

Lessons for the Life from the Book of Job, Part 1

Job 1-2

Elder Quentin Smith, June 19, 2022

I just want to let you know that Jeremy is going to be a way. Jeremy and Katie are going to take some well-earned vacation. So for the next four weeks, we have somebody different in the pulpit. I've got three weeks to try and look at the book of Job with you. And then on the fourth week, you get another Smith, a BK Smith, who's the pastor from Squamish Baptist. He will be with us for that particular week. So we're hoping that Jeremy and Katie will have a well-deserved rest for the next month. I always love the opportunity to preach. It's particularly awesome for me today as it is the first time that I'm preaching with my grandson in the room. He has specific instructions not to fall asleep.

The Book of Job, always associated our minds with suffering and there is suffering. But there's a lot more than that. And I want to bring out a lot of the life lessons from the book of Job in the next three weeks. Along the way, we're going to see that it's possible to please God. We'll see that it's possible to suffer, even if you are above reproach. We're going to explore some of the feelings that Job had, the intensity of feelings as he went through the suffering. We know that we have feelings too, and how do we deal with feelings. We'll see that suffering actually tests whether we believe what we say we believe. He received some bad counsel, and we're going to talk about how to deal with that in life, how to avoid giving it and how to recognize it. I want us to talk about how it's possible to be steeped in right theology, and yet respond wrongly. We'll talk a little bit about what we do when we are misrepresented as he was, by his friends. We'll learn that God is not accountable to us. And finally, that He is able to restore. So there's a lot, there's nine life lessons that I'm going to talk to you about in the next three weeks. And I hope that, that's going to be really helpful for us because I understand that many of you have suffered. I look out in the room, and I am intensely aware of some of the suffering that you are going through at this point. But that's why we're here. That's why God has given us this book, His Word to help us.

So by means of introduction, I do want to give you a little bit of an overview of the book. When you look at the structure of the Old Testament, we start off with the books of the law, we get into the historical narratives. And then we have poetry and wisdom books. And then we have the Major Prophets and the minor prophets. And the book of Job sits right within that section of the wisdom and poetical books. It's considered to be the oldest book in the Scriptures. We don't actually know who wrote it, some think Job, and there are other contenders. But as far as the timeline goes, it's interesting that it's thought that he lived in the patriarchal time, in other words, the time of Abraham, long before Israel was even the nation. And the evidence for that is that there are really no references to Mosaic Law or the priesthood, or the tabernacle or religious days. His wealth is reckoned in livestock. His length of life was probably somewhere in the region of 190 years, Abraham lived 175. But when you factor in that Job had 10 children who were out of the house by the time this happens, and then he lived for another 140 years after his trial, you can see that that timeline fits. The money that is referred to is only used during that period, and the Serbians and Chaldeans responsible for the first wave of his trials lived around that time as well. So we're talking pre-Israel.

It's really the story of a man that we would understand was righteous. In God's opinion, he was blameless and yet he suffered and for that reason it highlights the question, why suffering? Why does that happen? Why suffering at

