

More Than Job Ever Dreamed

Job 42

She had no idea that a seat was reserved for her for the 2002 State of the Union address, or that the President of the United States would recognize her before a world-wide television audience within the first few seconds of his address. But then again, the entire world had changed since Sept. 11, 2001, and Lisa Beamer had already assumed her life would never be the same. Lisa's husband Todd had been on United Flight 93, the fourth plane hijacked on the darkest day in America's history since Pearl Harbor, but upon finding that three planes had already been used as missiles against American landmarks, Beamer and his fellow passengers decided they would fight back. Though the details of the final struggle will be buried forever in the Pennsylvania field where the plan crashed, Todd Beamer's challenge of "Let's roll," had already rung an important chord with the entire country. "In the normal course of events," said President George W. Bush, in his opening remarks, "Presidents come to this chamber to report on the state of the Union. Tonight, no such report is needed. It has already been delivered by the American people. We have seen it in the courage of passengers who rushed terrorists to save others on the ground - passengers like an exceptional man named Todd Beamer. And would you please help me to welcome his wife, Lisa Beamer, here tonight." The applause was thunderous, and Lisa didn't know what to do with the standing ovation. And so, very slowly, she stood with the rest of the country. "Standing there in my borrowed dress, with the eyes of the whole world on me, I somehow managed to remain standing," Lisa wrote in her book, *Let's Roll*. "I glanced down at the floor of the Chamber and saw the faces of our national leaders looking back up at me, applauding. It was an extremely strange feeling. No doubt if Todd were alive, he'd be laughing and saying, 'Can you believe this?'" There was much more, of course, for Lisa Beamer. National talk show hosts demanded to talk with her, before audiences of millions. She'd meet with the President and his wife again, privately. She would soon write a national best-seller about her memories of September 11. Can you imagine how dramatically and instantly life seemed to change for Lisa Beamer? On Sept. 10, 2001, she was the mother of two, and dealing with the first stages of pregnancy. No one could have convinced her that in less than four months, she'd know the President of the United States! (Source: *Let's Roll*. Lisa Beamer, page 248.) Lisa Beamer would say later she would trade all the notoriety for one more day with her husband. The cost of meeting the President was far too high . . . the road that took her to Washington was paved with the worst grief of her life.

Job's road to the most important encounter he'd ever have was paved with similar grief. In a single day, he, too, had lost people he loved. Every one of his children had perished in a single calamity. His own, painful illness that followed must have paled in comparison to those losses. The grief and pain was so severe, Job must have wondered if it would ever end. Job is a discovery of the infinite wisdom of God and His incomprehensible ways. Job and his friends think human wisdom and logic is sufficient to comprehend God.

Job admits that God's wisdom is infinitely greater than his own. His efforts to explain God's ways only brought darkness, not light. When we come to the final chapters, God responds to a five-man, 35-chapter debate on suffering – not by answering Job's questions – but by simply showing up. When Job finally gets a chance to speak, he speaks as a changed, humbled man. No longer does he demand an answer from God. No longer does he insist that his righteousness wasn't deserving of suffering. Job's friends had taken 8 turns accusing Job of all sorts of evil. They blamed him for his children's deaths, and by the end, they had grown harsh and personal. Job arrives at a different conclusion with God. "*Therefore, I put my hand over my mouth...*" Job 40:4

If you underline any passage in the book of Job, underline this verse: "*I had heard about you before, but now I have seen you.*" Job 40:4

God gave Job more than Job ever dreamed. God gave Job Himself. Job sees God—and that is enough. The years to come find Job with his health restored. His lap is once again full of children and grandchildren – A new beginning, indeed. If Job ever wonders why God doesn't bring back the children he has taken away, he doesn't ask. Maybe he knows that his children could never be happier than they are in the presence of this One he has seen so briefly.

