

Job 1 Without Cause

Good evening and thank you for joining us! Tonight, we begin our study in the book of Job, so would you please turn in your bibles to Job.

I can tell you there's about 65 other books in the Bible I'd rather teach. In fact I know some CC pastors that have never taught the book of Job. This is why I don't bounce around, going through the Bible in order forces me, and you, to go through all of the Word of God. And Job will not be an easy study. Because we're going to talk about suffering.

Suffering can really be separated into 2 categories. Suffering that is a direct result of our choices, and suffering that has nothing to do with our choices.

The suffering that we cause ourselves because of our choices and actions is relatively easy to identify. If a person begins to do drugs, they will suffer the consequences of those actions. If a person drinks and drives, there's a cause and effect relationship there isn't there? We see an example of this cause and effect in **Proverbs 19:19 A man of great wrath will suffer punishment; For if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.**

But that's most often not the suffering we see in the Bible is it? In fact, as Bible students, you know that one of the most common attributes of people in the Bible is the fact of their suffering, when they didn't cause the circumstances.

And this is what troubles us so, this is what causes us to squirm in our theological seats, when we cannot explain why suffering happens.

I could spend the next several hours sharing story after story of suffering that made no sense.

Baby ethan

The 14 yr old babysitter who died protecting little boy

A couple of months ago i was wth a mom who excitedly goes to wake up her daughter on her daughters birthday, only to find out she's died, I'm having to physically restrain her as she's become violent

The little boy in the hospital in Haiti-maybe 8 years old who was near death, unresponsive in fact, due to starvation.

Any attempt to try and explain those few examples of suffering are futile. And I bet each of us in this room has examples of suffering you've experienced or witnessed that have caused us to search endlessly for words. Only to realize there are no words, because sometimes life doesn't make sense.

Before we even begin I want to share some uncomfortable yet undeniable truths regarding suffering that I pray, we won't ever forget. To be clear i'm not saying why suffering happens, im explaining truths of suffering:

UNDENIABLE TRUTHS ABOUT SUFFERING

#1 Suffering loosens our grip on this life!!! (fixes our eyes on eternity)

#2 Faith during suffering doesn't make sense, because faith defies logic

#3 Even though we can rightfully be upset that we haven't gotten what we've wanted, we can always be thankful we haven't gotten what we deserve. (sometimes we lose sight of the fact we deserve eternity in hell)

I mention these right off the bat because having the proper perspective in the midst of suffering is critically important.

As we do with all new book studies we need to dive into some background before we get into our verses.

As we come to the book of Job, we actually enter into a new section of the Old Testament. As you know, the Old Testament is divided into different divisions. The first five books comprise what is often called the Pentateuch, the books of the law.

The next several OT books are historic, they deal with the history of the nation of Israel from the time that they come out of Egypt and begin as a nation in the land. And these books cover the period of history while they are in the land of Israel through the Babylonian captivity and regathering again to Israel. And the books of history take us up to about 400 B.C.

Now we are entering into a third part of the Old Testament, the books that are known as the books of poetry. And these include Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. They are Hebrew poetry.

It's important to know that Hebrew poetry is unlike our English poetry because Hebrew poetry doesn't rhyme words, rather it gives parallel thoughts or contrasting thoughts. For example Hebrew poetry compares the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. Or the parallel thoughts **Psalm 140:13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; The upright shall dwell in Your presence.**

And so you are giving parallel thought concepts or contrasting thoughts-this is Hebrew poetry and we'll see this through the next several books in the OT.

The author, date, and place of the Book of Job are all uncertain. It may be that Job himself recorded his experiences in the book, or there may well have been another anonymous author. A lot of scholars believe that Moses wrote Job, but it's just speculation.

Judging by the style of the Hebrew it uses, many scholars believe Job to be the oldest book of the Old Testament.

The book of Job has comforted countless readers for thousands of years, because it confirms what God has declared in Isaiah and Job expressed himself, and that is that the ways of God are beyond our finding out. **Isaiah 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.**

I doubt any of us would pretend to understand everything about God. In fact, we'd readily confess we understand very little about God and His plans. That's why we worship Him.

See if we could understand God completely then He would be on our level, and what would we then have to worship?

But because God is so much greater in wisdom and understanding and knowledge and power than we are, we stand in awe and reverence and we worship Him.

But the struggle occurs when we're directly confronted with the fact that God doesn't always do things our way. Nor does God stop to explain to us why He does it His way. Though we sometimes demand that He does.

Have you noticed it seems sometimes that God doesn't even pay attention to our demands? He just seems to go ahead and do what He wants to anyhow, in spite of our objections.

