

The Mystery of Suffering: The Book of Job

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[0:00] Job. He lost everything. His children, his wealth, his health. Yet in all of his suffering, Job never gave up his faith in God. He continued to trust God even when he didn't understand! Job is a story full of timeless wisdom. It's actually four things that he didn't understand and it's a thousand years old, this book. So we're going to turn there to this book, the book of Job, really one of the most challenging books in the Bible. It tells the story of a man, a righteous man, yet one who suffered so greatly. When we suffer, it can be difficult to understand, to cope. We feel confused, angry, even possibly abandoned by God. The truths in this book, the book of Job, this 4,000 year old book, are just as real for you, for your life. To strengthen your own faith, you can take heart in the pages of this book today.

So let's meet Job. We'll go to Job chapter 1 verse 1. Job chapter 1 verse 1, it says, 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 evil. In other words, he shunned evil. He was a God-fearing man, a man who loved God. His faith was right, his walk. He was saved and he loved God. Job loved and cared about his children too. In later verses, it talks about how he consecrated them every single morning with burnt offerings. He loved them so that he wanted to pray for them and care for them spiritually and be an example. And through his life, Job was to endure immense trials, huge loss and physical affliction. We can learn from his life, his example. It was an example of faith, of perseverance, of humility as he faced many storms and tragedies.

We can, I hope, put ourselves in his shoes somewhat and learn from his example of faith and how he coped and how he got through. We can find strength when we go through our own times of trial. The fact is we may face our own times through life and it's a reality, isn't it? I know lately I've had some new pains and aches and agony and sleepless nights from pain. We can all empathise with this or that. It's happening to us, our own human frailties and weaknesses and our own problems of life, whatever it be, financial, physical, mental relationships. Let's learn from Job about what Job did, how he handled such tough times. It tells us how Satan appeared to God and it says the Lord commended Job to Satan as a righteous man. Pick it up from verse 8.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job? Pointed him out, there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and assureth evil.

He didn't hang around evil, he got right away from it, he shunned it. Satan challenged Job's faith. The devil is called, one of his titles, the accuser of the brethren. That's what he does.

[3:54] He finds some, oh I found a little fault here, a little fault there, oh there's another fault, another fault. And he points his finger at us, doesn't he? He's the accuser, he attacks, he finds fault. We can play that game too, can't we? We can be just like him, find fault with others, rather than the one that we look at in the mirror. There's plenty of fault there.

Verse 9, then Satan answered the Lord and said, Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not made an 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 substances increased in the land, but put forth thine hand now and touch all that he hath and he will curse thee to thy face. So we read here verses 9 through 11 how God had blessed Job, he had everything. God had made provision for him so fully and God had kept him safe. Think of it for yourself. We can take all of that for granted that we have, can't we? Scarcely giving a thought to thanking God for what we do have, Job had really everything that he could desire. And why? Because God had given it to him, God had provided it to him.

Satan accuses Job then of being a fair weather kind of believer. Oh, you've got Job on side, Job's only got faith because of all the things that you've given to him, because life is so easy for him. And so Satan asks permission to test Job. Notice Satan's limitations here. Satan cannot do whatever he wants with us.

He has to ask permission. He has to go cap in hand and ask for this or that still because it's the power of God that is overarching here. God's authority. And Satan is only allowed to do what God allows him to do. Verse 12, and the Lord said unto Satan, behold, all that he hath is in thy power only upon himself. Put not forth by hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

[6:09] So here we see God allows this suffering. Job faced suffering even as a God-honouring man. And this can be the reality for all of us as God's people, believers here today. Friends, the reality is we're living in a world where pain happens. And when it does happen, it can rock our faith. And we can wonder what's going on. Where is God in our pain? Truly in this broken world we live in, we can expect to face hurt and heartache. It's common to man. Really suffering is the universal experience. It's the real human experience, isn't it? And I speak from experience. And people I know, loved ones that I know, I've gone through. I've gone through the worst of things that you could experience. Sad things. It's hurtful things. Hard things. Times of hardship. And suffering.

In Job 14.1 it says, Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. When you think about it, how many days do we have? Some people reckon it all up, don't they? Even if you've got 90 odd years of days, it's only a few days really, isn't it? In the scheme of things.