all? And why suffering that seems undeserved? Well, the book is unique in the sense that we are informed that there's a conversation between Satan and God. The book just says that there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan came among them to present himself before the Lord. He has been wandering around on the earth. And God asked him, Have you considered my servant Job? He proudly, I would say, even affectionately, refers to Job as a blameless man. Well, Satan responds and says, Well, are you surprised? You've bought him out? You have given him and blessed him to the extent that, of course, he's going to serve you, anybody would. Satan accuses him of having a faith that's not really real, faith that is in response only to blessing. And so God relents and allows him to attack Job's possessions, his household, his family. And then real tragedy unfolds, the suffering is physical, financial, emotional, spiritual. But when he remains faithful and maintains his integrity, he pleases God, but the accuser comes back. And he says, Well, that's fine. You can take away what he has. But if you touch his bone in his flesh, He will this time, curse You to Your face. And so God relents and allows Satan to do that. And he ends up with boils from the soul of his foot to the top of his head, covered. And yet he remains faithful. And he holds on to his integrity. We learned that Job has some friends, sympathetic friends, friends who speak a lot of truth about God. Interestingly, they speak a lot of truth about life, about the wicked. But as friends and counselors who come alongside him to try and help him in this difficult time, their major problem is that their diagnosis is incorrect. The diagnosis is that he must have sinned because obviously God's hand was heavy upon him. And it had to be for that reason, and yet God knows that that's not the case. And ultimately, while he's trying to process this, and fend off the misplaced counsel and rebuke that he's getting, he becomes bitter towards the Lord. He cannot reconcile what he knows about God, being a faithful and just God, powerful, glorious, with what he's actually experiencing because it doesn't feel very just. He becomes angry, demanding. He loses his way in his attempt to understand and rationalize why he should be suffering the way he is. And he actually imagines himself marching up to God to demand answers. And ultimately, God reveals Himself for who He is, the Creator, the Sustainer of the universe, Sovereignly ruling over everything far above anything that we could even imagine. Far too high for us to comprehend. And He gives us a glimpse, just a shortlist of attributes and power. And Job realizes that he's completely outgunned. He's completely humbled by recognizing who God is. And in that moment, when he truly sees God, it's as if his bitterness about his experience seems to evaporate for a bit. And that brings us to a great truth that when we see God clearly, often, our suffering will be eclipsed. When our world is turned upside down and we are most rattled by suffering, that is usually the time that we've lost the clarity of our understanding of who God is. We've drifted away from intimacy with the Lord.

Well, the outline of the book is pretty simple; chapters one and chapter two suddenly and quickly bring us into his situation. Chapter three is where he laments about how he wished he hadn't been born. And then from chapters four through to 41, there are a number of rounds of speeches; three speeches by each of his friends, four speeches by Elihu, that's six chapters by Elihu, two speeches by God and then in chapter 42 Job repents. God rebukes and condemns his friends, and He restores Job's prosperity.

Well, let's jump into some of the lessons. The first lesson I want to speak to you today about is it's possible to please God and the second one is it's possible to suffer, even when you are above reproach. Open up your Bibles to the book of Job and let's read chapter two together. Lawrence has taken us through chapter one, but we need to read chapter two. We're going to be reading a lot of Scripture today. Because I'm not sure how many people are familiar with this book. Chapter two verse one:

“There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. The Lord said to Satan, where have you come from? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, from roaming about on the earth and walking around on it. The Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job for there is no one like him on Earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God turning away from evil, and he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to ruin him without cause. Satan answered the Lord and said, skin for skin. Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life, however, put forth your hand now and touch his bone in his flesh, and he will curse you to face. So the Lord said to Satan, Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life. And then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the soul of his foot, to the crown of his head, and he took a pot shard to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. And then his wife said to him, ‘do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.’ But he said to her, ‘you speak as one of the foolish women speaks, shall we indeed, accept good from God and not accept adversity.’ In all, this Job did not sin with his lips. Now, when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity, that had come upon him, they came each from his own place. Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar, the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him. When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe they threw dust over their heads towards the sky. Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was great.”

Possible to please God. There are others who have please God. Hebrews eleven verse five talks about Enoch. Enoch was the father of Methuselah, he lived 365 years. And it says, he walked with God, and he was pleasing to God and yet he was no more, God took him. We know that. God said of Jesus, “this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, listen to Him.” And you know, if there's one thing we desire, it is the pleasure of our Father. I think we've all seen that in earthly fathers, we like to be right with our dads. We want to have that great relationship. It's even more magnified when we think about our Heavenly Father though. There is not a feeling in the world that can compare with when we are right with God and our salvation. When that gulf between us, that our sin has caused, is made right. We don't want to see His anger, even His frown. We don't want to grieve the Holy Spirit that is within us. And if you think about another person who pleased God, Psalm 51, as David writes he is most distressed after his sin with Bathsheba about the loss of intimacy that he is going through or is threatened. And he doesn't want to lose that fellowship. He almost begs not to be cast from His presence and not to have God take His Holy Spirit from him. We long to be right with God as His children.

