

Lessons from the Life of Job

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[0:00] Looking at Job, the book of Job. And if you'd like to turn there, we'll start with Job chapter 1 verse 1. I'll just take a few snapshots through the life of Job, this man of God, in the Old Testament there.

So just before Psalms, you've got the book of Job in the middle there. Job chapter 1. And we see in the book of Job the personal sufferings of this man Job and the trials of his faith.

Job chapter 1 and verse 1 it says, There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. And that man was perfect and upright and one that feared God and eschewed evil, or he turned away from evil.

And he shunned it. And Job 1 verse 3 tells us that Job was one of the richest men of his day. He was greatly blessed by God, his possessions, his family, his social standing, his status.

He'd arrived at a position of great wealth and respect that most men would only dream about. Job had surrounded himself with good works, pride, security and family.

[1:14] Everything was going right for him. However, he would witness its destruction in just one day. He would suffer the loss of it all.

Right through the book of Job, it makes the point that Job didn't deserve the horrible things that happened to him. In chapter 1 verse 8 it says, And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like unto him in the earth a man, a perfect man and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?

Satan suggested to God, Take away his benefits and Job will curse you to your face. And within days Job lost virtually everything.

His income, his wealth, his means of travel. Lesson number 1, Remain faithful with or without possessions.

Remain faithful with or without possessions. Verse 12, Job's first trial was the loss of his herds, his wealth, so his substance, and of his children.

[2:27] His very family was gone in a moment. Job's response in verse 12, Job 1, Verse 12 it says, The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself.

Put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord. And Job's response we see in verse 20, Then Job arose and rent his mantle.

He tore his clothes. And he shaved his head at the sign of mourning. And he fell down upon the ground. And he worshipped. Job's response, God be praised.

In verse 21 it says, He said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord had taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. Now of course we can all have testing moments when we may say careless words.

[3:40] Job didn't even do that. He didn't even know his loss of his herds, of his wealth, of his substance, of his income, of his family, of his children. He sinned not.

Life is filled with difficulties at times. We know that each one of you, you will face it. Maybe you already have, and I know some of you have. Life can be filled with difficulties, with disasters.

For Job, there were some natural disasters. There were some amazing setbacks. There were some health worries. The death of loved ones. What a tragedy. His life was filled with these tragic things. And in chapter 2, verse 3, And the Lord said unto Satan, Has 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 escheweth evil, and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest against him, to destroy him without cause.

So lesson number one, remain faithful with or without possessions. Number two, lesson number two, remain faithful even in bad health. So now, Satan strikes Job's health.

[4:54] In chapter 2, verse 5, reading from verse 4, And Satan answered the Lord and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life.

But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. Satan was still not convinced, that Job still genuinely worshipped the Most High, with or without possessions.

Satan then obtained permission. Interesting, isn't it, that Satan had to obtain permission, to devastate Job's health. Within days, Job was reduced to a human wreck.

Chapter 2, 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.

Maybe it was leprosy. We don't know. It's not defined exactly what his affliction was. Yet we see the symptoms of it. There's various symptoms given through the book of Job.

[5:59] Some have suggested maybe it was elephantiasis, a disease that was featured in a movie called The Elephant Man.

A piteous creature, all horribly deformed, employed in freak shows. This could have been Job's lot. It would account for the reaction of his friends, the gruesome picture of what this man had become. All that we know is that it was dreadful. His affliction was a dreadful thing. And in Job 2, verse 8, we see Job. He's sitting on the pot. He's sitting on the ash heap.

Job is at the ash heap. The place of social outcasts. He would have been sat there with lepers, with the outcasts, with the rejects of society.

The dump outside the town was his home now. He was as good as dead, as useless and worthless as the rubbish that people throw out. That's how Job was feeling and how he was treated.

[7:19] Have you ever felt that way? Perhaps you've gone through to even this stage of feeling thrown out on the garbage heap of life. And in verse 9, his very wife, his own wife, the one who should have stood with him, who should have been his support and strength, she said, curse God and die.

Not much help. Verse 10, But he saith 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. What a testimony this man was. The testimony of this man in the midst of all of this.

It's been said that the purest awe is produced from the hottest furnace. The brightest thunderbolts comes from the fiercest storm.

