

Job

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[0:00] Job, the book of Job. It's one of the oldest books in the world. But its message is just as real and just as relevant for you and me here and now in the 21st century today.

And Job is the story of one man struggling with God. It addresses that age old question of human suffering. How should the righteous suffer?

So it's a story of going from riches to rags and to riches again. It tells the story of the man Job and of his journey from tragedy to triumph ultimately.

And it's been said that the name Job means persecuted one or repentant one. And through the book of Job we see God's dealing with this man Job.

This man Job as he faced some of life's misery and sorrow, of suffering and shame. Job shows us how to identify with those who suffer as well.

[1:05] As we look on as an observer it brings powerful words of hope and comfort to us. On a practical things that we can learn from Job. So we first meet the man Job as a wealthy, righteous man.

A noble man with a large family. Many flocks of animals. Many servants and a large home. Yet for Job his life would fall apart.

And all the while El Shaddai, the Almighty, God Almighty, is doing a work in Job.

So the book starts at chapter 1 verse 1, funnily enough. And there was a man in the land of us whose name was Job. And that man was perfect and upright.

And one that feared God and eschewed or shunned evil. He was perfect, upright, feared God. And he eschewed, he shunned evil.

[2:13] Who was Job? Job was a godly man, a righteous man, a wise man, pure and persevering. He was known for this characteristic of the patience of Job.

That's what James called it in chapter 5 verse 11. He was known for his patience, his perseverance as James writes of him. He was a blessed man, a man who persevered, a God-fearing man who went the distance.

And in verse 5 we see that Job was a good father. He was blessed with a family of seven sons and three daughters. And he loved and cared for his children.

He would consecrate them every morning with burnt offerings. And the book of Job tells this amazing story. And it gives us a glimpse also into the supernatural.

Into the dimension of the supernatural that we don't always conceive of. How can we conceive of it? So next up we see the scene in heaven where Satan comes to accuse Job before God.

[3:16] And there's this very real aspect of spiritual warfare. And it's going on now in our lives, isn't it? It's going on right here and now in our lives. There's spiritual warfare.

It's a backdrop to this world that we live in. Of the things that we can see. Into that unseen world of which we're not conscious. That dimension beyond what we can see.

And we see that there in verse 6 of chapter 1. Job 1 verse 6. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. And Satan came also among them.

So these angels, Satan was there. They came before the Lord. And Satan is introduced to us here. Satan. It means adversary. He's opposed to us.

He's against us. He's our committed enemy. Public enemy number one. And he opposes the work of God in the world and in your life and mine. He's called the accuser of the brethren in Revelation 12 verse 10.

[4:16] And in verse 8, Satan is there. And God asks, Hast thou considered my servant Job? But Satan accused Job of just serving God because it was

convenient.

Because it was comfortable. Because he was getting blessed. Because of what he could get out of it. And Job 1 from verse 9 through 10. It says, Then Satan answered the Lord and said, Doth Job fear God for naught?

Verse 10. Hast thou not made a hedge about him and about his house and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands and his substance is increased in the land. Job's accusing. Satan's accusing Job. Satan's accusing Job that he only served God because God protected him. God blessed him. And Satan asked God's permission to afflict Job.

To test his faith and faithfulness. And there's one thing that Satan hates, brothers and sisters. It's that God's people trust him. God's people trust him.

[5:26] Satan hates that. And we need to face the enemy. Head on sometimes. And face the enemy's attacks. Knowing that our faith will bear that test.

And see the distance. And so keep our faith strong. No matter what. No matter what the enemy throws against us. So God set out to prove to Satan that Job was not righteous merely because he was blessed.

Because God was blessing him. But Job was righteous because he loved God. And our Lord calls us to this. To faithfulness. To that faith that is full and overflowing.

Faithfulness. God challenged the devil. He told him in verse 12. God says you can touch him.

But do not kill him. And from this glimpse into the unseen realm. We see that God sets limits. He has a head. He sets limits. He sets boundaries.

[6:36] He limits Satan's power. Satan is restricted. God is in charge. He is in charge. And we can know that whatever happens.