Job was pleasing to God. chapter one verse one, the author says that he was blameless and upright, fearing God turning away from evil. Chapter one verse three says that he was the greatest of all men of the East. Chapter one verse eight, God gives him that same commendation, blameless, upright, fearing God, turning away from evil. In chapter two verse three, God repeats that. And I cannot imagine much higher praise than to truly have the Lord think of us in those terms. What do those terms mean? What does it mean to be blameless? Well, it means free from blame, I guess. It says, if others might accuse you, they may throw mud, but the mud is not going to stick. Righteous, faultless. What about being upright? That's relating to being right, authentic, not deceitful. What about fearing God? Well, standing in-awe humbled by the presence of God, humbled by who you know God is, and then turning away from evil, actually implementing what we know we ought to do with regard to evil, flee the appearance. Turn away, don't go there.

In chapter one verses four and five, we're going to look at some more Scripture to flesh this out and just see how pleasing Job was to God. In verses four and five it says, "he prayed and he interceded on behalf of his children, just in case they may have cursed God in their hearts." That's what we do as dads, isn't it? We pray for our children. But that's not all, turn with me to chapter 29. Chapter 29, Job is reminiscing about the way his life was? He's recounting the way his life was before this tragedy. I don't believe he's boasting. But we get a really good flavor of who he is. Let's read it.

"And Job again took up his discourse and said, 'Oh, that I were as in months gone by. As in the days when God watched over me when His lamp shone over my head and by His light, I walked through darkness. As I was in the prime of my days when the friendship of God was over my tent.'" Isn't that beautiful? 'The friendship of God was over my tent,' the intimacy of his relationship with God. "When the Almighty was yet with me, and my children were around me, when my steps were bathed in butter. And the rock poured out from the streams of oil. When I went out to the gate of the city, when I took my seat in the square, the young men saw me and hid themselves. And the old men arose and stood, and the princes stopped talking, and they put their hands over their mouths. The voice of the nobles was hushed, and their tongue stuck to their palate." This is the respect that he commanded in the marketplace, his influence. Verse 11, his reputation "for when the ear heard, it called me blessed. And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me, because I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the orphan who had no helper," that's a deliverer. "The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me and I made the widows heart sing for joy," that's a provider. "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me, my justice was like a robe, and a turban. I was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy. And I investigated the case which I did not know. I broke the jaws of the wicked and snatched the prey from his teeth." That's a leader he's pursuing justice he's protecting. "And then I thought I shall die in my nest and I shall multiply my days as the sand. My root is spread out to the waters, my dew lies all night on my branch. My glory is fresh in me and my bow is renewed in my hand." That's the appreciation for the blessing with wonder to God. "For it was," verse 21, "to me, they listened and waited and kept silent for my counsel. After my words, they did not speak again and my speech dropped on them. They waited for me as for the rain and opened their mouth as for the spring rain. I smiled on them when they did not believe and the light of my face they did not cast down. I chose a way for them and sat as chief and dwelt as a king amongst the troops of one who comforted the mourners." That's the influence, the wisdom, the refreshing, the patient, the position, the confidence, he's all of these things.

Turn over to Chapter 31. Chapter 29 is an outline of all the things that he did. But then in chapter 31, as he's trying to reconcile this again, he's trying to think of all the things that had he done that would be reason to be experiencing the punishment that he's experiencing. And so here comes a list of hasn't done. "I've made a covenant with my eyes, how could I then gaze at a virgin? And what is the portion of God from above or the heritage of the Almighty from on high? Is it not calamity to the unjust and disaster to those who work in equity? Does He not see my ways and number all my steps?" Here it comes, "if I have walked with falsehood, and my foot has hastened after deceit, let them weigh me with accurate scales. Let God know my integrity. If my step has turned from the way, or my heart followed my eyes," verse nine, "if my heart has been enticed by a woman, or I have looked at my neighbor's doorway, may my wife grind for another and let others kneel down over her for that would be a lowest crime. Moreover, it would be an inequity punishable by judges, for it would be fire that consumes to Abidjan and would uproot all my increase, if I have despised the claim of my male or female slaves when they filed a complaint against me. What then could I do when God arises? And when He calls me to account, what will I answer Him? Did not He who made me in the womb make my servant,

