

Thirteen Weeks in the Book Of

JOB

They That Wait Upon The Lord
Shall Renew Their Strength

Inver Grove Church of Christ

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Week 1 - Faith Sees Value In Trial (Chapters 1 & 2)

One moment your world is fine; the next, you watch everything fall in one day. Your things, your family, your health, your reputation; all destroyed.

In the book of Job, everyone has a different perspective on what to make of this: To Satan, an opportunity to show people that God is a liar and to prove to God that love is nothing more than self seeking a payoff. Job's wife sees only the bitterness of great injustice, seemingly done by God who she now regards as an enemy. Job remains focused on God and His works (which is great), yet it is obvious that the Lord sees what nobody else did: *value in trial*.

The Theme of Inward Things and Outward Things

In these two chapters we see one of the best qualities of Job: he is mindful of what his children might have done "in their hearts" (1:5) which shows that he understands the purpose of the command (1 Tim. 1:5). When struck, his focus remained on inward things: God and his works (1:21, 2:10). Thus, he is not broken. Even the Lord Himself references inward things when he boasts to Satan of what sort of person Job is (1:8, 2:3). It is obvious that the Lord is more concerned about the state of one's faith and the salvation it brings, than for health, wealth and even in a sense mortal life. Should we feel the same way?

Satan is concerned with outward things, boasting that human devotion is nothing more than self-seeking (1:9-11, 2:4): reputation, health, possessions, family, and all the trappings of this life. As the speeches unfurl in the following chapters, watch for signs of how deeply ingrained this is in *everyone* but the Lord. Is it possible to see one's own personal integrity as an "outward thing" valued in some skewed way? As a thought: Satan's power is over outward things, but if the Kingdom does not consist of outward things (Rom. 14:17) then what power does he have over us, if any?

The Lord Always Takes the Lowest Place

Have you thought about how Job's suffering is a hardship upon the Lord? He suffers willingly by allowing Satan to come before him, opening opportunity for slander and attacks on Himself, He forbears being framed by Satan and therefore losing reputation and honor, He has to watch and wait as Job is disappointed in Him and Job's wife breaks faith. God's humility is so great that He not only endures these things, but waits patiently and in the end doesn't speak a word on His behalf to Job. Nobody takes the lowest place more than God.

The Challenge of Faith

The events of the book play out in a way that clearly indicts God, and Satan is very clever to make the Lord appear to be the villain. Also, Job didn't see God protecting him, he only saw the destruction of earthly relationships and things. Since faith is the assurance of unseen things (Heb. 11:1) faith will always believe God rather than sight or experience. This is the challenge that now confronts Job. With all events pointing the finger at God, can Job believe that the Lord loves him and hears him? Can Job see the same value in trial that God sees?

In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong (1:22)

As long as Job's focus was on God and His works, he was safe, comforted, and at peace. The chapter concludes in an amazing way, given what has taken place.

Questions - Week 1 - Faith Sees Value in Trial

1. Setting: Who are these people? What are their nationalities / ethnicities?
2. According to 1:5, what is Job concerned about with his children? How does this concern show his true godliness? How is this similar to what God says about Job?
3. Why do you think God would point out one of his beloved servants to someone like Satan? Does this make God complicit in what follows?
4. What are the things that happened to Job and his family?

Thought Questions

1. Why do you think Satan would want to be around God, whom he hates?
2. Why do you think God would be willing to bear the grief of being framed, appearing to have failed, and knowing that Job will be disappointed in Him?

A Meditation on Christ

The only two people in the Bible that Satan did everything he could to destroy were Job and Christ. Unlike Job, Christ had nothing physical to take away, as He was only invested in spiritual things. Like Job, Christ was tested with the striking of His body, and to a much greater degree than Job.

Like Job, Christ was surrounded at the end by people who were completely compromised by Satan. The religious leaders, the soldiers, even His disciples. Because all were compromised Christ at the end had to go it completely alone, having to believe fully in God's promise and never wavering in faith of God's love and mercy. As always, where others had stumbled, Christ triumphed through faith in God's love and power.

Week 2 - Job's First Speeches (3 - 24: Eight Speeches)

Faith is fully convinced of God's Love

Chapter two ends with Job having a full focus on the Lord and His goodness, but sometimes a greater challenge can be guarding and protecting our faith in the long run. He now has time to think about what happened, all the while being pressed by his friends.

The first things to break on Job was his faith that God hears him and his faith that God loves him, this will become more obvious in each of his speeches as his focus is slowly moved and everyone involved grows more frustrated with every exchange of words.

Job's Focus Changes From God and His Works to Self and His Own Works

Listen to the speeches and notice how Job's focus shifts. The first speech seems harmless, but within it is a tiny crack that will get bigger and bigger. The irony here is that Satan's belief about outward things are playing out in an unexpected way: Job himself is focusing more and more on outward things: His former glory, the way he was respected, and his personal integrity; ie., "because I've done these things I don't deserve this."

It is not a coincidence that a focus on self will destroy one's ability to know the love of God and the solace of prayer. A focus on self is the opposite of dying to self (Matt 10:39, Phil. 3:7-11). Question: If we don't stand before God on the basis of works, do we think we stand before each other on the basis of works?

How Wrangling With Others Embitters The Soul

Job's speeches become increasingly combative; less and less introspective in a good way. Job might have seen how he was becoming embittered toward his friends, but we wonder if he realized how wrangling with his friends was slowly and imperceptibly embittering his heart against the Lord?

In the New Testament, when Paul writes to Timothy it is obvious that Timothy had become too involved in arguing with brethren and is warned against what this does to the heart. We also note that Jesus kept Himself free of bitterness by not engaging in endless debate with the Pharisees. When they showed up He answered them directly and then moved to the next town.

How Much Did Job Understand About The Nature of God's Love?

Let's take a moment to recognize that Job never doubted the existence of God, he didn't decide to jump head-first into sin for some supposed relief of pleasure, he didn't curse God or others. However, his focus is shifting in a way that makes peace with God impossible. Furthermore, things are beginning to slip out of his mouth that are exposing the flaws; and that is good because exposing sin is the first step to dealing with it. As his focus shifts, his confidence in God's love is eroded enormously. Why do you suppose maintaining a deep conviction that God loves you is so critical for enduring suffering? And why do you suppose that bitterness toward others resulted in Job doubting God's love for him?

Questions - Week 2 - Faith Is Fully Convinced of God's Love

1. The first speech seems harmless at first glance but it's the first step in a very bad direction. What are the things in Job's first speech that could have been "nipped in the bud"? Compare to Psalm 73.
2. How many places can you find where Job insinuates or says outright that God does not hear him or love him? Share some of those. What would make him believe that?
3. Where are some verses that indicate that Job feels he is more righteous than God? If you have read all the speeches and don't believe Job ever said such a thing, then jot that down here also.
4. The speeches of Job have some hidden gems. If you find some that stand out, jot them down here and share them in class.

