

August 23, 2020  
Sunday Morning Service  
Series: Job  
Community Baptist Church  
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Greer, SC 29650  
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## WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO GOD?

### Job 10:1-22

One of the privileges residents in America enjoy is the “presumption of innocence.” That is the legal principle that one is considered innocent until proven guilty. It is a common right practiced in most cultures in the world. It is supposed to mean that if you are charged with a crime, your peers should assume that you are innocent until the evidence proves otherwise. Of course, in reality it seems that people in our world are presumed guilty as soon as the news hits the internet; and if there was any doubt in your mind, the news media clears up the issue by repeating the “appearance” or “apparently” until it is almost impossible to think the person so charged could possibly be innocent.

Job had great difficulty seeing that God would grant him the privilege of “presumed innocence.” He felt like God had already judged him guilty, just like his three miserable counselors had, which left Job with no recourse. He couldn’t even meet His accuser in the courtroom where he would present his case. But, in fact, if Job did meet God in the courtroom, he would discover that God is the prosecutor, the witness, the jury, and the judge. Job didn’t stand a chance – or at least that is how he felt.

Job’s problem was that he was engaging in a very common practice. He was looking at God through the lens of his own experience interpreted by his knowledge of God. We do this too frequently. Instead of interpreting life’s circumstances through the lens of Scripture first, we interpret a situation in light of our experiences, with maybe just a sprinkling of Bible thrown in to justify our argument that we are living by faith in God’s Word. It is a sad reality that often the human experience eclipses the truth about God.

For example, we are overtaken by an affliction like losing our job, our child rebels, or we have a health crisis. In response, we conclude, “Oh well, all things work together for good.” But we never take the time to figure out how the Bible defines “good” in our particular circumstances. What does God seek to accomplish? What is God doing and why?

This was the kind of conflict Job wrestled with. We see the conflict throughout chapter ten. Job felt like God had sent him to the courtroom because he was being charged with sin. Most of us know what it is like to be charged with doing something we did not do or charged with not doing what we should have done. We might even stay awake at night building our case to defend ourselves. We might plan “If he says this, I will say this.” Or “I will point out that the charge cannot be true for the following ten reasons.” But, if we are like Job, when we get to the courtroom, no one is there. No prosecutor or no judge to whom we would like to present our case.

That is exactly how Job felt. He argued that he would like to say certain things to God. And the things Job listed were not very complimentary. His words were often downright critical and unjust. It is such a blessing for us to compare the words of our text, the words that flowed from Job’s frustration, to his response after God has spoken to him. They are as different as night and day. It is the difference between speaking to God with the advantage of full knowledge, and speaking to God out of frustration and ignorance. Here we learn that if we really trust God, we will give Him the benefit of the doubt, acknowledging that there are things in life we just don’t understand.

### Would You Criticize God? (vv.1-7)

You might criticize God if you looked at your unfavorable circumstances as Job did. The lens through which Job saw God (vv.1-2) was tinted by his opinion that life was loathsome. *I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul (v.1)*. When we compare the various speakers in this “play,” we find that a significant difference in heart, difference in attitude is obvious throughout the book. Eliphaz and Bildad spoke with analytical, precise arguments. Their goal was to prosecute their

case to prove to Job beyond any question that God judged him because of his sin.

Job, on the other hand, speaks out of deep emotion from a tattered and tortured heart. He really does love, respect, and trust God. It is just that God's actions toward Job do not fit Job's understanding of God or previous experience with God. As a result, Job gave expression to the thought that he was sick of living. He was a bit like John Knox who said near the end of his life, "I am tired of this world, and this world is tired of me." That is how Job felt to the extreme.

To loathe is a deep emotional, repulsive reaction toward a person or object. That is the feeling Rebecca experienced because of Esau's wives and she said, "*I'm tired of living!*" (*Genesis. 27:46*). It was David's emotion toward God's enemies when he concluded, "*Do I not loathe them?*" (*Psalms 139:21*). Loathing was how God felt toward the sinful Canaanites. He said, "*I have abhorred them*" (*Leviticus 20:23*). It is how the repentant Israelites in exile felt about their past sins against God. The prophet proclaimed, "*And they will loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed, for all their abominations*" (*Ezekiel 6:9*).

Notice that three of the above examples given involve people. One involves sin committed by people. In Job's case, it wasn't so much people he abhorred but his circumstances, which at the time defined his life. As Christians, we might find ourselves in circumstances, not nearly as intense as Job's, but loathsome nonetheless. We feel helpless to change them and have no choice but to plod through them a day at a time. We should also be familiar with that same emotional slough if we remember our sins against our Holy God. Job was so overcome by unalterable circumstances, that we hear him complain against God freely. We feel the bitterness of his soul in his words.