And did not the same One fashion us both in the womb? if I have kept the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or if I have eaten my morsel alone, and the orphan has not shared it,” verse 19, “if I’ve seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or that the needy had no covering.” 21, “if I have lifted up my hand against the orphan, because I saw I had support in the gate.” Verse 24, “if I’ve put my confidence in gold, if I have gloated because my wealth was great, if I have looked at the sun when it shone, and my heart became secretly enticed.” Verse 28, “for that, too, would have been in iniquity, calling for judgment, for I would have denied God above.”

So much that he did. So much that he didn't do. There's no doubt that Job pleased God. And if we want to please God, we need to look at that and pursue that and think to ourselves: blameless, upright, fearing God, turning away from evil. There's a beautiful simplicity to that, and it's uncluttered. And one might be tempted to stop there and move on. But not so fast. Because we will miss the boat completely if we think it's about the things that we do and the things that we don't do.

There's a lot that he did and did not do that was commendable. But if we're careful, we can be discouraged because we don't measure up to this kind of life. I don't. And you will be discouraged if you think that you can be pleasing to the Lord, especially if somebody else's life is your measurement. I just don't have a life like Job. So where's the hope that I would have pleased the Lord. We live in individual worlds where we're distracted. And we fail and we weaken our faith. And we fail on a personal level, and we fail in our marriages. And we wrestle with anxiousness and depression, or a sense of hopelessness at times, and we don't feel valuable to the Lord, especially if that currency is things that other people are doing. And we lament and we wrestle internally about the way the world is, and we don't feel necessarily that we're making much of an impact. And we feel like we don't have answers for so many issues that are just difficult. And we might be tempted to try harder or to serve longer. And the problem with that is sometimes we can become competitive with one another even in a spiritual realm. You know, this ministry is doing better than that ministry. This church is reaching more than that church. See, that's the essence of legalism. And it was the currency of the Pharisees. So I need to remind us that what he did flowed from somewhere, how he lived flowed out of how he believed. And it's important to emphasize this because we have to learn that faith is the great equalizer. Because we can all approach God in faith, and we can all be pleasing to Him. And our lives, you know what, will look completely different. Being pleasing to God is never measured completely in what we do. And if we don't remember that we'll become works based, we'll become involved in church activities and that will become our faith. But when we understand that, if those things don't come from a heart that wants to serve God, then they'll be like filthy rags in His sight.

So being a faithful Christian, is first about being before it's about doing. I'm gonna say that again. Being a faithful Christian and leading a faithful Christian life is always first about being before it's ever about doing. And even then, I'm sure you've noticed that it's more about what we do in secret, than it is about what is done for everybody to see. So should we strive to be blameless and upright, fearing God turning away from evil? Absolutely. But it starts somewhere. And it starts with humility. It starts with a mourning of our sin, Jesus Himself, Matthew five verse three, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Isaiah 66, verse two, “but to this one, I will look to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My Word.” You want to be great in God's sight, you'd be humble, you have a heart that is contrite, and you tremble at His Word. And that's what pleases God. 51 verse 16, “for You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise, I would give it. You are not pleased with burnt offering, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” So if we're going to do, it has to come from a heart that is right before the Lord. And that's what James teaches us.

Right? He teaches us that anything we do is a result of our faith. It's a result of our hearts before Him. Those attributes cited in Job's life flowed from a calm, humbled, settled heart, and they were the fruit. And that's why it's called the great equalizer. Because God calls everybody to have faith.

