



If a Man Dies, Shall He Live Again?

Grappling with God: The Gospel According to Job #8

Job 13:19-14:22

David DeHaan

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You call me out upon the waters
The great unknown where feet may fail
And there I find You in the mystery
In oceans deep
My faith will stand

And I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine

Your grace abounds in deepest waters
Your sovereign hand
Will be my guide
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me
You've never failed and You won't start now

So I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders
Let me walk upon the waters
Wherever You would call me
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander
And my faith will be made stronger
In the presence of my Savior

I will call upon Your name
Keep my eyes above the waves
My soul will rest in Your embrace
I am Yours and You are mine

(Oceans, Where Feet May Fail by Hillsong)

We've been singing these words which are very fitting for the book of Job. Job went through many 'deep waters.' He clung to the profession of faith: "God, I am Yours and You are mine."

Please turn to Job 13:19. If I asked you, "What is the most daring thing you have ever done?" how would you answer? Does it bear a lot of explanation? Is scuba diving the most daring thing you have ever done? Or perhaps bungee jumping? Maybe you are not as adventurous as I thought. How about parachuting?

We usually think of daring things as active and potentially life-threatening. Yet I would guess that you didn't say, "The most daring thing I have ever done is waited and hoped."

When Pastor Sunday opened God's Word in the first part of Job 13, we looked at a glorious peak in the book of Job. There are deep waters to tread and we are feeling Job's deep, painful difficulty with him. We feel for Job as he turns this way and that only to meet dead ends. The peak allowed us to peer over the mountains and see a vista of God's grace and a glimpse of the gospel. Job makes this profession of faith but there seems to be risk and daring involved in this profession. Job 13:15:

- *"Though he slay me"*—I know God is in control of all things and is overseeing everything catastrophic that has happened to me. I know His power but also His goodness and grace.
- *I will hope in him*—I will trust Him. Literally, "I will wait in hope for Him."

That is a very daring, bold move by our friend Job. Job 13:15 is the first high point in the book. Then we go back into difficult wrestling with God through the storm.

In this sermon we will go from one peak: *"Though he slay me, I will hope in him..."* to another peak in Job 14. Here is our three movement plan:

1. Walk through the text of Job 13:19-22
2. Camp out in the most important, poignant part of the passage in Job 14:13-17
3. Talk about three answers to the 'so what?' question of the text and about the difference this should make in our lives.

As we begin, let me pray and ask for God's blessing on the preaching, hearing and applying of His Word.

Our Heavenly Father, we praise You that Your Word is firmly fixed forever in the heavens, Your faithfulness endures to all generations and Your Word stands fast. We want to plant ourselves in Your Word so that we might be servants of Yours and delight in Your Word. Would You help us—through Your Holy Spirit—to understand what You want to communicate? Help us see the gospel in the book of Job. May we not forget it and may it make all the difference. May it give us resurrection hope in the midst of our own struggles and difficulty. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

In Job 13:19-22—the first movement of our text—we see Job is longing to deal directly with God. Remember we are in a section where Job is replying to the third of his three friends who have come to comfort him in his affliction. By the end of Job 14, he is finishing his response to Zophar and we are at the end of the first cycle of his responses to his friends' "comforting" words. Zophar—like the other three friends—has a fairly simple understanding of life. His

conventional wisdom is true at this point and says, “If you do what is right, you will be blessed. If you disobey God, you will experience pain. Blessing and cursing are dependent on your obedience to God.” That is true as far as it goes but it is not the whole picture. Along with Job, we are learning that although it is true if we choose to sin, we are choosing to suffer—the reverse doesn’t always work. If you are suffering, it doesn’t always mean you have chosen to sin. The religion of Job’s friends says, “If you are suffering, you must have sinned.”

Zophar is the most straightforward and to the point. “It’s very simple, Job. You are suffering and must have sinned. Whatever that sin is, confess it and let’s move on.” Job keeps saying, “It’s not that I’m a sinless individual, but in this instance I’m blameless and I’m holding on to that integrity.”

