

Trusting in Times of Tragedy

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[0 : 0 0] All right, good morning, everybody. Let's go ahead and we'll find our spots here for the Sunday School Hours. We just continue in our series here, Lord, we just thank you and praise you for the day, for the opportunity we have to meet together even in this new year.

Lord, help us just to draw close to you. Lord, help us to understand the reality and the necessity of faith and just the dynamic of trusting you even here today, even in times of tragedy and walking through those things practically in our life.

And Lord, we pray just have your hand upon each one here today that we might be encouraged and strengthened through the truth of your word. And we just ask it all in your precious name. Amen. All right.

As we see here, you know, we've been looking here at a faith that triumphs, you know, overcoming life's challenges with the courage from God's word. You know, as we understand that courage that we need to trust the Lord in the midst of those challenges.

And the book of Job, you know, I think could be one of the most, when you look at it from the worldly perspective, it could be the most depressing book in the Bible. You know, when you read chapter one, man, it's pretty depressing.

[1 : 3 6] You know, I mean, it is like downhill after downhill. It's like when Job got on the slide of misery, man, he greased it up and went off the end. You know, it's like he just runs through.

It would be except for the fact we have the blessing of seeing the end, of seeing what God did through it, how God matured Job.

You know, we're talking this morning about practical sanctification. You can look at the book of Job this way. Job was a righteous man who loved God, but God grew him through the tragedy.

Because Job is more mature in his faith at the end than he is at the beginning. Those things come about and, you know, and oftentimes I don't think we really consider all the details of the book of Job, the suffering that is really present.

But it teaches us, though, that it's just not about suffering, but God triumphs even when we suffer. We can mature and grow and become conformed to his image as we can be changed through those things.

[2 : 4 9] And, you know, we find here there's so many elements we could talk about in the book of Job. You know, it's just some of the preachers of the past spent significant time preaching from the book of Job.

It said the 17th century Scottish preacher George Hutchison preached 316 sermons from the book of Job. You know, I've yet to reach that point yet.

I think I've hit 75 in the book, but I've never hit 300 and some. And everybody said amen, right? Time to move on, preacher. Another one of Joseph Carl in London took 23 years to preach through the book of Job that he published as a massive 12-volume set, you know?

So I want you to understand it's not how much, but, you know, there's a lot of things in here to learn and apply to our life.

Job's friends could learn to be quiet. Like I said, when you think about the message this morning in the book of Job and the practical application, there's a lot of things that cross over of how all those elements come together.

[4 : 00] You know, you could gleam a lot from the book, but, you know, like suffering in our own lives, there's much that we can't fully understand. And, you know, the book of Job is one of the old records in Scripture, and it's a found group with the other poetical books in the Bible.

But chronologically, Job would be placed next to Genesis as the events occurred sometime before or during around the time of Abraham is what most have figured out or walked through.

And, you know, if you grew up in church, you're probably familiar with the story of Job and, you know, where a righteous and wealthy father of 10 children lost everything in an instant. You know, the headline for Job would be devastating.

But we understand that what Job records for us is important because, you know what? We're going to encounter similar situations in our own lives.

We're going to encounter situations that may not be as tragic as Job's, but yet they may be. They might not draw us through the challenges in the same way.

[5 : 11] But, you know, what we can learn is that we can trust God. We can trust God in tragedy. And we look through for that here.

You know, we find here the first thing we're going to look at here is the devotion of Job. Because, you know, there's a misconception today that if you just serve God, life's going to be great. You know, there's people who stand up and preach that.

You know what? As soon as somebody says that, I know they're a false teacher because they haven't read the book. Will God be with you? Will God help you through everything in life?

But no place in the Bible that says, trust me and everything's going to be perfect. Matter of fact, Jesus tells us otherwise. You're going to have suffering and trials and tribulations.

Because you live in a fallen world. But God says, I'm going to use those things for your good. You know, look here this morning at the devotion of Job. Look here at verse 2. In Job chapter 1, it says this.

[6 : 12] Let's just start at verse 1. It says, there was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. And there's a man that perfect and upright and one that feared God and eschewed evil. And they were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

You know, if your children are a heritage of the Lord, Job was rich. He had ten kids. He had a vibrant family. Job was blessed with a large family. We learn that he was blessed by God.