You know what, our occupations will not be the same, our influences will never be the same. You'll be going places that I can't go and I'll go places that you can't go. But we all stand at the foot of the cross equal, having sinned, all able to turn and ask the Lord to save us. And in whatever capacity He grants us to be able to serve, we do that with all of our heart. So I want to ask you as you sit here today, where are you?

There are some of you here in this room who are not saved. And I need you to know that God created us for relationship with Him, He created us that we would be pleasing to Him. But what happened was that we rejected that. We turned away from that relationship and we started to walk in a way that was arrogant and proud. And we decided that we didn't want to have anything to do with God and that has made God angry. And we understand that as parents, those of you who have children, maybe you've had a rebellious child, maybe you are the rebellious child. And you understand what it's like as a parent to be angry with that attitude that says, I don't care, I'm gonna go my own way. But I want you to know that God in the Psalms, and in Lamentations, is angry with sin, and He will punish that. And yet Jesus came obedient to the Lord, when to the cross to take that wrath on your behalf. And so you need to understand that you will stand before God one day and there will be no excuse. The evidence will be so stacked against you, that you will not be able to refute it, and you will be guilty. And God will punish unless you come before God. And you confess that, and you ask God to forgive you through Christ. And you recognize that it was Jesus, who paid that death on your behalf. And then I trust that you will trust the Scriptures that say He will save you, and you will ultimately be pleasing to God again.

Point number two, it's possible to suffer, even when we are above reproach. Let's go back to Job. We've talked about his character and his influence; I want to examine the suffering. Verses six through 12 of chapter one were told about a conversation. This is the uniqueness of this book. It might seem strange to us, but what do we know? Well, Satan says he's been roaming around on the earth walking around on it. Excuse me? Well, we know that that happens. First Peter, chapter five verse eight says, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour." So we know that that's the case. And so that doesn't surprise us in Job. And then we also know that Satan has been called the accuser of the brethren? Right? We know that. And so he must have access to God still. Because Revelation, chapter 12 verse 10, tells us that Satan is the accuser of the brethren who accuses them before our God day and night. Now, you can't accuse the brethren before God day and night and not have access to God. And so, it does actually make sense. When we think about it that this happened.

In this conversation, God references Job. We're not sure why at least, but it is a commendation. Have you considered, have you taken note of? And from God's perspective this is a sign of His confidence in the authenticity of Job's faith. With that, God would say, have you taken notice of my servant Connie, or my servant Judy? Or my servant Dave, or my servant, whoever. But Satan accuses God of having bought him out. Is it a surprise to you? You've made a hedge around him, his house and all that he has on every side, you've blessed the work of his hands, his possessions have increased in the land, of course, he's faithful, what would you think? So God agrees to lift His protection, and He gives access to all that Job has, as long as Satan doesn't hurt him. And in verses 13 through 19, the trials come and boy do they come. There's four waves of trials in chapter one. He loses his oxen and donkeys along with his servants. His sheep are consumed by fire from heaven, and those

servants are killed. The camels are stolen and those servants are murdered. And the house in which all his sons and daughters were visiting collapses and kills them all. All his belongings, his wealth, his servants' lives, his family and his children. And in verse 20 through 22, we see his response. Job tore his robe, shaved his head, fell to the ground, and worshiped. "Naked I came from a mother's womb and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

In the second trial, chapter two verses one through seven, we're brought into that reality of Satan again presenting himself before the Lord. And this time, we understand that Job is not guilty because God says, "He has maintained his integrity despite the fact that you incited me to ruin him without cause," that word is 'overwhelm' him. Satan's answer, "Skin for skin. Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life." And I want you to see that this accusation is so outrageous. Number one Job doesn't understand or know that this conversation is taking place. But what Satan is accusing him of is bargaining. His children's lives and the lives of His servants, etc, for his own protection, for his own life. How preposterous. And I want you to understand that that is the extent that Satan goes to deceive us. That's how preposterous some of the deception in the world is. He says, "it's one thing to take away everything he has. But if You touch his bone and his flesh, he'll curse You." You know, it's very difficult to understand why God would allow this. Just like it's difficult to understand why He is allowing some trials in your lives right now. But nevertheless, God relents and allows him to access Job's physical health, but not his life. And so it comes.