1. God Has A Plan In Spite Of Our Pain.

Then Job replied to the LORD: "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:1-6

The word "despise" in the Hebrew is "ma'as," which has two different meanings. It can mean "to loathe or to abhor or to despise" as the NRSV translates it. However, it also can mean "flow or to run" as "to dissolve, or melt."

When Job says He had "heard," it means he thought he knew all there was to know. All that there was to hear. But when God showed up in the whirlwind, Job adds, "Now my eye sees You." He was melting in the presence of God. It's Job's way of saying, "I thought I appreciated God's glory, but the sight of even a fraction of His majesty blew me away." Right now, we sometimes struggle with God's ways, but when we see Him and fully appreciate the weight of His glory, everything will make sense. So, Job confesses that God alone is sovereign, wise, and glorious.

The verb describes a typical first response to divine revelation. Like Job, Habakkuk had challenged Yahweh's apparent indifference to the sufferings of the righteous. But then Habakkuk had his own visionary experience with God. In Habakkuk 3:16, he confesses how he is undone. It is the same with Job. Yahweh has spoken. Job has said, "*I hear, ...I see.*" Job 42:5

Job had charged God with unfairness. But now that he has met God, he simply says "You are God. I am not. That is good enough for me. I dissolve and repent." The idea of dissolving in God's presence intriguing.

When a caterpillar becomes a cocoon, it doesn't undergo a gradual transformation. Rather the caterpillar's body totally dissolves until it is a liquid "soup," and out of this soup, a butterfly takes shape.

That's what happened to Job. He was dissolved. He never got an answer to any of his questions, but through an encounter with God, he no longer needed an answer, for he had a renewed relationship with God. He became a butterfly.

What do good people do when bad things happen? Through an encounter with God, they are dissolved and made new. Out of this newness they learn to live again, to take risks, and become more generous and giving with those around them.

We are left with some life changing conclusions at the end of Job's encounter with God.

- **God Is So Powerful, Healthy Fear Is The Appropriate Response.**

Adam and Eve covered in the Garden. Moses could barely breathe in front of the burning bush. Isaiah said, "I'm a dead man." The disciples bowed in their still-rocking boat and worshipped the man who had just ordered a storm to disappear. John and Peter left the empty tomb trying to fathom what they'd just discovered. Peter, especially, wondered what a risen Savior would do with a denying disciple. Saul needed three days to recover his eyesight after his Damascus Road experience, so shaken that he would take no food or liquid.

When people meet God in the Bible, no one is laughing. No one is taking it lightly. No one acts as though a meeting with God is part of a routine schedule. This is why the Proverb writer concludes, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...*" Proverbs 1:7

When we grasp the power of God, we're just like Job. All of our questions, all of our complaints, all of our priorities melt into complete awe.

After his opening statement, Job is silent. After all the words in the previous chapters, there is not another word recorded from his lips. Seeing God, and understanding God's power, changed Job's entire perspective. He had a renewed fear of God, and it was a healthy fear.

When Job saw the approaching clouds the Lord spoke to him from, according to Job 38:1, surely he became nervous. From the hints we have in Elihu's comments, it must have been an impressive set of clouds, filled with lightning and thunder and wind. It would have been a massive show of force, a Category 5 type of entrance for God.

Job wasn't hurt, wasn't injured, and wasn't silenced. Not long after God joins the conversation, Job is blessed with children, property, and wealth. His prestige, integrity, and honor are restored. He died "old and full of years," having seen his great-great grandchildren born from his second set of children.

Millions of golfers know the name of Harvey Penick. His first book, Harvey Penick's Little Red Book, became a surprising best-seller, selling more than 1 million copies in 1992, quickly earning the title of the best-selling sports book of all time. But by the time Penick even showed his notes – the genesis for his book – to a local writer, he was nearly 90 years old. Penick wanted to know if the book was worth publishing. The writer read it and told him he liked the book. In fact, by the next evening, the same man left word with Penick's wife that Simon & Schuster had agreed to an advance of \$90,000.