Thought Questions

1. If you don't break the commands, does that mean you are therefore keeping them?
See Matthew 5.
2. If you don't break the commands, do you therefore stand before God justified by them?
See Matthew 19:16-30
3. Why do you think Job felt compelled to justify self rather than wait for God's vindication?
See Psalm 30.

A Meditation on Christ: Jesus Never Lost His Focus

It's very amazing that Jesus, even when people were just using Him to get healed and go on with their lives without following Him that He never lost His purpose. People thinking He was coming to be a physical king did not cause Him to yield at all in His purpose. Nobody could cause Jesus to neglect or forget His true ambition, or cause Him to waver in knowing what He was sent from the Father to accomplish. I think that's just incredible.

It should inspire us that Jesus in all His glory humbles Himself to all of our needs, and should make us want to align ourselves all the more to His kingdom and purpose.

Week 3 - The Friends' Speeches - Faith is Never Human Wisdom

The friends are the embodiment of sincerity but they are not the best students. There is a continued appeal to dreams, feelings, and religious cliches upon which they presume to speak for God with the greatest boldness. We must always bear in mind that God isn't who you think He is, or who others say He is; but rather God is who He says He is. Too many people presume to speak for God when they should not.

The Three Friends

Eliphaz seems to be the person everyone admires. He speaks first, is always mentioned first, speaks with an air of authority, and the others seem to repeat his arguments as-if something is true because Eliphaz said it. At the end of the book, the Lord himself speaks directly to Eliphaz and tells him what he and the others must do.

Bildad and **Zophar** obviously have a great deal of respect for Eliphaz as they seem to get up and say "I agree with Eliphaz". Their speeches tend to be shorter and their points more difficult to follow, they are more prone to personal attacks and Zophar in particular seems rough around the edges.

The Utmost Sincerity

We cannot emphasize enough that the three friends possess the greatest possible measure of sincerity, having sat with Job for a full week without saying anything. Later, as the speeches devolve into strong-arming a confession out of Job, we can see remnants of sincerity as they try to "rescue" and "fix" their friend. Human wisdom is not God's wisdom, even when delivered with the best of intentions. Is sincerity by itself what the Lord is looking for? What is it that truly exalts people before the Lord?

So Many Things The Friends Do Not Consider

They do not consider that their efforts to "convince" Job are actually drawing him farther away from the Lord, they do not consider that they may be guilty and that God might be rebuking them through Job, they do not consider the baselessness of their claims against Job or the self-disproving nature of their reasoning.

Worse, they do not consider that their portrayal of God makes Him a guardian of outward things: health, reputation, family, possessions and thus their arguments are exactly what Satan asserted in chapters one and two: People only want God in a quest for self. The greatest irony in the friends speeches is that in arguing on God's behalf they are actually speaking on Satan's behalf; and rather than rescuing their friend they are shifting his focus away from God's works to his own works. Are these the things that exalt people in the sight of the Lord?

Wouldn't it be great to hear the friends say "Let's just pray and trust God"? It would have been better if they had, but the speeches are an important part of the book because they draw out faults that will later be dealt with in a way that provides the greatest grace. The speeches produce frustration, muddled thought, and a focus on works where all roads lead to self as cause and cure.

Questions - Week 3 - Faith Is Never Human Wisdom

1. Eliphaz lays out "evidence" that what he says is from God. What are his evidences?
2. What are some verses about the deception of human wisdom as opposed to the greatness of God's wisdom?
3. Which of the friends only spoke twice?
4. The friends explain to Job why he's suffering, what he needs to do about it, and what will happen if he complies. Give verses from the arguments for each of these.
5. What was it that needed fixing on Job? What would you do to "fix Job"?

Thought questions:

1. Why couldn't the friends' speeches "fix" Job?
2. Was Job a better person than his friends? On what basis? What is it that exalts a person in the eyes of the Lord?
3. Have you ever noticed how false teaching tends to be extremely general? What is the danger in basing our faith on religious cliches?
4. Why do you think people presume that whatever they are doing is what God wants? Whether it's ripping phone books or handing out hotdogs, there is the instant presumption that God told them to do this and so long as they do it they are "good". Why do people presume on God the way the Three Friends did?

Suffering and God's Role In Suffering: Considering It On a Deeper Level

The book of Job is leading us into a larger revelation on suffering and God's role in allowing suffering that has not fully explained prior. It is also teaching us something about the nature of grace, God's love, and what it is that exalts a person before the Lord.

A Meditation on Christ

Jesus, who was righteous beyond any measure, was crucified and brought to nothing while others accused Him of sinning against God while He was blameless and feared God utterly. He spoke nothing on His own behalf but trusted fully in God's vindication which would come by God raising Him from the dead. He, being perfect did not think of His own works as justifying Him before God, yet we in our sin often think God owes us for services rendered. He made Himself of no reputation, even taking the form of a servant. Let this mind be in us!

Week Four - Job's Final Speech - Faith is not Works (26-31)

At this point the argument with the friends has taken its full course, like a poison that began small and now consumes the person. Job thoroughly details his exacting, thoughtful piety toward God which has been perfect in every regard. In Job's view the deeds merit God's favor and his former glory the result of extreme obedience (31:35-37).

It's as-if we are supposed to feel like he's really settled the matter with his full measure of good works. Obviously that entitles him to family, reputation, and God's favor! We can pump our fist in the air as he lays it down, shutting up his friends once and for all with unanswerable righteousness. What can they possibly say now? The man is flawless.

Along the way he takes some shots at the Lord: The Lord accuses him unjustly, his suffering is an insult against his great integrity, God doesn't listen, et cetera. It is hard to count the number of ways that he indicts the Almighty of wronging him and harder still to understand that this is the same Job who in chapter two firmly stated that if we accept good from the Lord can we not also accept the ill? (Job 2:10). Arguing with others and justifying self are indeed bitter poisons (2 Tim. 2:14-19).

Job's Nine Speeches Seem To Go Like this:

Phase 1 - Why doesn't God Kill me? What did I do wrong? Why does God not pardon?

Analysis: Seems harmless but sets him down a path of envy and resentment.

Phase 2 - If God is punishing me (which he believes), then why are others not punished?

Analysis: Fretting over the wicked is a path to hardness of heart (Psalm 73).

Phase 3 - Doesn't God know that I'm better than those people?

Analysis: This is where Job is drawn into "outward things" as a point of view.

Phase 4 - Here's proof that my integrity is flawless!

Analysis: A subtle flaw in Job's faith now revealed through the fire of trial.

Job's final speech appears to have three parts; in the first part he bemoans the loss of justice to himself; in the second he bewails the loss of his former glory and status, and in the final section he explains why he merits both justice and elevation. Job's obedience is admirable, but what he makes of it here is greatly mistaken.

Nothing is Left for God and His Works: It's All Job Now

The thought process seems to have come to its logical conclusion and we are not surprised that further speeches from Job are not necessary. What God intended has been drawn out and fully exposed. So, it turns out that this story is still about God and His works and not Job's righteousness; a fact not missed by the next speakers. God is at work!

