

## Job

Week 6 of 8

Job 38-39

### TRANSITION FROM MISSIONS UPDATE:

Reinforce the value of missions at CCC and point people to .info to learn more about upcoming missions efforts.

### INTRO

One of my fondest memories as a kid is gathering together with my family once a year to watch on TV, in technicolor, *The Wizard of Oz!* We'd have popcorn, sodas, etc. Now as an 80's kid, you can understand why this was such a big deal. Unlike the on-demand reality of today's media landscape, this was the one time a year where *The Wizard of Oz* was broadcast nationally into the homes of millions of American families. I'm sure you recall the plot. An unsuspecting protagonist meets calamity that completely upends her world and sends her hurling through time and space until she ends up in the land of Oz. She runs into three friends along the way with the belief that if only they could meet the wizard then she could get back home and all of her problems would be solved.

*We're off to see the wizard, the wonderful wizard of Oz! We here he is a wonderful wiz because of the things he does. If ever oh ever a whiz there was, the wizard of oz is one because, because, because, because, because, because --- because of the wonderful things he does!*

### Wicked

In our family, *The Wizard of Oz* has been something of a passion. Jessica played Dorothy in high school, I played the cowardly lion at a community theater, and our daughter, Jules has seen the musical *Wicked* on her 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> birthdays. *When I meet the wizard my whole life will change!*

The promise is so good. If I can get an audience with the wizard then everything will be better! This story is not all that dissimilar to what we've been studying through the past 5 weeks in the book of Job. Job meets a series of calamities that completely upend his world. A series of life-altering events ripped everything from Job – his kids, his wealth, his health, his reputation and his standing within the community. Job, who was revered among the land as “the greatest man among all the people of the East” has now been reduced to one who cursed the very day of his birth and wished to die.

His belief was similar to Dorothy's. If I can just meet with God then I can clear up this mess. Everything will change. I will be vindicated. I'll have an answer to why any and all of this has happened.

In fact, for 34 chapters, chapters 3-37 we see a back and forth dialog between Job and his three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite trying to make sense of the situation. The three friends came to Job to comfort him in his distress. They wept with him, sat with him in silence for seven days and seven nights, grieved over his circumstances and bitter losses, and offered up their individual wisdom to Job.

The general consensus among the three is that Job must have done something wrong for God to have his heavy hand of judgment upon him, for after all, the righteous do not suffer such retribution. Throughout the back and forth discourse, Job continually maintains his innocence and time and time again Job cries out to get an audience with God to clear up the misunderstanding.

Here are several instances –

**Job – 13:3** “But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God.”

**13:20** “Only grant me these two things, O God, and then I will not hide from you: Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply.”

**23:3** “If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say.

**30:20** “I cry out to you, O God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me.”

**31:35** “oh, that I had someone to hear me! I sign now my defense - let the almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing. Surely I would wear it on my shoulder, I would put it on like a crown. I would give him an account of my every step; like a prince I would approach him”

Job is wanting to argue his case.

He wants relief from the circumstances and an explanation, if only I knew where to find this God, but he doesn't answer.

And the very last defense we hear from Job he calls God an accuser. Put these accusations against me in writing so I can wear them on my shoulder and on my head like a crown. I would be able to hold my head up high and walk in like a prince!

God, you are the one doing this to me, even though I am innocent! Let's have it out, clear the air. You've got it all wrong.

Before we get too hard up against Job and his response, we have to identify with Job in his suffering just a little. Because if we are honest, if I am honest, I have and would be asking God the same exact things that Job has.

What did I do to deserve this?

Why are you allowing this to happen to me?

Do you even care?

You have the ability to do anything you want, and yet you determine to bring your wrath against me, one who is innocent!

WHY?

Woven throughout Job's responses to his friends Job is convinced that if he could just talk to God that all of this would be sorted. All of this would clear up. This is all a gross misunderstanding, a perversion of justice. God has gotten it all wrong. He must be wrong. Look at me!

There is no question that suffering has been one of the key themes throughout the book of Job, and today we are finally reaching the climactic confrontation between the Almighty God and the afflicted Job. This is the moment Job has been crying out for.

