

The Book of Job
Walking With the Grieved
Sunday, March 6, 2022

Suffering and Disillusionment

How can we better love God, others, ourselves and the world around us?

In the context of our current cultural backdrop, the primary motivation for those engaged in Christian Deconstruction is rooted in an inadequate theology of suffering.

How do we model a God that grieves WITH us to a world perplexed by the reality of loss, injustice and indifference that is an inescapable part of the human existence?

The Prospect of Powerlessness

There is a truth that is understandably difficult for us to face: God cannot be controlled, and our struggle with powerlessness belies our lack of trust in God's goodness.

We hate powerlessness. That's why we prefer anger over sadness, contempt over empathy and dismissal over understanding.

Entering into another's grief is costly. It necessitates that we access a part of ourselves that has experienced powerlessness and loss.

Brene Brown: Empathy Bear Video



Our Bent To Self Protect

Job 6:22 Now you too have proved to be of no help; you see something dreadful and are afraid.

Self Reflection: What do we do when we see something dreadful and are afraid?

The Delusion of Control

Often, we desire to identify the cause of grief so we can control the amount of pain that enters our lives. We indulge in a kind of Christian Karma that deludes us into believing that we can protect ourselves through our wisdom and righteousness. This leads to a subtle judgement of ourselves and others.

“The truth is, we all have ant years and grasshopper years - years in which we are able to prepare and save and years where we need a little extra help. Our true flaw lies not in failing to store up enough resources to cope with the grasshopper years, but in believing that each grasshopper year is an anomaly, visited only on us, due to our unique human failings.”

Katherine May, *Wintering*, p. 200

The Slow, Unsatisfying Current of Grief

Job is clearly depressed. He has no place of temporal rest or comfort, and longs for the escape of death.

It is not uncommon for me to hear suffering people say something like, “How I dread that moment of opening my eyes to the reality that this is my life and I must walk through another day with pain as my constant companion.”

In our loathing of powerlessness, and our longing to help, we cry out, “There must be something you can do!”

Job 9:4 “His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted him and come out unscathed?”

Contempt for the Sufferer

Job 12:5 “Men at ease have contempt for misfortune as the fate of those whose feet are slipping.”

Contempt, a form of anger and disdain, is a panacea to powerlessness.

Self reflection: Will we reach out to help steady the one who is stumbling, or point from a distance? Will we dare to draw close with our presence when we fear being pulled into the abyss?

What is the abyss you fear will overwhelm you?

In our subtle, quiet contempt, we dismiss the universality of suffering. In reality, we are all the poor, we are all the grieved, we are all the unworthy.

Job's Reflection: From the Lips of the Grieved

Job 13:12-15 “Your maxims are proverbs of ashes; your defenses are defenses of clay. **Keep silent and let me speak; then let come to me what may.** Why do I put myself in jeopardy and take my life in my hands? Though he slay me yet will I hope in Him; I will surely defend my ways to his face.”

Our quest to to control our own fate, thus diminishing our view of God's power, gives us feet of clay We then stand on a foundation that crumbles.

We enter into suffering with closeness, curiosity, compassion, and a personal confidence in God's power and goodness.

Jesus wept, expressing his deep sorrow with his friends. This is not how it was meant to be.

Practical Prompts

- Help me understand how that feels for you
- Tell me the story of how you came to . . .
- You must have good reasons for
- That makes a lot of sense
- Where do you find yourself struggling?

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