An eye blink. An eye blink, isn't it? It's a puff of air, isn't it? A whisper of air. A vapour that passes away. A few days and full of trouble. Life can be like that. Even as God's children, we still can face troubling times. And friends, we can all expect times of sadness, of bruising, sin. Even deep heart pains, deep wounds, savage storms. Sin has marked the world that God's made, the perfection of creation because of the fall of man. And we face real tests. It's real life as we travel through life. And Job is the real example we can take heart. But here's a graphic living example of a man who went through great suffering and loss. And what we can learn. These are not times to fall into despair, but to find that firm foundation of faith, that anchor that keeps the soul. Let's see what happened for Job and how he handled it. It tells how there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house. And there came a messenger onto Job and said, the oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them. And the Sabaeans fell upon them and took them away. Yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword. And I only am escaped alone to tell thee. So his sons and daughters taken away, slain with the sword.

Verse 16. While he was yet speaking, there came also another and said, the fire of God has fallen from heaven. And I only am escaped alone to tell thee. So these sheep, these servants were consumed. Verse 17. While he was yet speaking, there came also another and said, the Chaldeans made out three bands and fell upon the camels and have carried them away. Yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword. And I only am escaped alone to tell thee. So the camels slain the servants there. Verse 18. While he was yet speaking, there came also another and said, the sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house. And behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness and smote the four corners of the house and they are dead. And I only am escaped alone to tell thee. So here's Job, he faced trial after trial, loss after loss. What did he lose? His material possessions, his cattle, his sheep, his camels, his servants, his own beloved children. Picture that. We can't fathom it, can we? His multiple children killed. How did Job respond? With grief. And yet also with worship. We see that verse 20. Then Job arose and ran his mantle. He tore his clothes and he shaved his head. It was a sign of mourning. And he fell down upon the ground and worshipped.

What does he do? He falls to the ground in worship. Job was a worshipper before and after. What happened to him? He continues to be a worshipper. And he proclaims.

[10:52] What happened to him? He says, Verse 21. Verse 21. 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. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. It brings to mind the

psalmist's cry in Psalm 42, verse 11.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God? For I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. And Habakkuk 3.18. I know Neil was talking about this one Wednesday night. What does Habakkuk say? When the fig tree doesn't blossom and everything's going to pieces.

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. Habakkuk 3, verse 18. The psalmist, I shall yet praise him, Habakkuk. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord.

And here's Job. Falls on his face. Worships. He was a worshipper before, and he was a worshipper after the disaster.

And he says, look, I came out naked and I'm going back there. I can't take anything with me. I came as a baby in my birthday suit, and I'm going to go back there the same way.

[12:27] There's nothing that I haven't been given that the Lord's not given me. The Lord gave me, and the Lord's taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Despite his pain, Job recognised God's sovereignty, God's authority. Job's faith held steady as a rock. Job trusts in God no matter what.

These tragic circumstances that fell upon him. In fact, his friend's pain and loss is our lot. It's life at times. And in that place is still the very centre of God's will.

Job was not out of God's will when he was in pain. He was in the very centre of it. Will you brave the storm by faith? We can cultivate that kind of faith that trusts God, even in such settings, knowing that he is in full control, even in the midst of our suffering.

You might say, preacher, it's easy for you to say. Look, believe me, we all know something that is testing and hard. Look at Job as that example that we can put our eyes upon and be like him.

[13:40] What does he do? He heard the news. What does he do? He worshipped. He fell down and worshipped. What a display of faith, of trust in God. Satan had stripped Job of his family, his wealth, later his health.

And we see his deep sorrow, his hurting, his mourning, yet his unwavering trust and worship of God. What about you and me, brothers and sisters? Can we have that same trust that we trust God so, even when we don't understand?

We may not understand this side of the grave, yet we can have a faith that hangs in there. That we can fear him, trust him, know him, worship him.

Job did not understand why he was going through this suffering, this time of testing, yet he trusted.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. I might not feel like saying it, but that's what I'm going to say.

That's what Job did. We can learn from his example, can't we? When we're suffering, it's easy to become angry at God, despair and frustrate, worry, doubt his goodness to us.