As Job responds to Zophar and pleads his case he says:

*“Who is there who will contend with me?
For then I would be silent and die” (Job 13:19).*

If Job could just make his case before someone he could be quiet and meet his end. Yet so far, he is making his case to his friends and is getting nowhere. He really wants to make his case before God as he said earlier in the book. Job 13:3 is a turning point where Job begins to take a specific trajectory:

*“But I would speak to the Almighty,
and I desire to argue my case with God.”*

In other words, “If I could do anything, I would like to bring my case before God.” He responds to Zophar but stops talking to him and begins to talk to God:

*“Only grant me two things,
then I will not hide myself from your face:
withdraw your hand far from me,
and let not dread of you terrify me.
Then call, and I will answer;
or let me speak, and you reply to me” (Job 13:20-22).*

Job wants to get close to God and plead his case. But he wants God to help him with comfort and relief, to take the terror away and then he will be able to come to God as he wants to. It’s really important to notice that Job wants to get closer to God, to press in toward God in the midst of his suffering. Yet he also understands there is a barrier. It is one we all experience—the barrier of sin.

Job is still convinced this particular predicament and intense suffering is not punishment from God for sin. However, that doesn't mean sin and the fallenness of a sinful world are not a detraction or barrier to fellowship with God.

*"How many are my iniquities and my sins?
Make me know my transgression and my sin"* (Job 13:23).

In other words, "I'm not saying I am not sinful. Rather, I don't understand that this has come upon me because of a specific sin."

*"Why do you hide your face
and count me as your enemy?
Will you frighten a driven leaf
and pursue dry chaff?
For you write bitter things against me"* (Job 13:24-26).

Think of Naomi, who came back bereft of her husband and sons, having left her homeland because of famine. *"She said to them, 'Do not call me Naomi [meaning 'pleasant']; call me Mara [meaning 'bitter'], for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me'"* (Ruth 1:20). Job is feeling the same thing:

*"...and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.
You put my feet in the stocks [You've limited me because of sin
and the fallenness of the world in which I live]
and watch all my paths;
you set a limit for the soles of my feet.
Man [all humans] wastes away like a rotten thing,
like a garment that is moth-eaten"* (Job 13:26-28).

Although Job is blameless in this case, he is not sinless. He is living in a sin-sick world where he and his fellow man experience the decaying effects of the fall and sin.

Living in a Fallen World Results in Misery

The first result of this is misery. Job speaks of living in a fallen world and recognizes that man's life is painful and brief because this world has been devastated by the effects of sin.

*"Man who is born of a woman
is few of days and full of trouble.
He comes out like a flower and withers;
he flees like a shadow and continues not"* (Job 14:1-2).

Think of how many times in Scripture the lives of human beings are compared to grass and flowers that will die in the fall and winter. Although human beings are of a higher order, our lives are much the same—painful and brief.

*“And do you open your eyes on such a one
and bring me into judgment with you?
Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?
There is not one” (verses 3-4).*

The world is messed up and stained; who can make it right again? If something has been made dirty and unclean, how can it ever be made clean again? No human being can do that.

*“Since his days are determined,
and the number of his months is with you,
and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass,
look away from him and leave him alone,
that he may enjoy, like a hired hand, his day” (verses 5-6).*

Job’s conclusion is, “The best we can do, Lord, is to finish our shift like hired hands. Would You allow us the satisfaction of a good day’s work? That is the best for which we can hope.” The first result of living in a fallen, sinful world is the misery of a life that is painful and brief.

Living in a Fallen World Results in Mortality

Job says, “Life is short, then it is over and that is final.” In verses 18-22, Job laments the pain and limitations we all experience in a fallen world. We are here for a brief time and then “*laid low*” (verse 10). We all die and are buried.

He says we are not even like a tree. In verse seven, he talks of how a tree has hope for renewal even after being cut down. If water floods the stump, a new sprout will come. Then he compares humans to a river bed that will not be renewed after drying up. In verses 18-19, he says human beings are like the mountains or hills which erode and never return.

When I was a kid, we would go to Lake Michigan to a certain dune known as “The Big Dune” where we would dock our boat. It was the tallest of all the dunes, the most fun and most difficult to climb. We had the satisfaction of running down the dune into the lake on a hot summer’s day. A few weeks ago we went back to Lake Michigan with my parents. We were out on the lake and I asked my dad, “Where’s ‘The Big Dune’? I’m looking over the landscape and can’t find it.” He pointed to it and I couldn’t recognize it. It had eroded and was the same height as everything else.

Job says human life is like the erosion of the earth. If a mountain is “laid low,” you will never rebuild it. Human life is painful and brief. Then we die and that is final.

