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B0709 – March 4, 2007 – Job 1, 2, 38, 42 – The Endurance Of Job

“To lose your wealth is much
To lose your health is more
To lose your soul is such a loss you never can restore”

We have been studying trials and persevering through trials in the Book of James. James mentions several OT believers who persevered in different trials as examples for us; Abraham, Rahab, Elijah and Job. Each of these people has a life story. Of some we know much, like Abraham and Elijah. Of others we know very little such as Rahab and Job. James saw that all of them share one thing in common: endurance through trial. By giving them as examples to follow James beseeches us to turn to the dusty pages of bygone history and read anew their stories. When we read of their sufferings, their endurance and their victory we can see the path they walked and where we too ought to tread. We cannot help but identify with these saints who suffered before us and we are consoled by the fact that we are not the first to suffer such trials. Also we see that the Lord has a purpose for our sufferings even if we don't know why and that some of these purposes we can't even know but all along we are never alone.

Each of our lives tells a unique story and each story is full of trials. This morning I want to look at the story of Job's trial. If you think about it we don't know much about Job's life. We are only given a snapshot of this one event in his life. We know nothing of his parents or his childhood or his marriage. There is surely much more to the tapestry of his life and how he became the man we see in Job. What we do know is that God had been at work in His life. This is apparent from the description of him as a man who was blameless, upright, feared God and turned away from evil (Job 1:1). Job evidently had a close relationship with God and God had been at work in his

life before this trial. We want to explore this trial a bit because it was a defining event in Job's life and each of us also face defining moments. We are all a bit like Job. We all go through trials and we all have questions about why God is sending us this trial and we want to look and see what Job has to offer by way of an answer and what we can learn from Job about God and ourselves.

The book about this man's trial is the first book of the canon of Scripture, that is, it was written before Moses penned Genesis (~1445-1405BC), but, of course, it records historical events which happened after the creation, fall, and flood. If we were to locate Job's story in the greater context of the Bible it would probably fit between Genesis 11-12; sometime after the Tower of Babel but before the Call of Abraham. He was therefore a descendant of one of Noah's three sons; Shem, Ham or Japheth, probably Shem since his name is of Western Semitic origin. He lived in the post-Flood world around ~2,100BC. He possibly met or even knew other OT people like Abraham and Melchizedek. During that time the world was still recovering from the flood which had occurred about 250 years before so living conditions were harsh. Yet, Job was a blessed man. The Bible says he had ten children, "seven sons and three daughters" (Job 1:2). He was also very prosperous. The Bible says "His possessions...were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants (Job 1:3). In fact the Bible says he "was the greatest of all the men of the east" (Job 1:3). Being such a prosperous and great man it may surprise you to know that he is mentioned outside of Job only one other time in the OT and only one time in the NT. Ezekiel mentions him along with Noah and Daniel as a righteous man (Ezek 14:14, 20). James mentions him as an example of one who endured (James 5:11).

James 5:11 Ἴδού, μακαρίζομεν τοὺς ὑπομένοντας· τὴν ὑπομονὴν Ἰὼβ ἠκούσατε, καὶ τὸ τέλος κυρίου ἴδετε, ὅτι πολὺσπλαγχνός ἐστιν καὶ οἰκτιρμῶν. **(BYZ)**

James 5:11 Behold, we bless the enduring. You have heard of the endurance of Job and you have seen the end of the Lord, that He is very compassionate and merciful. **(Authors Translation)**

James 5:11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful. **(NASB95)**

In this verse James has drawn out for us the key event of Job and what the Lord did in the end. Job endured and the Lord made all things right. Clearly, James' Jewish audience already knew the story of Job, they had heard of his endurance and they knew the outcome. That is, they knew the conclusion of the Book of Job, that after all was said and done Job did not sin in all he said (Job 42:8) and the Lord "increased all that Job had two-fold" (Job 42:10). If we see the outcome it will be a motivation to endure the hardships we face. Let's read the story of Job's two trials and look at his responses in the midst of trial.

