

There Was a Man

Job 1:1-5

Intro: Why a sermon series on the Book of Job?

- It addresses, in a unique and profound way, the reality of suffering.
 - When God's people experience great heartache and loss, they often turn to Job.
 - *Suffering Well* – Rick Thomas
 - *Lament for a Son* – Nicholas Wolterstorff
 - *Grace Disguised* - Jerry Sittser
 - *Laughing at the Days to Come* - Tessa Thompson
- It's an extremely relevant book. Life is filled with loss and sorrows. Some of you are in the midst of great sorrows right now.

It's not an easy book. It's long, repetitive

Deals with a topic we would rather avoid. We live with secret fears, with the shadow of things we dread. Usually related to our children.

"The Patriot" - Mel Gibson: "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me." (3:25)

- What are your deepest fears?
- What if what you most deeply feared happened to you?
- Could you still believe in God?

Job forces us to face the fact that we live in a world where great, devastating tragedies do happen – and those tragedies often seem pointless and random.

- Jerry Sittser, "A Grace Disguised", lost his wife, his mother and his daughter, in one moment, when a drunk driver crossed the center line and hit their vehicle head-on. He was left, along with his remaining children, to wonder why.
- What do we do with a God who allows such horrifying evil into the lives of his children? Job refuses to allow us easy answers.

In the end, this book is deeply helpful

- It exposes our false assumptions concerning how this world works
- It refuses pat answers to great suffering. Job's friends had answers, and there was much truth in what they said. But their answers were wrong.
- It reveals a God who is greater and more glorious than we had imagined.

I. Historical Context

- A. **Chronological** – sometime around the time of Abraham
- B. **Geographical** – “lived in the land of Uz”. Not connected in any way with Abram.
 - Melchizedek – a priest with no lineage. A type of Christ.Job, like Melchizedek – appears with no lineage.

II. His Greatness

A. **Moral** Greatness

- a. Blameless – obedient, repentant, a man of prayer and faith.
- b. Upright – dealings with others. (Job 29:12-16) A life of integrity – his religion was deep and true. He was transformed by the renewing of his mind.
- c. Feared God and turned away from evil.
 - i. Deep reverence for God, trust in God,
 - ii. “I have made a covenant with my eyes not to look upon a virgin.” (31:1)
 - iii. Joseph “How could I do this wicked thing and sin against my God?”
- d. God vouches for Job’s moral integrity. (1:8)
- e. Job’s moral greatness will be a key part of the drama of this book.
The great question: Why is Job suffering?

What kind of moral universe do we live in – if a truly godly and good man like Job is allowed, by God, to suffer such devastation?

B. **Material** Greatness - (2-3)

- The amount – measured as wealth was measured in those days
- The meaning – “he was the greatest of all the people of the east”

Here we have an insight into Job – he is not “everyman”. He is a uniquely godly and great man. He stands alone in his piety and his blessedness. There is no one else like him in all the earth. So why does this great and godly man suffer?

III. His Faith and Fear

Job 1:4–5 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.
⁵And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate 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 children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually.

Puritans – feared nothing but God and sin. Job feared that his children might sin by “cursing God in their hearts”. “To renounce”. This is how sensitive his conscience is towards the Lord. The idea is that, Job is thinking, maybe while his children were having their party they secretly in their heart wished that God wasn’t there so they could enjoy some sin. Maybe they secretly, in their heart, wished they could have some fun, indulge in the flesh, and at that moment wish that God was not God.

- Job loves the Lord, his God!
- He loves his children and is deeply eager to see his children love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul and strength,
- He offers a sacrifice for them – believing that God is merciful and gracious and willing to forgive sin – but it comes at a price, the price of shed blood,

This is Job’s faith. It is a beautiful faith.

This is Job’s fear. Sin is always lurking. Evil is always present. And he fears for his children. And then – the thing he feared happened. Not because he was negligent. And not because he was guilty. He wasn’t.

This was the great error of his three friends – a “**retributive**” worldview. Good things happen to good people. Bad things happen to bad people. Bad things are happening to Job. Job must be bad.

But Job hasn’t sinned. It reveals what Ash calls “the deep mystery” of the universe – there is a suffering that is redemptive, there is a sorrow that heals, there is a hurt that brings hope. Job shows us that all suffering is not retributive. God often calls his righteous ones to suffer – not for their sin, but for his purposes.

Application

- If you belong to Christ – you live in a world defined by redemptive, not retributive means and ends. God is not punishing you in your sorrows.
- God reveals himself in this book, not only as the Mighty Creator – but in the face of Jesus Christ, the Loving Redeemer. He is the Great Innocent One, who suffered what he dreaded but in that suffering redeemed a people for Himself and revealed a God of infinite love.