth, six inches long, five inches across, weighing as much as three pounds!! One web site said the ostrich egg is not only the largest egg on earth, it is also the largest single cell on earth! Only dinosaurs produced larger eggs
- f. BUT God says she lays them on the ground and lets them warm in the sand; he says that is foolish, because a foot may come along and crush them where they lay
- g. God says he did not endow her with wisdom!! That was his choice!
- h. Furthermore, he says she treats her young harshly as though they were not even hers... in another place, God zeroes in on the zeal of a mother bear over her cubs

Proverbs 17:12 Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly.

- i. or a human mother for her nursing infant

Isaiah 49:15 "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?"

j. But the ostrich is designed by God very differently; God actually seems to insult her for her foolishness, which he himself designed into her

Job 39:16-17 She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers; she cares not that her labor was in vain, ¹⁷ for God did not endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good sense.

k. BUT, says God, she can run like the wind!!

Job 39:18 Yet when she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider

l. And it's true... ostriches can run in short bursts up to 43 miles per hour... sustained speeds of 31 miles per hour; a single ostrich stride can be as much as 16 feet in length

m. God doesn't say anything directly to Job about him and the ostrich; but it's clear God is saying: "I made an ostrich. What did you make? Can you make anything as amazing as an ostrich?"

8. The horse

a. Speaking of the horse, God next boasts to Job about that magnificent creature

Job 39:19-25 "Do you give the horse his strength or clothe his neck with a flowing mane? ²⁰ Do you make him leap like a locust, striking terror with his proud snorting? ²¹ He paws fiercely, rejoicing in his strength, and charges into the fray. ²² He laughs at fear, afraid of nothing; he does not shy away from the sword. ²³ The quiver rattles against his side, along with the flashing spear and lance. ²⁴ In frenzied excitement he eats up the ground; he cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds. ²⁵ At the blast of the trumpet he snorts, 'Aha!' He catches the scent of battle from afar, the shout of commanders and the battle cry.

- b. Whenever I think of God's creation of the horse, I think of Secretariat winning the Belmont in 1973... running as the commentator Chic Anderson said famously "like a tremendous machine"... 1.5 miles, faster than any horse had ever run that distance... the power, the grace, the beauty... I'll never forget it as long as I live
- c. God speaks to Job of the strength and courage of a horse in battle... utterly fearless, fierce, pawing the ground and snorting, ready to charge into the bloody fray
- d. His speed is astonishing as he eats up the ground on his charge; the ground shakes beneath his pounding hooves
- e. God addresses Job directly this time: DID YOU GIVE THE HORSE ITS STRENGTH OR ITS BEAUTIFUL MANE?

9. Birds of prey: the hawk and the eagle

Job 39:26-30 "Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread his wings toward the south? ²⁷ Does the eagle soar at your command and build his nest on high? ²⁸ He dwells on a cliff and stays there at night; a rocky crag is his stronghold. ²⁹ From there he seeks out his food; his eyes detect it from afar. ³⁰ His young ones feast on blood, and where the slain are, there is he."

- a. Hawks are magnificent birds... soaring through the air
- b. Hawks are fierce hunters, swooping down from the heavens at over 150 miles per hour to grab their prey with sharp talons...
- c. When they migrate, they fly over 1000 miles from the nesting to the feeding areas
- d. Eagles are even more astonishing creatures than hawks
- e. They are amazingly strong... able to pick up over four times their body weight... up to 35 pounds
- f. As God mentions, Eagles' eyesight is amazing—human eyeballs have 200,000 cones per mm in our retina; eagles have five times the density—1 million cones per sq. mm.; normal human

eyesight is 20/20—eagles normal eyesight is 20/5—meaning what looks sharp and clear to us at five feet looks just as sharp and clear to an eagle at 20 feet

g. Eagle flight is, if anything, even more amazing—riding thermal columns, they can ascend to as high as 10,000 feet; using these thermal currents, they can soar for over three hours, rarely flapping their wings

10. God humbles Job again, asking if hawks fly by his wisdom or if eagles soar at his command... not at all! They do what they do independent of man!

C. Job Humbled, While God is Exalted

1. Look again at all the “Do you...” passages in Job 39
2. “Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch over the deer when they do? Do you count the months of their gestation period? Do you know the right time for them give birth?” Job must confess his total ignorance of these things.
3. “Did you let the wild donkey go free? Was that your decision? Did you decide his habitat and provide some green vegetation for him to eat?” NOT AT ALL!
4. “What about the wild ox? Perhaps you might have the knowledge to train and domesticate him... but did you give him his mighty strength?”
5. “What about the ostrich? Can you make such a strange, foolish but fast bird? Would you have come up with such a creature?”
6. “And did you design the horse, with its stunning speed and its magnificent mane flowing in the wind? Did you give it its courage?”
7. “And are you in charge of the hawks flying? Do you know how to design a wing, with its feathers and its bones and tendons... and the brain of the hawk, to use its tailfeathers to stabilize him while he dives from the air at blinding speeds? And do you command the eagle when to fly, and does it obey you?”

