

Power Displayed, Dependence Declared
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Allen Power

Job 40:1-14, 42:1-5

Opening: A little humor to make three points. [Couple on the beach; two older women in a car; the visitor in the nursing home]

What does all this have to do with Job's situation at the end of this book?

- Be careful what you wish for. (Job would learn this painful lesson.)
- Be clear who is really "behind the wheel." (This one too!)
- Be certain about who YOU are (and more importantly, Who God is.)

First, a little context before the text; we have some catching up to do on the way to chapter 40. Though Job was upright and blameless, God allowed Satan to attack him in every way except taking his life. In the midst of Job's suffering his three best friends (plus a young man named Elihu) question him: "*If God allowed this suffering, you must have done something really bad, Job!*" Job maintained his spotless reputation was intact. Over time though, he became bitter.

In chapters nine and ten we see that change in Job's tone.
[Comments are mine.]

Job is speaking:

Job 9:14–15 (NLT) — 14 "So who am I, that I should try to answer God or even reason with him? **15** Even if I were right, I would have no defense. I could only plead for mercy. **[Job still had the right perspective at that point.]**

Job 9:29 (NLT) — 29 Whatever happens, I will be found guilty. So what's the use of trying? **[He's feeling sorry for himself as we might expect.]**

Job 9:32–35 (NLT) — 32 "God is not a mortal like me, so I cannot argue with him or take him to trial. **33** If only there were a mediator between us, someone who could bring us together. **34** The mediator could make God stop beating me, and I would no longer live in terror of his punishment. **35** Then I could speak to him without fear, but I

cannot do that in my own strength. **[He's getting bitter and now the tone really changes in chapter 10]**

Job 10:1–3 (NLT) — 1 “I am disgusted with my life. Let me complain freely. My bitter soul must complain. **2** I will say to God, ‘Don’t simply condemn me— tell me the charge you are bringing against me. **3** What do you gain by oppressing me? Why do you reject me, the work of your own hands, while smiling on the schemes of the wicked?

[He's accusing God of being uncaring and unfair.]

Job 10:5–6 (NLT) — 5 ...Is your life so short **6** that you must quickly probe for my guilt and search for my sin? **[He was describing a “gotcha’ God.”]**

Job 10:12–14 (NLT) — 12 You gave me life and showed me your unfailing love. My life was preserved by your care. **13** “ ‘Yet your real motive— your true intent— **14** was to watch me, and if I sinned, you would not forgive my guilt.

[Ding, ding ding! Bitter party of one!]

In frustration Job says to his friends: **Job 13:2–3 (NLT) — 2** I know as much as you do. You are no better than I am. **3** As for me, I would speak directly to the Almighty. I want to argue my case with God himself.

- Job had moved from “*Who am I to reason with God (9:14)*” to “*I want my day in court before God!*” Job – be careful what you wish for!
- In chapters 38 and 39 God replied to Job’s bitter complaints.
- He THUNDERED from a whirlwind: “*Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words?*”ⁱ What “ignorant words” had Job said about God? His most dangerous outburst was back in chapter nine:

Job 9:22–24 (NLT) — 22 Innocent or wicked, it is all the same to God. That’s why I say, ‘He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.’ **23** When a plague sweeps through, he laughs at the death of the innocent. **24** The whole earth is in the hands of the wicked, and God blinds the eyes of the judges. If he’s not the one who does it, who is?

- Job just accused God of being UNJUST! Lightning rod, anyone?
- Through chapter 38 and 39 God Himself fires questions at Job:

Job 38:3–4 (NLT) — 3 Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them. **4** “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much.

Job 38:8 (NLT) — 8 “Who kept the sea inside its boundaries as it burst from the womb,

Job 38:11–13 (NLT) — 11 I said, ‘This far and no farther will you come. Here your proud waves must stop!’ **12** “Have you ever commanded the morning to appear and caused the dawn to rise in the east? **13** Have you made daylight spread to the ends of the earth, to bring an end to the night’s wickedness?

Job 38:16 (NLT) — 16 “Have you explored the springs from which the seas come? Have you explored their depths? **[Avg depth 2.3 miles; deepest 7ⁱⁱ]**

Job 38:19 (NLT) — 19 “Where does light come from, and where does darkness go? **[The universe is estimated to contain 100 to 200 billion galaxies.ⁱⁱⁱ]**

Job 38:27 (NLT) — 27 Who sends rain to satisfy the parched ground and make the tender grass spring up?

- From the deepest sea to the farthest galaxy, God created it all and controls everything in them. What a mighty God we serve!
- In chapter 39 God reviewed His control of the animal kingdom He created.
- He talks of goats, donkeys, oxen, birds, horses, and ends with these words to Job: “Is it your wisdom that makes the hawk soar...? Is it at your command that the eagle rises to the heights to make its nest?”^{iv}
- That brings us to today’s text in Chapter 40:

Job 40:1–14 (NLT) — 1 Then the Lord said to Job, **2** “Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God’s critic, but do you have the answers?” **3** Then Job replied to the Lord, **4** “I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand. **5** I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say.”

- God thundered, “*Do you still want to argue with the Almighty?*”
- Questions: How did Job respond? What caused Job to “shut up?” What do you think Job was wishing at this point?

