

All Shall Be Well  
Job 42

Take your Bibles and turn to James 5. Tonight, we come to the end of Job's story. It has been a long road, and there were no shortcuts for Job to get to this point. In the same way, there are no shortcuts for us on the path of our sanctification. James reminds us of the great lesson the book of Job holds out to us.

**<sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup> You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. <sup>9</sup> Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. (James 5:7-11)**

Job is an example to us. That's why we've been considering him. He shows us how to be patient until the coming of the Lord. James reminds us that the coming of the Lord is at hand, meaning it is imminent. It will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye as Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 15. He, the Judge, is standing at the door, and it could open at any moment. Does that give you hope?

The end of Job's story has much hope to offer us tonight. The English translation of verse 11 does not do it justice. The phrase James used there in verse 11, "the purpose of the Lord," literally means "the end from the Lord." James was saying, "Remember the end, the outcome, of Job's story, which shows us how the Lord is compassionate and merciful." That word compassionate in the Greek literally translates as "many-bowelled." That's odd, but it refers to the intense, full affection of God towards His people. He loves us with hurricane force. The end of Job's story tells us much about God's many-bowelled compassion and His unfailing mercy.

Let's turn to Job 42 and read together the wondrous conclusion to the history of Job. I want to point out three particular ways that God's compassion and mercy are displayed in the end of Job's story. Remember what we read last week. God spoke in the whirlwind. He confronted Job with His majesty and indescribable power. He asked Job a series of questions that made Job feel smaller and smaller with each successive query. In the end, God held behemoth and leviathan before Job, painting with vivid words the most terrifying creatures He had created. God declared that these unstoppable forces of His creation were completely under His control. However terrifying they may be to Job, and to us, they are not terrifying to God. He made them, and He will use them for His own purposes. Then, God ceased to speak, while Job trembled awestruck before the One who created and controls behemoth and leviathan. How would Job respond?

**Then Job answered the Lord and said:**

<sup>2</sup> “I know that you can do all things,  
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.  
<sup>3</sup> ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’  
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.  
<sup>4</sup> ‘Hear, and I will speak;  
I will question you, and you make it known to me.’  
<sup>5</sup> I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,  
but now my eye sees you;  
<sup>6</sup> therefore I despise myself,  
and repent in dust and ashes.”  
(Job 42:1-6)

The first way we see the Lord’s compassion and mercy is that Job is humbled. Does that seem odd? Humility is the first gift we receive as a result of God’s compassion and mercy. This is what the revelation of God accomplishes in those who believe it and receive it. Any other response to a true encounter with the living God would mean that you have not truly encountered the living God. Have you ever trembled after reading the Word of God? Have you ever been brought to your knees because you knew that God had spoken to you directly? Have your eyes ever filled with tears as God’s voice echoed in the hollow caverns of your dark heart, and brought to light your sin? Have you ever despised yourself in the presence of God? Has your heart ever been strangely warmed by the fire of His holiness and love? Have you repented in the knowledge of the One who can do all things, whose purposes can never be thwarted? I pray that you would have such an encounter with God. He is ready to meet you even here tonight. Are you seeking Him?

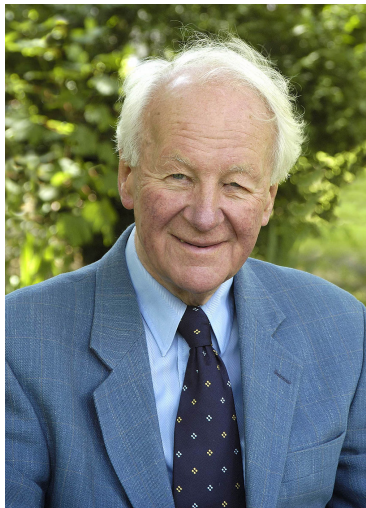
If so, let me warn you that you will be humbled in His presence. You will not be left the same as you were before you encountered Him. But this humbling is not a bad thing; it is the greatest gift God has to offer you this side of glory. I like how Christopher Ash put this in his commentary on Job,



“The most deeply compassionate and merciful thing God can do is to humble us and bring us low so that we bow before him and lean on Him and trust Him.”