Job's works truly are impressive, and it would do us well to meditate on each of them as a model for how the Godly ought to live. Moreso, it's important for us to know the kind of life Job lived so that we can understand that he is not being punished for sin. It is critical that we understand what a righteous person he is, otherwise there is no chance that we will grasp the purpose of the book (plug for weeks six through thirteen). Also, his Godly deeds did matter; just not for the reasons he supposes at the moment.

Questions - Week Four - Faith is not Works (ch. 26-31)

1. If you were there, what advice would you give to Job's friends?
2. Find four places where Job makes the Lord out to be the "bad guy". Look very closely at chapters 26-28, but not there only.
3. What are a few of Job's good works that you find most impressive?
4. Job complains that he is falsely accused yet falsely accuses the Lord; is there some sort of "red flag" we can use in our own lives to spot hypocrisy in ourselves?
5. How would you rate Job's righteousness against Abraham? What does this say about God's election in the Old Testament? Relate this to Romans 9:6-18

Thought Questions: Revisited

1. If you don't break the commands, does that mean you are therefore keeping them?
See Matthew 5.
2. If you don't break the commands, do you therefore stand before God justified by them?
See Matthew 19:16-30
3. Why do you think Job felt compelled to justify self rather than wait for God's vindication?
See Psalm 30.
4. Do you see any echoes of Christ in Job's last two speeches? Forsaken? He becomes the ultimate stumbling block? Does anything else stand out to you as *messianic*?

A Meditation on Christ

He was greatly confident that His life showed Him to be who He was but it never seems like he was impressed with his own goodness. "Nobody is good but God alone" (Mark 10:18) He once said, completely brushing off an opportunity to be exalted on the basis of self. Likewise, He submitted to John in a baptism of repentance which shows that Jesus had no pride based upon self, no desire to exalt some ego or some reputation, never thinking He was somehow above any of God's things or any of God's commands.

The Narrator Speaks : Job 32:1-5

The book has a natural division at this point: The narrator has been sitting back, letting the three friends and Job say all they want, choosing to not tell us if what was said is true, half true, or straight up false. The arguments have become something like a hall of mirrors at the State Fair with people slowly losing their frame of reference. The moment has now come to throw open a door of light to show what is real and what is an illusion. The whole story gets shut down in sort of an intermission because it is critical that we know with absolute certainty what is really going on here.

The Prior Speeches Draw Us Into A False Narrative

The speeches when fully read, have exactly the effect they are supposed to: They draw you into a false narrative without you realizing it. We are baited into a who's more right and who's more wrong and who's better than who. There is no answer other *than comparing themselves with one another* (2 Cor 10:12).

Regarding the Three Friends

(1) 32:1 They were "all done" with arguing, in other words we've heard everything they have and they won't have anything better. **(2)** 32:3 The friends did not come up with even a single point that had merit, despite the number and length of their speeches. **(3)** 32:5 Their points against Job were baseless and it's shallow on their part that the baselessness never gave them pause.

Regarding Job Himself

(1) 32:1 He is righteous in his own eyes. **(2)** 32:2 He is justifying himself at the expense of justifying God. **(3)** 32:3 Job is being condemned by the friends, meaning that the arguments against him are no longer good willed or intended to reveal grace. **(4)** Job (and his friends) were "older people" and others standing around were listening to what we suppose was seen as a weighty conversation between champions of religious thought.

The Narrator Wants Us To Know A Few Things About Elihu Before We Listen Him

(1) 32:2,3,5 Elihu has been angry while listening to all this and he's angry now, at pretty much everyone. **(2)** 23:4 He waited a very long time to speak. **(3)** 23:3 He knows that everything the Friends said was baseless; in other words - and this is often missed by commentators - Elihu does not agree with the Three Friends, so his speech should not be interpreted as a rehash of ideas that have already played out and come to nothing. **(4)** He recognizes that the problem Job has at this point, is self-righteousness so we should see Elihu's speech as addressing that, and not an attempt to uncover some hidden sin.

Why Does The Narrator Do This Now?

For what it's worth, the narrator stepping in at this moment means that Elihu's speech is grouped with God's speech. He also hinted that Elihu easily perceives things rightly about others' arguments and demeanor. Personally, I would have expected the narrator to step in before God's speech as sort of a Herald; but that never happens. Our wake up call comes now, and now we know exactly what has been going on and where each character is at.

Week 5 - Elihu - Chapters 32-37 - Faith Exalts Others

Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad (the three friends) were people who loved Job with great sincerity; but this is not to say that they were great students or understood God deeply. Now, *The Narrator* comes forward to let us know that the speeches are about to change in a very big way. And they do. Up steps Elhu! Elihu does not have years of friendship with Job, and he speaks in an almost detached manner; but his understanding of the Lord is shocking in how well he grasps the *higher principles*. This makes him sort of an opposite of Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad (the friends).

Elihu Answers Job Point By Point & Quote By Quote

Unlike the friends, Elihu takes the time to actually quote what Job had said, and to discuss why Job's reaction lacks faith in the grace and goodness of God. He seems to be saying:

- Job was rightfully hurt when the friends accused him of secretly perverting justice and attacking the innocent. IRONY: Job is accusing God of that exact thing.
- Job did not have to conclude that God does not love him or hear him, even if one would grant that God is punishing him (Elihu probably realizes that God wasn't punishing Job)
- Job did not have to appeal to his own works, but could have rested in conviction toward God's commitment to love, redeem, and glorify.
- He takes the time to show that he both heard what Job said as well as what Job meant
- He does not quote the most egregious things said by Job, focusing instead on the actual things that "broke" in Job's faith.
- A focus should remain on the Lord's works, to the saving of the soul.

Strengths and Weaknesses as a Child of God

Here we have a perfection of knowledge muddled by carnal pride (1 Cor 8:1-2). Elihu highly rates himself because he over-rates knowledge. Is knowing all the right answers to all the right questions the thing that exalts a person in the eyes of God? Does this make him better than those with less knowledge but greater sincerity? Is this what will fix Job?

We give credit to Elihu for focusing on Job's earlier speeches and not the last two. It is a good thing to overlook the more sensational and profane things that somebody might say in their worst moments; for we must not forget that Job is an incredibly righteous person who loves God very deeply.

Elihu on What Job Had Said: Did Job Actually Say These Things?

1. 32:6-14: Age is privilege to knowledge and wisdom.
See Job 12:12
2. 33:8-11: I've done nothing wrong but the Lord has it out for me.
See Job 13:27, 30:20, other ...
3. 34:5-6: My life entitles me to God's favor.
See Job 7:19-21, 9:14-20, other ...
4. 34:9: Serving God does not profit anything
See Job 24:1-12. First speech? Other ...
5. 35:2: My righteousness is more than God's.
See Job 7:17-21, 10:1-3, Job 27:2, others ...

Note - This one called out by Eliphaz: 35:2

Note - This one called out by the Lord: 40:8 (we will pretend we don't know that yet)

6. 35:3: The relationship is as useless to God as it is to me (paraphrase)
See: Job 24:15, 31:3-4.
7. 35:14 "I do not see Him"
See: 9:11, 23:9, maybe 7:8 and 17:15.
8. 37:19 Job is instructing others on his prepared speech to God
Does that sum up Job's last five speeches?

