

UNSHAKEABLE

Title: Part 2 – “When Life Doesn't Go According to Plan”

Date: October 12, 2025

Transition: Band Continues Softly

As we continue in this moment of worship and prepare our hearts for God's Word, let's take a minute and make some space for God to work in our lives. Our souls have a surface, a midlands, but God communicates to us in the depths. So, everyone close your eyes, I promise this won't be weird, but let's give God EVERYONE and EVERYTHING. Just say that under your breath, “God I give you everyone and everything...” Now as the band plays softly just take a few moments and give God all the things and all the people on your heart. Lovingly detach yourself from the cares of this world.

[PRAYER TIME]

Hey before you grab a seat take a :30 seconds and say “Hi” to some people around you. While everyone here in the house is saying “Hi” to each other I want to say “Hi” if you are joining us online or on our app, thank you for spending some time with us! We consider you a part of our church family so let us know how we can pray for you or serve you—we'd love to walk alongside you in any way that we can.

If you have a Bible with you today or the Bible app on your phone and want to follow along we will be in the Old Testament book of Job. Today we're looking at one of the most remarkable transformation stories in all of Scripture. AND we will begin with the end of the story and work our way back from there. This is from Job chapter 42, starting with verse 1:

Then Job replied to the Lord: ² “I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ³ You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. ⁴ “You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ ⁵ My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. ⁶ Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.” [Skip down to v.10 now] ¹⁰ After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. 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 on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring. ¹² The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. ¹³ And he also had seven sons and three daughters... 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. ¹⁶ After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. ¹⁷ And so Job died, an old man and full of years.

That sounds so nice, right? Everyone wants to second half of Job's life, BUT no one wants the first! Today I want to preach a message I am calling:

When Life Doesn't Go According to Plan

Raise your hand if you could share a story or two about what happens when life doesn't go according to plan. Some of you are like, "A story or two, that could be the title of my biography!"

TODAY we are continuing a collection of messages calling "Unshakeable" which is all about developing unwavering trust in an uncertain world. We are wading into the tension between our natural tendency toward control and anxiety and worry versus the supernatural, childlike peace that comes from deep trust in our Heavenly Father's character.

Last week we talked about Abraham and His son Isaac's journey to Mount Moriah and here's what we discovered: our need to control everything is actually what's making us anxious, stressed, and spiritually exhausted. The pathway to peace isn't through more control but through surrender.

We found out that God's will isn't a burden to carry but a pillow to rest on—meaning that when we align our hearts with His purposes, we discover what Jesus meant when He said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The big takeaway was this: the very things we grip the tightest are often the things that are slowly killing our souls. But when we learn the art of letting go, we discover that God can be trusted with the things that matter most to us because they matter to Him too. If you missed week one, you can always go back and watch or listen from our app or website.

Today we're going to explore **what happens when life completely derails** from our expectations and how to develop unshakeable trust when absolutely nothing makes sense anymore. BECAUSE here is reality:

"Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." – Mike Tyson

That's at least what Mike Tyson famously said back in his prime. But it is true! It is a universal reality: everyone has a plan until life punches them in the face. We all have plans, dreams, and expectations about how our lives should unfold. And then life happens!

You plan for a healthy retirement, then get a diagnosis that changes everything. You plan for your kids to make good choices, then watch them make decisions that break your heart. You plan for a stable marriage, then find yourself sitting in a lawyer's office discussing divorce papers. You plan for a successful career, then the economy crashes and your industry disappears.

According to the American Psychological Association, 76% of Americans report that unexpected life changes are a significant source of stress currently in their lives. Because we're not built to handle constant uncertainty. Our brains crave predictability, routine, and control. When those things get disrupted, our entire psychological framework can collapse.

But here's what's fascinating: some people don't just survive life's unexpected turns; they actually emerge stronger, wiser, and more compassionate. Psychologists call this "post-traumatic growth," and it's one of the most remarkable discoveries in modern mental health research.

The question isn't whether unexpected difficulties will come, they will. The question is: when your plan gets completely disrupted, what resources do you have to not just survive, but thrive?