He is in charge. Our Lord God. El Shaddai. God Almighty. We can know that whatever happens. Satan's power. He is not almighty. His power is limited.

Brother. Sister. Satan's power is restricted. It's limited. So God allowed Satan. Certain limitations. To test Job.

And it was a heavy test. By taking away his wealth. His family. And finally his health. Job lost just about everything. His sheep. His oxen.

His camels. His servants. His sons. His daughters. Yet he did not lose faith in God. He held strong. It was just one day.

[7:34] You can read of it there in Job chapter 1. In one single day. Job was stripped of his wealth. And bereaved of his ten children. What a calamity. In one day.

It was drastic wasn't it? What did Job do? Notice what he did. In verse 20. Job's first response. As well as mourning. His first response was worship.

He worshipped. In Job 1 verse 20. Then Job arose and ran. His mantle. He tore his garment. And he shaved his head. Which was a sign of grief.

And he fell down upon the ground. And worshipped. He mourns. But he worships. In his grief. He still praises his Lord. And he blesses the name of the Lord.

Here is what we see. It's real worship. You know. Some would. As much as we can sing such songs. It's not. For Job. If you're happy and you know it.

[8:35] Clap your hands. You know. It wasn't that his worship was about how he felt. As much as we can have joy. And we can count it all joy. What is not joyful.

But his worship wasn't man manufactured. It wasn't conjured up. Or the atmosphere of the musicians of the time. It was real worship. Real worship.

And he gave thanks to God in everything. Job praised God in his pain. Even in his grief. It was real worship. Real worship.

He arose. He fell down upon the ground. And he worshipped. Verse 21. And he said. Naked came I out of my mother's womb. And naked shall I return thither.

The Lord gave. And the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

[9:33] The Lord hath given. And the Lord hath taken. Blessed be the name of the Lord. He acknowledged God's controlling hand. In all of his life. He maintained his integrity. In spite of these satanic attacks.

That took his family. And hurt him. And then we see in verse 3 of chapter 2. Job 2 verse 3. And the Lord said unto Satan.

Hast thou considered my servant Job? Notice. Job is God's servant. My servant. Job. That there is none like him in the earth.

A perfect and an upright man. One that feareth God and assureth evil. He fears God. He assures evil. He assures away from it. He assures it.

And he still holdeth fast his integrity. Although thou movest me against him. To destroy him without cause. So here was Job. He was holding fast. That was round 1.

[10:31] He got through the first part. Now it was ding. Round 2. It was going to get harder for Job. Job's suffering was going to go up a notch now. Next Job was covered with these terrible sores.

From the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. And chapter 2 verse 7. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord. And smote Job with these sore boils.

From the sole of his foot unto his crown. From head to toe. He was covered in these running open sores. Now it's not defined what his affliction was.

Some would perhaps consider leprosy. He had feelings of terror. Sleeplessness. Nightmares.

Ulcers. Rotting bones.

A blackening peeling of his skin. Failing vision. Rotting teeth. Bad breath. He was a wreck.

[11:32] Emotionally. Physically. Tormented. Confused. Angry. He had all of those feelings. And he vented them. He was human.

We see. As the word tells us. As men and women of God. It reads warts and all. Of all of their ways. And Job had such despairing times.

And Job had a change of address as well. Now he lived on the ash pile. The ash heap. In verse 8.

He was in the ash heap. The place for the social outcasts of the land. He was shunned. He couldn't live in the main community anymore because of his gruesome sores.

And he was left all alone on this ash heap. To scrape his wounds with broken pottery. What a sight. What a smell. What a feeling that he would have had.

[12:35] Can we imagine it? He was as good as dead. Yet despite his suffering of pain and anxiety and torment. He still believed God.

He still believed. Despite his suffering. He lost everything. He was left only with his wife. And she was little comfort.

As we see from verses 9 through 10. Then said his wife unto him. Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die.

The one he was left with. His wife. Said. Give it up Job. Curse God and die.

