

Have you considered My servant, Job?

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Preacher: Rev John Maclean

[0 : 00] I'd like now to turn your thoughts to the passage we read in Job chapter 1 and the words that we have at verse 8. Job chapter 1 verse 8.

And the Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? Have you considered my servant Job?

Job. The story of Job, I'm sure you all understand this, is a very interesting story. When you think of all that was allowed into his life, it's amazing that such a man at the end of the day could give so much praise and thanks to the Lord.

What I want us to notice first of all is that God chose Job at a particular time for a particular purpose.

Now God could have said to him, like what Jesus said to Peter, what I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.

[1 : 14] What a difference it would have made to Job if he knew what was happening. Not just what was happening, but if he knew why it was happening.

What a difference it would have made. And I'm sure there are times when we go through our trials, our difficulties, and we wonder what's happening.

But we also may wonder why do we have to go through such an experience. We know that God trusted Job in this time of difficulty.

And something I want you to think about. That no matter the difficulty and no matter the trial that we go through if we are the Lord's people, that God trusts us in that trial.

Think of that for a moment. God trusts us in that trial. It may be difficult. It may be severe.

[2 : 35] The Lord knows what we are able to bear, what we are able to take. The Lord knows how far you could say the difficulties will go.

Everything is within the control of the Lord God of heaven. Later on Job could say, Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.

And we also are reminded that he knows the way that I take. He knows the path that I'm on. And then he goes on, Job knew the path that he was on.

He knew for some reason that he was meant to be on that path. He knew that it was something that was allowed and planned by God.

I don't believe that it was at that moment that the Lord decided, I'm going to test Job or let Satan test Job.

[3 : 58] I believe that what was happening to Job was all within the plan and within the purpose of God. That what was happening to him was not an accident.

It wasn't happening by chance. And again we have to remember that. God has that path laid out for us.

He has planned that for all his people. And therefore nothing is happening by chance or by accident. And nothing is happening outwith the control of God.

He knew, he believed, that God had a plan and God had a purpose. When he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

Somebody said, gold fears no fire. There are two things, two main things that I want us to notice. Easy to remember.

[5 : 01] The first is this. How Job lived. How Job lived. And the second. What Job lost.

First of all then, how Job lived. Now we are told three things. We are told that he had, you might say, a vibrant, strong faith.

I'll come back to that in a moment. We are told that he had a great fortune. And we are also reminded that he had, at that time, a fairly large family.

So you have these three things. His faith, his fortune, and his family. And it is clear that he had a strong faith.

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. And that man was blameless and upright. He was a real man. And he had real experiences.

[6 : 11] And these experiences were both spiritual and physical. Job went through these experiences.

Now there are two things that are mentioned. We are told that he was blameless and upright. That doesn't mean that he was sinless. No one is sinless.

But Job was the kind of man you couldn't point your finger at. You couldn't say to him, you did this or you did that wrong and so on.

No one could point a finger at Job. Spurgeon, I'm sure you've heard, was a well-known preacher in London. Spurgeon one day said, you can write my name across the sky.

I have nothing to hide. And what we are told is this, that he was a righteous man. Somebody said he was a man against whom no one could make an accusation that would stick.

[7 : 20] He was a man of integrity. Throughout all of this experience, he maintained his integrity. And I'm sure there were times when that was not easy.

But we are told that he was blameless and upright. The second thing we are told is that he feared God. Now that means that he had a respect.

He had this holy awe. He had a respect for God. A loving reverence for God. And as someone else said, not a cringing fear.

That's the kind of man he was. He had a reverence for God. For who God was. For what God said. Or for what God did. But then, the third thing that's mentioned there. It's not just that he was

blameless and upright and who feared God. But we are told that he turned away from evil.

[8 : 28] That is, he shunned it. And any time when he was being tempted, he walked away from it. He shunned evil.

He turned away from it. Now, there are four words that you could use. That would sum up this particular part. Because when you look at Job.

He was a man of holiness. Something that came from his heart. And something that had to do with the relationship that he had with God.

His holiness. But a second word you could use is the word honesty. He wouldn't have got so far with the blessing of the Lord unless he was honest before God.

He was a man that was honored throughout the whole region. A man of honor. His word was true. You could accept what he was saying and so on.

[9 : 31] But it's also very clear that he was a man of humility. What a man Job was. He had a strong faith.