I don't know if any of you have had a boil. I don't think I've ever had a boil, but I've seen plenty. And I've had to deal with plenty. And I will tell you, they are not fun. And if you can imagine that boil that you had covering head to toe, you get just a little glimpse of the flavor of what he experienced. Throughout the book of Job, you have glimpses of this and let me just give you this list. He's got inflamed ulcers, sores, itching, chapter two verse eight. Changes in facial appearance chapter two verse seven, loss of appetite 3:24. Depression, loss of strength, 6:11. Worms in the boils. Maggots, flies produce maggots, they lay eggs in open sores and within a few days maggots emerge. That's how it works. He's got maggots in his sores, running sores, despair, seven verse six. Difficulty breathing, darkness under the eyes, that sleeplessness 16:16. Foul breath 19:17, loss of weight 19:20, continual pain 30:17, restlessness 30:27, blackened skin 30:30, peeling skin and fever 30:30. He's so repulsed by how his skin looks that he doesn't even want to touch it. He takes a pot shared, a piece of clay pot to scratch it and to rub it away because the puss is running. He's unrecognizable to his friends, such that they raised their voices tossed that dust in the air, which is a cultural way of intense sadness on behalf of somebody else, and they weep. He is immersed in that as quite rightly he would be the physical suffering, the pain, the odor, the seepage onto the skin, the dry cracking scabs, the itch and the pain. Probably his wife was not keen to be near him. And then he's still battling the emotional trauma which began in the first wave. He's making himself low before the Lord, he shaved his head, he tore his robe, he's sitting in ashes and yet he remains faithful, he holds on to his integrity. He does not blame God. And I want to briefly, as an aside, just examine Satan's accusation.

Is it possible to be bought out by God? Well, when you say it like that, the answer is no. Does God, by our worship, throw blessings? No. We don't even relate to that, as parents, we don't bribe our children so that they behave, we reward behavior that is already there. But on the other hand, is it possible that we can have faith and feel so blessed by what we have, that we understand that all our belongings and blessings come ultimately from His hand and be so humbled and thankful that we respond in deep thankfulness? Absolutely. But I think it's also possible that in a wealthy community amongst all the blessings and luxury you live in, you can feel obligated to acknowledge God in a way that is external, in a way that you go to church. And you gather, and you do your duty,

because you're afraid that God might take away your lifestyle. There are people who live like that. There are people who worship God in that way. You see, we can create a false sense of security for ourselves by tending and doing church as if hopefully, somehow, the life that we've grown to love won't be taken away from us. I've seen this in counseling situations where a marriage is threatened with breakup or a spouse has left and the rejected spouse starts to look, and the motivation is to get that marriage back. They come to God to fix their marriage. And when the marriage isn't fixed, they disappear. Oh, I tried religion. It didn't work.

Job's friends had landed in a place where blessing was a sign of being right with God, but they went further. They extrapolated that the suffering must be a sign of having sin, suffering represented God's judgment on them for your sin. And we'll talk about the council at a different time, but this formed the corner of Job's struggle. They said you've sinned; he knew he hadn't. Now, does God use calamity to punish sin? Yes, He does. You think about Babylon. We were reading Lamentations yesterday at the men's Bible study and, literally, Israel was taken up and sent into captivity as a result of their sin. So we know that God does that. And we also know that it is His intention that we, through suffering, get to the point of godly sorrow, repentance and restoration with Him. But what about when we haven't sinned? What is the true mark of faith regarding a trial that is not a result of sin? Because this is Job's situation? What do the Scriptures say? Well, Paul says a true mark of faith, in regard to trial, is being content in all circumstances whether we have much or we have little, Philippians 4:13. Job says, Job 13:15, "Though he slayed me, I will hope in Him. The author of Psalm 119 says, "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn Your statutes." And he says, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray. But now I keep Your Word," Psalm 119 verses 67 and 71, "It is good that I was afflicted because, before I was afflicted, I went astray but now I keep Your Word." So there are times when God will discipline us, keep us faithful. True faith really says God gets to choose and I'm content with His choice, because I trust Him.

