

Job 42

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 March 2012

Preacher: Robert Kinney

- [0 : 0 0] And if you want to keep your finger there in Job 42, that's where we will be spending our evening this evening. Let me pray.
- Great God in heaven, purify my heart and cleanse my lips that your voice may be heard. Give us your spirit that we may understand your word in love and do your will to your glory.
- Amen. We have arrived at the end of Job. For a few months now, we've been working our way through the poetry of this great book.
- We've traveled along with the man as he cried out in pain and frustration at both his friends and God himself. We've watched his friends make some staggeringly insensitive comments.
- And we finally, last week, heard God speak from the whirlwind. And so tonight, we see the relatively brief conclusion to the book.
- [1 : 1 6] And here is the end of the matter, the lesson to be learned. The depth of one's relationship with God is everything. Job has learned this lesson and is walking away from this test better off than when he began in more than one way.
- But chief among these ways is the renewal and strengthening of his relationship to God. So our passage tonight, chapter 42, I think works in three parts.
- Each is an implication of the theophany that we saw last week, of God's revelation of himself and the incomprehensibility of his ways.
- First, in Job's response to the theophany, verses 1 through 6, we see the demand of repentance. Second, in God's response to the three friends, that's verses 7 through 9, we see an act of mediation.
- And finally, with God's final response to Job, verses 10 to 17, we see the hope of restoration. So let's dig in.
- [2 : 3 1] The demand of repentance, verses 1 through 6. God has just revealed himself to Job in the whirlwind. The message from God is clear.
- He defends himself in legal terms and Job the victim has been revealed as Job the accuser. And God's point is direct. Job, you aren't God.
- You've been too presumptive to tell me how blessing and cursing should work and what the righteous deserve and what fate should await the wicked. In your life, you've been blameless and upright, Job.
- I get that. Correctly fearing me. Good guy, Job. Yet in these words, you have stepped beyond your knowledge and you have presumed. Your complaint, Job, is an accusation, an indictment of my character.
- You don't understand. You are not God. The speech is designed to humble Job, to bring him to greater knowledge of God, yes, but mainly to reform his understanding of and perspective on his relationship with God.

- [3 : 43] And so Job responds. In verse 2, he begins, I know that you can do all things and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
- Job's first response is one of admiration. He begins by acknowledging his right place as but a small fleck in the sea of creation from God's perspective.
- Job acknowledges that the cosmos works not because of some rules of which Job himself is the arbiter, but because it is God's purpose.
- And with this new posture of humility comes two specific points of repentance. First in verse 3, Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
- See, Job restates God's question from 38 verse 2. That's what that first line is. In which God actually echoed Elihu's accusation or conclusion from 35 16.
- [4 : 48] See, Job has been speaking throughout this book from a point of insufficient knowledge. Of course this is true. I mean, we knew that from chapters 1 and 2, right?
- All the pain and suffering that Job faced was never about his righteousness or wickedness in the sense of deserving it. We knew from the very first verse of the book that Job didn't deserve it.
- But as both our experience in this world and our common faith and a profoundly foolish gospel demonstrate, a gospel in which the Savior saves by dying on a cross, X amount of righteousness does not necessarily exempt us from X amount of suffering.
- not at all. Rather, there is more to it than that. And here, in parroting God's question, Job acknowledges as much.
- Job is not the master of the universe. There are a great many things he does not and will not ever know. Job's second point of repentance comes with him again restating God, but restating another phrase of God's, this time from 38 3 and 40 verse 7.
- [6 : 00] See that here in verses 4 through 6. Verse 4 is his parroting of God. Hear and I will speak, I will question you and make it known to me.
- I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you, therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes. See, twice God challenged Job to answer him face to face.
- In response to the first speech, Job declined. And here, finally, Job restates God's question, God's challenge and response.
- And what does he do? He repents. See, the word repent here is a challenging one. The Hebrew word behind this translation has a very wide semantic range, most often being translated as comfort.
- So, while the word can mean regret or repent, it does so in the internal sense, a sense of inwardly comforting oneself, coming to terms with regret, mentally shifting one's posture toward humility.
- [7 : 13] It is not the typical word for reforming one's behavior, but an internal coping. And this is what Job does. He repents. He understands.
- He comes to term with his smallness in the face of God's overwhelming bigness. And it is an incredibly humbling moment.
- He's there, still sitting on that same pile of ashes from chapter 2. But the phrase I really like here is verse 5.
- I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you. It points us back to, I think, chapter 19, when Job surprised us with his confidence in God the Redeemer, defending him against God the tormentor.

So, in 1925-27, if you want to turn there real quick, Job said, for I know that my Redeemer lives and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

[8 : 24] And after my skin has thus been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold and not another. My heart faints within me.

See, Job has heard God's voice and now, like a blind man receiving sight for the very first time, his eyes are opened. He knew that God would satisfy, that he would see God, his Redeemer.

And now, his relationship is finally restored. He's seen God. But now that Job's relationship with God has been restored, God turns to the friends.

He turns to judgment, ready to put Eliphaz and Zophar and Bildad in their place. In very plain terms, God thoroughly rejects the consistent mantra that these friends have been chanting about the way God works, blessing the righteous and punishing the wicked and falsely assuming Job's guilt.