But then also, we are told that he had a great fortune. Now, you think of it. 7,000 sheep. 3,000 camels. 500 yoke of oxen. 500 female donkeys. Many servants and so on. He had a vast fortune.

You can think of along these lines. That wealth and godliness do not often sit well together.

Wealth and godliness. But here was God able to trust Job with all the possessions that he had.

[10 : 29] The riches, the wealth that Job knew. He believed it was given to him from God. But it didn't turn him away from the Lord.

He had this vast fortune. God blessed him. He knew that God was the giver of all these good, all these gifts that he had.

He knew that. He knew that the Lord gave them to him. He acknowledged God in all of that. But then, it speaks about his family.

We are told that he had seven sons and three daughters. Now, there are two things I want us to notice. The first is this. They were not perfect.

Or they had their faults. And because they had their freedom, then some of these faults would come to the surface.

[11 : 32] Maybe they were the type of folk that showed a respect in their father's house. That they did that out of love and out of reverence for the man Job.

But maybe in their hearts there was a rebelliousness. And maybe when they got away from the home, that rebelliousness surfaced.

You know, there are lots of folk like that. They have that respect in their parents' home. But there may be that rebelliousness going on in their hearts.

Maybe that's what happened to the prodigal son. He didn't like the upbringing that he had. He didn't like the way his father was doing things.

He wanted to get away. He wanted to live his own life. And there are lots of people who have done that. There are lots of people that are doing that.

[12:34] And all they're thinking is this. I want my own freedom. I want to do my own thing. And they go off. And like the prodigal son, it ends in ruin.

And for these children of Job, it seems that they had, you might say, they lived it up. Or they might have thought they had good times.

But Job didn't think along those lines. They were not perfect. But also, Job knew that they needed prayer.

It may be that my children have sinned. You see, he loved his children. That was natural. He loved them.

But the interesting thing is this. Rather than getting on to them, he prayed for them. I wonder, how much time do we give praying for our children?

[13:41] I wonder, do we spend more time getting on to them rather than praying for them? And we are told that from time to time, Job would offer sacrifices to temporarily atone for their sin.

And we are told that Job did this continually. He prayed for his family because of that love that he had for them.

you could think to yourself, how could such a man suffer? He's the last person that you would think of that would suffer the way he did.

But he did. And that leads on to the second thought. It's not just how Job lived, but what Job lost. And one day, he lost nearly everything.

Now maybe to a degree, you can identify with Job. When everything seemed to go wrong, there's this loss, there's that loss, and so on.

[15:01] Now as I said earlier, Job knew what was happening. He was being told exactly. But at that particular stage, Job didn't know why.

And if there is a question we might often ask of the Lord, why? Why am I going through this? Why is it so long?

Why is it so severe? Why do things seem to happen just one after the other? Sometimes, and it's not a lack of faith, we ask the question, why?

Now, something strange that went on. We are told about a heavenly conference with a strange conversation.

conversation. And it mentions to us how, you know, the sons of God, how they met together, and we are told that Satan was there with them.

[16:12] A strange conference. Now, there's a lot of speculation as to where this was, what really happened, and so on. we don't understand exactly what was taking place.

We are amazed, you might say, by the appearance of Satan. But he's there. And what you notice first of all is this, the question that God asked him.

And God is saying to Satan, Have you considered my servant Job that there is none like him in all the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and who turns away from evil?

In all that happened to Job at this time, it was God that took the initiative. And as I said earlier, God knew his man.

He knew the kind of man that Job was. And what you see is this, the confidence that God had in Job.

[17:22] Now, from Job's point of view, he was unaware of what was happening. He didn't know what was going on. But I believe that he had this assurance.

As he said, Though he slay me, yet will I trust him. But the point is this, he didn't know what was happening. or why it was happening rather.

And there may be times when we are going through our difficulties. And at such a time, we can't take the risk of being out of sorts spiritually for a moment.

we can't take that risk of being out of sorts spiritually. How often do we give Satan the ground he is looking for?

Job was upright, he was blameless, he feared God, he turned away from evil, evil, and yet, here he is being severely attacked by the enemy.

[18 : 38] And see what God is saying, God is asking, have you considered, have you thought of Job? Maybe God was saying it in this way, you know, you've attacked so many other folk, you've done this, you've done that, have you thought of Job?