SO, today we are going to do a case study about a man whose life became unrecognizable. We met Job after everything had come off the rails and God had restored him. BUT before all this, Job was the wealthiest, most respected man in the ancient Near East. Job lived sometime after Noah but before Abraham AND he had everything going for him—successful business ventures, a large loving family, perfect health, sterling reputation, and deep walk with God. Job had plans. Reasonable expectations. A trajectory that made sense. He was living the ancient equivalent of the American Dream.

And then, in a single day, everything changed through a series of catastrophic events that were completely outside his control. We pick up Job's story in chapter 1, verse 13. Turn to your neighbor and tell them to buckle up:

¹³ One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ a messenger arrived at Job's home with this news: "Your oxen were plowing, with the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ when the Sabeans raided us. They stole all the animals and killed all

the farmhands. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: “The fire of God has fallen from heaven and burned up your sheep and all the shepherds. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”¹⁷ While he was still speaking, a third messenger arrived with this news: “Three bands of Chaldean raiders have stolen your camels and killed your servants. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”¹⁸ While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: “Your sons and daughters were feasting in their oldest brother’s home.”¹⁹ Suddenly, a powerful wind swept in from the wilderness and hit the house on all sides. The house collapsed, and all your children are dead. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”²⁰ Job stood up and tore his robe in grief.

Job lost his livestock, his servants, his children, and eventually even his health. This is like someone losing their business, their family, and receiving a terminal diagnosis all in the same week.

In fact, stop and put yourself in Job’s sandals for a moment. You wake up that morning as the Jeff Bezos of the ancient world. You check your phone—everything’s normal. Your business is thriving, your kids are healthy, your retirement is secure. You grab coffee, maybe scroll through some good news. Life is predictable, comfortable, blessed.

Then the first messenger arrives. Your business has been destroyed—not by poor decisions or market forces, but by complete catastrophe. Before you can even process that news, another messenger arrives. Then another. Each report is worse than the last. Your mind is trying to make sense of information that doesn’t compute.

You know that feeling when you get one piece of terrible news and your brain kind of short-circuits? Now imagine that happening five times in the span of an hour. Your logical mind is scrambling: “This can’t be happening. This has to be a mistake. This doesn’t happen to people like me.”

Then comes the knock on the door that changes everything. The news about your children. Suddenly nothing else matters. The business, the finances, the reputation—all of that becomes background noise to a pain so deep you can’t even find words for it.

AND just when you think the nightmare can’t get worse, your body begins to fail. The man who woke up healthy and wealthy now sits in ashes, his skin covered in painful sores, scraping himself with broken pottery just to find a moment’s relief from the agony.

Can you allow yourself into that kind of trauma for a moment? This is where most of us would break. This is where bitterness would seem not just reasonable but inevitable. This is where faith would feel not just difficult but impossible. Amen?

SO, Job loses everything and as the story goes, Job's friends came to comfort him but in the end just made things worse by suggesting that his suffering must be punishment for secret sins. His wife, overwhelmed by their losses, encouraged him to just "curse God and die." Men, I would be willing to bet no matter what you think of you wife she has never told you to just curse God and die! Job then spends the middle chapters of this story questioning and wrestling with why God had abandon him.

BUT here's what makes Job's story remarkable: he didn't just survive this experience—he was transformed by it. By the end of his journey, Job had a deeper understanding of God's character, a more mature faith, restored relationships, even greater prosperity than before, AND he had become someone who could comfort others going through similar difficulties.

Job's story teaches us that when life doesn't go according to our plan, it might be because God has a better plan that we can't see yet! So, what do you do when life doesn't go according to plan? What can we learn from Job's story? A few thoughts I put in my notes that you can put in yours.

Your response to disruption determines your destiny.

The first thing we need to understand about Job's story is that his circumstances didn't determine his character—his character determined how he responded to his circumstances. Let me say that again. Job's circumstances didn't determine his character—his character determined how he responded to his circumstances.

When everything fell apart, Job had choices to make:

- He could become bitter **OR** better.
- He could blame God **OR** trust God.
- He could give up on his faith **OR** deepen his faith.
- He could isolate himself **OR** reach out for community.
- He could despair about the future **OR** hope for restoration.