But I appreciate that, because I have found the older I get, the less I truly know!

When we acknowledge and recognize who God is, then we're glad to submit our lives and our will to Him and to His wisdom.

And I am thankful that we can pray, "Lord, I don't understand what You're doing. I don't like what You're doing, but I know that what You're doing is best. Not my will, Your will, Lord, be done."

Job appears as the eighteenth book in our canon of Scripture, but as I mentioned before many theologians believe it was the first biblical book written. If it is, it's by no accident. The theme of Job is the most fundamental of all truths - the sovereignty of God.

Every other doctrine rests on the footings of God's sovereignty. God's sovereignty is the first concept a human needs to grasp - sadly, it's the one most people never learn.

God's sovereignty simply means God has absolute authority. God has no limits. The only rule that governs God's action is His own prerogative. He does whatever He wants – however He wants – whenever He wants – to whomever He wants.

The book of Job lets us know upfront who's in charge... and it ain't us...

SHOW PIC In the 1993 movie Rudy, the main character is praying to get into Notre Dame. He asks his mentor, Father Cavanaugh, if there's anything else he can do to help his chances. The old priest tells him, "Son, in 35 years of religious study, I have only come up with two hard incontrovertible facts - there is a God, and I'm not Him." In short, that's the lesson we learn in the book of Job. **CLOSE PIC**

This fascinating book is structured in 4 sections... Chapters 1-2 are the prologue. The dialogue between Job and his friends occurs in chapters 3-37. God's monologue and Job's reaction, occurs in chapters 38-41. And chapter 42 is the conclusion or

epilogue. Here's the outline: prologue, dialogue, monologue, and epilogue

We're gonna study chapter 1 and the title of tonight's message is Without Cause

Let's pray

1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. Scholars believe that the city of Uz was somewhere south of the Dead Sea – near Edom - what is today southern Jordan.

And if Moses is the author of Job, it's possible that Moses learned of Job while working as a shepherd among the tribes of Midian.

Now again a lot of scholars believe Job lived in the era of the Hebrew patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Why? Twice in Genesis – chapters 10 and 36 – it mentions the name “Jobab.” In Genesis 36 a “Jobab” is listed as one of the kings of Edom. Whether or not that was the same man we can't say for sure.

But notice how the Bible describes Job. **blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil**

Remember “blameless” doesn't mean “sinless.” Like all men, Job had his faults. We know that Job was not sinlessly perfect; yet God unashamedly seemed to see him that way.

The modern believer stands in the same place, completely justified in Jesus Christ. Because of our faith in Christ, we stand blameless before God!

From the outset the author is letting us know it was nothing Job did or said that caused the suffering that came upon him. Job did nothing specific to warrant the horrible circumstances he had to endure.

2 And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. In this ancient culture status and wealth were often measured by the size of one's family. He's a prosperous man.

3 Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East. Another measuring stick of wealth was the quantity of livestock they had.

4 And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. Perhaps each person's appointed day was their birthday. Job's sons and daughters were in the habit of partying together. It gives us the picture of joy, and celebration.

5 So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly. Apparently,

this was before the establishment of the Jewish Tabernacle and priesthood because there's no mention of the law or anything here.

During the period of the patriarchs the father served as the priest of his family. And Job was a loving father. He cared about his kids.

Job not only cared about his own standing with God, but also his kids walk with God.

This is still the mark of a good parent. Of course as parents we want our kids to excel in all of life... we provide music lessons, and batting cages, and tutors, and fun experiences. But tragically today, even lots of christian families forget what's most important - the child's relationship with God.

In verse 6 the scene abruptly shifts from earth to heaven...

6-7

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan[fn] also came among them. 7 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?"

So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." A lot of people think Satan lives in hell, but hell is the last place Satan will visit. Until he's cast there, Satan is alive on planet earth stirring up trouble and grief.

The word "devil" means "slanderer, false accuser." This is what Satan does.

Revelation 12 10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down

Satan is constantly accusing us, which is why we need an advocate before God - a Mediator. In fact, Job cries out for a Mediator in chapter 9... In chapter 19 Job has faith that His Redeemer lives...

Ultimately, Jesus is Job's advocate and ours - the NT uses this exact language. 1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus

Our sin is now covered by the blood of Jesus and has become inadmissible evidence in the court of God whenever our accuser tries to bring it up!

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" This is fascinating to me. It's a rare privilege to eavesdrop on what God is saying from His throne.

Remember God's throne in heaven is engulfed with praise. But God Himself praises His kids. Like a proud papa God brags on His servant Job.