When the writer saw Penick later, the old man seemed troubled. Finally, Penick came clean. With all his medical bills, he said, there was no way he could advance Simon & Schuster that much money. It took a while, but finally the writer convinced Penick that the publisher would pay him the \$90,000 . . . not the other way around!

What a joy to realize that instead of needing to pay God an insurmountable bill for sins already committed, God has decided to give us the priceless gift of grace – our sins are already paid for, in full.

2. Obedience Always Opens The Door To New Life.

"After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before." Job 42:10

God only gave Job one set of instructions. He was to pray for his friends, the men who had argued with him during his lowest hours. Job had been forgiven, and as a result, Job was expected to forgive. This was the command of God to Job. Job was always honoring God and putting God first.

What life-changing and inconvenient command is God giving you?

3. Even After Loss, Life Can Begin Again.

Although life is never the same after we have lost someone, it can begin again. The 10 children Job gets at the end of the book can't replace the ones he lost.

When Job started a new family, he once again had 7 sons and 3 daughters. What's interesting however, is that although this passage doesn't name the 7 sons, it does give the names of the 3 daughters. Although on occasion women play important roles in the Old Testament, only rarely are they mentioned by name. So for this book to give the names of Job's daughters is both unusual and surprising.

Perhaps in this ancient society, the benefit of having seven sons was obvious enough. So, to highlight Job's happy condition, a few words are given concerning his daughters. They are named, and their names highlight the joy of Job's new condition. The first daughter is Jemimah, which means "dove," because God had turned darkness to light. God had brought peace out of turmoil. The second is Keziah, which means "cassia," (an expensive spice similar to cinnamon) because God had replaced the stench of loss with the fragrance of victory. The third is Keren-Happuk, which means "horn (container) of eye paint (which was used to accentuate the beauty of the women in that day). This is the same word used by Moses in Exodus 32 to refer to "glory and brightness." God had replaced Job's pain with God's glory. With these names, we are not surprised to hear that "there could not be found in the land women more beautiful than the daughters of Job."

Even more surprising is the fact that Job gave his daughters an inheritance alongside his 7 sons. To give a daughter an inheritance was just unheard of in Job's day, and it would have surprised and perhaps even scandalized the people around him. And yet Job violates the social norms of his day and treats his daughters as equal to his sons. It is a great affirmation of his love for all of his children and an special blessing to his daughters. Job's suffering and his encounter with God have led him to broaden his perspective that all of his children are precious, and he shows it by his actions.

Anyone who has had a close encounter with death knows that it drastically changes your perspective. Your family, your friends, and even life itself, becomes more precious.

- Nothing can ever make up for what we have lost.

The lessons here are critically important, especially if you happen to be in a season of crushing grief or painful suffering. What Job discovered has given people insight for centuries, and the truths he learned haven't lost an ounce of their power. "*The LORD blessed the latter end of Job MORE than his beginning.*" Job 42:12

Webster defines "more" as being "in greater quantity, amount, measure, degree, or number." The Lord worked in Job's life to give him "more" at the end of his life than he had at the beginning of his life.

I want the "more" that God can give me! I am not interested in the "more" of money, power, or recognition. I am interested in the "more" of the spiritual realm.

Even Though It Requires Patience, Wait On The Lord's Rewards.

- God Restored Job's Fortune.

"*After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before.*" Job 42:10

"*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.*" Job 42:12

God blessed Job with 14,000 sheep. That's a massive herd, even by modern standards. God gave Job 6,000 camels in order to rebuild his huge trading company. God gave him 1,000 yokes of oxen to plow the soil and plant crops, and God gave Job 1,000 female donkeys to carry all of his supplies. God didn't leave any doubt about his approval.

- God Restored Job's Fame.