Questions - Week Five - Chapters 32-37 - Faith Exalts Others

For today's questions we will discuss each of Elihu's points; and how those same things are felt by people today. However; we'll add the following:

1. What does Elihu say in chapters 32 & 33 that indicates he is exalted in his own mind?
2. Many people trust that a person can be schooled in religious thought, and when sanctioned by others this gives them a right to speak on God's behalf. Read what Elihu says in 36:1-4 and compare it with passages like Acts 17:11, Luke 24:27. Why would Paul and Christ not want people to "take their word for it" because they are "religious authorities"? See also Deut. 8:3 and Rom. 10:17.
3. What are some stories in the Bible where people's lives and faith were hurt by somebody who claimed to speak for the Lord but did not speak what God had said?
4. If you have all knowledge and understand all mysteries, does this mean you have what God wants? Consider 1 Cor. 13:1-3, 1 Cor. 8:2.

A Meditation on Christ

Christ spent his earthly life lifting up the fallen, the weak, the needy. Even though His disciples frequently sought to exalt self, He always dismissed any such thing. The models He pointed to were not the proud, but children and servants. In the temptations, Satan held out three scenarios that would have a strong appeal to a perspective of privilege; again, He would have none of that, choosing instead that God would be exalted at great cost to self.

Jesus seeks to exalt others in offering salvation. He finds those who would have a true love of God and exalts them by washing them and saving them from their sin and bringing them into a glorious inheritance with the saints. Nobody exalts others more than the Lord! Let us do all we can to follow in His steps.

Week 6 - The Lord's First Speech: Chapters 38-39

Over thirty chapters of damage is undone when the Lord speaks. As you read the Lord's first speech, think about how what He says will restore a right faith and a right focus. God's first speech is sort of a "Sermon on the Mount" of the Old Testament. It should impress us that the Lord waited and showed mercy.

The Lord Shows Up and Is Totally Good With Hearing Job's Complaint

The Lord needs to say a few things before Job opens up his mouth. In this speech, the Lord reveals His true character to Job. Service, love, devotion, deep care and infinite forethought are the most obvious take-aways from the first speech. And even though Job has accused God directly, the Lord Himself never accuses Job of anything but rather He talks about the world around us in a way that is soothing and works to produce true lowliness of heart. It's like the gentlest possible way that anyone could have confronted Job. After God speaks nobody is frustrated or angry anymore, just calm, at peace and in a right faith.

First Part of Speech: The Mechanisms of Life: 38:1-38

Things that govern the world; light, water, weather and the surrounding stars actually reveal the incredible amount of grace constantly in play that makes God's relationship with people possible. Think of grace as a thoughtful kindness given by somebody who had no obligation to provide it; yet it has been supplied in ample measure. It's as if the size of rain drops or the amount of light were things that, if too much or too little or too great or too small would actually do harm so the Lord chose to measure with the greatest care to provide the greatest grace to his creatures. Also, to show the greatest grace, it is necessary to have storms; if *moisture + dust = rain* (38:34-38), how did the dust get up there? Can you see tragedy as a storm? Job's view of his own works had distorted his view of the Law of Grace; and in this speech the Lord explains how the universe has been founded on the Law of Grace.

Second Part of the Speech: Animals: 38:39-39:30

You can't forget that he's talking about people or you'll miss the point; though the point comes from a truth about animals. Their greatness isn't derived from riches or appearance but inward things. It's interesting that all of the animals either have faults or are glorified in a position of weakness: The horse is incredibly brave but it tends to be too eager and can get you killed if you don't restrain it. The ostrich has truly amazing abilities but it's a poor parent, yet on the other hand what is truly great about the lion, the raven, and the mountain goat are the amazing ways they provide for the weak; and not in any outward glory. Inward things, using the abilities that God has provided, and knowing that flaws, suffering, and death are all part of the design leads Job to understand that grace goes deeper than he ever imagined. Flaws are part of the perfection; not a perfection of works but *a perfection of grace*. Consider Is. 43:19-21 and 1 Cor. 12:7-10.

The Lord Ends His Speech And Asks to Hear The Grievances: Job's Response

Earlier in the book, Job had hoped to appear before God in order to deliver some epic lines proving his innocence and his rightful place before the Almighty and others. But, the word of

the Lord melted his heart so that he went from "Behold I am righteous" to "behold I am vile" (40:4). That is exactly the mind that every follower of the Lord is in when they finally "get it". In verse five when he says he will speak no further, we should see this as Job's change of heart affecting his life. He no longer has any grievances because the suffering has been put in a right perspective; and this while still suffering. Amazing!

Questions - Week Six - The Lord's First Speech: Chapters 38-39

Basically, we understand what the Lord's speech is about by the way Job reacts to it. He achieved lowliness of heart and completely gave up on the notion of "works" even though his own works were perfect. So knowing that this is the correct way of understanding and applying God's speech, we handle it accordingly.

1. What are some ways that the Lord's invitation to hear Job's complaints should inspire us to prayer? What are some passages that make you want to grow in your prayer life?
2. Select one thing that the Lord talks about in this speech, and share something about how that one thing reveals God's goodness, generosity, and grace. Is there a verse from the Lord's speech that you find particularly meaningful?
3. How did the Lord's speech address what was REALLY going on in Job's heart?
4. When Job became focused on his own integrity, he became unable to perceive God's grace working in his life. Why does a focus on our works blind us to seeing the grace of God working in our lives?

Thought Questions:

1. Why do you think God waited until last to speak? Why couldn't He have just "mopped this thing up" much sooner? Doesn't the extension of time increase the suffering?
2. In 38:12-21 can you see something like a spiritual land promise? See Heb. 11:14-16. What is the progression of ideas in these verses?

A Meditation on Christ

Jesus continually taught that faith takes the commands to their logical end (Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28, 33-34, 41). Jesus lived this out; His faith and conduct went so far beyond commands that it is difficult to grasp how truly joined to the Father He was in heart and mind. When surrounded by need, He showed mercy. He went without food and sleep, and ventured to the next place even during storms. He persevered for the sake of broken people to such an extreme that it is no wonder at his crucifixion everyone knew who and what He was, and what He taught. When He said "It is finished" He had given everything He had until nothing was left. His heart was so joined to the Lord that his extreme obedience never hardened him to those who had been broken by sin. Nobody had ever been so loving, so forgiving, so comforting, or so approachable. There is no saviour like our Lord!

Week 7 - The Lord's Second Speech: Chapters 40-41

Despite the fact that Job is now in a right heart, there is something more, something about God Himself that if left unsaid would not give a full picture and would leave too many questions unanswered. The Lord is now going to explain the difficult work of bringing all people to a lowliness of heart (40:7-12). For this, there is an easy way and a hard way which are typified by two animals.

And what if ... let's entertain a notion here ... that this doesn't mean that the wicked should always be struck but perhaps the righteous instead?