Then he said unto her. Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaker. What shall we receive good at the hand of God? And shall we not receive evil?

[13:31] In all this did not Job sin with his lips. Now not much is said about Job's wife. It seems like she gave him pretty cold comfort here. But I've heard a commentator say that maybe she got a bit of a bad rap.

You know Job's wife. Because she was just human just like Job was. And at the end she was blessed like Job was in chapter 42. As their family and wealth was restored.

But she was human. And we see the weaker vessel perhaps in the wife of Job. That she was just throwing her hands up in the air. It was hopeless.

It seemed. So Job lost his family. His wealth. His health. Job's story raises some questions for us. Why do the righteous suffer?

You know it's as some have said it. Why do bad things happen to good people? You know and sometimes good things happen to bad people. Why is that? Sometimes it's hard to really explain isn't it?

[14:36] It's something we can't always understand. And so Job's friends now show up. They come on the scene. Job's friends. In inverted commas. They come. His comforters.

They come along. And they talk along this question of why the righteous suffer. They were meant to bring comfort to Job. But their visit was really some long theological debate over what caused Job's suffering.

And for all their effort and comfort they really were just persecuting Job emotionally and verbally. Job was tried.

Tried by his losses. By his family. By his disease. By his disease. By his disease. And now by his friends. Those that were meant to be his support and helpers. And in the middle of the book of Job we see 29 chapters of misapplied theology and human reasoning and bad advice.

They were just giving all kinds of arguments. A mixture of good and bad. A mixture of truth and falsehood in some of their counsel to Job.

[15:44] And Job's three friends were claiming to Job that Job was being punished because of his sin. Now there's some faith preachers that say the same kind of thing nowadays too.

That you don't have enough faith. That's why you're sick. Of course it's not true. But Job maintained his innocence. He had lost everything.

And his body was now covered with boils from head to toe. Job had come to this place where he could no longer endure. He couldn't take it anymore. He couldn't endure the agony, the despair. He struggled with his emotions. We see the very human side of Job the man. He was downcast and downhearted. And he cursed the day that he was born. He wanted to die.

We see Job shows us the reality of what life is like sometimes. Maybe you've been in Job's shoes. Even while he asks, why me?

[16:48] Job never lost his faith in God. He still believed. He still trusted the Lord. Some mistakenly blame sufferings on personal sins as the friends of Job.

rather than that Job was being tested by God and grown to grow. And people still think like this today that the presence of suffering means the absence of faith or the lack of real faith.

But it's not so. Job's friends made this great error. But Job remained devoted to God. He held fast. His faith was strong despite it being shaken.

And so Job's friends were a good example of being a poor comforter of others. We can learn from Job's friends in how not to comfort other people. Don't be like Job's friends.

You know, Job said of them, verse 2 of 16, I have heard many such things. Miserable comforters are ye all. You know, who's got friends like that?

[17:52] Yes. They come and they just condemn you or make you feel worse than you already were. But Job's friends, they should have tried to comfort him and pray with him. But they just condemned him and blamed him for his calamities.

And so if you're a friend of someone who's going through some tough things, rather comfort and pray for them. Rather bless them and encourage them and uplift them.

Not treat them like Job's friends treated him. Then we see a fourth man come, Elihu. Elihu. He told Job to humble himself and submit to God's use of trials to purify his life.

So he gave somewhat good advice there. Sure enough, God wanted to humble Job, but this was only a part of God's test. So how did Job cope with his trials?

We can learn from the rest of the story as we read through the book. And I know we're really just picking bits and pieces here. It's hard to do it justice in this short time.

[18:57] And we can take more study to dig deeper. But as much as he naturally despaired, as he cried out in anguish, Job's faith gave him the endurance, the patience of Job, the perseverance of Job, the keep on keeping on that Job had.

And he cried for a mediator. In Job 9.33, he tells, Neither is there any daysman, which means mediator, between us that might lay his hand upon us both.

And we know the word tells us that there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. He is that one who bridges that gap. He is that advocate we have before the Father.

And we can find his grace. We don't need some human mediator, not some Mary or some saint, but we have the living God in the person of Christ.