[14:44] But let's remember, our God is our great, sovereign king, our ultimate king. And he is in control of everything. We're in the palm of his hand. We can trust him, even when we can't understand what he's doing.

Because there's a good reason that he has for everything that he does. We may not understand the suffering, but we can still trust our God. And suffering doesn't stop our praise.

Amen? Suffering doesn't stop your praise. It shouldn't. It should keep on praising. Praise, nevertheless praise. Praise no matter what. Praise even though he's taken away.

Blessed be the name. Blessed be his name, the name of the Lord. We can know that God is good and that he will never abandon us. He truly cares for our very best. Job's trials teach us that suffering does not necessarily mean a punishment or a lack of faith on our part.

But sometimes suffering is beyond our comprehension. There's really no simple or easy answer or explanation. We don't understand. And that's okay still too.

[15:49] Yet will I praise. Yet will I rejoice. Blessed be the name of the Lord. When we don't get those immediate answers. Nevertheless, we can wonder that natural question, why God?

But let's learn still to trust. Trust in his ultimate plan. Even though it's hidden from us. What it fully means. So Job's trials have only just begun here.

In chapter 2, Satan ramps it up. He puts the knife in a bit harder. He raises the bar, the challenge here. Satan keeps on accusing.

It's what he does. He hits you once and he keeps on hitting you. He wants to break you down. The Bible talks about how he wants to wear out the saints of the Most High. That's what he does.

He wants to fatigue you and wear you down, wear you out. And until you crack, until you break.

Verse 1 of chapter 2. There was a day, it says, Job 2 verse 1, where the sons of God, these angels, came to present themselves before the Lord.

[16:52] And it says, Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou, Satan? And Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Notice here, another point to note is that Satan is not omnipresent. He's got to walk to and fro about the earth. He's not omnipresent.

Some people give Satan more credit than he's due. Because Satan is limited. And so he was going out, walking to and fro, going around about the earth.

Verse 3. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered 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.

And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him to destroy him without cause. He says, look at Job. He's perfect. He's upright.

[17:51] He's one who shuns evil. He's a man who fears God. And he still holds fast his integrity. Verse 4. And Satan answered the Lord and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

He's talking about his physical health here now. And it goes on, verse 5. But put forth thine hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life. So God now allows Satan to afflict Job's health. Now that can hurt, can't it?

When you're hurting, when you're physically hurting, when your body's hurting. Notice what happened next and see what Job did. Verse 7. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown, head to toe, covered in boils, pussy, weeping, hurting boils, sores from head to toe.

Verse 8. And he took him a potsherd, like a broken piece of pottery. A broken pottery piece. And he scrapes himself.

[19:06] Scrapes those pussy, bleeding, oozing sores. Scrapes them red, raw, over all his body. Imagine, he's a bleeding, open sore of a man.

He scrapes himself with all, like his whole body. And he sat down among the ashes. So he's on this pile of ashes, this ash heap.

He's sitting on the rubbish pile. He feels like rubbish. He looks like rubbish. And we note Job's physical afflictions here, his pain. It was severe. It was brutal. It was gruesome.

His whole body covered this mass of sores. He was in agony. Imagine you'd just get one little mozzie bite. It's bad enough, isn't it? He's got the whole body covered in him.

Oh, you can't imagine it, can you? Verse 9, it says, Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die. She was a big help.

[20:06] His helpmate. Curse God and die. Give it up, Job. Just curl up and die. Curse God while you're doing it. Verse 10, But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.

What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God? And shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips. His wife reacted like some people do, don't they?

Mind you, we might pick on Mrs. Job, but she'd lost everything too. So, I mean, the poor woman, Job wasn't suffering on his own, she was suffering too.

But she shows a different reaction, doesn't she? She'd lost everything too. And some people can be like Mrs. Job. When tough things come, some people want to curse God and turn to despair and anger and frustration and yelling and screaming.

You name it. Yet Job answered, he continued to persevere. He showed unwavering faith. He refused to curse God. He refused to sin with his lips, with his words.

[21:14] You know, easy when something happens, the ultimate, the natural reaction is to blurt out something that we shouldn't say, isn't it? We may not always appreciate at the time there's some purpose in our time of suffering.