Round 1: Chapter 1

Job 1:1-5 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east. His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings *according to* the number of them all; for Job said, "Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.

This section is designed to show us the character of Job, the posterity of Job, the prosperity of Job and the greatness of Job. He was a man of God.

Job 1:6-12 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? "Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every

side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. “But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.” Then the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.” So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

Now, in verse 6, “the sons of God” (Heb *benei elohim*) are the angels and Satan “came among them” into a direct confrontation with God. After God found out where Satan had been God asks him if he’d run into His servant Job. From God’s perspective Job was His servant, the highest title a human can receive. He was both humble and great. Satan then makes a proposition that we need to understand. We will call this Proposition 1. Satan proposes why Job fears God. “Does Job fear God for nothing?” The implied answer is “No.” In other words, “God, there is a reason that Job fears you and if we remove that reason then Job will no longer fear you.” Satan then gives us the reason he thinks Job fears God. “Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. “But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.” In other words, Satan is saying “God, Job fears You because You protect him and prosper him. Therefore, if You remove Your protection and his prosperity then he will no longer fear You but curse You. Job is basically selfish. Do you follow Satan’s argument? The question is, “Will this argument hold?” “Is Satan right?” “Is it true that if Job loses God’s protection and his prosperity he will curse God and die?” “Is it true that Job fears God for no other reason than his own well-being and expediency?” Satan thinks that it is but God thinks it is not. God thinks Satan’s argument is full of hot-air. Satan’s argument sounds logical but it’s not. God knows there are other reasons Job fears Him. Thus, God, in a sense, stakes His reputation to Job, saying, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.” So, we have a challenge: Satan vs God and the battlefield is Job. Poor Job. He didn’t know any of this was going on behind the scenes. We have it somewhat easy. We can look back and see behind the scenes but not Job. Job couldn’t see from our perspective. He couldn’t see all that God wanted to accomplish by the trial but we are given a behind-the-scenes look into the purposes of God. There was a purpose to Job’s trial even though Job didn’t understand what was going on and we have to keep that same focus as we encounter trials.

God has a purpose for our trials, they are not meaningless, whether we can see the purpose(s) or not. So, Job was about to become the battlefield to solve an issue between God and Satan.

Before we move on notice v 11 and 12. In verse 11 Satan posits that God put forth His hand and touch all Job has but in v 12 God says to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power” but this loses the force because the Hebrew literally says “all that he has is in your hand”. God distances Himself from the calamity which is about to overcome Job. We can say with great confidence that God picked out Job, removed the hedge about him and permitted what was about to take place but the plans were devised by Satan and carried out by Satan. It is important to note that God did not, at this time, permit Satan to touch Job himself, only all that he had. So, ultimately God is the one who authorizes what can and cannot happen in His universe.

Job 1:13-19 Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

This was a very bad day. I don’t think I’ve ever heard of anyone having a day as bad as this day. There have been days when mothers lost all their sons in battle. There have been some pretty bad days but I have never heard of a day this bad. Every trial is difficult but some more so than others and I think we all need to try to get in Job’s shoes and imagine the loss. What is very interesting is the way Satan designed this calamity. In the first chapter Job’s