D. God's Activities with All Animals

1. God chose ten creatures to focus on and celebrate... the lion, the raven, the mountain goat, the doe, the wild donkey, the wild ox, the ostrich, the horse, the hawk, and the eagle
2. God made each of them... crafting them by the word of his power; he gave them their attributes—their abilities; he decided how much strength they would have, how much speed, how they would move, how much intelligence, what their native habitats were, what they would eat, how they would reproduce, how they would interact with each other, how large their populations would be
3. God programmed their instincts... they do not think and reason like a human being; they react instinctively to do what God designed them to do; their parents did not teach them these instinctive behaviors, but they were hard-wired into their being
4. God actively cares for them—feeding them, guiding them, protecting them or giving them over as prey to their predators; God decides how long they live and when they will die
5. Now, God does this not just with these ten creatures but with every creature on planet earth: biologists have recently estimated that there are over 8.7 million different species of living creatures on earth... give or take 1.3 million!! How in the world these scientists have come up with this figure, I'll never know, because the same people say that 86% of land species and 91% of aquatic species *HAVE YET TO BE DISCOVERED!!* So how they could be counted, I have no idea.
6. God in his wisdom made them all and manages them all in a vast complex ecosystem
7. And just as amazing is the fact that this ecosystem stays balanced and doesn't run amok

In 1991, a zealous group of scientists launched an artificial closed ecological system in Oracle, Arizona. They gave it the hopeful name "Biosphere 2," because they were seeking to imitate Biosphere 1 (planet Earth) in its success. Its purpose was to

show the viability of closed ecological systems to support human life in outer space. Designers had in mind human colonies on Mars, fully sustained within an ecological system that had everything it needed within itself. The scientists designed Biosphere 2 with a web of interactive systems, including an artificial rainforest, a miniature ocean with a coral reef, a mangrove wetland region, a savannah grassland region, a fog desert, an agricultural region for human farming, and a place for the eight humans to live. Despite the best efforts at balancing the oxygen, carbon dioxide, waste products, and cycles of life and death among its animals, birds, insects, and microbes, the whole experiment failed miserably. The oxygen level kept dropping steadily week after week, the fish died off rather quickly, and the populations of greenhouse ants and cockroaches exploded. Oddly, the morning glories overgrew the rainforest, crowding out other plants. The best thinking of ecologists and the investment of over \$200 million was inadequate to create a healthy, balanced closed ecological system

8. But God's system stays balanced... the cockroaches and the morning glories stay in reasonable balance with the rest of all living things

II. God Convicts Job

A. God Brings the Lesson Home to Job

Job 40:1-2 The LORD said to Job: ² "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!"

B. Job Now Sees the Point

Acts 17:24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth

1. His power and wisdom and love are clearly on display in what he has made

2. Such a mighty, wise, loving God can be trusted in whatever he does!
Managing your life is a small work for God
3. God makes no mistakes! Therefore Job sinned gravely when he failed to trust in God
4. Who does Job or any human being think he is to question God or to answer back to him?
5. It is just as Paul said plainly in Romans 9:

Romans 9:20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"

God is not accountable to us, neither does God have to answer for any of his decisions about us. God's track record of awesome creation and skillful management of that creation is impeccable.

BUT Job is answerable to God! So God demands an answer!

C. Job Begins His Process of Repentance

Job 40:3-5 Then Job answered the LORD: ⁴ "I am unworthy-- how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. ⁵ I spoke once, but I have no answer-- twice, but I will say no more."

Job felt his deep unworthiness! He knew how sinful it was for him not to trust God in the handling of his life's affairs

He is now disgusted at what he said, and the ignorance it displayed.

He is resolved not to speak again in the presence of God. He knows that God is perfectly worthy of all praise, and is ashamed of his complaining and charging God with wrongdoing

REPENTANCE... turning from sin! This is key to our salvation!

III. Lessons for Us Today

A. For Non-Christians

1. Nature can tell you there's a God and what he's like

2. There is overpowering evidence around you at every moment if you simply have eyes to see it
3. Listen again to the natural theology texts

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

- a. God's invisible qualities = his attribute... his wisdom, his power, his love are CLEARLY SEEN in nature... in the wild goats and deer giving birth successfully; in the wild donkey running free and finding plants to eat; in the strength of the ox, the running of the ostrich and the horse, the soaring of the hawk and the eagle... not to mention the swimming speed of the dolphin, the might of the elephant's trunk, the strength and intelligence of the ant...
 - b. God puts himself on display in all his animals
 - c. How much more the earth itself, with its pounding oceans, its freshwater lakes, its soaring mountains... and the night sky with its constellations and the soft, pale gleam of the moon
4. Paul says that the creation proclaims the existence and nature of God—the mighty King, the Loving provider, the wise Ruler, the Judge of all the earth... Paul also says that creation leaves all human being WITHOUT EXCUSE
 5. Creation does not make God's existence logically inescapable... you can wriggle your way out logically; but creation renders it MORALLY INEXCUSABLE not to believe in God
 6. AND Paul says that sinners naturally SUPPRESS the truth of God constantly by their sinful pride
 7. It is prideful for anyone to look every day at this clear evidence of God's power, wisdom, and love in creation and not believe in God and serve him

8. HOWEVER... though we can glean the existence of God from nature, we cannot glean his Son, our Savior
9. Instead, the Bible reveals Christ to us as the only Savior of the world
 - a. Christ's miraculous birth—born without a human father but by a human mother—he is fully God and fully human
 - b. Christ's sinless life... Christ miracles... Christ's atoning death
 - c. AND Christ's mighty resurrection!

Christ is the answer the Book of Job is searching for

In Christ, God answers all the questions of pain and sorrow and suffering

B. For Christians, the Lesson is Clear

God is saying to Job in the midst of his great suffering... "I am the God of creation... the God who made all things, sustains all things, governs all things... I know how to run the entire planet — so trust me to run your life as well!"