You know, when we understand that his children were not a burden, but a blessing. But we see he had a large family. We see that he was a wealthy man.

Look at verse 3. It tells us this. In other words, Job was what everybody wanted to be.

You know, everybody knows today people take wealthy people and people that are on the pinnacle of society and say, that's who we want to be. You know, everybody knew who Job was.

[7 : 26] Job was the guy everybody aspired to be. Look how God, look what Job had. Large family. Large possessions. Everything's going good in Job's life. You know, the Bible tells us that he was the greatest in the East.

And he had substance and status. But you know what God noted? He made a side note of his substance and his status. But God made the biggest deal about Job's faith.

Because Job's faith is what made the difference. It's clear Job's faith was a central component of his life. You know, notice there in verse 1.

And it says, whose name was Job. And the man was perfect and upright and one that feared God. And he skewed evil. You know, Job was said to be perfect and upright.

Now, I want you to understand, it doesn't mean Job was sinless. Nobody other than Jesus Christ has ever walked this earth that was sinless. He is the only one.

[8 : 29] But we understand that Job was upright. This verse is very clear that Job loved the Lord and wanted to do what God had for him.

You know, when we understand Job's significance came from his faith in God. You know, one of the important things that we can learn about trusting God in tragedy from the life of Job is this, is make your devotion to God the priority of your life.

Make your devotion to God the priority of your life. Job's life was not centered around his kids. It was not centered around his possessions.

As you read through chapter 1, you'll find Job's priority was his relationship to God and his family's relationship to God. Those other things had to take oversight and had to take, but they were in the right place.

There's nothing wrong with being wealthy. There's nothing wrong with having a large family or having God's blessing in those areas. But you know what? Our relationship to God still supersedes those.

[9 : 35] And Job was clear. Job's family and fortune and health were dear to him. And he was devastated by their loss. But ultimately, they weren't the central aspect of his life.

Because as you read through the book of Job, it deals with men and God. It deals with the reality of how that plays out.

And it's a good reminder even for us, if our possessions are the most significant thing in our lives, what happens when they break or they're lost? You know, when things get taken away?

When your position diminishes? You know, you can have people rise to prominence and disappear into obscurity. You know, our significance isn't in our status or what happens.

Our families, our marriages, and other important relationships are good. But our relationship with God is the most important. You know, Job had substance, but he honored God with it.

[10 : 35] To honor the Lord. You know, Proverbs 3.9 tells us this. Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the firstfruits of all thine increase. He had a great family, but he put the Lord before the family.

It says he feared God, you know, and eschewed evil, you know. Let's look what this looked like. Look at verse 4 in chapter 1.

It says, His sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day. And he sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so when the days of their feasting were gone about that Job sent and sanctified them and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all.

For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their heart. Thus did Job continually. You know what? Job was concerned about his family.

He was not concerned about them financially as much as he was spiritually. He wanted them to learn to fear God just as he had. You know, and we see Job's family gathering.

[11 : 45] But Job made a feast. After the feast, Job made an altar and worshiped the Lord and even interceded on behalf of his kids. You know, he did that just in case his kids said, Lord, have mercy on them.

You know what Job knew? Job knew that kids do things they shouldn't do. Because he knew who he was. He knew who his kids were. But he wanted them. He prayed for them. The Bible also tells us that Job askewed or avoided evil.

And actual reverence for God and avoidance of evil are linked together. You know, at the end of Job there in Job chapter 28, in verse 28, it says, Unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and depart from evil is understanding.

You know, the fear of the Lord and departing from evil are connected. You can't separate those things. And when we understand Job's relationship with God was central to his life.

And it gave him strength for what was to come. Because trusting God in those difficult days began with trusting God when things were going good. I want you to understand that if you're going to trust God in the difficulty, difficulties are going to be easier if you've already put your faith in God before you get to that point.

[13 : 06] If you're going to walk with him. Because we know the second part of Job's life is that we know his devotion, but how about the devastation? You know, one thing I've learned as you read through the book of Job, prosperity preachers get killed by the book of Job.

