

Hope for Justice

General Topic: Justice and Adversity

Sunday, February 27, 2022

Author: Rev. Spencer L. Braddix

Lesson Text: Job 42:1-6, 10-17

Background Scripture: Job 42

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee and declare thou unto me.

5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

6 Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.

Job 42:10 And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also, the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him and comforted him over all the evil that

the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

12 So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.

15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.

17 So Job died, being old and full of days.

Lesson Objective(s):

The lesson this week will reveal the reward for humbleness before God. We will also see how God remains faithful during adversity.

Teaching Tools:

Word puzzles may be developed from the following site: www.puzzlemaker.com. Also, www.dtlk.com has several visual aids that may be beneficial, as well as

www.kidssundayschool.com which provide other helps for teaching.

Bible Journaling may be an interesting way to involve older teens in self-expression of the lessons they are taught. Visit www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps to find ways to use this valuable tool to learn and reinforce Scripture.

The Lesson:

One way of refining silver involves the long process of heating it until all the other metals have been skimmed off. After the silver cools, it's reheated to remove any other impurities. This process is repeated until there are no signs of anything except the silver. The book of Psalms references this in Psalms 66:10 stating that God refines us like silver, but then brings us to a place of abundance. The Lord uses good and bad events in our lives to form us into the persons He wants us to be. Those events, both bad and good refine us so that we more closely conform to His image. In this week's lesson, we learn about the end of Job's incredible journey of intense suffering and personal repentance. We will see that by the end of Job's story, God was the central figure and focus. His sovereign character was confessed, and His sovereign abundance was demonstrated.

Background

Job is the first poetic book of the Old Testament. Job is a book of wisdom; it answers the soul-aching questions of godly sufferers. Job grapples with the question, "If God is loving and just, why did he allow such pain and degradation in the life of a righteous man?" Job essentially exposes three distinct scriptural truths.

First, God allowed Job to be tested as he was perfect and upright, feared God and eschewed evil. God's omniscience is evident. Satan was granted permission to test Job. Secondly, human frailty and limited thinking

stumbles to understand the counsel of God. The awesomeness of God is too wide for human understanding and comprehension without the illumination of God's grace. Finally, the reality of faith is not in blessing, favor, humanistic understanding and answers, but in the revelation of God Himself.

Faith is God being revealed to us, in us, and through us. Job conveys that testing purifies character and integrity. God never initiates pain and suffering without benevolence and grace. God makes full restitution and can be fully trusted.

During all of Job's troubles, he steadfastly held to being innocent of any sin that caused his suffering. Job was correct, but in all of this, he became arrogant and critical of God. He believed that since he was innocent, he had the right to confront God and plead his case. When God initially chose not to reply, Job complained that God was silent, inaccessible and appeared not to be concerned. After all, three of Job's friends had nothing more to say, Elihu became the fourth person to speak to Job. Apparently, he was a bystander who heard their debate and was much younger than Job and his friends.

While Job's three friends said that he was suffering because of some past sins, Elihu had a different point of view. He had a better understanding of Job's problem than his three friends had because he had a higher understanding of God. Elihu maintained that Job wasn't suffering because of sin; he was sinning because of suffering. He pointed out that Job had become arrogant as he tried to defend his innocence (Job 33:8-13). There was much truth in Elihu's speech. While his words were on a higher spiritual level than Job, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, Elihu still wrongly assumed that responding to suffering correctly always brings healing and restoration (Job 33:23-30), and that suffering is always in some way connected to sin (Job 34:11).

At the end of chapter 42, God rebukes Job's three friends for being so wrong about how He deals with sin. They are commanded to take sacrificial animals to Job.

Following Job's dialogues with his three friends and the counsel of Elihu the Lord spoke directly to Job "out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1-39:30). First, He rebuked Job for questioning Him as the Creator of the earth and all its creatures. Then, through a series of unanswerable questions, rebuked Job for questioning Him as the Creator of the mightiest of all those creatures, the behemoth which was possibly the hippopotamus, and the leviathan which was a large unidentifiable sea animal (Job 40:6-41:34).

After asking Job about his understanding of the world he saw around him, God told Job to answer Him to which Job replied that he couldn't answer any of God's questions nor could he accuse God anymore. This week's lesson text begins with Job's response to God.

Recognition of God's Sovereignty (Job 42:1-3)

God is wisdom and His understanding is infinite. Job tried rationalizing God's counsel and wisdom through his own understanding, and it was fruitless. Starting his response to God's speech, Job does not immediately retract what he has said. Job does not admit that God is in the right or that he is in the wrong. He does not confess to any sins or apologize for what he has said. He simply begins by affirming God's omnipotence, something he had acknowledged all along.