He is the mediator, the advocate we have. So Job found faith in his time of trial, faith to call out for a mediator, a saviour. Job 13.15, Though he slay me, yet will I trust him, but I will maintain my own ways before him.

[20:08] Even though he slay me, I'm still going to trust my God. Even though I'm taken to death itself, I'm still going to trust my God. And Job was able to praise God in the midst of the storm.

Truly suffering is the lot of us all to some degree. Life is short and hard. Job 14.1, It's the truth that man that is born of a woman is a few days and full of trouble.

Life is like that. It might seem like it's more full of trouble than other times at times. But yet, it's the lot of us all to have some trouble in our lives.

Let's not despair. The Bible says that the rain falls on the just and the unjust. Sometimes it's just how it is in life. Yet, in its all, we can know that the sufferings of this present time, the sufferings that we endure in these times, in this time, cannot be compared with the glory that is around the corner. The glory of glory. In Romans 8 verse 18, we can't compare the glory that is prepared, the wonders that is prepared, that will be revealed in us, for us one day.

[21:22] So God allows suffering for his divine purpose. And we can learn to trust God. Now you might say, Oh, it's easy for you to say. You know, and I'm not meaning to discount.

There's people here that are going through some tough things. It's going to get tougher. Let me tell you, it might even get harder for you. Whatever it is, have faith in God.

Have faith in God. Though he slay me, yet will I trust him. I'm going to yield to his authority over my life. I'm going to trust him even to death itself. To trust God in the time of suffering, in time of distress, in time of anxiety.

So Job cried out in faith. In Job 19 verse 25, For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

I know that my Redeemer liveth. I know my Redeemer, my Saviour, my Lord. Verse 26, And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

[22:24] You know, this is just worm food. What we're standing in, isn't it? You know, you might look in the mirror and make it look nice, but it's just worm food at the end of the day. And Job found his nourishment in the word of God.

And so can we. Yet in my flesh. One day I'm going to get some new flesh, a new body, a new face. You know, it'll be an extreme makeover. And I'm going to see my God.

Amen? Who's looking forward to that day? And I'm going to see my Redeemer. And my Redeemer lives. And so Job found nourishment in the word of God. And so can we. In Job 23 verse 12, he says, Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.

I've esteemed the words of his mouth. More than my necessary food. The words of his mouth. I've esteemed them. Wow.

More than my necessary food. God's word became more important. The promises of the book. They're written for our instruction, for our learning, for our comfort, for our hope.

[23:29] God's word became more important to Job than food. And Job gave praise to his creator. In Job 26 verse 7, he says, He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and he hangeth the earth upon nothing.

Job knew more than the scientific community of his time. He knew that God hung the globe in space on nothing.

Job knew what it was to fear and honour his creator with his life. In Job 28, Job says, And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.

And to depart from evil, that is understanding. He knew the reality of real wisdom and real understanding. It's to fear God.

To know him with a healthy fear, a loving honouring of God in our life. There is true hope. And Job learnt that.

[24:30] The sovereignty of God. To trust in the Lord. In Job 33 verse 4, he says, The Spirit of God that hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty, hath given me life.

Job recognised the awesome, superintending, over-ealing power of God, the El Shaddai, the Almighty. And so God speaks to Job and he restores him.

In Job 38, we see, As the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? So, as some have paraphrased this, you could

say, The Lord basically asks to Job, Who do you think you are?

Who do you think you are? You know, here's the Creator talking to this speck of dust called a man, this worm called a man.

Who do you think you are? God is sovereign. He is sovereign. It goes on, verse 4 of 38. Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?

[25:41] Declare if thou hast understanding. He's the Creator of the expanse of the universe, of the planets, of the universe, beyond our vision, beyond our comprehension.

If we will but open our eyes and understand this one that we serve is the Almighty Creator and His creation is all around. His eternal power is still at work, holding it all together.

In Him all things consist. And He can help us make sense of life. And understand at least partially the puzzles of life.