Behemoth and Leviathan

The first great animal typifies the qualities of God Himself (40:19). Its strength is awe inspiring, yet it prefers to live in quiet modesty. Its power isn't scary, but rather a great diversity of animals are all around and filled with peace and happiness. They seem protected and at rest in Behemoth's presence.

The second creature isn't surrounded by other animals and it doesn't dwell in modesty. The animal is terrifying beyond imagination and insanely violent, travelling near & far in search of things to devour. Does it surprise us that God made them both and each for a purpose?

The section on Leviathan is over three times longer than the section on Behemoth, we suppose because we have no objections to being humbled the easy way, but whenever something is difficult, it seems that we seek a greater depth of answers. That by itself proves that the worst things can sometimes produce the deepest level of thought.

The Lord's Speech Exposes How We Confuse Suffering And Sin

We have to be very clear here that if Job were in any way a guilty person; if there was any failing in his keeping the command then there would be no lesson in this book. This is why it had to be Job who suffered. Everyone is OK with the wicked suffering. But when the righteous suffer, populist theology and the whole "karma thing" is turned on its head and shown to be a lie.

It is interesting that God's view of suffering is different than anyone else in the book. The friends viewed it as a sign of God's displeasure at sin, Job's wife viewed suffering as something that contradicts the goodness of God. Elihu viewed suffering as remedial for the righteous as well as the sinner, but the lessons that God brings out here are much more nuanced. Suffering becomes *sort of* a grace for others (like in 2 Cor 1:3-5).

It's ironic that so many people struggle with "Why Bad Things Happen to Good People" because, if we read our Bibles we would discover that if the righteous don't suffer then the wicked cannot be saved. This can be easily gleaned from the stories of Joseph, Job, Daniel, Christ and others. We would do well to meditate on why it had to be Job and not the friends or Elihu. We must view suffering in the same way as the Lord, not in the same way as the three friends. Think of Job as being like the story of Joseph; where God's family is led to a greater spiritual land. Neither story would be possible without a Leviathan.

Questions - Week 7 - The Lord's Second Speech: Chapters 40-41

1. What are the ways that Behemoth is like the Lord, and how should that bring us to a great humility of heart?
2. What does Behemoth do with his greatness? How is Behemoth an answer to how a greatness of obedience (or anything "greatness") should be carried?
3. Leviathan is there for one reason and one reason only: To ruin your day and if possible your life. Why do things like that exist?
4. In 2 Kings 5:1-3 we find that God sometimes grants victory to the "enemies" over his own people. Why would God allow that kind of suffering? See also Psalm 83:9-13. Relate this to Leviathan.

Thought Questions:

1. Which character in the book of Job is most deserving to be smitten by God and afflicted?
2. We wonder if cancer and the fear of death saves more people than our evangelism? Would we really wish to rid the world of every Leviathan?
3. The humble person suffers with faith; the proud person suffers with protest. Why is that?

A Meditation on Christ

"Can you drink the cup that I'm going to drink?" Jesus asked, referring to the great trial He was about to endure. "Yes.", they said. Jesus never shielded Himself, nor did the Father shield Him from any kind of suffering; he tasted all of it in full measure for our sakes. Nobody faced Leviathan like our Lord, nobody so brave, so fully confident that God would do what He promised, fully trusting in the end intended by the Lord (Heb. 12:2).

Jesus showed us that love does not take the easy way out: "For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls."

Week 8 - The End Intended By The Lord: Chapters 42

Job finds peace, makes atonement for his friends, the friends do what God says, and in time Job receives the gift of another family of 12 twice as glorious as the first. Best ending ever? But is that all there is to the "end intended by the Lord" (James 5:11)?

Job Goes From Having Heard To Having Seen: What Has Changed?

What Job says to the Lord after the second speech is deeper and more detailed than after the first speech. He is all the more amazed at how God is able to bring about the end that he intends (42:2 see James 5:11 and note that Job isn't yet healed). In verse five, what is Job saying about what has changed? It almost seems like he has come to know the Lord, even though he served God sincerely and soundly before this. How changed is Job?

His Eyes Opened to the Law of Grace

The greatest single thing gained from the suffering was the deepening of the relationship; gone is any hidden notion of merit, Job is freed up to worship God in an even greater spirit of rejoicing, knowing new depths of God's mercy, putting all the praise upon Him.

This gives great importance to the book of Job as having nothing to do with the nation of Israel. It shows that the grace of God is not a keepsake of one group of people. If Job was truly living a perfect life, and still fell into judgement by that law, then what hope has anyone else if they fall into judgement by that law beyond the mercy of this life? This is the gain of the book: Job comes to understand the real reason why the Lord loves him.

A Second Family of 12, Twice As Blessed! But, What Is Their True Glory?

The doubling of the sheep, camels, oxen and donkeys is certainly an unexpected and amazing blessing, but is there something more glorious than possessions?

Consider Ps 39, Ps 17:13-14: God occupies the wicked with material things. The wicked draw a false conclusion from an abundance of and trust in material things, whereas when the righteous receive material things and even if there is an abundance they understand that their life doesn't consist of an abundance of things (Luke 12:15). But God reserves the wicked for judgement, like all He has to do is give them their things and they'll stay right there "reserved" for judgement.

Job's second family may be like Solomon's latter days; God granted him wisdom but at first he only applied it to worldly things. With Job, the family is twice as glorious as the first; but he can now perceive much more clearly that the actual treasure is spiritual. Christ always perceived that true wisdom is spiritual in nature and didn't have to go through a worldly phase. It would be amazing to see the way hardships are embraced in Job's new family.

The Latter End Of Job's Life

In keeping with the things Job said about his own inward change in verses 3-5, the end of the book seems to emphasize Job enjoying what we'd regard as the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23), whereas the beginning of the book emphasized his obedience. It's almost as if the

first family of 12 served faithfully under law but the second family of 12 under grace. Thoughts? The beginning is a great obedience and the end a great peace.

Questions - Week 8 - The End Intended By The Lord

If there has been a time when the Lord has helped you through hardship by reading the story of Job, I hope you will share that story in class today.

1. What is it that you like the most about the ending of the Book of Job?
2. What is Job trying to say in verse 5? What has changed before and after?
3. 42:11 All of his family and all of his acquaintances came to eat at his house, and they comforted him for "all the adversity that the Lord had brought upon him." So let's ask, **was it the Lord who afflicted him?** Think about the same thing with David in 2 Sam. 24:1 & 1 Chron. 21:4, or compare John 14:30 with Is. 53:10.
4. What do you make out of verses 13-15 regarding Job's daughters?

Thought Questions

1. Why did Job Suffer?
2. Could the book of Job have had a "happy ending" if it ended without the restoration of outward things? Do we think of stories about John the Baptist or Micaiah as happy?
3. How does the Book of Job embolden you to trust God more fully?