When we read Job’s words, we’re tempted to be deflated and depressed, as he is. But remember to Whom Job is lamenting. Remember that he is lamenting and bringing it to the Lord, not holding it inside. I like what Francis Anderson says in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries on Job about this book: “To lament before God preserves legitimate sorrow from embitterment. Job is more puzzled than aggrieved.” Lament is when we come before the Lord and say, “God, I can’t figure this out. I recognize the difficulty, hardness and misery of this and am bringing it to You. I’m not going to curl up in a corner but instead come to You with lament.”

There is a hint that Job is not without hope. He asks, “*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean...*” (Job 14:4). No mere human being can make something clean which is unclean or make the universe right when it has gone wrong. However, the One to Whom Job is lamenting can do so. Some ancient translators wanted to theologically ‘clean up’ this verse so they translated Job’s answer as, “*None, save God*” rather than “*There is not one*” (verse 4).

We see there is hope for Job and for us. It is the hope of the resurrection. Job longs for life beyond the grave. It looks like his life will simply be miserable, he will die and that will be it.

He asks another question. “*If a man dies, shall he live again?*” (verse 14). “Is there hope of life beyond the grave and is resurrection possible?” If the answer is yes, we can live in hope. If the answer no, we are in very sad shape. The Apostle Paul said:

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied (1 Corinthians 15:16-19).

Do you see how important the book of Job is to the gospel story as it unfolds in Scripture? If what Job is longing for is not real, Christ could not be raised from the dead. If Jesus has not been raised from the dead after dying in the place of sinful humanity, then we have no assurance God the Father has accepted the death of His Son as the atoning sacrifice for sin. Resurrection is vindication. It communicates to the universe things that are seen and unseen. God has accepted the death of His Son as full payment for the sins of His people. Resurrection says redemption has been accomplished, Jesus has overcome, the grave has been overwhelmed and the victory has been won.

Job longs to know this is real. It will make all the difference for him in the midst of his suffering and agony. If the truth of the resurrection is real, death is transformed. Job says, “I am

going to die but—if there is resurrection—death will be transformed for me and will no longer have its sting.” Job wouldn’t have to fear death because it would no longer be a final dead end. It would become a renewal or new beginning—a temporary stop on a journey to something much more glorious.

Job calls this day which will draw near an ‘appointed time’ when God will remember him. In Scripture, when God remembers someone it does not mean He is prone to forget them. It means He is about to do something powerful and saving on their behalf. He is beginning to pour out a torrent of His kindness and grace toward an individual or group.

He remembered Hannah and Rachel and provided them each with a son. He remembered Noah and his family in the ark. He remembered Abraham and His people in slavery in Egypt. Exodus 2:24 says, “*And God heard their groaning [agony, suffering and enslavement], and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.*” As God was getting ready to do the greatest saving event in the Old Testament—the deliverance of the children of Israel from slavery—He remembered His people. Zechariah prophesied about the newborn Jesus in the temple and said that His coming would be evidence of God’s remembering His covenant with His people.

We can see in Job 14:13-17 that God is beginning to act and Job is longing for God to act:

*“Oh that you would hide me in Sheol,
that you would conceal me until your wrath be past,
that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me!”* (verse 13)

Sheol was the abode of the dead in the understanding of the ancient world. Job is asking God to hide him in the grave until God’s wrath passes over him.

He also wants God to remember him at the appointed time:

*“If a man dies, shall he live again?
All the days of my service I would wait,
till my renewal should come.
You would call, and I would answer you...”* (verses 14-15)

Think of Jesus’ call to Lazarus in the grave. “*Lazarus, come out*” (John 11:43). Job wants to know if that could happen for him.

Notice the care taken by God:

*“For then you would number my steps;
you would not keep watch over my sin;
my transgression would be sealed up in a bag [dealt with],
and you would cover over my iniquity”* (Job 14:16-17).

“If God would do this, it would transform death.” Job longs to know resurrection is possible because it would transform his suffering. He says, “*All the days of my service I would wait...*” (verse 14). The New International Version calls it his “hard service” and the New American Standard says “my struggle.”

Job would be able to call his extreme hardship and suffering his service, his calling, reasonable worship and offering, even though its purposes are beyond his comprehension. His being enclosed and limited could be service to God.

The eminent 17th Century author John Milton became blind in the later years of his life. Although it was difficult, his greatest desire was to continue to write because He felt this was the calling the Lord had given him. He wrote a poem on his blindness titled simply On His Blindness:

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.