And friends, God can bring out a refining of our character. Something good can happen, even though we can't fully understand it while it's happening. And in those times, those moments of suffering, they have the potential to refine us, to make us the man, the woman that God wants us to be, to bring out the very best in us.

And testing times can deepen our reliance on him because we depend on him more, don't we? When it's easy, breezy, we might forget even to pray, to thank him, to be grateful. But when it's harder, hopefully then we turn our eyes to him and we know we depend upon him, we need him. And so trials can build endurance and help us mature. You know, you get that pain, pain even that stops you sleeping, pain that's constant.

It helps you also to think, well, I'm not the only one. I'm not the only one. Think of my wife. What does she go through? My situation, my family, what's happening for others, loved ones.

[22:29] You know, there's people that, as I mentioned in prayer, there's people that have lost loved ones of late, the heartache of losing someone you're close to, the pain. When we have pain, it helps appreciate the pain of others.

It helps us to empathise, doesn't it, with others and their pain. Helps us open our own hearts to have some compassion, have a bit of feeling, have a bit of understanding and extend help to those who suffer.

It can help when we face testing to surround ourselves with others too. That's why church is good. That's why fellowship is good. My fellowship helps us when we're hurting. It's meant to.

As you get around other believers, they can encourage you and you can encourage them because people can help people, provide comfort and support and wisdom during times of suffering.

So Job's friends turn up for him. Now, they weren't very good at helping him though. That's the only thing. He had some support. He had some community but they did let him down.

[23:32] It was questionable comfort from Job's friends. Job 2, from verse 11, it tells Job's three friends heard of all this evil, this disaster that had come upon him. And they came, everyone from his own place.

So they had Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar. And they made an appointment to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. Verse 12, And when they lifted up their eyes afar off and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept and they rent everyone his mantle and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

So it says they, they lifted up their eyes, they looked for him, but they didn't recognize him. He's just so covered in sores, they didn't know that it was Job anymore. He looked so ghastly. They didn't recognize who he was.

And so they lifted up their voice, they wept and they put on this dust as a sign of mourning and sorrow and grief. Verse 13, So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, but none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very grave.

So Job's friends, at least they turned up. They turned up there, they sat with him, they provided him some comfort at the first just by being present with him, sitting with him in silence.

[24:49] So they demonstrate what friends should do for friends. We should do that for people, shouldn't we? To try to be there, to try to reach out, try to show we care somehow.

Trouble is when they opened their mouth and they started giving him their well-intentioned advice, it turned into accusations. So the friends started giving all these different views about suffering.

We can't unpack all that here, but they talked about God's judgment. They made it these repeated accusations against Job, about his character. Really, they were doing the devil's work of accusing. You've got friends like that. They come and they pick on you and they actually make things worse. And they were a good example of what not to do when you're trying to help a friend get through a rough time.

So really, Job's friends should have tried to comfort and pray for him, pray with him, but instead, they just kept on condemning him and blaming him for his own calamity.

[25:52] And in Job 16.2, Job called them miserable comforters. They're comforters, but they're miserable. They just made him miserable. How do we treat our friends when we might hear of one or another that's got some tough thing happening?

Can we rather be a friend who cares and shows it rather than Job's miserable comforters? Hopefully, we're not like them.

Despite the poor example they were of people helping people go through pain, it's still true that community is important. That's why God helping us that we can be that kind of support group as a church body for one another in times of suffering.

And be mindful, be alert to times we can lend support and encouragement. Walk alongside others, remind them of God's faithfulness. So, let's take the point here that we can be an encourager to others.

Let's just plant that thought. Yeah, how can I be rather than like Job's friends be a helpful friend to encourage? As the story unfolds further, chapter 3, Job responds with this profound lament.

[27:10] He expresses his anguish and his despair and his desire even for death. He was human. He was real. This was what's and all Job.

He's human and he shows it. He pours out his feelings. Friends, it's normal to have that reaction, that human reaction, isn't it? Oh, just so hurting.

Pain is real and we can pour out our feelings to him, our God. It talks about how he can relate to the feelings of our infirmities because the Lord Jesus, he's the God with skin on, isn't he?