A Meditation on Christ

When Jesus made atonement, while in great suffering, He redeemed a great family for God, bringing many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10). Job suffered involuntarily, but of Christ it is said "Here I am and the children whom God has given me" (Heb, 2:13, Is. 8:18). Christ willingly tasted everything that could be thrown against Him, winning for us a salvation from sin that is so great that it even has power to change the heart; God assuring and testifying to this by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:31). Just as the latter end was much greater for Job, those who are least in the Kingdom are actually much greater than the saints in the Old Testament because of power and glory of the New Covenant (Matt. 11:11).

Week 9 - Faith Takes the Lowest Place

The Book of Job is the story of a person who goes from "Behold I am righteous" to "Behold I am vile" (40:4, 42:5-6). So, what if doing good perfectly is actually a very shallow view of God that is limiting and insufficient?

Job Grew To See Himself As Weak And Not Strong

In the book of Job everyone viewed themselves as strong and not weak. The Friends felt no need to consider that Job's suffering may be for their sake. Job was confident that his perfect works meant that his own suffering couldn't possibly be remedial. Elihu made no attempt to hide his belief that he too had a very exalted place before the Lord (33:2-6) and thus failed to consider that God might be rebuking him through Job. When we think we are strong, *it never applies to us*.

The Lord's speeches humbled Job in a way that he could see himself as he really is before the Lord: weak, blind, begging (40:4-5, 42:2-6). Then, everything changed for him. Question: Do you think Jesus viewed himself as weak and needy?

What Does It Mean To Take The Lowest Place?

When the Lord takes the lowest place in this book, He suffers willingly by allowing Satan to come before him, opening opportunity for slander against Himself. He forbears being framed by Satan and losing reputation. He waits as Job is disappointed in Him and Job's wife breaks faith. He takes the lowest place when He waits to speak. Unlike Elihu, when He does speak he doesn't present Himself as a notch above everyone he waited for because He waited. Taking the lowest place, simply put, is being willing to suffer for the sake of exalting others.

This principle is everywhere in God's two speeches: the elements God made exist for other things; the glory of what the animals do. Behemoth in its great strength takes a low place, preferring to dwell quietly behind the reeds, typifying the Lord (40:19) with the result that the animals around it are joyous and at peace.

The Grace of God Rescues Those In A Low Place

Christ and Job saved others through sacrifice when they were in the lowest place of all. The friends were atoned for when they lowered themselves to do what God said and humbled themselves to Job. Paul takes a low place in 2 Corinthians, speaking at length about how he sees himself as weak and wishes to be viewed as weak, and not at all like the super Christians (2 Cor. 11:5) who's demeanor as "strong" gave a completely false notion of what God Himself is like, making it impossible to truly know the Lord, much the same as what Job's friends had done. Think of Rev. 3:17-18 here.

What Exalts A Person Before The Lord?

What is it that exalts a person before the Lord? Is it the help of other people? Good deeds? The physical deliverance that people can provide? The kindness of others that relates to this life? Not at all. People are in a right place before the Lord when we lower ourselves entirely

and yield to God's generosity that comes from faith when we receive from Him all things, especially the blessings He cannot give us except when we suffer loss.

Questions - Week 9 - Faith Takes the Lowest Place

1. What are Jesus' teachings on faith taking the lowest place? Share some verses from the Gospels!
2. Why were the following people overlooked? Matt. 13:55, 3 John 9 & 12, 1 Samuel 16:9-13. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Should they have done something about that?
3. In what ways did suffering place Job into the lowest place? See ch. 19, 29-30.
4. How are Job's words and demeanor changed after the Lord spoke? Give examples.

Thought Questions:

1. What would you say to somebody who thinks that God should appear personally to everyone, demonstrating the greatness of His power?
2. Isaiah 64:6 In what way is our righteousness "filthy rags"? Isn't God obligated to save us when we do them? How does this lay glory on God and not on self?
3. If salvation is by grace through faith, then why are the commands so important?

A Meditation on Christ:

Isaiah 42:19 *"Who is blind but My Servant, or deaf as My Messenger whom I send? Who is as blind as he who is perfect, and blind as the LORD's Servant?"* Can you imagine Jesus seeing Himself as blind and deaf or weak? Like, before He was made flesh He dealt with the whole world at once but now He's just dealing with a handful in one place? And now He's subject to hunger, weariness, and the frailties of the human form? Yet how He depended on the Father every moment, applied Himself to the scriptures, prayed without ceasing, being made strong in Spirit because God's strength is made perfect in weakness. Where Job failed to see himself as weak, Christ succeeded magnificently, showing the wisdom of God's strength in lowliness.

Week 10 - Why God Allows the Wicked to Prevail for a Season

In the book of Job, the wicked prevail against Job's family and things, and Job himself is stuck with suffering, weakness, and loss of reputation. Why would the Lord have allowed such things to happen?

The speeches of God outline storms, darkness, death, and glaring faults in otherwise great animals. And, some things apparently only exist in order to destroy. If there really is a God, then how could there be anything like Leviathan? Why would God do that?

Some Benefits Derived From The Wicked Prevailing For a Season

1. **Evangelism:** When the wicked prevail their sins become fully exposed. In the Prodigal Son, when did it become clear that the older son was unfaithful in heart? Only when he seemed to prevail over the younger son. Since the older brother's greed and bitterness was exposed, it became easy for the Father to discuss it with him. How did the faults of the friends become exposed and how did that make the conversation easier?
2. **Draws us closer to God:** Like the Psalmists, we are pushed to a point where we almost lose ourselves but in that we find God in deeper ways. Psalm 77: Seems like the Psalmist refuses earthly comforts and seeks only the comfort from God. Why was Job drawn to the Lord instead of away from during this ordeal? Why is it that at rock bottom, so many want to cry to the Lord?
3. **Allows God to show how easily worldly things can fall:** God allows Tyre to prosper at the expense of others, because He appointed a day that he would show how quickly wealth and privilege can be undone, lest we trust in them (Is. 23:1-13, Ezek 26). Think of how the judgements of the Lord expose the fraud of worldly things which cannot be done unless they prevail for a season.
4. **Justifies God in Judgement:** When the righteous endure, it makes God's judgement all the more just on those who do not keep faith. Example: Macedonians in 2 Cor; 1 Sam 7:1-12 willing to wait in difficult circumstances VS 1 Sam 13:5-14 not willing to wait when no immediate danger. Just think of how prior obedience on the part of the faithful shows even more that God's judgement is just!
5. **Allows us to strengthen our focus:** When others do not see the true value of Gospel, they want you to act as a vendor of outward things; but when you realize that the Gospel is actually more important than any of their worldly issues, you become purposed like never before. Example: Exodus 16: Manna and the Quail. Why would the Lord have granted their request for quail if it would result in the wicked prevailing for a time? It exposed the benefit of God's purpose in the manna it seems like that incident strengthened their purpose as the people seemed to grow in faith. See Deut. 8:2-3.
6. **Proves that Love for God is not based on outward things.** Jesus loved the Father even though there was no earthly payoff; the only earthly payoff was offered by Satan. In the book of Job, who supposed that there had to be a payoff in outward things?