Modern psychology has identified what researchers call "resilience factors"—the characteristics that enable some people to bounce back from adversity while others remain stuck in victimhood. Here's what's remarkable: every single resilience factor that psychologists have identified can be found in Job's response to his crisis. **Things like...**

Cognitive Flexibility: Instead of rigidly clinging to his old understanding of how God works, Job remained open to learning new things about God's character and ways. Look back at our opening text, Job says: (ch.42)

Then Job replied to the Lord: ² “I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ³ You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. ⁴ “You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ ⁵ My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.

He admits his previous framework was incomplete. He acknowledges God's ways are beyond his current comprehension. AND he's willing to move from secondhand knowledge to firsthand experience. Contrast this with his friends, who rigidly maintained their "suffering = punishment for sin" theology even when faced with evidence to the contrary.

Another resilience factor is:

Social Connection: As we've mentioned, despite his friends' poor counsel, Job continued to engage with community rather than completely isolating himself. This is one of the strongest predictors for people who grow through adversity.

Another one Psychologist talk about is:

Meaning-Making: Job looked for purpose and significance in his suffering rather than concluding it was meaningless. In Job 19 he says:

²⁵ I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. ²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. ²⁷ How my heart yearns within me!

Even when Job can't see immediate purpose, he's expressing faith that there will be ultimate vindication and meaning - that his story will have a resolution where justice and purpose are revealed. Contrast it with his wife, who essentially said "This is meaningless—just curse God and die." No meaning-making at all.

A few more resilience factors:

Active Coping: Rather than passively accepting defeat, Job continued to seek God, pray, and wrestle with the bigger questions. Job isn't just lying down and taking it—he's

actively seeking dialogue with God. He wants to find God, present his case, hear God's response, and engage in the bigger questions. Look at Job 23:

³ If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! ⁴ I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. ⁵ I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say to me.

Another resilience factor they say is:

Future Orientation: Even in his darkest moments, Job maintained hope that his story wasn't over. Look at Job 17:9:

Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands WILL grow stronger.

Even in chapter 17, one of Job's darkest chapters, he still believes righteous people will "grow stronger" meaning future growth, not just survival. This is incredibly powerful because Job has lost everything! He has no visible reason for hope! His friends are telling him he's finished! His wife has given up! Yet he maintains absolute confidence in future vindication! How many of you want to be a person of unshakable trust like that!

Here's what all this teaches us: your response to disruption is more important than the disruption itself. You can't control what happens TO you, but you can control what happens IN you.

Viktor Frankl, a Holocaust survivor and psychologist, discovered this truth in the concentration camps. He wrote:

"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

That's exactly what Job did. He chose his attitude. He chose his response. He chose his way forward. And those choices transformed not just his circumstances, but his character.

Another thing we learn from Job's story is that there's always more happening than what we can see from our limited human perspective. Number two, write this down:

God's perspective is always bigger than your pain.

The book of Job begins with a scene in heaven that Job himself never knew about. There's a conversation between God and Satan about Job's faithfulness. Satan argues that Job only serves God because God has blessed him, and that if those blessings were removed, Job would curse God to His face.

God allows Satan to test Job's faith, not because God is cruel or uncertain about Job's character, but because God knows something about Job that Job doesn't even know about himself—that his faith is strong enough to survive this test and that he will emerge even stronger on the other side.

Job never learns about this heavenly conversation though. From our perspective, his suffering seems random, unfair, and meaningless. But from God's perspective, Job's suffering has profound purpose—it demonstrates the reality of genuine faith *AND* it becomes a testimony for generations of believers who face similar trials.

This is one of the hardest truths to accept when life falls apart: God sees things you can't see. He knows things you don't know. He's working toward purposes you can't understand from your current vantage point.

The Apostle Paul, who experienced similar suffering, expressed this truth beautifully in Romans 8:28 when he says:

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

That means God can take your worst day and weave it into your best story! He can take your greatest failure and transform it into your most powerful testimony! He can take your deepest pain and use it as the foundation for your most meaningful ministry!