Just slaughtered in their philosophy. Because you think about God, here's God building up Job saying, Hey, here's a guy who loves me. He fears me. He's trying to do what is right before me.

He worships me the way he ought to worship. He's doing the right things. He's got the right focus. You know, that's quite a cheerleader list from God, isn't it? But look what happens.

There's a devastation, you know. Most of the problem is, I think most of us want to live in the first five verses of Job. When everything's going good.

You know, I don't know about you, that sounds pretty good. You know, first five verses of Job, let's stop there. But does it stop there, does it? It reveals what's going on because unbeknownst to Job, there was something taking place.

[14 : 12] Look at verse six of chapter one now. It says, Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou?

And Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job? For there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil.

And then Satan answered the Lord, Does Job fear God for not? You know, we see here that in response to what's happening, God draws attention to Job's righteousness.

You know, and then Satan asks, now directly questions Job's motive. You know, Doth Job fear God for not? You know, look at verse 10.

It says this, Hast thou 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.

[15 : 18] You know what? Job's faith, Satan said he only trusts you because you've blessed him. Because of all the good things he's enjoying. It's the only reason Job trusts you.

Because look at verse 11. Look at Satan's accusation. He says this, But put forth thine hand now and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. What's the accusation against Job?

What's Satan's accusation? Yeah, it's not real. He says, Job's faith is a fake. He's faking it. It's easy to do that when everything's going good.

You know, the devil's a master of half-truth. Because part of what he said is true. It is easier to trust God when everything's going well. That's true. I think we can all agree.

It's easy to be on board. Well, God's blessing. Amen. Trust, praise God, you know. That's easy. But the second part that Satan said, he says, Hey, Job will praise you when things are going good, but you just stop taking so good a care of him and put him to a test here a little bit, and he's just going to curse you.

[16 : 28] You know, it's ironic that the Satan really puts forth what a lot of people have and do in their life. They trust God when it's easy, and they don't trust him when it's not. I think his accusation had some merit, but you know what?

When our heart is right with God, we'll trust him even in the tragedy. Because we find here that God granted permission for Job's faith to be put to a test.

You know, how do you find out if something is true? You know, it has to be tested. It has to be put to a test to say, is it measure up?

Because it's easy to say something, but it means more when it's actually done. When we accomplish or do what we ought to do.

You know, when those things come about, you know, why do we test things? You know, you think about all the things we test in life, you know, it's one of those things that, you know, here recently, you know, you see a different things being tested, you know, a lot of things in the news, you see rockets being tested.

[17 : 36] You know, why do they not just put something on them and just stick, stick them on the, on the shelf and wait? Why do they test them? Why they want to see if it's going to do or perform the way it was supposed to perform.

The only way, you know, if it's genuine and it's going to function is to test it. It has to be tested to know if it's true. You know, how do we do science?

Somebody doesn't come up with a hypothesis and say, I think this is true. So therefore we can bank on it. What do they have to do? They have to put it out. What? To a test.

Does it actually produce? Does it come to fruition? The same dynamic, God allows tests in our life that we might, he might find and reveal even to ourselves, where is our faith?

What do we trust? You know, the true quality of our faith can be only be revealed under pressure. You know, I want you to understand there's no exemption for suffering. You know, we live in a generation that wants an exemption.

[18 : 41] You ever know, everybody wants their exemption. They want their carve out. You know, we want it. We don't want to have to face this part of it. You know, we're coming up to the first of the year.

A lot of people are thinking about taxes. Everybody wants a tax exemption. You know, what part can I be exempt from? You know, or parents want exemption to the rules for their children.

You know, make an exception for mine. You know, it's like they want things played out. You want those things. Employees want exemptions for themselves in work policy. You know, you can name a list, go down the list of things people want exemption from.

But you know, in this life, you're not exempt from the realities of suffering. We're not exempt from it. You know, Job was a righteous man that didn't exclude him from suffering.

Matter of fact, you know what God said? Job qualifies for it. Job qualifies to stand the test. Because you ever notice something about a test, let's put it this way.