He can help us understand the mysteries that come across our way. At least some of them. And Job 38, verse 6, it says, Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?

Or who hath given understanding to the heart? He is the source of wisdom. He is the source of understanding. Our Lord God Almighty, the El Shaddai, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and of our lives.

[26:53] We must depend upon Him. Job 38, verse 41 is the truth of God's sustaining provision, who provideth for the raven, His food. You know, as our Lord says in the Gospel of Matthew, that He closed the lilies of the field, the sparrows.

God cares for everyone. For the hairs on your head. He knows you. Let's submit to His control. He provides for the raven and He provides for you, for me.

So Job submitted himself to God's control. He entrusted his life to the Lord and to His great power. 42, verses 1 and 2, Then Job answered the Lord and said, I know that thou canst do everything and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

He came to that comprehension. He was starting to grasp it more here. There is no full human answer to the question of suffering. There's no full human answer to that.

And most of the speeches of Job's friends show this. They didn't have a clue really. They had different opinions. But really they were all wrong. Because sometimes good people suffer.

[28:12] Sometimes bad people prosper. It's how it is. The book of Job teaches us that suffering and righteousness sometimes exist together.

That it's no lack of your faith. It's no lack of God's power that you're having some hard times. It's perhaps all the more reason why you can know Him and draw closer to Him in such times.

And so the book of Job teaches us such things. So Job was not to blame. Rather, he was the most righteous man on all the earth. He was the most just man, it says in Job chapter 1.

And at the end of the book, we see Job come to repentance. We see him come to humble himself before the Almighty God. And he acknowledged Him. 42 verses 5 through 6.

I've heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Verse 6. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. He says, Look, I'm just disgusted with myself.

[29:19] And I repent in dust and ashes. I just come before your almighty power. And I submit to you. I surrender all. Job confessed his unworthiness.

He trusted in the Lord. And he affirmed his faith in God. And then we see a massive turnaround. A massive reversal of what happened to Job. He was restored to health, to happiness, to greater prosperity than he'd had before.

In 42 verse 12 it says, So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. It says he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, 1,000 she-asses.

He had double what he'd had before. The Lord blessed Job again. He gave him twice as many possessions. And God gave Job another family of seven sons and three daughters.

He restored the same number of children. And he still had the same wife. And God restored everything that Job had lost.

[30:25] His health, his finances, his family, and his relationship with his spouse. You know, for all of Job's wife's faults, she hung in there.

She was still with Job. And, you know, she was maybe a bit weaker, a bit, maybe throwing her hands up in the air a bit early in the peace compared to Job. But she was still there at the end of his life.

And so there was a turnaround in her, I would say, as well. So Job lived another 140 years, seeing his descendants to the fourth generation, to an ripe old age.

And so how can we apply the principles of Job, this ancient book, in the 21st century? How can we cope when the pressure comes?

How will you cope? Will you be like Job? Will you have the patience of Job? The patience of Job, the perseverance. To go beyond these present trials and to have, as Job had, the faith of the resurrection of the just to come.

[31:32] That we will see his face and we will live again. And because of your faith, you will see God and live forever.

So when we suffer, brother, sister, let's take a page out of Job's book. I won't damage my Bible, but you know what I mean. Take a page out of Job's book and learn from him.

Learn from Job. Learn from his example. Learn he was human. I want to die. He got to the depths of human despair.

Yet he says, I know my Redeemer liveth. I know my Redeemer liveth and I will see him. He will come for me. So let's respond in faith and trust in the Almighty.

Satan's power is restricted. He's got boundaries around him. And there's a hedge around you. There's God's protection, God's care, God's overruling.

[32:41] God allows Satan to hurt us sometimes. Satan is powerful, but he's not almighty.

Who is almighty? Our God. Our God, the Almighty. The El Shaddai, our God and King. He is sovereign. He is our master. He is our loving God who made us, who knows all.

He sees the beginning and end of everything. And you might be just in the middle of it. You don't think, why am I in this mess? You know, he sees the end of it.

And he sees the glory that awaits you. He sees that which is beyond comprehension. I have not seen, nor have the ear heard, neither have it entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love him.

