

## **Giving Comfort and lessons learned through Job's Journey of Faith**

Opening Prayer...

Opening Illustration... The story of Job and his Comforters

Job was the spiritual leader of his family and even though Christ was not yet incarnate, we can see many examples of the life and character of our Lord and Savior exhibited in Job. We will look at some of them today.

Job was a remarkable man, upright in character, feared God and he shunned evil. In fact in Chapter 1 verse 8 the Lord is speaking to Satan: Then the LORD asked, "What do you think of my servant Job? No one on earth is like him—he is a truly good person, who respects me and refuses to do evil."

I think you must be doing okay if you get a reference like that from God don't you?

Job was a man who was greatly blessed. He had seven sons, three daughters, 7000 sheep, 3000 camels 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys. In short, he was rich and influential in the East.

Satan appears to God and God brings Job to his Satan's attention. God asks Satan if he has considered his servant Job, a man of remarkable character.

Satan wants to destroy Gods people and so says to God: "Does Job fear God for nothing? Specifically Satan challenges God.

### **Slide 1 – Satan's Accusations**

#### **Satan's Accusations:**

- There is no such thing as unselfish piety
- Mankind only does right when it is profitable to do so
- God is not worthy of service on the basis of his nature alone
- The first round of testing, losing his wealth and family is not enough

### **Slide 2 – God accepts the Challenge**

#### **God's Acceptance of Satan's Challenges:**

- He allows Job to be severely tried but not killed
- He will show that there is such a thing as selfless righteousness
- He will show that there are a people of true devotion simply because of who he is

**Slide 3 – What was Job's trial?**

**How did Job suffer?**

- His Oxen, Donkeys, Sheep, Camels
- His seven Sons and his three daughters
- His health
  - Boils & Itching
  - Worms and oozing sores
  - Corroding Bones & Gnawing Pain
  - Fever and blackened skin

Job lost all his wealth, his family and many things that would have been status or position in the community. Job was physically ill and emotionally distraught.

How would you feel today if you:

- Lost your house or home
- All your money and stuff were gone
- Your spouse' didn't support you and told you to curse God and die (cf. Jb 2:9)
- Your kids died
- Your health was gone and you were suffering with parasites, fever and pain
- Your friends came over to tell you it was your fault, because you were a sinner and a bad parent

What would you do?

Well... here is what Job did:

**Slide 4 – Job's reaction**

**Job's Reaction:**

- 1) He mourns, tears his robe, shaves his head and falls to the ground.
- 2) Next... He PRAISES GOD! He blesses the name of the Lord.

**Slide 4b – Job's statement of faith**

I believe that Job could praise God despite his circumstance because he truly saw a vision of the Christ. It was his faith in his redeemer that sustained him. If we look at Job 19:25-27 we can clearly see Job's statement of faith:

<sup>25</sup> For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;  
<sup>26</sup> And after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, That in my flesh I shall see God,  
<sup>27</sup> Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another.  
*How* my heart yearns within me!

Notes:

*The word redeemer here comes from the Hebrew word “go’el” which means a person who makes a payment to free someone else from obligation.*

*It was also interesting to me that the name Job in Hebrew is “boya” which means to repent. We see a clear illustration here of the Grace of God. Christ has made a perfect payment for us to free us from obligation; all that is required is that we repent and accept him.*

Are we in the place today where when things are going sideways that we are ready to praise God? This message isn't just for you today people, this is for me as well. I for one will declare the name of the lord and his greatness. I will stand in honor before him and glorify his name despite my sorrow.

#### **Slide 5 – Vision is necessary**

When adversity comes into our lives will we follow Job's example and Praise him? Do we truly have a vision of Christ in our lives? The scripture tells us in Proverbs 29:18 (AMP) that:

<sup>18</sup> Where there is no vision [no redemptive revelation of God], the people perish; but he who keeps the law [of God, which includes that of man]—blessed (happy, fortunate, and enviable) is he.