This humbling is not a one-and-done event in our lives. It is an ongoing process, intimately entwined in the ongoing process of our sanctification. The humbler we become, the holier we become. Humility and holiness go hand-in-hand.

Job was not confessing here that he was guilty just as his friends had accused him of being guilty. He is not confessing to his friends. They had accused him falsely. But now, having stood in the presence of the Almighty, he is confessing something far deeper than his friends could even imagine. He now sees sin for what it is in its essence. I like how John Stott defined the essence of sin.



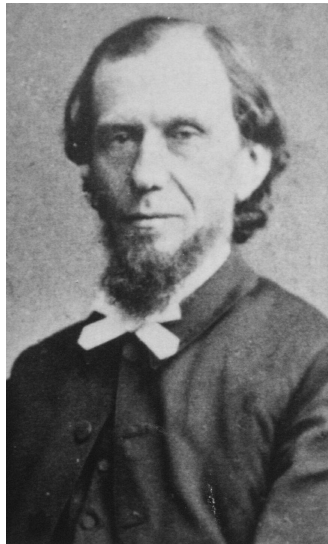
**“The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be.”**

Job confessed here that he had thought too highly of himself. By questioning God’s governance of this world, he was essentially saying, “I think I could run this world better than you.” He realized how utterly wrong he was. I struggle to manage the small, ordinary affairs of daily life. How could I possibly think that I could handle governing the universe? It’s insanity, and it’s sin. It’s in our pride that we foolishly think we can control the uncontrollable.

Only God has the requisite wisdom to sovereignly govern this world, and His wisdom is so great that He is able to do it in such a way that He remains good in spite of the existence of such terrifying evil. He cannot be touched by evil even though evil exists in the world that He has made. He remains holy, and He governs the rebels in order to vindicate His own justice and righteousness and display his compassion and mercy in the end. He has a plan to overcome the evil that has taken root in the human heart. As Stott said, He sacrifices Himself for man and puts Himself where only man deserves to be. Where and when did God do that? On the cross on Calvary.

The same God who subdues the untamable beasts, behemoth and leviathan, would ultimately subdue Satan under his feet. He crushed the head of that vile serpent not by becoming strong, but by becoming weak. He overcame evil not with evil, but with good. He defeated death by dying. This is the wisdom of God which ought to cause us to put our hand over our mouth like Job. We should not be so presumptuous as to think that we can find another way of overcoming Satan and the grave. We should humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, by which He dealt the death blow to Satan's schemes. The cross of Jesus Christ is our victory. It humbles us. It shows us our need. It *is* our need. It is our only hope.

So, the first gift God offered to Job in the end was the gift of humility. This is not typically the first gift that we seek from God, but it is the first gift He desires to give us. We cannot receive the other gifts God has for us until we have first been humbled. The gifts that follow can only be received rightly after we have been humbled. As Andrew Murray said,



“Humility is the only soil in which the graces root; the lack of humility is the sufficient explanation of every defect and failure. Humility is not so much a grace or virtue along with others; it is the root of all, because it alone takes the right attitude before God, and allows Him as God to do all.”

Having been humbled in the presence of God Almighty, Job is ready to receive the second gift, which is seen in verses 7-9. In these verses, the style shifts back from poetry to prose. After nearly 40 chapters of poetry, we return to the prose style with which the book began. Watch how this beautiful ending to the story unfolds.

<sup>7</sup> After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. <sup>8</sup> Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you,

for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly. For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.”<sup>9</sup> So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them, and the Lord accepted Job's prayer. (Job 42:7-9)

The second gift of God's compassion and mercy is the gift of forgiveness. I don't mean primarily the gift of being forgiven, although that is certainly involved here. I mean the gift of being able to forgive others. Job has been forgiven by God, and so he is able to forgive as he has been forgiven. Job is given the gift of intercessory prayer. He gets to be a peacemaker. This is a stunning and ironic reversal. The friends who came thinking they had wisdom and comfort to offer Job, who thought they were in the position to bless the lesser, are now told by the Lord Himself that they are the lesser who need to be blessed by Job. These wealthy and wise men of influence need Job, an unrecognizable worm of a man, to pray for them. He tells the friends that he will accept Job's prayer. Don't miss that! Wow! God says Job's prayer has authority in heaven. I'm reminded of Jesus' words to His disciples in John 20:23, “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” (John 20:23) That's the same thing God is saying about Job. He would accept Job's prayer to forgive the sins of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