The furnace of affliction. This is where Job was. He did not sin with his lips. And then in 2 verse 11, Job's friends arrive. And it gets even more interesting.

[8:27] So we see lesson number one is remain faithful with or without possessions. Remain faithful. Number two, even in bad health.

And number three, we see another lesson from Job's life. Remain true to God even though others accuse you of falsehood. Here was his friends.

They came on the scene from chapters 3 through 37. There's a catalogue of human reasoning, of judgment, and of his friends' advice. So-called friends.

Most of it completely missing the mark. Job's friends, question mark, come to the conclusion that Job has probably secretly sinned. And that is why God is punishing him.

His suffering is due to his sin, they think. His friends, they come to comfort, but they end up criticising. Have you had friends like that? It happens, doesn't it?

[9:28] People don't understand. They misunderstand what we might be doing or what's going on in our life. People pointing the finger and judging unfairly. And here they were thinking God was punishing Job for the loss of his children, the loss of his possessions, his wealth, of his wife's love, of his health, and finally of the loss of respect of wife and friends.

For they concluded that Job was a secret sinner, and this was the reason for his awful calamities. There's an ancient instrument called the tribulum.

The tribulum is what they used to use to beat the chaff from the weeds. I suppose as they would hit it in the container it was in, or as they would throw it up in the air, and they'd beat it so the wind would blow it about.

And the tribulation separates the chaff from the weeds in human character too. Tribulation, just as that tribulum separates the chaff from the wheat in the physical, tribulation separates the chaff from the wheat in the spiritual sense too.

And we see that here in Job's life, that even despite these great testings, that he maintained his faith. And note his words in Job 19 verse 23.

[10:50] It says, He cries out, Oh that my words would be written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and led in the rock forever.

Of course we know it has been written in a book. It has been written. And Job's words have been written. And in Job 19 verse 25, His testimony is here. 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, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me. Verse 25, For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. Isn't that wonderful to know? I know, I know that whatever else might be going on, that I may not know and understand, or fathom what's going on around about me, I know that my Redeemer liveth, that he is alive.

What a dramatic change we see in Job's response over time to this testing. His patience and his faith, they sink into despondency and depression. He cries out in despair and pain and outrage.

[12:11] He says, May the day of my birth perish. Job never asked for healing or having his family back. His relationship with God is his highest goal, and he still knows that he's redeemed the liver.

Job's true crisis was a crisis of faith, not of suffering. Will Job believe even when life isn't fair? Another lesson, number four we could learn, is do not question God, because we do not know all the facts.

Do not question him, you do not know all of the situation. Each of us faces at times the same crisis of faith, as trouble comes, as the uncertain things happen.

All of us can have times where we find ourselves Job-like. Maybe there's a tragic accident, a terminal illness, the loss of a job, we might feel like shaking our head and asking ourselves, Why me?

What does God have against me? Why does he seem so distant? And at such times, we can focus so easily on our circumstances, our illnesses, our looks, our poverty, our bad luck, as the enemy.

[13:24] We pray for God to change our circumstances, but Job teaches us that at that moment, when faith is hardest, and the least likely, then faith is most needed.

And at that very moment, Job, as he felt most abandoned, at that moment, God was giving him a personal, almost microscopic attention.

God seemed absent to him, in one sense, but God had never been more present. Job 14, verse 1, life is short and hard.

It says, man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. Few days, it's fast, it's fleeting. As we grow older, we can see how those days have flown by, fleeting like flowers, like shadows, and it's full of trouble.

In a series of questions, none which Job could answer, the most high points out the futility of men's judgments, and which are seldom, if ever, based on the knowledge of all the facts.

[14:31] And Job realises the smallest of his own opinion. In 42, verse 5, it tells us there, as our Lord discourses with Job, and Job 42, verse 5, Job says, I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent, in dust and ashes.

Even this blameless man, as we know, he's called blameless, he's one who turns away from evil, and who is called just, he had to repent, in dust and ashes.

And even this blameless man, needs to repent, when he becomes proud, and self-righteous. And friends, we all can have those moments, when, even when, we feel like we're walking with God, so

closely, and that we're feeling very spiritual, yet even in those moments, of our own fleshly, feeling of righteousness, we need to repent, in dust and ashes, just like Job did, as he becomes proud, and self-righteous.