He sees the beginning and the end of everything. And God will bless those who endure. Someday God will reward you with unbelievable blessings. You know, it talks about if we suffer with him, we're going to reign with him.

[33:48] You know, I can't grasp that. Can you? You think, you know, these blessed believers in countries where they really suffer, wow, they're going to get some big crowns. They're going to get some wonderful joy.

Friends, we're living in a fallen world. And it's the lot of life, man's life. It's full of trouble. We all suffer in this life.

You know, we notice it as we get older. You know, I used to joke about getting older, now I am. But we know that we're getting older and frailer and weaker and more pain and suffering.

But we will all suffer in this life. And as someone has said this, we may not know the why today, but someday we probably will. Instead of asking why do I suffer, we should ask what?

What is God up to? What is God trying to show me, to do in me? The why do I suffer will have to wait sometime for when we see him.

[34:52] We may not get that mystery unraveled. We may not fully grasp what's going on now. What does it mean? Why is God allowing this? His purposes will be revealed in eternity.

And so, Satan could not lay a finger on Job and nor can he on us. He's restricted. And God is in charge. And so, the book of Job teaches us to trust the Lord whatever our circumstance.

He is sovereign over all our sufferings, over all of life. And he will permit or not permit trouble. He will allow us to be put through the test and we'll be stronger for it.

He'll refine us such that those who go through the trials, the trial of your faith, there'll be a substance there much more precious than of gold, that perisheth.

Our Lord will prove our faith and purify our lives and we can know that God is in control. Brothers and sisters, as we wrap up, let's take a page out of Job's book.

[35:58] Amen. Take a page out of Job's book. Learn from Job, his faithfulness, the patience of Job. Learn the comfort that Job had, not from his friends, but from this word have I esteemed more than my daily food.

We can reckon on his control for his children. We can rely on his grace and rest in his promises that no matter what, he is still God.

He is still God. Job passed the test and so can you. Sister, brother, you can pass the test and all the time knowing that our Lord is always worthy of our praise.

The first response of Job, he fell down and he worshipped. He said, blessed be the name of the Lord. He's taken away, he's given me, he's taken away, but blessed be the name of the Lord.

The Lord is in full control of your life, of all that he has created. We don't always understand what he's allowing, but we can trust him still.

[37:05] Trust him evermore. And he'll bring us through whatever adversity we will face. What's going to happen Monday morning? When I think, when I preach a sermon like this, I mean, I've already had, I've had a lot of trouble lately with various things.

My wife being quite ill with extensive vandalism and theft from this property. And we think, oh, what next? What's going to happen Monday morning?

We can trust him anyway, can't we? Can't we trust him? Suffering has an end. It will not last forever. And God's wisdom and timing is perfect. He sees and he knows everything.

And he allows these things to build us up, to endure those trials and temptations, to know his comfort and hope. And at the close of the book, what do we see? Take a page out of Job's book. chapter 42, everything changes. You know, sometimes we might feel like I'm in Job chapter 1 or 2 at the moment or 3 with all those rotten friends of mine.

[38:10] But go to chapter 42, amen? Take a page out of Job's book, chapter 42, and see what happens. Satan is defeated. Glory! Glory!

Job is restored. Glory! And God is glorified. Glory. If you suffer, learn to rest and rely on the Lord. We can trust God's strength and power.

Who's the almighty? Not Satan. Our God and King. And he has created you and me and all things and we're in his hands. And he will lead us and guide us.

He'll let us go through some tough things that he can grow us and strengthen us in grace. And even in time of suffering, we can know this for sure by faith that we can know and have that hope that is enduring beyond this present time and we know God's everlasting comfort is our sure foundation. I'm preaching to believers tonight. You might say, I don't know this God. You can by faith. Trust him now. Trust him now. And for believers, trust that what he did at the cross, he saved you, trust that he's keeping you, trust that he'll welcome you into his everlasting embrace.

[39:30] And for the meantime, we just have to trust. We just have to trust him. Let us pray. Let us pray.