"*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.*" Job 42:11-12

When Job's wealth returns, so do his family and friends. Suddenly they all want to console him, and they even give him financial gifts. We're thinking, "Where were you when he really needed you?" The narrator brings this up as another symbol of God's blessing. Job 1:3 described Job as "*the greatest of all the people of the East.*"

- God Restored Job's Family.

"And he also had seven sons and three daughters. The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. 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." Job 42:13-15

God blessed Job and Mrs. Job with 7 sons and 3 daughters. Notice that God did not give Job double the children. That's probably because the first 10 were still his. They were just with the Lord. Regardless, it's another symbol of God's restoration.

It reminds us of two things.

- Nothing can ever make up for what we have lost.
- Loss transforms our perspective.

The Christian knows that death does not get the last word so when we remember our loved ones we also cling fast to our hope of eternal life.

- God Restored Job's Health.

"After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation." Job 42:16

We can assume that God healed Job of his boils, because the book concludes by saying that Job lived 140 more years. This is double the 70 years that are mentioned in Psalm 90:10. Not only that, he enjoyed the blessing of watching his children and grandchildren mature. The book ends by highlighting the incredible blessings Job enjoyed for 140 years before his death.

So, God restored every blessing the narrator highlighted in Job 1, except for one. The first quality the narrator highlights in Job 1:1 is that Job was "blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil." God didn't have to restore Job's integrity, because he never lost it. It was the one thing Satan could not take, no matter how he tried and failed.

Job's reply when Satan took his wealth and his children.

"At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.'" Job 1:20-22

Job's response when Satan attacked his body.

"His wife said to him, 'Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!' He replied, 'You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?' In all this, Job did not sin in what he said." Job 2:9-10

These are incredible words of faith and resolve. Job had some low moments, but God's grace carried him through, and in the end, God was faithful and restored everything Satan had taken. God won. Satan lost. And Job was vindicated.

God doesn't bless Job because He is obligated to. Instead, He blesses Job because our God is full of grace and compassion. God is a loving Father who cares for His own.

God's purpose for us often includes deep valleys, sorrow, and pain. Normally, we don't understand why or what God is doing. Oftentimes, it feels cruel and unjust. But God is wise and sovereign, so by faith I embrace it and hold fast to my integrity.

Because God is full of grace and kindness, He will not leave us in misery and agony forever. He is near to His children, and just as He cares for a mountain goat in the remotest wilderness, He will care for us.

It's true that He may not bless you in this life the way he blessed Job, but Hebrews 6:10 states, "*For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name.*" God will be faithful in eternity to bless you beyond your wildest imagination. It will be worth it all!

"Job died, old and full of days." Job 42:17

Job's life ended long and blessed. He was well rewarded as a warrior who won a great battle for God's glory. The idea behind "full of days" is that Job died when he was "satisfied with this life."

"Job is now as willing to die as ever he was to dine; he is satisfied with days, saith the text, not as meat loathed, but as a dish, though well liked, that he had fed his full of."

In this great book of Job, there is no solution of problems. There is a great revelation. It is that God may call men into fellowship with Himself through suffering, and that the strength of the human soul is ever that of the knowledge of God.

We are not all like Job, but we all have Job's God. Though we have neither risen to Job's wealth, nor will, probably, ever sink to Job's poverty, yet there is the same God above us if we be high, and the same God with His everlasting arms beneath us if we be brought low. What the Lord did for Job, He will do for us, not precisely in the same form, but in the same spirit, and with like design.

Job humbled himself before the Plan of God and the Person of God. It was a plan he could not understand, and it was a Person he could not comprehend, but he yielded to the Lord anyway! Those who get "more" are those who humble themselves and yield to God and what He is doing. 4 times in Job 42 God calls Job, "*My servant.*"

We can see this truth worked out all the way through the Bible – Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Widow of Zaphath, Simon Peter, Luke 5; the Disciples, John 21; Three Hebrews; Daniel; Noah; etc. They all got "more" because they humbled themselves before God and His perfect plan!