So how would you have responded? How we respond is direct evidence of where we are with the Lord. Chapter two verse three, his integrity is recognized by God and two verse nine, it's recognized by his wife. And you know what? That tells us that it's real. I want to talk to the men today, to meet today's fathers. Hey guys. I want to challenge you to be men of integrity. The fact that God could recognize his integrity, and his wife recognizes integrity, that tells you that it's real. I want you to accept this challenge, that you live lives that your wives know are real. And why is that? Because your wife knows you the best of anybody here on earth. You can't put something past your wife. God in His infinite wisdom has given us that. And you know, I wasn't gonna go there but I think I need to go there. Job's wife has had a hard rap. And you know what, you can imagine the suffering that she went through as well. Job says, "must we accept blessing and not adversity?" And so she wants to put him out of his misery. And he doesn't say, you are a foolish woman. He says, "You speak as one of the foolish woman." And I would almost say that it is something that we need to apply, grace to for his wife, because of all he has offered, if she said that. I don't know if that came from the heart? But Job is gentle with her. And he says, must we? And men, that you would be men of integrity that you would be able, even when your wife comes out with something that is shocking to you. And you think Wow, where did that come from? That you would be gentle with her that you would be men of integrity, that you would love her.

What a beautiful word integrity. And in this case, it looked like steadfastly holding to his faith, keeping it intact, worshiping God despite adversity. Jim Berg gave an illustration one time that said, when you put a tea bag in hot water, tea comes out. And if you think about a trial as being metaphorically the hot water that is poured onto your life, which is the teabag, the question is, what's coming out? Because what's inside is going to come out. That's

what trials do. Our circumstances draw out of our hearts what is in them. And in his life, in his work, in his counsel, in his wealth, and in his loss, he was pleasing to God.

Okay, so how do we apply this? I think it's helpful to work through this, as I know that many of you have had significant trials, many of you are going through significant trials right now. I've got seven applications. I'd encourage you to take some notes. The first thing I want to say is that when you are faced with this kind of adversity, remember, it's likely that you don't know the full picture. And what I mean by that is Job didn't know the full picture. Job was not aware of the conversation that God had with Satan. And I want to remind you that we don't know exactly why God necessarily sends difficult things into our lives. But remember that God has what somebody has called the helicopter view. We could call it the drone view. We get the dashboard view. We don't know what's around that corner. We don't know why. God has given it to us. But we keep driving, trusting that He knows the full picture.

Number two, remember that God doesn't guarantee that a sanctified or blameless life will mean a trouble-free life. That's never been the case. We don't come to the Lord and expect it to be trouble-free, in fact, Philippians says, "it has been granted to you not only to believe, but to also suffer for Him." First Peter five talks about after you have suffered for a while. So, for us to think that suffering is a sign that things are not going well, is not true. In this world, you will have trouble. And I think part of the reason that we don't have as much trouble as we should have is that we're keeping quiet about the Gospel. Sometimes if you open your mouth in this culture, you will receive trouble. And so, my encouragement to us is to expect it, but to be those ambassadors for Christ.

Number three, a trouble-free life is not the end goal for the Christian anyway. But what our troubles are, is they represent an opportunity for God's work in our lives to be put on display. Let me think this through with you, Jesus, when He was on the earth, went to the cross. And I would hazard a guess, and I'm open to correction here, that had He not gone to the cross, there were certain characteristics and attributes of God that would not have been as clearly delineated for us, for instance; His compassion, His mercy, His self-control, His long suffering with us. Christ's obedience to God, the extent of all of those were magnified by His suffering on the cross. And so your suffering gives an opportunity and avenue, if you like, for attributes of God that you were created in the image to portray to be obvious.