#### **Slide 6 – Overall Themes**

What are some overall themes can we take from the book of Job:

- God is worthy of love apart from the blessings he provides
- God may allow suffering as a means to purify and strengthen a person in their faith
- God has a bigger frame of reference than we do and sometimes it is difficult to determine what he is doing in another's life
- As a people we have the example of the grace of Christ in Job's actions and character to follow when times get tough

#### **Slide 7 – How Satan tries to derail us**

Satan will always try to attack us where it will do the most damage:

- Our sense of self
- Our sense of who we are in God

- Our sense of pride in our accomplishments
- Our sense of family and our children
- Our health and our Bodies
- Our treasured possessions
- Through our friends and loved ones

He wants us to lose faith in God who is faithful, just and Loves us. If we become convinced that because of circumstance God does not love us what hope do we have. Testing and trials may come into our lives but we have the hope through Christ Jesus who sent us the holy comforter that we can walk through fire and not be burned, the waves will not overtake us and NOTHING that the enemy throws against us will prosper.

### **Look carefully at Jobs responses:**

In the narrative of Job and his friends we see certain characteristics of Christians who are not driven by love and who do not understand grace. Elephaz, Bildad and Zophar show us examples of the wrong way to comfort and show us clear examples of characteristics to avoid.

We talk about putting on Christ and want Christ reflected in our lives. When we talk of typologies or foreshadowing of Christ we mean that we are looking for Christ-like qualities and parallels in the person we are studying. To really understand Job we need to look at the parallels to our saviour.

#### **Slide 8 – Job as a typology of Christ**

- Both had everything – (cf. Job 1:1-3 & John 1:1, 2, 10&14)
- Both lost everything – (cf. Job 1:13-22; Phil. 2:5-8; Luke 22:39-44 & Isaiah 53:1-3)
- Both were tempted by Satan – (cf. Job 1:12-20; Matt. 4:1-10 & Isaiah 53:4-7)
- Both were falsely accused of being Sinners (cf. Job 4-31; John 8:33-58)
- Both suffered but did nothing wrong (cf. Job 1:21-22; I Pet 2:21-23; Isaiah 53:9)
- Both remained faithful to God (cf. Job 1:21-22; Rev 5:1-10; Heb 5:8-9; Acts 1:1-11; I Pet 3:22; Luke 23:46)
- Both were blessed more abundantly in the end (cf. Job 42:10-17; Isaiah 53:10-12)

Elephaz:

- Presumes that all suffering is a consequence of Sin
- Does not offer comfort or support
- Is about religion not relationship
- Directly attacks Jobs character

**Slide 9 – Jobs responses to his comforters 1**

Job's Responses:

- Job repents that his rash statements about wanting to die are the result of his suffering and asks for forgiveness if he has sinned. (Job 6:1-7:21)
  - He repents of his hasty words
- Job pleads with his friends advising them that they are not helping him
  - He tries to get his friends to see the truth
- Job wishes to plead his case before God (Job 16:1-17:17)
  - Gives glory to God for his divine nature and doesn't lose faith

Bildad:

- Proudful in his own situation
- Presumes God killed Jobs children because of their sin
- Assigns the blame for the loss of Jobs children to Jobs lack of parenting skills
- States that Job is getting what he deserves

**Slide 10 – Jobs responses to his comforters 2**

Job's Responses:

- Job declares the wisdom and power of God
  - Even though he does not understand he still declares Gods wisdom
- Job asks God why he is against him
  - Job shows relationship here not religion he asks God why
- Job asks God to let him die
  - Job declares Gods divine nature here and asks for death
- Job asks his friends for pity
  - Job repeatedly shows his friends the right path
- Job declares that God will prove his innocence
  - Job is showing God is sovereign and will be his vindicator
- Job declares that God will Judge his friends
  - Job warns that God will judge them for their accusations

Zophar:

- Does not like his assumptions challenged
- Responds in indignation at Jobs statement of innocence
- Believes that it is his responsibility to correct Job or rather shame him
- Declares that Job has not received enough punishment for what he has done
- Presumes that Job is sinning in secret