Job. And what you find then is Job, not just, sorry, Satan, not just accusing Job, but accusing God, accusing God first of all and then accusing Job.

Does Job fear God for no reason? And Satan is saying you've put a hedge around him, no wonder he is the way he is. And what Satan is saying, change that.

Take the hedge away and he will change. Now, it's an interesting thought when you think of it. It's like Satan saying, how will Job react when things go wrong?

And to a degree, Satan knows what we could be like when things go wrong. and he tries to capitalize on that.

[19 : 57] He tries to, you could say, work his way further into our experiences. But the point to remember is this, Satan can only go so far.

I'll say more about that in a moment. But this accusation, you see, Satan had nothing good to say about Job.

God knew his man. God knew him. And God was able to say, this is a righteous man. God is interesting also to notice the way in which God answered Satan.

Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand. It's God saying, wait and see.

It is God saying, I have such confidence confidence in my servant. And the thing to remember about all of this, God was allowing all that was going to happen to Job.

[21 : 11] It was all within the plan, the purpose, but it was within God's purpose and permission.

in other words, it was a permission with limits. Job could only go, Satan could only go so far in his attack of Job.

And you might be thinking to yourself, what else? What else is going to happen? What else do I have to go through? And as I said earlier, the Lord knows how much we are able to bear.

But he also reminds us that there is one to whom we can go and we can cast all our burdens on him. And maybe we come with the question, Lord, why?

A permission within limits. Satan can only go as far as God allows him.

[22 : 22] So the next thing you notice is the way that Satan attacked Job. Three things, I've hinted at them already, but three things we have to remember.

That it was sudden. It was without warning. And that's what happens to us. The devil doesn't tell us when he is going to attack.

And Jesus made that so clear when he was speaking about the thief that comes in the night. The thief doesn't tell you when he's going to come. It was so sudden without any warning.

And that's why we have to be on our guard. Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.

temptation. But then also it was so successive. One thing after another. And I'm sure he would have said what next?

[23 : 28] And you might have been in the same situation and you said just exactly that. What next? You've gone through this. You're faced with that.

Another difficulty. And you're saying to yourself what next? But then also it was so severe.

I don't think any of us could have gone through what job went through. Or put it this way do you think that God would let any of us go through what job went through?

Somebody said this as much as he can Satan unleashes hell in Job's life as much as he can.

Now there may be times when the attacks of Satan are so severe that we wonder could it become any worse?

[24 : 34] But just when you can put it like this when he thought that things couldn't get any worse they did and he heard this story he heard that story he heard the next story and then he was told that all his children were dead all of them in the one house the house collapsed on them and they were dead the other thing the other point that I want us to notice and I'm going to think about that this evening how did Job react in all of this how did he act and it is a very interesting story because we are told at the end of the chapter we read that Job we are told that he arose he tore his robe he shaved his head but then the last verse in all this Job did not sin or charge God with anything

I wonder could we ever come to that point could we be in that point where we don't blame God where we don't charge God where we don't blame our circumstances you know that's what Adam and Eve did what did Eve say the serpent beguiled me tempted me what did Adam say the woman you gave me blaming circumstances but Job did nothing like that and we are told that he worshipped he fell on his knees and he worshipped the Lord the point that I'm going to stress this evening I'm just leaving one thought with you it was so important how Job behaved in this trial I often think of that with reference to

Paul when he was in prison and Paul is saying all these things that happened to me they have turned out for the furtherance of the gospel it was important how Paul behaved in prison because of all the folk that were watching the point to stress is this it's important how we behave in our times of trial in our times of difficulty when things are going wrong it is so important how we behave not just for our own good but when you think of all the people that are round about and they're watching and they're seeing your reaction I wonder then how is it with you today what are you going through are you able to come to

God at the end of the day are you able to come to him now and acknowledge that he is in it you may not know the reason but you acknowledge that he is in it and that he is working out his purposes his plan for your life and for the life of others he reminds us all things work together for good have you considered my servant Job I wonder would God say that about us have you considered my people here have you considered them and Satan would say oh I've thought about them and I've tried them I've tested them but you the Lord God was there surrounding them with his presence with his blessing and with his power be

God add his blessing to these few thoughts upon his own word we're going to bow our heads in a word of prayer to how