

Who?

Texts: II Corinthians 6:1-13, Job 38:1-11
Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian Church – June 20, 2021
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How many of us seated here today have felt like Job from his story in Scripture? And I am not just talking about those times when we complained to ourselves or to God, “Why is this happening to me? Why is God letting me go through this?” But have you experienced a time when our worlds were just crumbling around us? Life is indeed hard, and it is even harder when we go through those difficult times - relationship problems between a parent and a child, marital problems, making difficult decisions regarding aging parents or grandparents, health concerns, financial hardship, the economy, job loss, loss of income due to hours being cut or getting hurt on the job, loss due to the passing of a loved one - family, friend, spouse, child, and as we have seen over the past year, living through a worldwide pandemic and losing our own. Maybe you are worshipping with us today because the stresses and pressures and problems of life are just too overwhelming. You need this hour to get away from normal life - to hide for awhile. You need this hour to keep your sanity, or else you will completely lose it. You need this hour because you need some kind of hope or word from God to keep on keeping on.

For the first thirty-seven chapters of the book comes the story of this man Job, his life and his losses, his trials and the testing of his faith. We have also the conversations Job has had with his three friends (and I use that term “friends” VERY loosely) Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Their main concern is that Job just confesses what he has done wrong and allows God to intervene so he can get his life back. Unfortunately, they do not support him in the way that he needs them to. Quite frankly, the old adage, “with friends like these...” really fits them. I do not know that I would want them as my closest confidants and support system during a time of trial and distress.

You can understand why Job has questions for God. In the beginning of the book, we read that all was going really well for Job. He had money, he had servants, he had a large and growing family, he had resources, and he had it all. He was living the kind of life that many of us can only dream about. Then, God and his angels and Satan all gather together. God and Satan begin talking about Job, about the many blessings in his life. And Satan tells God that while things are good, Job is, of course, faithful and righteous. However, at the first sign of trouble, Satan is convinced that Job will crack. Satan tells God, ““But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” (Job 1:11).

Satan proceeds to take everything from him - his family, his property, his servants and animals, and even manages to attack Job’s health with sores from his head to his toe. And so, the debate and discussion ensue. Even Job’s wife tries to get him to just curse God and be done with it. His friends accuse him of some sort of horrendous sin - they do not know what it is, mind you - but he **MUST** be guilty of something to inflict this kind of pain and agony upon himself. Job maintains his innocence, however.

In chapter 31, Job challenges God. He basically throws down the gauntlet and tells God, “If I have done something wrong, if I have sinned, then bring it on, God.” He still maintains his innocence and purity in life. Job is a righteous man, still. Fast forward a few chapters, and we finally hear from God. And boy, do we hear from God! “Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm...” Out of the swirling and chaotic winds of life, God met Job. God came to Job and calls him to the carpet. God tells Job the truth about Himself and where He has been during Job’s time of loss and suffering. “Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge?” Uh oh. This is not going to be pretty, is it?

“Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.” Do you get a sense of what God is saying to Job here and how He is saying it to him? He is basically saying, “Job, you had better...” Wait, I cannot say that. We are in church. But you know, that is the kind of message God feels Job needs to hear right now. Despite his suffering and pain, despite his complaining, God has a word for Job. And that word is “Who?”

Who determined the world’s measurements? Who stretched the measuring line upon it? Who shut the sea behind doors? Who gave you wisdom, Job? Who gave you the ability to understand? Who, Job? Who? Who? WHO?

I will tell you WHO, Job. It is Me. It is God. I am the One who created everything all around. I put the stars in the sky, I set the planets in orbit, I created the plants to grow with sunlight and water. If I can do that, if I can keep everything in this universe together, with all of the science of gravity and astronomy and physics and the mystery of God, then I can take care of you. I will take care of you, Job. You. And your family. And your friends. Just as I have provided for the raven, so I will provide for you.

God wants to give Job the truth about Him - about Job’s relationship with a righteous and just and loving and faithful God, who created him. A God who looks out for Job, even in the midst of his troubles and pain. A God who has heard the cries of His child, Job. Even though the words might sting Job somewhat to hear them, they are words that need to be spoken. God needs to get this message to Job. Why? God knows Job is a righteous man. God knows the state of Job’s heart. Job needs to be reminded of what is important in his life. Sure, he has suffered greatly; but God is with him. Then. Now. Always.

For as much as I want to yell out, “Let Job have it, God,” I know that there have been times over this past year that God might as well have spoken these words to me. That God

would have told me brace myself and hear what He had to say. Sometimes each of us needs to be shaken out of our complacency, out of our self-absorption, out of our finite thinking to see what God is trying to say to us. Sometimes we just need to see that God is still there for us, even if His message might sting as well.

Where are you in your walk with Jesus Christ right now? Can you sympathize with Job because that is how you are feeling right now? Have you just weathered the intense storm of pandemic and are wondering where God is as things hopefully continue to get better? Do you need a swift kick - a command to brace yourself - in order to get you back on the right track with God? To be more faithful in your walk of faith?

God knows what it is like to suffer. God understands our weaknesses, our trials, our joys, our suffering, our afflictions, our times of doubt and uncertainty. He lived it all Himself, through His Son, Jesus Christ. Let us then, in times of sorrow and in times of joy and happiness, draw near to the One who...created us, sustains us, guides us, suffered for us, died for us. Who? Our Heavenly Father, who is there for us even when we are not always there for Him. On this Father's Day, praise be to God, for His unending love and faithfulness to us, His children! Let us pray...

Eternal God, Lord of all, we thank You for this reminder that You are in control of everything - our lives, the universe, all that is. Guide us and help us, we pray, to trust that You are there for us in all seasons of our lives. Give us an abiding sense of Your presence and love especially when we face difficult times. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.