- Presumes Gods disgust at Job
- Said that he should be thrown away like dung

**Slide 11 – Jobs responses to his comforters 3**

Job's Responses:

- Job tells Zophar that he is not representing God well
  - In love he is cautioning his friend not to assume Gods intent
- Job asks God again to let him die
  - Job declares Gods divine nature here and once asks for death.
  - What he is really asking for is an end to his suffering
- Job reminds Zophar that the wicked prosper and live
  - This is scriptural in Matt. 5:45(NIV) it reads:

That you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

**Slide 12 – Jobs Christ-Like Character**

**Jobs Christ-like Character:**

- 1) Job was upright and undefiled among his people
- 2) He believed in God
- 3) He was kind to his family
- 4) Just to his neighbors
- 5) Benevolent toward the poor

**We see four distinct Christ-Like characteristics in Job:**

- 1) Perfect – (cf. Job 1:1,8; Job 2:3; Job 8:20; Job 9:20-22 )

In this context the word means sincerity and free from evil intentions it is not sinless:

- 2) Upright – (cf. Job 1:1,8; Job 2:3; Job 8:6; Job 17:8)

In this context the word means straight

- 3) Feared God – (cf. Job 1:1)

In this context it means to reverence or have a deep respect for God

- 4) Eschewed Evil – (cf. Job 1:1,8; Job 2:3)

In this context it means to depart away from, to put away, to put down or rebel against

## **Pitfalls for comforters:**

### **Did not listen to Job**

Homiletic example 1:

A loving husband once asked his wife a question. If she could have anything she wanted for her birthday, what would it be? She said that she would like to be 7 again. Well the husband jumped right in and said he completely understood. On her birthday, he took her to Disneyland and rode the rides for hours, they then went to McDonalds where he ordered her a happy meal and finally they went to a triple play at an animated film festival. That night they went home exhausted and the husband asked the wife how she liked being 7 again to which she replied: "Actually honey, I meant my dress size..." In this case the husband listened to his wife but he did not hear her. He did not read her emotion only reacted to her words.

### **Did not offer any words of encouragement of edification**

Homiletic example 2:

Recently I was at a funeral where a family I know lost their son who was a friend of mine. I was walking by when others were giving their condolences. I was almost floored when I heard a well-meaning sister in the lord say to the grieving parents: "It is time to move on, take comfort, it must have been Gods will that he died"

### **They were too busy giving advice to understand what was really being said:**

Homiletic example 3:

I was out with a friend a while back and he felt alone and isolated from his brothers and sisters in Christ. He was going through a lot with his family and in his personal life. In a lesson I have learned through my lovely wife Julie, I did not try to fix it, I simply listened and let the Holy Spirit comfort him as he spoke out his heart to me. Jesus is a far better comforter than I am.

### **Reacted to Jobs words not his heart**

Many times people react and say things out of desperation, pain or anger. We need to learn to listen to the heart of the individual not just the words. We need to ask ourselves what is this person really saying to me?

## **Summary:**

### **Slide 13 – giving comfort**

In Romans 12:15 – Paul tells us to: “Mourn with those who mourn

In Proverbs 25:20 – “Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.”

In Matthew 5:4 - Jesus did not say: “blessed are those who mourn...” he said: “Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.”

We want to be Christ-like in our approach to those around us. Let us do Grace one with the other together. Here are some tips for real comfort:

### **Slide 14 – How to give Christ-like comfort**

## **What Real Comforters do?**

- 1) Comforters are not dissuaded and will go to comfort their friends whether invited or not
- 2) Comforters Listen carefully with their hearts not just their ears
- 3) Comforters put their effort into understanding not talking
- 4) Comforters React to emotions not to words
- 5) Comforters don't smile when a person describes their suffering. It tells the other person that they really don't understand.
- 6) Comforters Express how they feel to make a connection with the one suffering
- 7) Comforters do not judge by distasteful sights (dirty house etc.)
- 8) Comforters build each other up in unity; they don't tear each other down

John 15:12 – This is my commandment that you love one another.

Closing Prayer...