children are mentioned and then his possessions. In that day wealth was measured by animals. Job was obviously wealthy. When we look at this calamity here what we observe is four messengers, each with bad news. But notice the order. First it was news of the oxen and donkeys. These were the least valuable of Job's animals. There were only 500 oxen and 500 donkeys. Then, while he was hearing this bad news, a second messenger came with more bad news. Second, it was the sheep and the servants. They were all consumed with fire. These were next on Job's list of value. He had 7,000 sheep but sheep were less valuable than camels. Then came a third messenger at that very time with more bad news. Third, Job your camels too, all 3,000 of them and the servants who attended them, they are all gone. And finally, while still speaking a fourth messenger with more bad news. Here we meet the pinnacle of bad news, his own children, all ten of them are dead. Now, you have to realize that all this came to Job's ears within a few minutes. This is a moment I don't think has ever been repeated and quite frankly I don't know if there is a person on this planet who could respond like Job did. This is a man who has lost all his possessions in a single day AND all of his children (Don't forget that Job's wife lost ten children too). I want you to get in those shoes (human drama). I want you to imagine losing all your possessions in one day and on that same day all your children dying. Some of you don't have to imagine too hard, you've suffered great losses and this is hard. I know. We have to come to the point where we are where Job was and we have to be ready. We don't know what tomorrow holds. Job probably woke up like any typical day, had his coffee, kissed his wife, went out to work, just a typical day. Then suddenly, without warning, calamity fell around him. ON every side a new messenger forging his way in to tell him of the horrors that had befallen him. Not to mention that now Job must tell his wife who also has lost all her possessions and children. Ten children, all raised from little boys and girls, precious to a parents heart. Are you ready? I don't know if I am but I know that we all need to be. Okay, I hope that has sunk in because now we're going to look at something astonishing. We're going to look at Job's response.

Job 1:20-22 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

He fell to the ground and worshiped God! How many of us have this perspective on the world? We come in naked and we go out naked. You come in with nothing and you go out with nothing. Therefore, if we have something in this world it's more than what we came into the world with. We came with nothing. Now the Lord has taken away something. Okay, I still have what I came in with. I'm still alive. Notice he even "Blessed" the Lord. He recognizes nothing happens that does not go before God. Yet, in all this Job holds the balance. Just because God permitted this did not mean God was responsible for it. And so the text says he did not blame God. That is a remarkable response and it tells us that the character of this man as developed by God was tremendous. He lost everything but his wife and his health and still he blesses God and does not sin or blame God. That is a DVP response. Obviously it took Job years for God to get Job ready for such difficulties. That kind of character isn't developed overnight. Let's turn to chapter 2 to see the next trial Job faced.

Round 2: Chapter 2

Job 2:1-6 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause." Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. "However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face." So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life."

Again God picks out Job and stakes His reputation to him. Note that God says "he still holds fast his integrity" even after the atrocities brought about by Satan's hand. This is an important notation. In effect God is saying to Satan, "You were wrong about My servant Job. He does not love and worship Me only because of what he can get out of Me." At this point God has

demonstrated with Job that Satan's 1st Proposition was wrong. Job loves and worships God even when all that God had given him was taken away. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord. Now Satan proceeds to make a 2nd Proposition. We will call it Proposition 2. Also note before we progress that God says "you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause" but it does not say God ruined Job. Satan incited God. The word incited means "to allure". Satan tried to tempt God to ruin Job without cause but God is not able to be tempted. Since God is not able to be tempted by evil He cannot be the source of temptation (James 1:13-15). What God did, therefore, was permit Satan to ruin Job. And in fact this is what happened. It was not God's hand that ruined Job but Satan's.

Let's look at Satan's proposition: Proposition 2. "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. "However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face." "Skin for skin" is a way of saying, "God, Job still worships you because you only took the skin of his children and you spared his skin. If you take his skin too then he will curse You to Your face." In other words, a man will always do whatever it takes to save his own life! "Yes," Satan argues, "all that a man has he will give for his life." Therefore, take away Job's health and Job will take away his worship. He will turn on You and curse You. That's Satan's proposition. Satan has drawn this proposition from his evaluation of human beings. He has been wandering about and observing human responses. One thing he has discovered is that humans ultimately care about themselves. We're selfish and so he comes to God saying, "Job cares more about his life than You. If you take away his health he will abandon You." And again, Job incites God to put forth His hand and do this to Job. But God is not tempted by this. God cannot be tempted by evil. He rather tells Satan "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life." So, once again, God permits Satan to go through with these plans and this shows that nothing goes on in the universe that God does not authorize. The question is, "Will this argument hold?" "Is Satan right?" "Is it true that if Job loses his health he will curse God and die?" "Is it true that Job worships God for no other reason than his own good health?" "Is it true that Job worships God for selfish reasons?" Satan thinks that it is but God thinks it is not. God is so sure that He stakes His reputation to Job up front and allows Job to, once again, become the battlefield for solving an issue between God and Satan. God may want to demonstrate that believers with

character do not love Him only for what they can get out of Him but because they really love Him for Himself.