### **THE LORD SPEAKS (38:1)**

**Job 38:1 Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm.**

Don't miss the importance of this statement. **God spoke. God showed up.** God finally gives Job the audience he had been crying out for. God could've remained far off. God could have ignored Job's pleas and remained silent, but God spoke. This is part of the complex character of the Almighty God whom we serve. He is not far off or distant or aloof. He is present, alive, active, and personal.

#### **God presents himself to Job out of a storm.**

Midwesterners are no strangers to storms. We understand the power of a swift, violent, powerful storm. The entirety of the horizon is swallowed in darkness. Ominous clouds charged with electricity are ripe with potential for lightning flashes, peals of thunder, swift, terrifying winds and rains that cover the earth.

I imagine Job was quite surprised, terrified even, at how God revealed himself. Unlike the Wizard of Oz who turns out to be nothing more than smoke and mirrors, this is the God of Uz who was, is, and always will be far surpassing any expectations and understandings Job and his friends held to.

**Job 38:1-3 Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: <sup>2</sup>“Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? <sup>3</sup>Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.**

God shows up and speaks, and then he questions Job. “Who is this?” You are speaking out of turn! You are lobbying accusations built upon incomplete understanding. You think you know me. You think you understand this world. Well, let's see.

“Brace yourself like a man” That phrase means, prepare yourself for battle. Tie up your shoe laces, tuck in your shirt, tighten your straps. You want to have it out? Let's go! I will question you, and you shall answer me.

### **THE LORD EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (38-39)**

God now begins to reveal a glimpse of the nature of who he truly is, and he does so by asking a series of questions meant to illuminate just how wonderfully mysterious and incredible God's created order is.

In the upcoming four chapters, God poses over 80 questions to Job concerning the natural world, beginning with the earth and the seas.

**Center Screen:**

**Earth and Seas**

**Dawn and the Deep (death)**

## Light and Darkness

## Snow, Hail and Rain

## Constellations

## Animals

Job 38:4-11

*“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?  
Tell me, if you understand.*

*<sup>5</sup> Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!  
Who stretched a measuring line across it?*

*<sup>6</sup> On what were its footings set,  
or who laid its cornerstone—*

*<sup>7</sup> while the morning stars sang together  
and all the angels<sup>[a]</sup> shouted for joy?*

*<sup>8</sup> “Who shut up the sea behind doors  
when it burst forth from the womb,*

*<sup>9</sup> when I made the clouds its garment  
and wrapped it in thick darkness,*

*<sup>10</sup> when I fixed limits for it  
and set its doors and bars in place,*

*<sup>11</sup> when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther;  
here is where your proud waves halt?’*

His line of questioning now expands into Dawn and the Deep or death.

Job 38:12-18

*<sup>12</sup> “Have you ever given orders to the morning,  
or shown the dawn its place,*

*<sup>13</sup> that it might take the earth by the edges  
and shake the wicked out of it?*

*<sup>14</sup> The earth takes shape like clay under a seal;  
its features stand out like those of a garment.*

*<sup>15</sup> The wicked are denied their light,  
and their upraised arm is broken.*

*<sup>16</sup> “Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea  
or walked in the recesses of the deep?*

*<sup>17</sup> Have the gates of death been shown to you?  
Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness?*

*<sup>18</sup> Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth?  
Tell me, if you know all this.*

And if you read through the rest of the LORD’s speech he continues with light and darkness, weather – snow, hail, and rain – constellations in space, and the creation of wild animals.

God is not asking these questions to shame, guilt, be heavy handed with, or beat down Job into submission, rather to illuminate Job’s mind of what he has already seen, to reconsider the wonder of the created order and the incomprehensible mysteries of things we simply cannot fully understand.