We Come To Realize If God Be For Us, Who Can Be Against Us

In Genesis 42:36, Jacob thought the world was collapsing around him, and he felt himself pressured into something he feared would make the suffering far worse. "*All these things are against me!*" he said. Yet, God was at work to save their family, reunite them with those

they loved, and to reveal a far greater glory. Likewise in the story of Job, for most of the book nobody recognized any benefit to the trial, it was only the Lord who saw value, and only the Lord who could bring about the intended end. How often do we think that everything is against us when in reality God is at work for us?

Questions - Week 10 - Why God Allows the Wicked to Prevail for a Season

This week most of our time will be spent walking through the scriptures in #1 - #6 (above). Here are a few more questions for consideration if time permits:

1. Name some parables of Christ that include thoughts on the wicked gaining the upper hand for a time. What is the outcome or benefit?
2. The Lord is constantly doing everything possible to ensure that the most people are saved and the greatest grace can be shown. How are "bad things" a part of that? Consider 1 Cor 15:24-28 and Judges 2:20-23.
3. Why do you think the Lord didn't say "*Satan did this, not Me*", and that way he could skip the two speeches? Why do you think blaming God or Satan leads nowhere? Why do you think the book never goes the "blame route"?

Thought Question:

1. The ol' classic: "Why would God make people if he knew they were going to sin?"

A Meditation on Christ:

Psalm 36:12, "There the evildoers lie fallen; they are thrust down, unable to rise." It seems like "there" is the place that, when evil thought it prevailed that it actually was undone by the Lord. They had planned, they had plotted, they had Rome and every *important person* on their side. But when the Lord rose on the third day, there, the powers of darkness lie fallen. When the wicked attempted to drive away His followers (Acts) the Lord once again thwarted their design. They seemed to prevail, the Christians were scattering, but when the Lord revealed himself to Saul of Tarsus; *there* (and then) the enemies were fallen.

The Book of Revelation also shows the enemies seeing themselves as having prevailed, but how does it end when the Lord appears? Let us never forget our victory in the Lord!

Week 11 - How To Suffer as a Christian

The Lord's two speeches completely changed Job's perspective toward suffering, just as it changes our own. Can you see the principles from the Lord's two speeches in the teachings of Christ, Paul, and Peter? People in their brokenness turn to the book of Job and they gain comfort and encouragement.

Inwardly: A Conviction of Things Unseen

There is an essential quality of God's image in being able to suffer with thankfulness before we see the good result or know the reason. If salvation is by grace through faith, joy cannot be taken away, and when joy is fulfilled in that way it's like what Jesus said in John 15 and 1 John when our joy is full it's because we are sharing in fellowship with Jesus. The Lord's speeches take the focus away from self and to Him, to inward and unseen things.

If we understand that the world is designed and entirely founded on the law of grace, then from that root I can suffer anything and glorify God.

- Remember that you are taking the lowest place.
- Be ready to endure with thanks to God before you know the good end.
- Avoid vindicating self based on works, even in your own mind.
- Listening is better than fixing, goes double listening to God.
- Keep a focus on God and others, as Christ did.
- Remember that the Kingdom is not about physical things.
- Do not lose your conviction that God loves you and hears you.
- God is always working for the salvation of His people so that allows you to wait, knowing that there is some end intended by the Lord for you or for others.
- Meditate on examples of suffering in the Bible.

Think about how a conviction in unseen things changed Paul's attitude toward suffering in 2 Cor 12:8-11; Phil 4:11, 1 Tim. 6:8 and we'll see the principle at work.

Inwardly and Outwardly Maintaining a Focus on God

Job achieved peace with God after the Lord spoke; when as yet he had *done nothing*. This tells us that the perspective of faith far outweighs anything that we do, as far as learning to suffer in a way that glorifies God.

When Paul was in prison, he wrote letters. When Joseph was sold as a slave he determined that no matter what he would be faithful to God. Ruth willingly embraced the deepest poverty rather than forsake Naomi and the Lord. Hebrews 11 has many such stories, explaining what suffering looks like when people grasp the principles of faith.

Another great example is a small girl from 2 Kings 5:1-4. Her ability to show love toward others, free from bitterness and self pity is amazing considering what she had gone through. Her desire to keep faith is evident in how she knew of faithful people, even those far away. Rather than saying "Why me" (Rom. 9:20-23) she said "Lord use me".

Week 11 - Questions / Class Discussion: Three Scenarios of Suffering

Today's questions will focus on three Bible stories. Each of these reveals hardships of varying sorts, none of them a punishment on those who endured; but all of them examples of the righteous suffering for the sake of the wicked. As we look into these, keep in mind how the Lord's view of suffering (in His two speeches) is different than anyone else's in the book, 2 Cor 8:9 seems to reveal the underlying principle.

1. Jesus Delay in Going To Lazarus House in Bethany: John chapter 11.
Who suffered because of the delay?
Why did Jesus say that he delayed?
What was gained, and would you be able to endure if you knew?

2. Leaving Jerusalem to Surrender to Babylon: Jeremiah: Jer. 29, 38:17-20
What kinds of suffering were the righteous enduring?
What sacrifices would be involved in surrendering to Babylon?
What was gained, and would you be able to endure if you knew?

3. Lazarus at the doorstep of the Rich Man: Luke 16:19-31
Who is sick and who is well? Who is rich and who is poor?
In what ways was the Lord making it easier for the "rich man" to obey from the heart?
Could you be content with your lot, if your lot was to provide opportunity?

Thought Questions:

1. In chapters one and two Job explains how to suffer with faith. What did he say?
2. Does God suffer? How does God Himself endure suffering?
3. Job did not see or acknowledge that God was actually protecting him. What assurances do we have beyond what Job had?

A Meditation on Christ

In the Psalms, David prayed "Let not my enemies triumph over me", Ps. 25:2 is one place but there are many more. It seems like when Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice for sins, when He died there was no Spirit of triumph in those who were there, but everyone seems mournful in a way that is introspective. They got to kill him but they never got to see what they wanted: They did not get to see Him fail, or even for a moment break faith or lose focus on saving others.

Week 12 - Only God Can Do The Real Fixing

At the beginning of God's second speech, the Lord points out that only He can humble the soul (40:11-14). This proves true at the end as after the Lord speaks, everyone is calmed and in a right mind with a good attitude.

God never put the burden on us to change lives or see people's hearts. In the book of Job, we watch as everyone tries to fix each other and we see those efforts come to nothing. Is this a warning for us today?

Not Everything Needs to be Fixed

God did not fix Job's situation in chapter three, it did not need to be fixed then. He let it play out even though Job asked for it to be removed. At the end when we see the glory, the changing of hearts and a revealing of the depths of grace we understand that it could not have happened any other way. In the book of Genesis, Joseph would have loved to fix his situation when his brothers sold him to traders, but God was doing some fixing in that this was how the nation was going to be saved.