Job 2:7-8 Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.

Here again, it was Satan who did this to Job and not God. He “smote Job and took his health. Job was so broken out with boils that he went and sat down in a heap of ashes to scrape his boils with part of a clay pot. He itched all over, looked pitiful, felt pitiful, had bad breath and all this in the midst of losing all his possessions and children. To sit in a heap of ashes symbolized extreme mourning and deep distress. It was so bad that Job’s own wife fell into the trap Satan laid.

Job 2:9-10 Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!” But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Job’s wife did precisely what Satan wanted Job to do “Curse God and die!” But Job would not. He said “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks.” By the word “foolish” Job was saying she was speaking as a “spiritually ignorant” woman, one who had no discernment. This must have been a terrible blow on top of his losses. Now his own wife was bitter toward God. Job says, “Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?”

On top of this Job’s friends came and sat down with him silently for seven days. This was the best thing they could have done. In fact, they should have remained silent the entire time. They argued by way of a basic syllogism throughout the discourse. God always protects the righteous and punishes the wicked. Therefore, Job must have done something wicked. This is a wrong argument. It is not true that God always protects the righteous. Throughout the discourse Job insists on his innocence even though he is very confused about “Why”? What Job wants is an explanation from God. In the end Job’s friends were more of a nuisance than help. On a couple of occasions he even asked them to just be quiet.

Often people think just like Job's three friends, "You must have done something unrighteous Job because God is judging you." But this is not the case at all. On three separate occasions God says Job was a blameless, upright man who feared God and turned from evil (1:1, 8, 2:3) and it was not God judging him but Satan who was destroying him. There was something else going on that was much bigger. Satan had challenged God with a huge question that had to be answered. "Do men love God only for what they can get out of God?" Surely some do. But God knew that all men were not that way. God knew that some believers love God simply for who He is regardless of what they can get from Him and even in the midst of misunderstanding. God surely could have stopped Satan from destroying Job. He could have crushed him with His power but this was a question that needed to be answered. "Do humans love God for nothing?" "Do humans love God for their own sakes?" God demonstrated that the answer is "No." Throughout the entire book of Job his friends insist that Job had done some unrighteousness yet Job clings to his innocence. Job vindicated God's assessment. He says in Job 27:5 "Far be it from me that I should declare you right; Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me." Job would not admit his friends were right. He knew he was righteous (27:6) and that no matter what his circumstances he would worship and serve God to death. This is the true love of a servant of God.

So what was God's reply? God's reply was two-fold. First, Job, you don't know what you're talking about (Job 38). Second, Job, you can't know. You are too limited. You don't have the capacity to understand the why. It is beyond human ability to comprehend.

By way of conclusion, through all the suffering Job did not sin, he endured. And it is for this reason that James puts him forth as an example of endurance, "You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful" (James 5:11).

Job 42:10-17 The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold. Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they

consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him. And each one gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold. The LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys. He had seven sons and three daughters. He named the first Jemimah, and the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. In all the land no women were found so fair as Job's daughters; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers. After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. And Job died, an old man and full of days.

Job never got an answer as to why this happened. All he got was an answer of "Who are you Oh man to question Me?" What Job finally had to accept was the fact that things were going on that were far greater than him. When Job "prayed for his friends" it seems that he began to understand in part that something BIGGER than him was going on and he started to serve others. In response God restored all that Job had twofold. Probably this twofold blessing parallel's the rewards a believer will receive at the judgment seat of Christ for enduring trials (James 1:12). Job is therefore an example of that great verse in Romans

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, (Rom 8:28a)

Job loved God even in the midst of trial and though he suffered much God was weaving things together for good.

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