Now keep V8 in mind, God's description of Job as we go through this book, because Job's friends will accuse him of all sorts of things that aren't true.

9-10

9 So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. Note this "hedge." God plants a hedge of protection around each of His kids. God has installed a fail-proof security system in your life. If you know Jesus you have a Father-filter.

Satan can't harm a hair on your head without first acquiring God's permission. What a comfort!

Any trouble that strikes my life I can be certain that it comes attached with God's permission and God's purpose. Again I may not understand why He's allowed it, but He's God, I am not.

11 But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" Satan accuses God of buying Job's devotion with His blessings.

12 And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.”

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. I want to be clear, God and Satan are not equal in any. Even Satan is under God’s dominion-Satan needs God’s permission to harm Job.

And this is puzzling, even troubling. Though God hates his rebellion, God chooses to keep Satan around. God limits Satan’s power -and uses the devil to fulfill God’s own divine purposes.

In v 12 we see God allowed Satan to do what he wanted to do, to ultimately serve God’s purpose.

13-16

13 Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house; 14 and a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 when the Sabeans[fn] raided them and took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!” A lightning bolt set the pastures ablaze and burned up the livestock.

This is interesting, because evidently Satan can manipulate nature. Remember the storm on the Sea of Galilee that almost sunk the Jesus boat. Jesus rebuked the wind and waves.

Perhaps Satan was behind the storm at sea – as he was the lightning storm that struck Job’s herd.

17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!” The bad news keeps coming and piles on. Now the camels and the servants are dead.

18-19

18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, 19 and suddenly a great wind came from across[fn] the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!” Notice again the weather-the great wind. Now to be clear God didn’t order the wind, but clearly it was Satan’s prerogative.

Each messenger comes with worse news than the first, and now Job learns that all of his children have died at once. If it were the kids first, it would've been less impactful.

Satan is smart, he knows how to affect us.

Think about this day for Job. Job wakes up with the world by the tail. By the end of the day, he’s lost it all.

How would you’ve responded if this happened to you?

20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

Job is absolutely grieving, the pain overwhelming, yet while in the grip of an agony none of us can fully comprehend, he still worships.

As he worships, Job offers one of the most stunning statements of faith in the Bible...

21 And he said:

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
And naked shall I return there.

The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away;

Blessed be the name of the LORD.”” It’s obvious Job worshiped the Giver not His gifts.

Job believed that God is sovereign. Which means God has the right to do as He pleases without getting my counsel or my approval. It’s God’s right to both give and take...

What if one day God completely cut off the flow of blessing into your life? What if the tangible benefits were gone? Would we still worship - simply because God is worthy to be worshiped? Or does our worship of God come only from how He’s blessed us?

Job knew he came into this world with nothing, so everything he had was from God. Job now has less, but it was still more than he came into this world with and more than he would take with him to eternity.

We'll finish our study...

22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong. In the midst of our suffering it's entirely ok to grieve, and to be broken, but we must continue to praise God for who He is.

And again this brings up the question-do we praise God only in happiness and blessing – or do we love Him despite the pain in our suffering?

I'm going to humbly ask you to write this in your Bibles, because I don't ever want you to forget it.

It has brought enormous comfort to me, and buoyed me in moments of despair. It's an OT prophecy, it speaks of the coming of Jesus.

**Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench;
He will bring forth justice for truth.**

SHOW PIC A reed is a fairly fragile plant, yet if a reed is bruised, it's worthless in the eyes of the world. But not to Jesus. Jesus will handle the bruised reed so gently that He will not break it.

CLOSE PIC

Flax was used for tinder to start a fire. **SHOW PIC** But flax is no good if it's only smoking and produces no flame. Again the smoking flax is worthless in the eyes of the world, but not to Jesus. Jesus won't quench the smoking flax. Instead, Jesus will

gently blow on the smoking flax, fanning it into flame again.

CLOSE PIC

This evening, are you a bruised reed? Are you bearing the scars of suffering? I want to encourage you to fix your eyes on the Lord so that He gets the glory through your weakness. **2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.** You may be weak because of your suffering, but perhaps the Lord is allowing it to show Himself strong in you, and through you.

Are you a smoking flax? Has your heart grown cold and calloused because of the suffering you've endured in the past? Jesus is the spark that can get the fires of enthusiasm burning again! At times, it's hard to start a fire. You have to prime it, show patience, and be persistent. But those are all tasks Jesus is good at. He's an expert at rekindling fire!

And not only can Jesus relight a fire in your heart, He can do the same in a marriage, or with a friendship, or for a confidence. Jesus will take smoldering kindling - a flicker of a flame - and fan it back to a full-blown blaze.

WORSHIP