But this requires what theologians call "eschatological patience"—the ability to wait for God's perspective to be revealed, trusting that He's working even when you can't see it. This is one of the things I have been praying for each of you this week. That no matter what you might be going through you would be able to hang on until you can see what God is doing behind the scenes.

Because here is the third takeaway truth:

Suffering is a tool God uses to transform us.

Sometimes God allows what He hates to accomplish what He loves. I know that's a lot to chew on so let me say it again. Sometimes God allows what He hates (suffering) to accomplish what He loves (your transformation).

This doesn't mean God causes evil or that He delights in our pain. Scripture is clear that God is good, loving, and compassionate. But Scripture is also clear that in a fallen world, God can use even painful experiences to shape us into the people He created us to be.

Job himself came to understand this. In the middle of his crisis, he said something remarkable:

But he knows where I am going. And when he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold. (Job 23:10).

Gold doesn't become pure without being refined by fire. The impurities have to be burned away through intense heat. Job realized that his suffering was serving a refining purpose—God was burning away things in his character that needed to go and purifying the things that needed to remain.

What I love about this is that modern research on post-traumatic growth has identified five areas where people often experience positive change after difficult experiences:

- **Appreciation for life.**

People develop a deeper gratitude for everyday blessings they previously took for granted.

- **Relating to others.**

Suffering increases empathy and the ability to connect with others who are hurting.

- **Personal strength.**

People discover they're stronger and more resilient than they thought they were.

- **New possibilities.**

Difficulties often open doors to opportunities that wouldn't have existed otherwise. AND...

- **Spiritual development.**

Crisis often deepens people's relationship with God and their understanding of what really matters.

Job experienced every single one of these areas of growth. By the end of his story, he had a deeper appreciation for God's blessings, stronger relationships with his family and community, greater personal resilience, new opportunities to minister to others, and a much more mature understanding of God's character and ways.

- The same fire that burns can also purify!
- The same pressure that crushes can also create diamonds!
- The same storm that destroys can also clear the air!

AND while that doesn't always help us feel better in the middle of a crisis, we can also hold onto this. Here's one of the most beautiful aspects of Job's story: God didn't just restore what Job had lost—He gave him twice as much as before. That's number 4:

God's restoration is always greater than your loss.

The text says, "The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part." Job ended up with double the livestock, a new family, restored health, and even greater reputation than he had before. But more than that, he had something he didn't have before—the knowledge that his faith could survive anything.

See Job's crisis moved him from secondhand faith to firsthand experience of God's character. AND this is God's pattern throughout Scripture. He doesn't just restore—He multiplies. He doesn't just heal—He makes you stronger than you were before. He doesn't just forgive—He gives you a testimony. He doesn't just save—He transforms you into someone who can help save others.

Noah, Abraham, Joseph, David, Peter, even Jesus Himself... God specializes in comeback stories! He takes what Satan means for evil and uses it for good! He takes what appears to be an ending and makes it a new beginning!

SO, in the brief time we have left, and because I know there is someone today who is in the middle of life not going according to plan, I want to leave you with a few practical applications for building resilience for life's disruptions. If you don't get anything else I say today, I pray you get these and use them. First:

1. Shift to heaven's perspective.

When you're in the middle of a crisis, ask yourself: "What might God be doing in this situation that I can't see right now?" This doesn't mean making up explanations or pretending everything is fine. It means remaining open to the possibility that God's perspective is bigger than yours. Amen?

Create what I call a "God's Track Record" list. Write down times in the past when God showed up in unexpected ways or brought good out of difficult situations. When you're struggling to trust, review this list and remind yourself that the God who was faithful then is faithful now.

2. Develop gratitude practices.

Research shows that gratitude is one of the strongest predictors of psychological resilience. Even in difficult seasons, there are still things to be thankful for. Job maintained a grateful heart even in his darkest moments.

Start each day by identifying three specific things you're grateful for. Not generic things like "health" or "family," but specific things like "my daughter's laugh yesterday" or "the kindness of a stranger at the grocery store." This actually rewires your brain to notice God's goodness even in difficult seasons.

3. Cultivate community.

Isolation is the enemy of resilience. Even though Job's friends gave poor counsel, the fact that they showed up mattered. Don't go through difficulties alone.