He accepts the argument of the divine speeches: he is a mere mortal, unfitted by capacity or knowledge for the management of the universe. He also asserts that no purpose of God can be thwarted. Job's second remark in verse 3 is a paraphrase of God's question, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2) followed by his response to it. Job makes it clear that he is responding formally to the challenge which God posted against him. By doing so, Job admits that he is guilty as charged. He has spoken about things that are far beyond his knowledge and experience.

It is foolish to believe we understand God's counsel and wisdom at work in our lives. God's wisdom annihilates humanistic wisdom, and knowledge falters in gaining access to the mind and counsel of God. God's wisdom and counsel exposes secret and hidden things, even thoughts. Job confesses that God can do anything, including discern thoughts. God is revealed as omniscient and His counsel powerful. God's counsel is great, mighty in works, and stands forever. Our purposes are worked out through the counsel of God's will. God's wisdom and counsel will cause human utterings that are too wonderful to understand.

Realization of Job's Fragility (Job 42:4-6)

Job continues on in his recognition of the abundance of God's wisdom in comparison to his own frailty. Job has a head knowledge of God, but a limited understanding of the operation of God's involvement in our suffering and adversity. Job states I have heard of thee in verse 5 indicating that Job's knowledge of God has been far too narrow. He had been academic. His friends and religious teaching had told Job about God. He had passed this information to others and engaged in a great deal of theoretical discussion about the nature of God. But the conceptions held by his friends were inadequate to meet his needs or fit his present circumstances. Those held by himself led him to make rebellious and blasphemous charges against God.

Already, Job has come to appreciate something about God that he had not known before. Through this trial, Job has come in some way face-to-face with God. What Job had known of God in the past was secondhand. Even so, Job had believed in God and lived for Him. But he had now been changed. Observe how he says, "but now mine eye seeth thee." It is as if Job is saying that, through his experience of loss, abiding uncertainty, and unrelieved suffering, and his relentless turning toward God, he has come to see in a new way. It is this kind of seeing generated by way of anguished turning toward God that forms the basis of his repentance. Now Job has received personal experience of God. What Job saw physically is not essential. Proof that God can be

realized through testimony is found with the crowd that followed Jesus due to the initial proclamation of the Samaritan woman (John 4:39–42). But in this text, hearsay is a truth that Job no longer has to rely on. He has been confronted by God on a Person-to-person basis.

Then comes the climax of the whole dispute between Job and God in verse 6. Job has definitely learned something about himself. Thus, he says, “Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Job here expresses regret at his foolish words, uttered hastily and in ignorance. From the very start, Job had erred in his response to his trial. He repents of his arrogance in impugning God’s justice. He repents of the attitude whereby he simply demanded an answer as if it was owed him. The expression dust and ashes shows that, as a humble suppliant, he knows his status. By these expressions he shows how deeply his soul was humbled in the presence of God. He who has high thoughts of himself must have low thoughts of the dignity of the divine nature, of the majesty of God.

Restoration of Job’s Stability (Job 42:10-17)

Verses 7–9 show God was displeased with Job’s friends. God is concerned only with the false things they had said about Him. They had declared that Job’s sufferings proved he had offended God and brought them on himself. Due to the inaccuracy of their analysis, God told Job to make intercession for his friends. God’s justice is evident in Job’s life. As Job vindicated his friends, God vindicated Job.

Earnest prayers of forgiveness for those who hurt and abandon us demonstrates God’s justice in us. The turning of Job’s captivity just as he prayed for his friends indicates God’s expectation of us when we are wronged by loved ones. God expects us to see through His eyes in their failure, just as God sees us when we fail. All who abandoned Job returned, comforted, and blessed him. Job received them without reservation and celebrated with them. Job was blessed with words of comfort and

the restoration of relationships. God’s justice always prevails.

Final Thoughts

Gossiping behind a person’s back as well as offering false advice can do much damage. We must be careful about assuming we know what God is doing in another person’s life. We may try to help people in their walk with the Lord with good intentions, but it’s very easy to give our opinions about why this or that happened. We must recognize that we cannot understand the ways of God in our own lives, much less in the lives of others.

God revealed Himself to Job in a life-changing way. He demonstrated to Job that He is sovereign and not subject to the judgment of man. Job responded to God’s revelation with humility. He repented of his accusations of God and was able to gain a new perspective about himself, and his problems. Many people like Job, struggle with life’s problems and need to catch a mental glimpse of the sovereign God. When we see Him as He is, we are better able to cope with the trials that we face.

Be Salt! Be Light! Be Blessed!