What You Think Needs To Be Fixed Might Not Be What Needs To Be Fixed

In 2 Cor. 12:7-10 Paul prayed that God would fix a situation but the Lord declined, the reason being that the situation was actually correcting Paul and not the other way around. In the story of Job, the friends were grossly mistaken about what was wrong with Job, and even Elihu's incredibly "sound" speech was incredibly amiss. Sometimes we get it in our heads that we need to fix something that might not be the real issue. This is why we have to trust God because He does more work than anyone.

In the story of Job, only the Lord understood how to bring out better things, and not just in Job but in all involved. 1 Sam. 16:7 tells us that people look at the outward appearance so we need to humble ourselves to understand that we might not understand. Only God can do the real fixing. It's our role to sow the seed; and God's to give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6-8).

Save Me Oh Lord, For Vain Is The Help Of Man

We need to be mindful of situations where a person comes to us and expects us to fix all of their problems instead of putting it all on God to let Him work it out for good and for salvation. In the book of Job, we see the help from others; both the sincere and the scholarly come to nothing; in fact they made matters worse. Would you agree that the three friends were at their best when they sat with Job consoling him, when they were showing mercy and not trying to fix him?

Sometimes, an over reliance on people is just another way that Satan gets us to focus on outward things rather than focus on God. Think about the Old Testament warnings about foreign alliances and why the help of man is futile (Ps. 60:11). In truth, only God can do the real fixing; which is why the comfort from people, being helpful, isn't what we ultimately seek. God provides the only assurance, the only hope, the only comfort. If our focus or others' focus is not firmly fixed on the help and comfort that God supplies, then we are set up for failure because we cannot do the real fixing.

Questions - Week 12 - Only God Can Do The Real Fixing

1. Did Job need to be "fixed"? Why or why not? What type of problem did or didn't he have?
2. How was Paul the Apostle able to preach and give himself for others without presuming it was up to him to fix everyone's problems? Provide some verses.
3. In the book of Job, the Lord waited and showed mercy; waiting longer than anyone else and showing greater mercy than anyone else. Name some other places in the Bible where the Lord did that.
4. What should the three friends have done in regards to Job's tragedy?
5. In Matt. 10:5-15, Jesus sent out his twelve, making sure that they were in no position to solve people's worldly problems. How did that help train the disciples to help others in a way that depended on the Lord to do the real fixing?

Thought Questions:

1. In the book of Job, who was the Lord intending to fix?
2. Name a prophet who did a great job of helping God's people to see that we solve our worldly problems by letting God solve our spiritual problems?
3. How does a right understanding of the Kingdom save us from trying to fix each other with physical things? See Heb. 13:9, Col. 2:20-23.

A Meditation on Christ

In Luke 11:27 someone shouted out "Blessed is the womb that bore you!" to which Jesus showed that one shouldn't presume a standing before God based upon anything other than truly giving oneself to Him (Luke 11:28, also Luke 14:15ff). Jesus was always a master of pointing people to the Father, even when people's misplaced faith sounded 'religious' and right to all other ears. The broken came to hHm, knowing that no power was in themselves and their faith was not in vain. Any thought of trust in self was always turned to a trust in God and in Him.

Week 13 - The Real Reason Why God Loves You

In the first two chapters, Satan asserted that there has to be a reason, something that one party does that greatly benefits the other; else there can be no relationship. We already pursued this from our end; supposing that Godliness exists to benefit self. But what about the relationship from God's perspective? Why would He love *you*?

And This Is Love, Not That We Loved God But That God Loved Us

Unlike Satan, the Lord never asserts in His speeches that there is a thing, or some group of things people do that merits His love. In the first speech, we see that He created all living things with a mix of amazing qualities and glaring flaws, which means that any notion of merit is broken by design. This makes a perfect situation to change hearts and exalt others. The second speech supposes that people's hardness of heart runs so deep that sometimes it takes the strongest medicine to cure. All of that implies that God is not willing that any should perish, all of it shows His tremendous love and commitment to us.

God's love runs so counter to Satan's accusations that He redeems Job, Job's wife, and The Friends though they had fallen into blindness and deceit in a relentless push that there has to be a reason, something we do that benefits God and when that stops the relationship is *over*. Yet, rather than being over, God revealed an even deeper grace, one stemming from God loving us and not the other way around.

Job "Gets It" When He Goes from "Behold I am Righteous" to "Behold I am Vile"

Imagine the moment that Job is willing to abandon his claim on being righteous; embracing weakness with the full confidence that God in His matchless love and grace will receive him completely. That is the shocker of the book. This is how God loves him. And this is why it had to be Job and not his friends, not his wife, and not Elihu. The point could only be made with a person whose works were flawless, else the point could not be made at all.

Think of Paul in Philipians 3 being willing to forsake any righteousness based on the power of his own obedience in the law, and instead fully embracing being "Paul" (means "little" or "least"), not "Saul" and the "chief of sinners". All of Paul's boasting ceased, and he came to realize that God doesn't stop loving him when his own failures become many (Rom. 8:33-39). Knowing the love of God keeps us from giving up on ourselves and others because we seek His comfort and solace.

God Is Love

This brings us full circle on the book to the end of our thirteen weeks. Abiding in God's love keeps us from giving up or giving in to despair. Our faith that God loves us and hears us will not be broken when we perceive the depths of His grace and His commitment to winning back even the hardest of hearts. Everyone knows that the Book of Job is about suffering, right? But what if suffering is the outward thing; and the book is really about salvation by grace through faith and learning that God's love can't be bought, sold, or told; as a firm conviction for every believer? And so the book teaches us how to wait on the Lord.

In places like 1 John we find that a true love of God is a powerful guard against false doctrine and emboldens us to keep His commands (John 14), and in places like the Book of Job we find it to be a key in suffering in a way that shows that God's wisdom works. I wonder what other things we would find about the love of God with further reading? Rather than seeking some reason why God loves you via something you do, we need to hold in faith that God loves us simply because God is love (1 John 4:7-8).

Questions - Week 13 - The Real Reason Why God Loves You

1. How can you be assured beyond question that God loves you? How would Job have assurance of that before Christ gave us an ultimate proof?
2. Is there anything in the final chapter of Job that demonstrates Job being shown how to have the same love for others as God has for others?
3. How does Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son show how God loves us? Think of both the older and younger brother.
4. In Isaiah 49:15 and other passages God tries to explain His love for us by pointing out something we do understand: A parent's love. How does that help us to appreciate what God's love is?

Thought Questions

1. Why do we find failure so demotivating in our walk with God?
2. Psalm 8 is the correct response to the same things as God's speeches. What does it say?
3. Is there a Bible verse that gives a definitive reason why God loves us?
4. Why do you think Elihu is not called out, unlike Job and the friends?
5. Didn't God say in chapters 1 and 2 that he loves Job because he always obeys?

A Meditation on Christ

This song really nails it: *Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong.* Yes, Jesus loves me.

Jesus revealed a love that cannot be surpassed, giving his life for you (John 15:13) taking your place in the penalty for sin, without which no relationship with God would be possible (Acts 4:11). Moreover, the Father Himself was proving His love by letting the hit fall on Jesus and not His friends, making his own love for you beyond any question (Rom. 5:6-9).