Find people who can pray with you, cry with you, and remind you of God's faithfulness when you forget. Plug into your church family, find a spiritual mentor, seek professional counseling, call a mature believer in your family but don't isolate yourself! God uses community as one of His primary tools for healing and restoration.

4. Focus on character over circumstances.

Ask yourself: "What is God trying to develop in my character through this situation?" Maybe He's developing patience, compassion, faith, humility, or dependence on Him. When you focus on character development, you can find purpose even in painful circumstances.

Job's suffering developed his humility, deepened his faith, and increased his compassion for others. Your difficulties can do the same for you if you cooperate with what God is doing. AND...

5. Maintain hope for God's restoration.

This doesn't mean engaging in wishful thinking or denying reality. It means believing that God can bring beauty from ashes, even when you can't see how that's possible.

Hope is not optimism—optimism believes things will get better, but hope believes God will be faithful regardless of how things turn out. Did you catch that? Optimism believes things will get better, but hope believes God will be faithful regardless of how things turn out. That's the kind of hope that can sustain you through any storm.

AND I know some of you are in the storm today. I'm speaking directly to someone who's in the middle of a season where nothing makes sense anymore. If that's you then just focus up here. I know your plans got derailed. Your expectations got shattered. Your dreams got delayed or destroyed. And you're wondering if God has forgotten about you.

Let me tell you what Job discovered: God never wastes your pain!

- Your disappointment is not disqualification—It's preparation!
- Your setback is not your ending—it's your setup for something greater than you can imagine!
- You think God is absent, but He's actually orchestrating!
- You think He's silent, but He's actually working behind the scenes!
- You think He's abandoned you, but He's actually positioning you for a comeback that will have you in awe of God like Job!

Some of you have been asking God "Why?" for months, maybe years. Why did this happen to me? Why didn't You stop it? Why aren't You fixing it? And God's been trying to get you to ask a better question: "What do You want to do through this?"

Because here's what I know about our God: He doesn't just restore what you lost—He gives you back double! He doesn't just heal what was broken—He makes you stronger than you were before! He doesn't just solve your problem—He transforms you into someone who can help solve other people's problems!

- Your current crisis is not your conclusion, it's your preparation!
- Your present pain is not your punishment, it's your purification!
- Your story is not over, God's just getting started!

But you've got to cooperate with what God is doing. You've got to choose your response. You can become bitter or better. You can focus on what you lost or what you're learning. You can isolate yourself in your pain or invite community into your healing.

Job made the right choices, and God restored him beyond his wildest dreams. The same God who doubled Job's blessings is the same God who wants to bring restoration to your story. But His timing is not your timing, and His ways are not your ways.

The God who turned Job's mourning into dancing is the same God who turned Friday's crucifixion into Sunday's resurrection. The God who brought Job through the valley of the shadow of death is the same God who walks with you through yours.

Maybe you're here today and you don't know if you believe in God yet, but you're going through something that's turned your world upside down. You're looking for answers, for hope, for something to help you make sense of your pain.

Let me tell you what research shows: people who have a sense of meaning and purpose in their suffering recover faster and grow stronger than those who see their pain as random and meaningless. You don't have to have perfect faith to benefit from this truth. The question isn't whether you can prove God exists—it's whether believing in a God who can bring good from your pain helps you live better than believing you're alone in a meaningless universe.

Job's story suggests that your suffering might have purpose you can't see yet. What if that's true? What if there's a reason you're going through this that will only make sense on the other side of this life?

Job walked into his crisis as a successful businessman with a comfortable faith. He walked out as a man who had seen God face to face and whose life became a testimony of God's faithfulness for thousands of years.

Your crisis is not the end of your story; it's the beginning of a new chapter. The chapter where you discover that your faith is stronger than you thought, that God is more faithful than you imagined, and that He can bring beauty from ashes in ways that will amaze you.

The same God who gave Job a greater ending than beginning wants to do the same for you. But you've got to trust Him even when you can't see the next page.

Some of you have never surrendered your life to Christ, and this crisis is God's way of getting your attention. Today could be the day you discover that the God who restored Job wants to restore you too.

Let's bow our heads together.