He's Jesus. He's come. He's endured human suffering as we heard about earlier in the raw reality of the sufferings of our Saviour.

He knows what pain is. He knows your pain. No one has suffered more in terms of the brutalising of his face. It says, no man was more marred than our Saviour was.

[28:18] So, pain is real and when we suffer we can pour out our hearts to our God and he truly understands. He does understand. We can tell God our deepest emotions and questions.

We can go to prayer. That's the blessing, brother, sister, that Job went to prayer. We can know that God is present and listening and even if it be chastening and God's discipline we can know God as the source of our healing and wholeness.

As it reads in Job 5, 17 it tells, Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth. Therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty for he maketh sore and bindeth up he woundeth and his hands make whole.

It's saying even when life brings hurting and there's soreness and wounding God will bind up those wounds. God will make whole. God will heal. Thank God we can know the one who is the healer of the broken hearted.

I just love this scripture Luke 4, verse 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he had anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He had sent me to heal the broken hearted to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering his sight to the blind to set at liberty them that are bruised.

[29:38] It's interesting this phrase heal the broken hearted is absent from some Bibles. The devil doesn't want you to hear that Jesus is the one who heals the broken hearted.

It takes out that reference in some Bibles. I think it's very tragic. I think it's deliberate. I think it's the devil. Jesus is the one who heals the broken hearted.

Friends, he heals the broken hearted. That's what it says. That's what I believe it says. That's what it says in black and white in the word of God. He hath sent Jesus to heal the broken hearted.

So whatever I hurt him, even if it be the very heartache and heartbreak of life, Jesus has come to heal the broken hearted. And Job, even in the midst of his pain, he could yet declare by faith his trust is in God.

His trust is in God. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He's saying here, even if he was to die, he would see the Lord again.

[30:45] Job knew that the Lord would raise his body up to be with his spirit. Death would not be the end for Job. Even if it was death, the worst possible scenario, death, even that isn't going to stop his faith.

He had a faith that goes beyond even death itself. Job could yet declare and confess his faith in the Saviour. I know this is a dear scripture to many who have that resurrection hope as often referred to at funerals as I have referred to as Job confessed his faith in the risen Saviour.

He says this, Job 19, 25, For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

I know that my Redeemer liveth. Jesus is alive. Amen? When we're talking to folk at the door, you get some who follow some dead prophet. Well, we're not following some dead prophet. We're following the living Saviour. Amen? I know that my Redeemer liveth. My Saviour is alive. And through faith we can trust God and find hope in the midst of our pain.

[31:57] Job could say, but he knoweth the way that I take. When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. That process, that time of suffering, of difficulty, God's making gold here.

It's 24 carats. What's the highest kind of carrot? Whatever it is, the heaven-grade gold. Heavenly-grade gold. He's making heavenly-made gold out of your life.

And so, we know that he is making gold. And we're going to come forth as gold. Through that furnace time, we're going to come forth as that bright, shining, pure gold. And Job remains steadfast in his trust in God.

He knows the way that I take. When he hath tried me, I'm going to come forth. I shall come forth as gold. He confessed it. His faith held steady. Despite his confusion and his pain, Job held on to that hope that God would deliver him.

And his example of perseverance teaches us, likewise, stay faithful to God in the midst of suffering. May God give us all that same perseverance, whatever faces us, whatever tomorrow brings, whatever happens Monday morning.

[33:06] Amen? Amen? I shall come forth as gold. You shall go forth as gold. Keep strong, knowing that God is with you. He's present with you, even in the darkest moments, even in the very furnace.

He's there. Amen? Because he never leaves us, nor forsakes us. Know the power of this one, friends today, this one who holds the universe in his hands.

He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and he hangeth the earth upon nothing. Know the power of this one who holds the earth in space. He holds you.

He holds you. Doesn't he? The one who holds the earth in space has absolute power. He holds you. Know that your life is held in his very hands.

Or don't we also to fear him, to love him, as further wisdom from Job reads, Job 28, 28. And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.

[34:15] So realize the one who has absolute power, holds the earth in space, he holds you. Realize that this is wisdom, the fear of the Lord, to know him, to love him, to realize our maker is our sustainer.

