

Sermon from June 20th. A collaboration between Vicar Kellie and Pastor Jon

Text: Job and Mark 4.

Today, Vicar Kellie and I are going to do a dialogue sermon. I will preach on Job, and she will preach on the Gospel. I hope to tie everything together in the end.

In both texts, humans are thrown into tough times... that are out of their control... and they begin to question God. For example, in the Gospel of Mark, the disciples are in a boat that is being swamped by wind and waves on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples fear that they are going to die. And Jesus is asleep on a cushion. How can Jesus sleep at such a time? They wake him up saying, "Do you not care that we are perishing?"

In the book of Job, after experiencing much loss and grief, Job wonders why he was even born? His wife even tells Job after all his losses to "Curse God and die."

I consider Job to be a hero in the Judeo-Christian faith. You have undoubtedly heard someone say, "He or she has the patience of Job"... when they have suffered great loss, but still remain faithful to God. Do you know the quote, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away?" That was Job. Job also said, "Shall we receive the good at the hand of God and not receive the bad?"

The book of Job deals with question of "Why do bad things happen to good people?" In the book, however, there is never a direct answer from God or others. But there are hints that God loves us, provides for us, and is still with us in the trials we face.

You see, Job was a righteous man. He was described as blameless and upright in chapter 1. He feared God and turned away from evil. Even in the possibility that his children might sin on any given day, Job would offer

burnt offerings to God on their behalf. Job was a good man.

Satan, in a cosmic challenge, came to God looking for someone on earth to test. God, who loves Job and is proud of Job said to Satan, “have you considered my servant Job?”

Satan’s hypothesis was that Job loved God because he had a blessed life: lots of money, livestock, land and a big family. “That’s why Job loves You, God” thought Satan. But God said, “All that he has is in your power; only do not stretch your hand against him!” Don’t kill him.

One by one, Job began to experience great losses. Members of his family were murdered. His property was plundered and burned. His livestock were stolen. He dealt with the grief of natural disasters. Job pretty much lost everything. He shaved his head and tore his clothes... a sign that he was in deep grief. But Job remained faithful to God.

Satan, came to God a second time. God again, proud of Job, said, “Have you considered my servant Job?” “But preserve his life.” So Satan, tried to draw Job away from his faith in God again... this time attacking Job’s skin with loathsome sores. In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Job’s friends showed up and did excellent pastoral care for the first 7 days. They just sat with him in his grief. But then they opened their mouths. They counseled Job with bad theology. They believed that if you are suffering in any way, you must have done something to deserve it. They didn’t know about this concept of “unjust suffering.” Sometimes people suffer without any fault of their own. Like when a child dies of cancer or when a natural disaster strikes your home or family.

So, in our text today, from chapter 38, God answers Job in a whirlwind. Essentially saying, “look around you Job.”

I know you are up against it, but look at the order and beauty of creation. Does it look like I give up on anyone or anything? Who brings the rain, snow, food for the animals and birds... etc? This response, although not a direct answer to Job's suffering, made Job feel a little smaller... humbler. "Job said, in chapter 40, "See, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth." In other words, Job gets it. Even when unjust suffering occurs, God still provides for the earth and all that is in it... including poor old Job.

Today, I walked outside and heard birds chirping, crows cawing, and bunnies going from one hiding place to another. I have met more neighbors this week because, of all things, a puppy sitting on the front step.

At the end of the book, God punishes Job's friends for their bad theology and counsel to Job. However, if they offered a burnt offering and if Job prayed for them, God would forgive them. What do you think Job did? He prayed for them. Job's fortunes were returned to him double in the end. But I still can't imagine all the grief he went through... all the loss.

Insert Kellie's part

In conclusion, the disciples did not fully understand who Jesus was. "Who is this?" Can you relate? Their ultimate faith or trust was not in Jesus yet as their savior. But did that stop Jesus from calming the storm? No

Faith was not a prerequisite to Jesus saving them. The Apostle Paul says it this way in Romans 5:3 "But God proves God's love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us."

God didn't wait for us to have a perfect faith before God sent Jesus into the world. This same grace is shown to the disciples in the boat, to us in the church, and to the world who has yet to know Jesus.