Notice that God doesn't command Job to pray. He simply tells Job's friends that Job will pray for them. I think this is significant because it shows that He knows Job's heart. He doesn't even need to give Job the command. He knows that Job, having been humbled and forgiven, will gladly entreat the Lord to show favor even on those who had maligned and slandered him. God knows what Job is, and thus He knows what Job will do.

Job's faith has made him all the things which Jesus declares to be blessed. You remember the beatitudes. Listen to these and consider how they each apply to Job.

<sup>2</sup> And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup> “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup> “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

<sup>9</sup> “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup> “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

(Matthew 5:2-12)

Faith makes us blessed because it makes us exactly what God wants us to be. I wanted to read that whole list because I want us to see how Job had all these ingredients of a life of blessing. By faith, Job was poor in spirit. He laid his hand on his mouth. He despised himself. By faith, Job mourned. Oh, how he mourned in chapter 3. By faith, Job was meek. He did not consider himself greater than his friends, though they considered themselves greater than him. By faith, Job hungered and thirsted for righteousness. His eye poured out tears to God that His witness in heaven would testify for him. By faith, Job was merciful. He offered forgiveness to those whom he could have sought to punish. By faith, Job was pure in heart. His only desire was to see God and dwell in His presence, and he was granted his desire. By faith, Job was a peacemaker. He prayed for those who persecuted him. By faith, Job was persecuted for righteousness' sake. And by faith, others reviled Job and persecuted him and uttered all kinds of evil against him falsely on Jesus' account.

In all these things, Job became a reflection of our great God and Savior at the end. We are never more like our Savior than when we offer forgiveness to those who have wronged us. Remember how unrelenting these so-called friends had been in their assaults on Job's character. Consider how difficult it must have been for Job to forgive them. Only someone in touch with the compassion and mercy of God could find power to forgive those who had wronged him so severely. We cannot forgive truly until we have received God's forgiveness. Job fulfilled the commandments of Jesus long before Jesus spoke these words of the Sermon on the Mount.

<sup>43</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.<sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup> You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48)

It's one thing to love those who love us, but it's quite another to love those who hate us. The word translated perfect in Matthew 5:48 is *teleios*, which doesn't mean exactly what we mean by our English word perfect. It's a form of the Greek word *telos*, which means end or finish. The word does not have to do so much with never making a mistake, as it refers to reaching a point of consummation or completion. It refers to our being made what we were originally meant to be. Strong's concordance defines it as "developed into a consummated completion by fulfilling the necessary process." So, Jesus is saying that we will be made complete and whole when we have learned to love our enemies even as they cause our suffering.

The author of Hebrews says this is how Jesus was made perfect. Look at Hebrews 5.

<sup>7</sup> In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.<sup>8</sup> Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.<sup>9</sup> And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

This speaks of all the prayers and supplications that Jesus offered up in the midst of His suffering. Certainly, it refers to His prayer in Gethsemane, "Not My will, but Thine be done." I believe it also refers to this one, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 22:34) It was the Father's will that He should pray that for us, His enemies, as He died and bore our curse in our place. He was heard because of His reverence, just as Job's prayer for his friends was heard. It is when we have learned to pray for the forgiveness of our enemies even as they conspire against us and seek to end our lives that we are made perfect, complete, mature, like our Father in Heaven. That is the point at which we as human beings, made in the image of God, have become most like God. The restoration of the imago Dei, the image of God, is completed when we have learned to forgive and to love those who persecute us.