And the one upon whom we depend for our every breath, says, The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. These confessions of faith here, The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

Truly we depend upon him, for our every breath, our every heartbeat. And this is true when you think about it, which is even more telling, this is true even for the most hardened of atheists.

They depend on him for their every breath. Don't they? Every breath. Even those who would use his blessed name to blaspheme his very name, that atheist depends upon him for their every breath. Through the mouth they used to curse and blaspheme him. Every breath bears witness to the fact that he's our sustainer. He's made us.

[35:31] The breath of life comes from God. Started with Adam and it's been passed through everyone since Adam. The breath that God breathed into Adam. It's still his breath, isn't it?

The breath of life ever since Adam. And we can't yet praise him today. He gives us life, he will hold you steady. Sister, brother, he'll hold you steady.

In chapter 38, it rounds up, God speaks to Job. God had been largely silent here till Job 38, verse 1, then the Lord answered Job, out of the whirlwind.

Out of the whirlwind, it says. As Job wrestles with his suffering, God responds here finally with his powerful series of questions. Again, we can't unpack it all in one short message today, but these questions from God, it reveals his infinite wisdom and creative power.

And in the latter chapters of Job, God asks him powerful questions that challenge his understanding. And then we see Job, he's humbled, he's silenced by the grandeur of God's majesty and wisdom.

[36:41] He's humbled here with what God says. And likewise too, if we could just have that same posture, that same heart attitude that Job had, realise God's ways are higher than my ways.

I don't always fathom what's happening for me. Yeah, I know the one who holds the future. I know the one who holds the earth in space and he holds me and my life and his wisdom is beyond my fathoming his wisdom that's in his word.

Maybe I need to read it more. I can find my strength there in his promises as I navigate the trials of life. The answers are here. The answers are here.

If we will, but heed them. And God showed Job his sovereignty and his wisdom in creation. He says, where was thou when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Think about that brothers and sisters. Where were we when God laid the foundation of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding. That's Job 38 verse 4. So God asks Job these questions about the creation of the world.

[37:53] Where were you when I made this world? When I made the universe? How limited we are in all of our knowledge and understanding when we think oh God, the God of creation, he knows, you know, multiplied more than the tiny bit that we might know of wisdom.

And Job questions God of course too. And God encourages Job's questions. Friends, you can go to God in prayer and ask him to show his way, his will.

You can learn as you read his word, his voice to you, the word of God. Don't be afraid to question God and find his wisdom from his word.

If we don't understand something, you've got prayer as that communication line. He may not always answer our questions in the way that we want but he will always answer them in a way that's helpful.

So Job came to recognise God's infinite wisdom and power. It says, Job 42, I know that thou canst do everything and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

[39:02] Job came to this place of humility where he says, Lord, I know you can do everything. Everything. And then it comes about that we see Job is restored.

God's blessings came with a double portion. Job got double what he had before. He gave Job new children, new livestock, new wealth.

He still had the same wife. But maybe she was more of a blessing after the effect. God gave a blessing. Amen. God gave Job blessing. And God will restore you.

Amen. Like he restored Job. Think of what God gave back to him. Thank God. Job came away with a deeper sense of God's power, of his splendour, trusting him more.

And it says, Job 42, 5-6, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.

[39:59] Job came to see what he was in the sight of this awesome, mighty God. The humility, the empty lack that was his life.

He saw how he needed to turn to God in great love and devotion. This real turning point in his life God and he realises I am just nothing in his holy sight.

And he came to see the reality of God's majesty. And Job prayed through earnestly And sought God's presence. There's a real turning point here. His eyes were open.

it says, verse 10, And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends. Also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. So again we see prayer here. Don't neglect to pray. Brother, sister, when trials come, you've got a communication link with the one who can restore, the one who can heal, the one who can sustain. Pour out your hearts before him when you need wisdom.

[41:04] Seek his comfort, his guidance, go to the word, pray. You can find strength in that time of suffering and you can hold on to hope. Trust that in God's perfect timing restoration and blessings will come.

Because friends, our sufferings are not the end of the story. Amen? It wasn't the end of Job's story. It says 42 verse 12, so the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. It started off with blessings and it finished with blessings. His life continued with blessing still. So Job's suffering was temporary. Now realise this brother sister that our light affliction is but for a moment.