In Job's opinion, he loathed life which might have flowed out of the fact that he was also of the opinion that God was little. "*I will say to God, Do not condemn me; let me know why you contend against me*" (v.2). Two of the words Job used in this statement (*condemn me* and *contend against me*) would be familiar in a courtroom setting. His words indicate that he saw himself as the victim or defendant in a case. Viewing himself in the courtroom

setting, Job sees himself as the defendant ready to prosecute his case against God. Is that okay? Can you identify with Job's opinion when you are facing difficulty?

In fact, Job's opinion of his situation revealed his ignorance. We, unlike Job, have a crystal clear understanding of what was actually going on in Job's life. Like Job, we often do not have the same privilege in our own trials. But we know from the opening verses that Satan was prosecuting God and God was the defendant. Job was actually a part of the evidence or the chief witness in the case to acquit God of Satan's false accusation. He wasn't doing a very good job of proving that God is true.

Do we do any better as witnesses for God's character? In the face of trouble, do we immediately resort to complaining to God out of bitterness of our souls? Do we loathe life and circumstances? Should we stop and at least pray: "Father, I am very confused about what You are allowing in my life right now, but I trust you to use this trial to bring glory to Yourself by making me more like You."

In verses three through seven, Job posed some questions that revealed his attitude (vv.3-7). He asked, "What good does God seek through oppression?" Or to quote the statement, "*Does it seem good to you to oppress, to despise the work of your hands and favor the designs of the wicked?*" (v.3).

We all know that oppression of the needy is opposed to God's character. To oppress is to extort, crush, to defraud the innocent or defenseless. God's preachers preached against such oppression to the Israelites. It was that kind of activity that caused God to send His people into captivity. Through Ezekiel God warned, "*The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the sojourner without justice*" (*Ezekiel 22:29*). In a similar way, we also pray that God will intervene in a helpful way for the suffering people. With David we should pray, *May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!* (*Psalms 72:4*). We know that *The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed* (*Psalms 103:6*).

Therefore, in a trial we might be tempted to ask with Job, "Why would God despise His created beings and 'smile on' the acts of the

wicked?” These are cutting, critical, disrespectful questions. But they are not equivalent to cursing God.

But as disrespectful as his questions were, Job posed more questions that moved from disrespectful to absurd. Is God like failing humans? *“Have you eyes of flesh? Do you see as man sees? Are your days as the days of man, or your years as a man’s years, that you seek out my iniquity and search for my sin, although you know that I am not guilty, and there is none to deliver out of your hand?”* (vv.4-7).

Is God no more righteous than sinful humans? We, like Job, know that God’s eyes are supernatural as they scope out the whole earth. Even Job will confess regarding the mighty person: *“He gives them security, and they are supported, and His eyes are upon their ways”* (Job 24:23). We agree with Elihu when he concluded, *“For his eyes are on the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps”* (Job 34:21).

Ah yes, God has the all-seeing eye. But what is God looking for? Does God intentionally look for sin? He doesn’t need to. Every single person is guilty of sin, born in sin, and characterized by sin. David understood that, *The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one* (Psalm 14:2-3). And salvation doesn’t quarantine us from sin. Even after we are born again, we struggle with and too often yield to sin. We must agree with Paul’s conclusion, *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate* (Romans 7:14-15).

Job was right. God sees everything. And God’s response is to be completely sovereign with all His choices and actions are completely righteous. God told Moses, *“See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand”* (Deuteronomy 32:39). It is true that God does His desired work in our lives for His glory. And, no, there is none who can deliver out of His hand.

So how do you respond knowing God is so in control? In troublesome times do you give vent to your bitterness to your frustration? Do you feel like crying out, “God, why are You doing this to me?” Do you criticize God’s infinite wisdom? Or . . .

### **Would You Speak Truth About God? (vv.8-20).**

Though Job was too often critical of God, in the final analysis (God’s analysis), he spoke the truth. At the end of the book we read the assessment. *After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has”* (Job 42:7).

In this section we do read several statements from Job that ring true about God. It is true that God is our Creator (vv.8-13). Job gave us about four pictures of God’s creation of us. God created us like a builder or craftsman creates. *“Your hands fashioned and made me, and now you have destroyed me altogether”* (v.8). He fashions according to His plan and purpose. But not to destroy. No doubt Job lost much, but God had not destroyed him.