If there is hope beyond the grave, then my struggle and limitation can be a service of worship to my King for His glory. Job feels like God has put him on a shelf, yet hopes his limitation can be an arena of service because of the hope of the resurrection. There is no ‘if’ about death. Yet Job hopes that when a person dies it is not the end.

It is not death to die
To leave this weary road
And join the saints who dwell on high
Who've found their home with God
It is not death to close
The eyes long dimmed by tears
And wake in joy before Your throne
Delivered from our fears

O Jesus, conquering the grave
Your precious blood has power to save
Those who trust in You
Will in Your mercy find
That it is not death to die

(It Is Not Death to Die,
Words by Henri Malan (1787-1864);
Music, Chorus & Alternate Words by [Bob Kauflin](#))

Job can dare to hope because he has taken a risk of faith. *“Though he slay me, yet I will hope in him”* (Job 13:15). Pastor Sunday called it “intrepid faith.” I have to admit, I thought “intrepid” was a car so I looked up the definition. It means “characterized by resolute fearlessness, fortitude and endurance.” That is the kind of faith Job is demonstrating. He is pressing in toward God. Like Jacob, he is wrestling with the Lord and saying, *“I will not let you go until you bless me”* (Genesis 32:36). *“Though You slay me, I will wait in hope for You.”*

We are told in the beginning of Job that Job is a man of faith who fears God and turns from evil. His life has integrity because he is vitally linked to the living God. When he suffers, he presses in toward God. Rather than allowing his suffering to drive him away from God, Job has been relentlessly pursuing God Himself. God has never failed him.

Job has lost all his material possessions and his physical condition has greatly diminished. He has lost his children and has a wife who is less than helpful. He also has friends whose counsel is empty and damaging. In all this, Job does not accuse God of wrongdoing. Instead, he moves toward God and seeks out greater access to Him. He voices his desire to speak directly to the Almighty to make his case.

In our text, we see Job is daring to hope for resurrection and life beyond the grave. He is daring to look in expectation for a coming day of renewal—a day when everything that has gone wrong in the world will be made right and there will be no more sorrow or pain. On that day, the hearts of all those who have longed for a Redeemer will rise on eagle’s wings before their God.

Some have seen Job 14:14—the second pinnacle or ‘vista’ in Job—in the context of the Old Testament and the book of Job itself. They have concluded that Job couldn’t be thinking of a personal, individual resurrection of the dead because that idea doesn’t take shape until later in the storyline of the Bible. I think this misses the point which the Holy Spirit wants to make for us in this text. I think this text shows us how glorious Job’s insight actually was, given the limitations of revelation in his time.

Job is equipped with a deep and abiding faith in a God Who is good and sovereign. In the midst of his suffering, he is also acutely aware of his own mortality—yet catches a glimpse of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He doesn’t see everything and what he does see is still a shadow—like looking at your reflection in a steamy mirror—yet his glimpse of the gospel is real.

Imagine if Job were to see the full picture of the eternal Son of God coming in the flesh, living a righteous life, suffering and dying as an atonement for human sin and rising from the grave to new life. He would have said, “Yes, that makes perfect sense. God has provided the Mediator for Whom I’ve been longing. I have a Redeemer and He lives. If the God Whom I have

dared to hope in has raised Him from the dead, He will raise me as well. Though I die, I shall live again.”

Friends, what Job only glimpsed we have beheld in the Person of Jesus Christ—the One Who said, *“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”* (John 11:25-26). Job did believe that one must accept the reality of his or her mortality in a fallen world. Yet if we hope in God, we can look forward to renewal, resurrection and eternal life beyond the grave.

We are living on this side of the cross of Christ and can say with confidence that those who hope in God and trust in Christ will experience the benefits of eternal life now and in the future. The ‘big idea’ of this text is that the reward for intrepid, relentless faith is eternal life.

This is for now, not just later. What are the benefits of waiting in hope for the resurrection? Let’s consider briefly three benefits of living this resurrection life:

1. Resurrection hope provides the only answer to my mortality.
2. Resurrection hope transforms the way we respond to trials.
3. Resurrection hope enables us to comfort others by pointing them to our sure hope.

Resurrection Hope Provides the Only Answer to My Mortality

The mortality statistics are in and—once again—they are 100 percent. The Bible says, *“...it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment”* (Hebrews 9:27). Job talks about his longing to be sealed up so God’s wrath could pass over him. He longs for God to seal his transgression in a bag and toss it away.