And Christ is in the book of Job. The Lord Jesus Christ, is right through, the book of Job. He is the one, who Job cries out for, as a redeemer.

In chapter 9, verse 33, in chapter 25, verse 4, in chapter 33, verse 23, the redeemer, the redeemer is here. Christ, the saving one, the liberator, the one who redeems, and sets us free, from our slavery of sin.

[16:14] And chapter 19, verse 25, Job acknowledges, the redeemer. Christ is identified. He identifies with us, in our sufferings too. Christ is with you.

He is with you. 42, 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 another lesson we can learn, is persevere. Persevere. Job was suffering, not because, he was the worst of men, but because, he was one of the best. So maybe for you, sister, tonight, brother tonight, when, awful things happen to you, it's not a reflection, that your faith is weak.

It's not a reflection, that you are a weak Christian, when, affliction might strike you. Illness, sickness, you might have a lack of healing. You might have, an affliction, a torment, a suffering, a tragedy strike you.

That's not a reflection, that your faith is weak. It may be, that God is allowing, this to make you, even stronger, in your walk with him. And Job was suffering, as I say, not because he was the worst of men, but because he was one of the best.

[17:29] And, for trusting God, was really a part, of his character. It was a part, of his inner character, which no outward changes, could destroy.

And he loved God. He loved God, not for the comfort, not for the blessings, the riches, the friends, that he formerly had, that he lost, but for God's own goodness, and grace, for God's relationship, that he enjoyed, for his holiness, for his friendship, for his glory.

And James 5, verse 11, it says, Behold, we count them happy, which endure. Ye have heard, of the patience of Job. Ye have heard, of the patience of Job, his endurance, his perseverance, of his faithfulness.

Friends, we could take a leaf, out of Joe's book, about faithfulness, couldn't we? That he sinned, not with his mouth. He kept true, and faithful, the patience of the saints.

The word of God, tells you, that there's a patience, of the saints, a perseverance, of the saints. In the book of Revelation, we show a picture, of the Lord's church, in the last days.

[18:37] On a spiritual level, every true believer, is faced, to varying degrees, with situations, similar to, those that Job, went through. As we see, in the back of the book, the testing, of the time, of the end, of the church, of the last days.

And friends, we're there. It's right about, the doors, as we know, of this time, we're living in. Where we may see, a loss of wealth, of material possessions, of a loss of health, a loss of loved ones, of family and friends, of false accusations.

You might be, subject to that, as Job was. Will you be found faithful? Will you be found faithful? You have heard, of the patience of Job.

You know, there's a story told, of a church in Quebec, where there's a man, who rings the bell, of the parish church. Every Sunday, he's rung that bell, for 52 years.

What a record, of faithfulness. And friends, faithfulness, is something, that's a testimony. It's a beautiful thing. It's a beautiful thing, when you're faithful, not dependent, on the circumstances, of how you feel, but because of your love, for the Saviour.

[19:50] Faithfulness. How will you cope? Will you, like Job, look past, all the trials of life, to the resurrection, of the just, when because of your faith, you will see God, and live forever?

Our faith is, not really tested, is it, in our fair country, of Australia. I was, seeing some, story, of, these various holidays, and, um, there's these strange holidays, that people can go on, these days, where, you know, bungee jumping, off these huge cliffs, or, one of these holidays, is, is, you can, go

to this place, in Eastern Europe, and, uh, you can, have the, these people, who, maybe some of them, formerly were in the KGB, and, uh, they can torture you, uh, you can, you can go to this place, and, uh, and pay them to torture you, as a, as a KGB agent would.

But, friends, uh, it's happening to our brothers and sisters, around, around the world today, they don't, they don't pay someone to do it, but, because they love the Lord Jesus, because they love the Saviour, in countries like China, in, in Eastern Europe, in the Middle East, in various countries in our world today, there's, your brothers and sisters, are being, hurt, deliberately hurt, and wounded, uh, and, uh, caused to suffer, uh, because of their love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mm-hmm. And yet, for us, we're so weak, aren't we, that, uh, um, as Aussie Christians, we, uh, just, we can't light a candle to them, can we?