Number four, I think we need to understand that it is absolutely possible to waver in your faith, under fire. We can waver in our endurance and perseverance. Job was absolutely worn down by it. But remember, First Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you, but that which is common to man, and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond that which you're able, but with that temptation will provide a way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."

Number five, remember that trials prove that faith is real. You remember the parable of the sower, a seed that went on the path and was eaten up by the birds and the second seed went on rocky soil. And it sprung up, and it looked real. But Jesus in Matthew 13 tells us that it withered away because it didn't have root and what made it wither away? Trials, when the sun beat down. It had no root, and it withered away. And so what looks like the real thing initially, is only proven by time and testing.

Number six, trials cause us to grow in endurance, our suffering causes us to grow in endurance. James chapter one verse two, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, whenever you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of

your faith produces endurance, and let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” When you understand that the purpose of trials is for your benefit, that you grow, you're in a much better place to handle that.

Finally, open to First Peter chapter one. And we'll maybe quit after we read this. First Peter, chapter one, verses three through nine. Read with me as Peter writes, “blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away reserved in heaven for you who are protected by the power of God, through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in time.” What an incredible promise. And then comes verse six. “In this, you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.” God said those trials are necessary. And they're going to come, if necessary, while you wait for that, which is glorious in heaven. Verse seven, “so that the proof of your faith being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory, and honor, at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory obtaining as the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” So, we just read that we have this glorious, amazing future that we look forward to. But for now, if necessary, we may encounter various trials, what two aims; number one, to prove that your faith is real, and that you are going to receive that salvation, and that results in joy? Because it proves that your faith is real. And it proves that you're going there. Because you hang on in a certain way. And it also brings glory to God. And you're pleasing to God, when you respond like that, because God gets the glory. So all we know is that in His sovereignty, God may decide that it's necessary. And that by proving your faith is real, there is joy inexpressible for you, because it really means that you are saved, and praise and glory to God.

So why do we suffer? Because it's necessary. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you so much for the wisdom of Your Word. And, Lord, we are so humbled by seeing Job's suffering, and so humbled by recognizing Your Sovereignty in that. Father, we desire to be pleasing to you, we know that it's not about a list of things that we've done or do, and a list of things that we don't do. We can't stand before You and justify ourselves saying, well, at least I'm not like this tax collector. And Father, we understand that we all have gone astray and that You are an angry God, that is part of Your character because You hate sin and those who do sin. And so we're thankful, Lord, that for those of us who are saved, that You have caused the wrath, to fall on Christ. And there is nothing that we bring that is good, either in the done list or the not done list. But only in humility can we trust in Christ? And only in humility can we ask You to forgive us and become once again pleasing to You? And Father, we know that we can be pleasing to You in how we suffer, in how we respond. Knowing Lord that Your Sovereign will, will determine how our lives end up. But that, Father, we can have a tenacious faith, all of us. It is the great equalizer, Lord. It's not about how our lives look, but it's about how our heart looks. And that, Father, we can please You wherever we are, by coming to You. And when You do send trials let us remember what we know. And that is, Lord, that suffering makes it clear that our faith is real. When we respond, even in thankfulness and it's a promise, Lord, that you have a promise of a salvation for us, ready to be revealed. But that now if You deem it necessary, Lord, we submit to that, though You slay us, we will hope in You. And that, that causes great glory to You, Father, because we trust You as our Father. Lord, I know that there are many here who are suffering now. And I just pray for them that You will lift their spirits, help them to see You for who You are, and help that suffering and the pain of that suffering to be eclipsed while they navigate the

trial. Lord, we come before You wanting to exalt Your name as Your people. And we praise You for these amazing truths. In Christ's name. Amen.