Merilee Web Story –

In my college years, I had a professor who gave us an illustration that relates to this. She drew a circle on a board and made a small little pie chart. Like a sliver of pie. And she said, “This is the

things you know that you know. Your name, your birth city, your likes, experiences, etc.” Then she drew a larger, but still quite small sliver of pie and said, “These are the things you know that you don’t know.” I know that I have never sky-dived. I know that I cannot engineer a rocket booster. I know that I have never been to Antarctica, etc. And then the remaining space of the pie chart, which was the majority of the circle she said, “This is all the stuff you don’t know that you don’t know. Things you have no comprehension of. Stuff you didn’t even know existed.” I can’t help but to think that God’s entire line of questioning to Job was geared in this motivation. God never accused Job of sinning. He didn’t deny that Job had indeed been suffering. He wasn’t attempting to thumb his power over Job. No, he was merely helping to open up Job’s mind to the fullness of everything that he couldn’t even fathom.

“Where were you when I?”

“Who was there when I?”

“tell me if you understand, if you know all of this”

“Surely you must know! For you were already born. You have lived so long!”

In asking these questions Job had to have thought, “I wasn’t there. Only you could do it, LORD, I don’t understand it. I’ve only lived a short while on this earth, unlike you, LORD” God’s purpose in his questioning of Job was to assert that unlike finite, mortal humankind, God is infinitely powerful, wise, and sovereign over all things! It is impossible for created human beings to even begin to fully comprehend the breadth and depth of this truth.

### **JOB SHUTS HIS MOUTH (40:4-5)**

Job 40:1-5 The LORD said to Job: "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!" Then Job answered the LORD: "I am unworthy - how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer - twice, but I will say no more."

### **Our Response**

Too often I believe our response to bad things happening in our lives is influenced by an incomplete understanding of who God really is. We fall back into the “cause and effect” or “retribution principle” understanding of God. If/then. If I am good enough, then God will bless me. If I am suffering, I must’ve done something to deserve it. If I haven’t done anything to deserve it and I am still suffering, then God must not be trustworthy, loving, and good.

When we hold to that incomplete understanding, We ask, “God, why are you allowing this to happen? Don’t you care about me? I have given my life to serve you, and yet still I am crushed by the weight of the world.”

And I’m not saying that the weight of your circumstance doesn’t carry with it real pain and heartache! Maybe you have experienced the bitter pill of having someone you love run out on you, without cause or explanation. Perhaps you have tasted the cruelty of a disease that makes daily life wrought with misery. Maybe your son or daughter has gone wayward from the faith and are living a life that is completely opposite of a God-honoring, faith-filled life. Maybe you, like Job, have experienced calamity – a job loss, a series of abuses, dreams crushed and shattered, you’ve been cheated on, lied to, you’ve endured a debilitating an accident, the pre-mature death of your child or a best friend,

What is your response? Is it similar to Job? “God, I haven’t done anything to deserve any of this. Why haven’t you moved?!”

I think the place we ought to all work toward is a quiet confidence in spite of any circumstance that may befall my life, that God is good, faithful, just, loving, and sovereign over all things. I may not understand the present realities of my pain, but I can cling to the LORD in the midst of it, trusting in his unfailing mercies.

You might be asking, so what am I supposed to just take it? Am I supposed to be a weak, feeble, passive doormat to the things happening around me?

No! Cry out to God! Present your requests before him through prayers, petitions. That’s why we have prayer teams and elders and a care and renewal ministry to help real people who are facing real problems to take their pains before God in healthy ways with people who love God and have their best interest at heart.

It’s wise for us to take the same posture that Christ Jesus took while in the garden awaiting his betrayal and execution. He pleaded with the Father to take away the cup he was about to drink, and yet he surrendered his will to God’s. Not my will, but yours be done. To know that through trials and all kinds of suffering God strengthens our faith and builds us into the people he desires for us to become!

You might find yourself in your circumstance pleading before God in prayer and still end up suffering through it. Can you come to the place of quiet surrender to say to God, “Lord, I want (fill in the blank)

- to be healed from this diagnosis
- to have my children walk with you
- to have my marriage restored... But even if it is not, you are enough.

The point of the Job story is not solely that we would endure suffering well. The point of Job is that there is an Almighty God who exists outside of space, time, and natural laws who put all of this world together and in his sovereignty holds the entire world within his omnipotent hands, exercising his omniscience, and his omnipresence. He is good. He is loving. He is the LORD. Let’s pray.