

JOB 38:4-18

KNOW-IT-ALL

Job is a man whom God said was upright and blameless, and yet all sorts of bad things happened to him and his family. Livestock was stolen. All his children died. Job got terribly sick. The only support Job got from his wife was that she told him to curse God and die. His friends said that it was his fault, because of his sin. Now we're near the end of the book and Job has finally got what he has been asking for all along, an audience with God so that God could tell him why he's suffering. At the beginning of the book God said that Job was righteous, "a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil" (1:8). So why is this righteous man suffering?

God in Christ has made you righteous through your baptisms and the forgiveness of your sins. Why do you suffer? Why do bad things happen to good people? What we're looking at in the book of Job doesn't seem fair. What we see in our lives often doesn't seem fair. People in the Bible are often asking that question of why are the wicked blessed and the good person suffers. The Psalmist says, "Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches. All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence" (73:12-13).

Go back to some of what we didn't read from Romans last week, what we skipped over between chapter nine and ten and you'll see another side to this dilemma of asking God why does this happen – whatever 'this' is in your life.

"As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then He has mercy on whomever He wills, and He hardens whomever He wills" (9:13-18).

That seems to be an easier answer to understand than the one God gives Job, but both are equally hard to accept. Basically, they tell us that God is going to do what God is going to do, and if He explained the "whys" to us we wouldn't understand it.

So, is that it?! Just move on and accept your lot in life because God is in control. Stop your complaining. You don't need to understand what God is doing, just accept that God knows better than you do, and trust that He's working all things together for your good. Maybe that's not all there is. There has to be some sort of answer here from God to Job, and to us, something other than just trust God because He knows what He's doing, and we don't.

What is that answer, the word of comfort that God has for Job? Did you hear it when it was read earlier? As you think about it first go back to Romans. “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” We often get stuck on God hating Esau, but what about Jacob? This is a statement about these boys before they were born. Why was Jacob loved before he was born? Why were you loved before you were born? Yes, you were loved by God before you were born. In Ephesians 1:4 Paul says that God chose us in Jesus “before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”

That’s where God starts with His answer to Job, the foundation of the world, and that’s where our answer lies for why God loves us? Why do we have the promise of salvation? Why does God give us faith? God is in charge and it has nothing to do with us. So, what does it have to do with? Did you pick up on it in the first few verses of our text? I’ll read them again to let you think about it, and while I read it think about Christmas, think about Jesus, remember that Jesus is called the Morning Star, and so morning stars – plural – in our reading are angels.

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its **cornerstone**, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (38:4-7).

Surely you know and understand by now what God was telling Job. As I reveal this to you let’s see if you do know all of this. Who is the know-it-all here? Surely not me. I had to do research for this as I do for every sermon. Listen to these passages and maybe what God is saying will come to you.

“Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’” – Isaiah 28:16. That’s quoted in 1 Peter 2:6 “For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.”

This cornerstone that God tells Job about is a ‘Him’. Who is this Him that by believing in Him your shame will be taken away? God is telling Job that He has already dealt with all of Job’s suffering and shame. God has answered Job’s prayers right from the foundation of this world. In Ephesians 2:20 Paul says, “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone”. Jesus is the cornerstone whom God tells Job about.

Do you think you would’ve understood it if you were Job and God explained His plan of salvation to you? Many people in the Bible had more

knowledge of God than Job did, but they still rejected this cornerstone. "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone" – Psalm 118:22. Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" (Matthew 21:42). Jesus would be rejected and crucified for our sins and raised for our salvation. Jesus suffers and dies so that you may live eternally without suffering.

Is this doing of the Lord marvelous in your eyes, or do you find yourself alongside of Job still stuck on asking God 'Why?!'? Do you question God's plan of salvation, or do you believe that your sin and shame has been taken away through Jesus?

Peter said, "This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone" (Acts 4:11). "As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame." So the honour is for you who believe" (1 Peter 2:4-7).

God answered Job with the foundation of salvation, and then He proceeded for another chapter to question Job if he knew anything about His creation. Finally, Chapter forty begins with God saying to Job, "'Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it." Then Job answered the Lord and said: "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer You? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further.'" (40:2-5). Job knew when to stop questioning God.

What was the response to God's foundation of salvation? Singing angels and shouts for joy. As angels sang at the creation of this world when God laid His cornerstone they rejoiced again when Jesus was born. "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!" (Luke 2:13-14). And there will be celestial joy at the end of the world – "a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for His judgments are true and just" – Rev. 19:1-2a.

It's not about understanding – but believing, trusting. Jesus came for all people to save them, not to remove them from the suffering of this world, but to promise us a world without suffering. For now, we're called to trust that God is in charge, not in some sort of burdensome way, but to be gracious to all of us through His Son Jesus the cornerstone of our salvation. Amen.