- Warren Wiersbe writes, *“Until we are silenced before God, He can’t do for us what needs to be done. As long as we defend ourselves and argue with God, He can’t work for us and in us to accomplish His plan through us.”*^v
- Job was silent but he wasn’t yet fully repentant of His sin of questioning God. So God continued: *“Job, if you want to play God let’s see you try!”*

6 Then the Lord answered Job from the whirlwind: **7** “Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them. **8** “Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you are right? **9** Are you as strong as God? Can you thunder with a voice like his? **10** All right, put on your glory and splendor, your honor and majesty. **11** Give vent to your anger. Let it overflow against the proud. **12** Humiliate the proud with a glance; walk on the wicked where they stand. **13** Bury them in the dust. Imprison them in the world of the dead. **14** Then even I would praise you, for your own strength would save you.

- This was a strong speech. How was it merciful?
- This is a good time to review our earlier points:
 - Be careful what you wish for. For instance, “taking God to court.”
 - Be clear who is “behind the wheel.” The Creator of the universe.
 - Be certain about who YOU are (and more importantly, Who God is.)
- By the end of God’s second speech, I bet Job understood those points.
- How did God’s review of His majesty and power help Job? How does seeing how BIG God is help us in times of tragedy and suffering?
- Now we turn to the conclusion of Job’s story in Chapter 42.

Job 42:1–6 (NLT) — **1** Then Job replied to the Lord: **2** “I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you. **3** You asked, ‘Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?’ It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me. **4** You said, ‘Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.’ **5** I had only heard

about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. **6** I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance.”

- Let’s focus on the simple truth of verse five. *“I had only heard about you [God] before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.”*
- It’s one thing to hear about God, it’s vastly different to truly see Him through the “spiritual eyes” of illumination through His Holy Spirit.
- The truth that should change us: When we truly see the awesomeness of God and His character of love and mercy, we should have no other reaction than to trust him especially in life’s most difficult circumstances.
- No one said it’s easy to react in this way. But God was teaching Job then and us now that in our toughest times we need to remember His awesome power and limitless love for His children.
- In verse six we see the other response to truly seeing God’s awesome power and character: heartfelt repentance. Look at Job’s words.
- Job repented for questioning God’s justice, character, and mercy.
- Even a blameless, upright man like Job could succumb to questioning God when life got tough. More proof that all have sinned and must repent.
- Charles Spurgeon: *“The door of repentance opens into the hall of joy,”^{vi}*
- We said in our first study of Job 1 that there was a happy ending.
- Chapter 42 verses 12-16 tell us, “the Lord blessed Job in the second half of his life even more than in the beginning...”^{vii} God gave Job back DOUBLE what he had in terms of wealth and resources. He gave him seven sons and three daughters.

Job 42:16–17 (NLT) — **16** Job lived 140 years after that, living to see four generations of his children and grandchildren. **17** Then he died, an old man who had lived a long, full life.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- James wrote in **James 5:11 (NLT) — 11** We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy.
- God gave us Job’s story as a textbook for times of tragedy and suffering.
- Here’s one important lesson from chapters 40 and 42: In the beginning of the book of Job, God said to Satan: *“Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil.”*^{viii}
- If a great, blameless and upright man like Job can get so off track in the midst of suffering so can you and I. We need to beware of that.
- We also learned when we truly see the awesomeness of God and His character of love and mercy we should have no other reaction than to trust him especially in life’s most difficult circumstances.
- No one said doing that would be easy.
- In his commentary, Chuck Swindoll gives us three great points to apply:
 1. *“If God’s ways are higher than mine, then whatever He allows I bow before Him in submission. The result of that attitude is true humility. Submission to the Father’s will is the mark of genuine humility.*
 2. *If God is in full control, then however He directs my steps, I follow in obedience. What relief that brings! Finally—I can relax, since I’m not in charge.*
 3. *If God has answers I lack, then whenever He speaks, I listen in silence. In the process of listening, I learn. Learning requires our slowing down, patiently waiting for God to work...”*^{ix}
- I don’t want to leave you with what feels like simple “Sunday School” answers to huge trials and tragedy. I don’t want to minimize the terrible weight of pain and suffering God’s people sometimes endure.
- The answer for the child of God is not easy, but it IS simple.

- This week I reached out to a colleague in crisis. He and his wife are a godly couple dealing with an ungodly tragedy concerning their estranged adult son. If I told you the story you would be overwhelmed as a bystander and struggle to imagine how they are dealing with it up close.
- This man, a former pastor, wrote to me: *“I didn’t know the human heart could hurt this much, (then he quoted Paul in 2 Cor. 12:9) but God’s grace is sufficient and God somehow will receive glory.”*
- Say a prayer for my friends, would you?
- Like Job, they are overwhelmed, but they are practicing the lesson of the end of Job’s story: When we truly see the awesomeness of God and His character of love and mercy, we can have no other reaction than to trust Him especially in life’s most difficult circumstances.

ⁱ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Job 38:2). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

ⁱⁱ The average depth of the ocean is about 12,100 feet. The deepest part of the ocean is called the Challenger Deep and is located beneath the western Pacific Ocean in the southern end of the Mariana Trench, which runs several hundred kilometers southwest of the U.S. territorial island of Guam. Challenger Deep is approximately 36,200 feet deep. It is named after the HMS Challenger, whose crew first sounded the depths of the trench in 1875.

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/oceandepth.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ All in all, Hubble reveals an estimated 100 billion galaxies in the universe or so, but this number is likely to increase to about 200 billion as telescope technology in space improves, Livio told Space.com. <https://www.space.com/25303-how-many-galaxies-are-in-the-universe.html>

^{iv} Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Job 39:26–27). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

^v Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Patient* (p. 150). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^{vi} Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Patient* (p. 153). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^{vii} Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Job 42:12). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

^{viii} Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Job 1:8). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

^{ix} Swindoll, Charles R.. *Great Lives: Job* (Great Lives from God's Word) (p. 278). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.