So, in the end, we see that Job has been perfected by this process of humiliation. He has ceased to justify himself. He has ceased to think of himself at all. In this way, he proves God right in the end. Isn't that what started this whole ordeal? Wasn't it ultimately a contest between God and Satan over whether or not Job was truly a blameless man? God knew Job. God knew who Job was, and He knew who Job was becoming, and He knew who Job would be in the end. Satan said otherwise. Satan argued with God that Job was only righteous because God had given him an easy life. So, God allowed Satan to prove Him right. He knew Job's faith would endure to the end, no matter what Satan would throw at him. He knew that Job would not renounce His faith and trust in God, no matter how terrible the sufferings of this life might be. God knew that His compassion and mercy would ultimately win the day.

As Job prayed for his friends, who had really become his enemies, Satan was vanquished. Satan was proved to be a liar and a fool. When we endure to the end, when we humble ourselves and forgive as we've been forgiven, God is proved to be more powerful than Satan, and we are made perfect. One of the distinguishing marks of the children of God is our ability to forgive and pray for those who persecute us. We are a community that has been forgiven much, and that knows how to forgive much. An unforgiving spirit is a denial of the gospel. Paul explains this well at the end of Ephesians 4, as he describes the kind of life the gospel should lead us to live, a life worthy of our calling.

<sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 4:30-5:2)

It's hard to miss the connection between forgiving one another and being imitators of God. Is there anyone you are bitter towards? Is there anger and wrath inside of you? Are you rooting against anyone, hoping to see their downfall? Remember how God in Christ forgave you, and let that free you from the bitterness and the wrath.

Once Job had prayed for his friends and the Lord had answered his prayer, he was ready to receive the third gift of God's compassion and mercy. He was ready to receive his reward.

<sup>10</sup> And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. <sup>11</sup> Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and ate bread with him in his house. And they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him. And each of them gave him a piece of money and a ring of gold.

<sup>12</sup> And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. And he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. <sup>13</sup> He had also seven sons and three daughters. <sup>14</sup> And he called the name of the first daughter Jemimah, and the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-happuch. <sup>15</sup> And in all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters. And their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. <sup>16</sup> And after this Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, four generations. <sup>17</sup> And Job died, an old man, and full of days. (Job 42:10-17)

Don't misinterpret this to mean that God will always deliver us from every earthly trial and reward us with greater earthly goods after the trial. That is not the point here. Sometimes, our earthly trials end in death, which is our ultimate deliverance. The true lesson here is a spiritual one. God blessed Job in this particular way to teach us that He rewards those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). He authored Job's story in this way to give us hope that our sufferings are not the end. But remember that our reward is not earthly; it is heavenly. He gave Job a double blessing after all that he endured to teach us that the rewards He will give us in the end are worth waiting for. The true blessing for Job was humility, forgiveness, and a deeper intimacy with God that came through his sufferings. Remember James words one more time.

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. (James 5:7a)

The coming of the Lord. That's it. That's what we're waiting for. That's our reward. Rest assured that the end of the story will be beautiful if you are trusting in Jesus. The end will be a time of complete, cosmic redemption. All shall be made well even as all is made new. The end will be strangely sweetened by the sorrows we are presently enduring. What tastes bitter today will be made sweet when we can look back upon it in glory. Somehow, someday, the calm will be the better for the storms that we endured. So it is fitting that Job's story ends on a happy note. If we are not careful, we can miss the deep significance and profundity of this happy ending. This is not just the sentimental, Disneyfied fairy tale "happily-ever-after" ending which has been proven to be trite and obviously unrealistic in our modern world. This is the true end of a man who suffered greatly because he was righteous on account of faith. God has something to say to us all in the blessings he lavished on Job in his latter days.

He is revealing Himself as the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is showing Himself to be compassionate and merciful, just as He said to Moses.



“The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.” (Exodus 34:6-7)

He is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. He will reward those who humble themselves and seek His face, and learn to offer forgiveness as He has offered forgiveness. So, have you been humbled in the presence of God? Are you being made perfect by learning to love your enemies and to pray for those who persecute you? Are you being prepared to receive a great reward from your Father in Heaven? Do the things of earth mean nothing to you in comparison with the glory that is to be revealed?

<sup>11</sup> Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. (James 5:11)