

What Am I Supposed to Learn?
July 14, 2013
Allen Power

Job 38:1-4; 42:1-12a

Have you ever had a time in the midst of suffering when, though you never stopped loving and believing in God, you wondered why He seemed so silent? You had SO many questions, and so FEW answers?

The writer Christopher Morley wrote:

"I had a million questions to ask God, but when I met Him, they all fled my mind— and it didn't seem to matter."

In today's lesson we learn: God promises to work all things for our good; He doesn't promise to answer all our questions. He wants us to trust Him for who He is, not for what He has explained.

Today, we come to the end of the book of Job. Humanly speaking, it's not surprising we've seen Job riding a roller coaster of emotion and faith. Job never stopped loving and trusting God making statements like: "Though he slay me, I will hope in him." (13:15) and "I know my redeemer lives." (19:25) However, he had become so frustrated with his incredible suffering and his three lousy friends, he had boldly questioned God and DEMANDED a HEARING. Through all this, God has been SILENT. Until NOW. God speaks in a STORM.

38:1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:
2 "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"

- What an entrance! **Why do you think God answered Job out of a "whirlwind?"**
- God says, who is this...meaning Job...who darkens counsel about God?
- **What do you think it means to "darken counsel?"**
- [If we had a dimmer switch on the lights and I turned it down. What would I have done to your vision of this room? Do you ever get paranoid about why some restaurants have it so dark in their dining rooms?]
- **What does it mean to say someone has been "kept in the dark?"**
- God said Job was speaking "words without knowledge."
- We have a word for someone who is in the dark and doesn't know what they are talking about. **We say they are....what?**

"God didn't question Job's integrity or sincerity; He only questioned Job's ability to explain the ways of God in the world. Job had spoken the truth about God, but his speeches had lacked humility. Job thought he knew about God, but he didn't realize how much he didn't know about God." [Wiersbe]

Warren Wiersbe:

"Knowledge of our own ignorance is the first step toward true wisdom."

3 Dress for action like a man;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.

- Brace yourself, Job! I will ask YOU some questions and let's hear YOUR answers.
- God begins WITH the beginning...creation:

4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

- Then for the rest of chapter 38 and all of 39 God recounts everything He created.
- He asks Job, "Were you there?"
- God talks about the oceans. "Job, did you create those?"
- How about rain, snow, hail? Who do you think is in charge of that?
- "Can YOU speak a thunderstorm into existence?"
- "Job, who tells the sun to rise in the morning at dawn?"
- God talks about the animal kingdom. Who created all of these? Who feeds them and cares for them? "Job, does the animal kingdom respond to your voice?"

- **By the end of chapter 39, How do you think Job was feeling?**

- Look at Chapter 40 verse 1. God takes a break and gives Job a moment to respond.
- The MESSAGE paraphrase recounts it this way:

40 God then confronted Job directly:

"Now what do you have to say for yourself?

Are you going to haul me, the Mighty One, into court and press charges?"

3-5 Job answered:

"I'm speechless, in awe— words fail me.

I should never have opened my mouth!

I've talked too much, way too much.

I'm ready to shut up and listen."

- **Job showed that he got God's message, but what did Job NOT SAY?**

6 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

7 "Dress for action like a man;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.

- And for another chapter, God continues to remind Job WHO IS GOD, and WHO IS NOT. Finally we come to chapter 42. Job again responds, but in a different way.

42 Then Job answered the Lord and said:

2 "I know that you can do all things,

and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

4 'Hear, and I will speak;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.'

5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;

6 therefore I despise myself,
and repent[a] in dust and ashes."

The Lord Rebukes Job's Friends

- **What REALIZATION about God had Job come to in verse 2?**
- **Verse 3: What is Job admitting in the last part of verse 3?**
- **Verses 5 and 6 are a picture of everyone who comes to faith in Christ. What did Job realize and what did he do about it?**
- Verse 6, Job says the words we must all say to God, "I repent." **In chapter 1, God said Job was upright and blameless, so what was Job repenting of in verse 6?**
- **Question: In questioning Job, God described His power, wisdom, and perfection. What did God NOT reveal to Job?** [Why Job had suffered. The conflict between God and Satan that brought about Job's suffering.]
- Job repented without knowing WHY he had suffered so much.
- **Why do you think God did NOT explain to Job WHY he had suffered?**

My thought: When we confront suffering in this life...We can ask God to teach us and grow us through our trial, but, we can never demand an explanation.

Remember: God promises to work all things for our good; He doesn't promise to answer all our questions. He wants us to trust Him for who He is, not for what He has explained.

- **Question: What about Job's situation had NOT changed when he repented?**
- Before Job could repent, something happened. Look back at verse 5.
- **What does Job say is different NOW in his relationship with God? Note the words "heard of" (hearing of).**

John MacArthur writes:

"At last, Job said he understood God whom he had seen with the eyes of faith. He had never so well grasped the greatness, majesty, sovereignty, and independence of God as he did at that moment."

- God had confronted Job with his error. He hadn't forgotten about Job's three friends, the "lousy comforters," and their opinions. Verse 7:

7 After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. 8 Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according

to your folly. For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.” 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them, and the Lord accepted Job's prayer.

We see in this chapter, FOUR R words to note:

- The first R, we must RECOGNIZE who God really IS by personal knowledge. Not just hearing of Him but seeing Him and His greatness, through the eyes of FAITH.
- Then the second R, we must REPENT for all the ways we have rebelled against God. Nowhere in this book do we see that Job turned to a life of sinful living. Yet, he committed the sin of questioning God's wisdom and justice.
- The third R, is RESTORATION. We see in verse 8 God had RESTORED the relationship Job had with Him. God would hear Job's prayer for the three friends.
- When we RECOGNIZE, and REPENT, God always RESTORES.
- Let me be clear, He may not RESTORE our earthly losses in this lifetime, but He always RESTORES the relationship with Him. In Job's case, He did BOTH. Verse 10 tells us...

10 And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

12a And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning.

- **Let's pause and notice something important. WHEN did God restore Job's fortune?**
- **What did Job's prayer for his friends indicate about Job's heart?**
- There's a BONUS "R word," RECONCILE. Our relationship with God can't be what it should be without being not only RECONCILED to God, but to others as well.

So, What's The Takeaway?

In James 5:11 the half brother of Jesus remembered the example from Job's life:

11 Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Job had questions, and even got a little carried away with them, but he remained STEADFAST. Still, Job never got an explanation this side of heaven, for his suffering.

Four final points for us to ponder this week:

1. God promises to work all things for our good; He doesn't promise to answer all our questions.
2. God wants us to trust Him for who He is, not for what He has explained.
3. The Christian life is not about understanding God, it's about TRUSTING Him.
4. Our relationship with God is never CLOSER and STRONGER than when we are forced to TRUST Him in a trial.

No matter what we're going through this week, will we TRUST when we can't understand?