God is much like a potter, as He creates and fashions us. But because of sin we return to dust. *“Remember that you have made me like clay; and will you return me to the dust?”* (v.9). That reality harkens back to God’s warning from the outset of man’s history. God warned that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was out of bounds, *“For in the day you eat of it you will surely die”* (Genesis 2:17).

God creating us is like the farmer who makes cheese from milk. *“Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese?”* (v.10). This is a picture of conception. God is in charge from the beginning.

Finally, God creating us for Himself is like a tailor sewing clothing. Job said, *“You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews”* (v.11). That sounds so much like David’s conclusion about the amazing intricacies of God’s creative process. *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully*

made. *Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well (Psalm 139:13-14).*

My soul does know very well that God creates in love. Job acknowledged that God gives life, unchanging love, and preservation. *“You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit” (v.12).* Life viewed as a mere biological process offers little joy or hope. Conversely, knowing that my life today is a gift from God gives purpose and meaning to it. More than that, we know that because God created us, He loves us with an unchanging, everlasting love. Like Job, God is still preserving us in the midst of trouble and difficulty.

We should acknowledge God’s unchanging love even when we do not understand what He is doing at the moment. And like Job, we know this is God’s purpose. *“Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose” (v.13).* To create us out of love was God’s purpose from Genesis 1:1 until today. But knowing all the secrets behind God’s love in creation are impossible. God is not obligated to reveal all details to His people. In fact, if God did reveal all the reasons and purposes behind His sovereign work, we would not understand or comprehend it.

It is also true that God addresses sin (vv.14-19). On one hand, God graciously convicts of sin. *“If I sin, you watch me and do not acquit me of my iniquity” (v.14).* God does not acquit the guilty – except through the sacrifice of Christ. *“If I am guilty, woe to me! If I am in the right, I cannot lift up my head, for I am filled with disgrace and look on my affliction” (v.15).* Woe to the guilty is right! But those who think they are right before God may not fully understand their condition. *“And were my head lifted up, you would hunt me like a lion and again work wonders against me” (v.16).*

Job rightly concluded that God’s discipline is an indication of His love. *“You renew your witnesses against me and increase your vexation toward me; you bring fresh troops against me. Why did you bring me out from the womb? Would that I had died before any eye had seen me and were as though I had not been, carried from the womb to the grave” (vv.17-19).* That conclusion fits well with the truth that God teaches us not to despise His discipline. Solomon admonished his son, *My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves,*

*as a father the son in whom he delights (Proverbs 3:11-12).* It is too easy in the midst of discipline to conclude that God is unfair, unkind, or unscrupulous. So . . .

### **Would You Ask God to Leave? (vv.20-22)**

It appears that Job despised God’s attention (vv.20-22) and because of it he requested a little respite. *“Are not my days few? Then cease, and leave me alone, that I may find a little cheer before I go – and I shall not return” (vv.20-21a).* Remember Job’s response to his wife? *“You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips (Job 2:10).* But now it appears that Job is responding opposite of what he told his wife. He just concluded that God had created him in love and offered care throughout life. Now, when he thought about God’s discipline, he acts like he doesn’t want to receive the evil as well as the good.

Only a very foolish person would ask God to leave him or her alone. Granted, Job suffered more than we can imagine. However, for a follower of Christ to follow his example and desire for God to stop paying attention is to be very full of self. Death to selfish desires goes a long way to keeping us out of sin.

Job looked forward to the darkness of the grave. He longed to go *“to the land of darkness and deep shadow, the land of gloom like thick darkness, like deep shadow without any order, where light is as thick darkness” (vv.21b-22).* This is a common picture of the grave in the Old Testament. The truth about life after death is developed further in the New Testament. We have extreme hope because of the truth we have.

In all of these deep ponderings of the suffering man, we learn that Job was no fool. He didn’t understand God’s works. He was frustrated. He was bitter. But Job was not at all like the fool who resists God.

David warned that, *The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there*

*is none who does good, not even one. Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the LORD? There they are in great terror, for God is with the generation of the righteous (Psalm 14:1-5). He also concluded, The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none who does good (Psalm 53:1).*

Both of these statements are more literally translated, The fool says in his heart, "No God!" In your trial have you criticized God, argued with God, and asked God to leave you alone? That is equivalent to saying "No" to God.

In contrast, the wise person submits to God. Submission is the act of arranging our plans, purposes, and desires under God's plans, purposes, and desires. We will never know if we are submissive to God until God brings something into our lives we disagree with. That is when the war between my will and God's will begins. When we conclude that we no longer plan to submit to God, we just lost the battle. Because God loves us, at times like that, He will continue discipline to bring us back into agreement with Him.