Even if it does go a lifetime it's still but for a moment. Isn't it? Our light affliction it's temporary. We've got all eternity ahead.

Know that God hasn't abandoned you and he is working. There are answers. There is purpose and eventually you will know it. So God's restoration of Job is a reminder that he is the God of hope.

[42:16] He is the God who will never abandon or fail. No matter what we're going through we can trust God that he will restore he will enable we'll be stronger through our suffering we'll have more muscles.

I was thinking of the term exercise your faith. There's a lot in that isn't there? Think about it. I know we've got some gym junkies here that go to the gym and you can see by their muscles and their physique that they're such great specimens of health because they exercise amen and it's the same with your faith isn't it?

Brother sister! away from exercise you see of course the military the police they exercise so they can be stronger so they can be fitter so they can serve and be fit and healthy likewise your faith suffering is exercising your faith amen so don't feel like it's the end of the world when suffering comes you'll be stronger you'll be stronger for it and you can know in the suffering the promise of God's presence God promises to be with us in our suffering to provide us comfort and strength he is near to the broken hearted amen I mean can you think of a suffering that's more deeper than being broken hearted honestly that God can even heal the broken hearted even if you feel like you like Job sitting on that junk pile sitting on the ash heap God can bring beauty out of ashes amen brother sister don't lose heart when tough things happen God can turn our pain into a testimony I like how the test becomes our testimony don't you love that that's a good one so suffering can lead to a spiritual growth increased faith deeper relationship with God so let's learn brother sister as we wrap up here like Job hold on hold on it's not the end of the story yet God's plans are far greater than all of our understanding and in times of suffering draw near to him he will draw near to you he'll be even more precious in those times your loving father that he is with you every step of the way so the book of Job is a challenging book we've only scratched the surface you could do well to have a good look at it again later and unpack it a little it's a challenging book but it's a exercise our faith amen so you'll be like these gym junkies you'll be a spiritual gym junkie amen you'll be a spiritual soldier a spiritual champion because

God is growing you transforming you and likewise let's think about maybe it's not you that's suffering right now but you know hey actually come to think about it I know some people that are around me that are suffering I know some people that are going through some tough things right now we can learn to show some compassion to others can't we wouldn't that be good that you can be used of God that the God of all comfort is going to help comfort others where with the comfort we ourselves have received from him we can comfort others we can encourage others we can help others find hope in God's promises So brother sister today embrace that journey including the times of suffering with steadfast faith knowing that God is with you every step of the way and be that source of comfort for others have your eyes wide open for others don't live such a blinkered life that it's all about me me me me myself and

[46:52] I no take the blinkers off exercise your faith bless others learn about God's grace and impart it and when it's happening when you're in it I'm going to yet praise him I'm going to yet rejoice he's taken away but blessed be the name of the Lord I'm not going to stop blessing him I'm not going to stop rejoicing I'm not going to stop praising and worshipping him I'm going to be like Job I'm going to fall on my face and trust him still as we navigate those trials of our life friends I urge you know the redeemer he'll carry you through the storms and he'll give you the hope and the strength to endure for I know that my redeemer

liveth I know that my redeemer liveth amen you can say that by faith you can declare that by faith I know he lives may we find his strength and solace his unfailing love his faithfulness to hold us to see us through to sustain us to restore us ultimately in glory it'll just be a flashing moment of time he walks beside you every step of your journey let's pray lord we do acknowledge you lord those questions unanswered at times even in the book of job we don't see fully the explanation of this or that but we know yet the testimony of job that came out of the test of job and lord help us to be such a people we'll see you working know you're working declare our faith confess our trust blessed be the name of the lord help us to be a people who will pray even if it be praying and lamenting and in anguish and despair yet to you to you who is the one who heals the hearts that are broken by faith lord we thank you that you care we pray each one might know that trust that saves our soul from sin and hell that we can know the saving grace that took you to the cross to bear our very guilt and sin and pay for it fully there we pray each one might know the hearts trust to say

I believe I trust you as my saviour and lord as each one of us that trust you may face trials let us not despair but find your grace and to know your keeping and sustaining power in Jesus name amen praise god