Mm-hmm. You know, and, uh, they're going to be there, so much closer to the throne, aren't they? These ones that, have endured, uh, such great testings, and, yet, for us, it's, really pales into, insignificance, what, what, in comparison, we might have to go through.

[21:58] Of course, that's not to say, there's some amongst us, who have, some great physical sufferings, and, and great testings, uh, in, in, in mental, in physical, in, in spiritual ways.

Uh, there's people around about us, there's loved ones that we know, that, that are going through a testing time. How will you cope? Will you be like Job? Will you be like him? And, the Bible says, you have heard of the patience of Job.

Will you look past the trials of life, and see that one day, the resurrection of the just, it's just around the corner. This light affliction is but for a moment. It's just going to seem, like a, a blink of an eye, in eternity, as we look back, and we'll see God, and live forever.

Or will you blame the Almighty? Will you blame him for the calamities, and, the testings that come your way? Perhaps your faith is currently being tested. It's a breaking point.

I do not know. Like Job, perhaps, even you do not know. You do not know what God is doing, in your life. But, for whatever reason, you cannot afford to lose your faith.

[23:05] You cannot afford to lose that, that holding on to him, today. don't give Satan the satisfaction, of thinking that you may, only be serving God, for the temporal benefits, for the material blessings, or health, or power, or favour.

Perhaps, perhaps God, is allowing it for you, just as he did for Job. How's it going to be with you? Will you be patient like Job? Or will you give up your faith, perhaps even to blaspheme God, and die?

Now, Satan had said to God, he, Job, will curse you to your face. Job's wife had said, curse God, and die.

But Job, the man of patience, passed every test. He got the victory. He got the victory. Now, the victory might, might not be, you're relieved of pain.

The victory might not be, that, that you're, that everything's going to be, blessing you again. But the victory is knowing that, that, that you're faithful. That you're faithful, and you'll see him.

[24:13] And if God takes away, from his people, all the earthly blessings, they are still rich, in his sight. Still rich. Didn't Job get it all back again? Yeah, he did, Chris.

He did get it all back. Of course, that's a wonderful, turnaround that happened, in the book of Job. But, even though, you may not have, earthly blessings, it could be, you know, you may still find yourself, poor, poor in earthly terms, or health terms.

You are still rich, so rich, in his sight. You know, your father has got, cattle on a thousand hills. And, what an inheritance you have.

You know, it's mind-boggling, isn't it? You have his presence, you have his Holy Spirit, you have the love of Christ, and you have the hope of heaven.

And, the book of Job teaches us, that we should be humble, and have absolute faith, in God's ultimate purpose. Be faithful, with or without possessions, in the loss of loved ones, of calamity, in times of bad health.

[25:17] Be true to God, even in the face of criticism, and persevere. Persevere. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for the, the, example of Job.

A great example, of his faith today. Lord, that we can look back, to that man. And this is no, this is not just some, legend, Lord. We know this is an account, of a physical, real man, who lived, who suffered.

Lord, who you're allowed, to be afflicted, to be punished, to bear great loss, and tragedy. Yet, Lord, he could cry out, I know that my Redeemer liveth.

And, like that too, Lord, we can cry out to you, even though we may, have some physical discomfort, and some loss, in life at times. Lord, yet, we know that you're working, something through it all.

And we can trust you. We can trust you, Lord, through it all, despite it all. And know that you live, and one day we'll see you, and we'll be with you.

[26:21] Bless each one, help us, Lord, each one, that we might have that faith, that goes beyond the circumstances, and goes beyond, our feelings, that we can have a faith, that endures, as Job had.

Help us, Lord, to live in, your life. We pray, Lord, if there's anybody, here tonight, who, hasn't taken that first step, of repenting, of turning from our sin, as Job did.

Lord, of turning, away from self, and sin to you, and life, eternal life. Lord, let them know that today, we pray, to know what it means, to abandon, going our own life, and living our own, as our own master, of our own destiny, and Lord, let you be the master, of our destiny, of our eternal hope, of our eternal future, of our eternal salvation, as we trust you.

We thank you, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.