Yet God stops. He stays his hand. He looks at Eliphaz, pronounces his judgment, and then tells him exactly how to avoid being dealt with like the fool that he is.

[9 : 43] See, the answer comes in verse 8. The friends are to take an offering to Job and ask Job to intercede on their behalf. And they do.

And Job does. Now, in verse 8 there, we're back in chapter 42, 42-8, notice how God refers to Job.

Three times in verse 8, God refers to Job as his servant. servant. This is important because it demonstrates Job's priestly function, a servant of God who, now that his relationship with God has been restored, is able to intercede.

And the roles have been completely reversed. Job, the wise and righteous man who feared God and turned away from evil and yet suffered horrific pain, now mediates.

He plays a part in sparing these men, these foolish men who've spoken wrongly of God and sparing them the wrath of God that results from their folly, their foolishness, their false understanding of God.

[10 : 53] Now, this seems simple enough. Job's fortunes are restored, his relationship with God is restored, he mediates for the friends, and so we now get a glimpse of what it means for the fortunes to be restored.

He gets twice as much. I'm not sure I would want twice as much donkeys and camels, but there it is. Donkeys and camels and ox and sheep, ten children, which sounds like a lot to me, including the most beautiful daughters in the land, long years and a full life.

Yet, interestingly, this is no sort of Disney-esque ending. Job still feels pain, still feels the aftermath of the torment, of his losses.

Notice there in verse 11 that when his family visits, he still requires comfort. God is rich. Yet, at a material level, he is rich.

And at a relational level with God, he is rich. So, there you have it. The demands of repentance, the act of mediation, and the hope of restoration.

[12 : 21] restoration. So, this last chapter is a fitting end to a hard book. Three results from God's theophanic revelation of himself, a need for repentance, an act of mediation, and a hope of restoration.

Yet, this is not the end of the story for us. The fact is, the tale of Job sets a pattern that is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Like Job, our encounter with God is one that shows a profound need for repentance.

Are you a sinner? You know, we read the law, and the response was, Lord, have mercy, because we are all sinners.

So, more than likely, we're already worse than Job at a just sort of behavioral level. But more to the point, how do we force God to defend himself against us and our accusations?

Because this is what Job has been doing. Do we hold it against God when we feel persecuted? Do we presume that we know better than God about how the world should work? And do we tell him that in our prayers?

[13 : 33] So, suppose, do we suppose ourselves as gods? God's in no need of God, in how we talk, in how we act, in how we live? Do we think that because we're Christians, because we, you know, wear the name tag, and do the motions, that somehow we should be spared the pain and suffering of this life.

If we think those things, then we're right where Job was, desperately in need of a revelation, an encounter with God that humbles. And this, friends, is the very nature of repentance.

repentance. It's why he repented. This kind of humility. So, when we are told that the kingdom of God has arrived in the person of Jesus Christ, and that we should be repenting and believing, it is fundamentally an act of humility.

It is the forging of a relationship with God through sacrifice, the sacrifice of his son, because maybe for the first times in our lives, we realize that we need God. We cannot save ourselves.

We cannot make it through this on our own. So, friends, do you need to repent? The second section shows an act of mediation.

[14 : 55] Remember how God refers to Job as his servant three times. This word is so important because it points us to the final mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ.

He came not to be served, but to serve as a servant, to give his life as a ransom for many, according to Mark 10.

So, while we are a bit like Job in a need to repent, we need one like Job, one who is ultimately even more righteous than Job, perfectly righteous, to mediate on our behalf.

This is Jesus. Jesus suffered the ultimate pain, and death, so that through him we might come to know God and to be saved. See, Job's relationship with God has been restored, and now through the one greater than Job, our relationship with God can be restored.

And third, once repentance has been shown, the relationship has been restored through mediation, so now the patterned end can be finished.

[16 : 05] and the pattern always ends with hope. For Job, that hope is demonstrated in material and familial wealth. For us, the hope of restoration comes through resurrection.

You see, Jesus was not simply the one to be sacrificed, but he was also the one to defeat death and rise up on the third day. And in so doing, he secured his place at the right hand of the Father and secured for us a place with him in his Father's kingdom.

As Jesus was resurrected, so shall we be. And the glory that awaits those who have repented and believed far outshines the material blessings of this life, even 10,000 donkeys.

For us as Christians, the hope of restoration is not that we will experience relief in this life. Make no mistake about that.

I just spent two weeks in Cuba and the prosperity gospel is alive and well there. The hope of restoration is not that we will experience relief in this life.

[17 : 18] The hope of restoration for Christians is the hope of resurrection. So, do you hope? Are you confident in the preservation of God?

So, Job's story sets a pattern for us. Will we be humbled enough by our encounter with God to repent? I hope so. Will we be restored to God through a mediator?

Yes, because Jesus did so. And now, friends, will we look to the hope of restoration that comes through resurrection? May it be so.

Job's story is ours. If you've ever suffered, if you've ever felt persecuted by God, if you've ever presumed upon God, there is a lesson here. Your relationship with God matters.

It matters so much. So, may you find peace in this moment. Or, as Peter put it in 1 Peter 5, 6-11, 1 Peter 5, 6-11, humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time, he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.

[18 : 38] Be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

And after you've suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son as a mediator that through his sacrifice we can come to know you.

Give us the strength to repent, to believe, and to live in a way that demonstrates our hope and resurrection. We pray this in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.