Friend, do you know the assurance of God’s wrath passing over you because you have entrusted yourself to Jesus Christ? Are you confident He bore your wrath on the cross and have you come to Him in faith—confessing your sin, saying, “Because of what Jesus has done, will you take away my sin, put it in a bag and throw it away? I want to trust in Jesus Christ—my Savior and Redeemer—Your Son Who is fully God and fully man. He bore my sin. I believe in and entrust myself to Him.”

That is the only way to know immortality. As other disciples were leaving Jesus, Peter said to Him, *“Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life’”* (John 6:68). Where else will you go to deal with your own mortality? Come to Jesus.

Resurrection Hope Transforms the Way We Respond to Trials

God can seem distant to us when we are going through difficult times. Rather than distancing ourselves from Him, we ought to press in toward Him and pursue Him. The problem is we all fall into the faulty logic of Job's friends. We think, "Something difficult is going on in my life. God must be unhappy with me." Like Job's friends, we can be guilty of putting God in a small box. Job's resurrection hope helps us understand a 'suffering-glory' connection which is a regular part of normal Christian discipleship.

The Apostle Peter writes of this. He is talking to servants and masters but the text is applicable for all of us. First Peter 2:19-22 says:

For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

Do you see how Job is a precursor to Christ by suffering and not reviling?

When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. (1 Peter 2:23-25)

When we are suffering and in times of extremity, we need to go to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls—the One to Whom we can entrust ourselves, knowing He judges justly. We need to remind ourselves of these gospel truths when we are suffering:

- Sin is ugly and we live in a real, fallen world. There are religions which try to convince us that suffering is an illusion and the mind has to break free of the body. The Bible's religion says we were originally created as physical beings and that our bodies and the physical universe are a good thing. We live in a fallen, sinful world with real suffering. We need to be honest and realistic about this. Yet we serve a God Who is working out His redemptive purposes in time and history and will unite all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- If I am in Christ and have come under His Lordship God's way toward me is only good and for my good. God doesn't punish His children. Therefore, my suffering is not

punishment from God—a fact that is part of our identity as children of God in Christ. We are those for whom Christ received the punishment and God’s wrath against sin. My suffering must be redemptive even if I can’t make sense of it right now. I may—like Job—not be given insight into my suffering in my lifetime.

This reality is reflected well in the third verse of Margaret Clarkson’s hymn O Father, You are Sovereign:

O Father, You are sovereign
The Lord of human pain,
Transmuting earthly sorrows
To gold of heavenly gain,
All evil overruling,
As none but Conqueror could,
Your love pursues its purpose—
Our souls’ eternal good.

(by Margaret Clarkson, 1980)

We can say with the Apostle Paul, “*So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day*” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Resurrection Hope Enables Us to Comfort Others by Pointing Them to Our Sure Hope

Part of the normal pattern of relationships in the body of Christ is the giving and receiving of care and counsel. We want to be instruments in the Redeemer’s hands—used by Him to bring comfort and love, bearing one another’s burdens. When we listen to our brother or sister share a particular burden—what Paul David Tripp calls “Showing us the fine china of their lives”—we can be overwhelmed with a sense of inadequacy. We think, “I don’t know how to help this person. I wish I could fix it for them but know I can’t. What can I do to help this fellow struggler?”

What we ought to do is point them to the sure hope we have in Christ Who has overcome the grave and is seated victoriously at the right hand of God, able to bring the dead back to life. He can surely help each one of us in our deepest sorrow. Let’s not try to fix one another but rather point one another to the Source of healing and wholeness. This is “*...the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep*” (Hebrews 13:20).

The ministry of comfort is especially rich when offered to a brother or sister in Christ standing next to the grave of a loved one who has died in Christ. What a privilege we have to remind one another of the truths from Scripture in such a situation. We don’t grieve without

hope as others do. *“For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep”* (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

When we bury a loved one who has died in Christ, we are reminded of the truth Paul reveals in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44. *“What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.”* Jesus has overcome and we will rise with Him. We can comfort our souls with the truth that we will one day rise because of Jesus. There will be no more sorrow or pain.

This is the gospel according to Job.

New Covenant Bible Church

[4N780 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60175](http://www.newcbc.org)

(630) 584-2611 ♦ www.newcbc.org

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