[19 : 49] when you have a test that happens and everything goes as you expected it to go, how's your response? You rejoice when you see the right, hey, this is what we worked for, this is what we laid out, this is what we expect, and now it happened.

You know what, when God put Job to the test, God was seeing if his faith was real because God knew Job's heart. You know what, God already knew the answer to the question before it was asked.

Before the devil tempted him, you know that God knew Job's heart? The Bible tells us that God knows the inner things of your heart. This test wasn't for the sake of God. That's a misconception of the book of Job.

God didn't do this for his benefit. He did this for Job's benefit. He allowed it for his benefit because you know what, Job's faith grew mightily from the beginning of the book of Job to the end of the book of Job.

There was a practical sanctification that took place in Job's life through the situation. You know, when we understand these moments change everything, you know, Job could understand what it was like to have devastation.

[21 : 01] You know, look at verse 13 in chapter 1. Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house and there came a messenger unto Job and said the oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them and the Sabians fell upon them and took them away.

Yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword and I am only escaped alone to tell thee and while he was yet speaking there came also another and said the fire of God has fallen from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them and I only am escaped alone to tell thee and while he was yet speaking there came also another and said the Chaldeans made out three bands and fell upon the camels and carried them away and slain the servants with the edge of the sword and I only am escaped escaped alone to tell thee and while he was yet speaking there came also another and said thy 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 it fell upon the young men and they are dead and I only am escaped to tell thee now you talk about a bad day you know there's a phrase that rings out of each one of them as the one was yet speaking another one shows up before he even got done with the worst the bad news the snowball effect of problems just seemed to show up everything you have including your family is gone now I want you to think about this in a single day in the matter of minutes

Job lost all his possessions he lost his livelihood and his family you know when we understand and we know from the rest of the story that was just Job's immediate loss as the story continues God points out something about Job you know look here at Job chapter 2 look down at 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 upright man one that feareth God and iskeueth evil and still he holdeth fast his integrity although thou movest me against him to destroy him without cause you know think about that for a moment he held fast his integrity in other words Job said I'm not going to change my faith or my trust in God no matter what happens what's Satan's response he says well let's let's touch his health the only thing he had left and he says

Job's going to curse you and die so God agrees he says okay go ahead and ratchet it up you know we find in look here at verse 6 of chapter 2 and the Lord said unto Satan behold he is in thine hand but save his life so Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown and he took a pot shirt to scrape himself withal and he sat down amongst the ashes you know Job here is covered with boils and we find as you read through there the boils got infected and you know when your body's covered with boils and they get infected it begins to affect everything about you you know the pain and the agony of that and you know then we find that Job's wife comes you know boy she was an encouragement Job you're a bum just curse God and die that's a help meet for you what a challenge then his friends show up his friends show up and initially they did pretty good for seven days they just sat there and wept with him and comforted him you know sometimes you'll find something very important here in the book of Job you know his friends just came to be with him you know one of the best things you can do to help a fellow somebody else in time of grief is be present presence speaks higher than anything else his friends came look at verse 11 of chapter 2 now when Job's three friends heard all this evil was upon him they came everyone from his own place and he lists them out there

Ephaz the Temamite and Bildad the Shuhite and the Zophar the Namahite for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him and they had lifted up their eyes afar off and knew him not and lifted up their voice and wept and they rent everyone his mantle and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven so they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights now here's some good advice for you when it comes to helping somebody grieving notice what they did none spake a word unto him I'll put a little bit of thing sometimes the best thing you can say is nothing but be present because you know what one of the tendencies when something bad happens we usually say something dumb you know that's not really helpful if you want to say something say let's pray together or just pray for them because what you say is probably not going to solve their problem or make them feel any better anyways you know presence makes a difference presence is important why did they do that for they saw that his grief was very great you know it wasn't long though after seven days they began to theorize okay what's going on this is that helpful thing that sometimes people hurry into you know they begin to

[26 : 28] Monday morning quarterback the situation you know and we find here through the next chapters you know chapters three through thirty one Job provided dialogue between Job and his friends and the main sticking point in this extended dialogue was the repeated insistence that Job was suffering because he did something wrong you ever notice that's our nature to go that direction why is God allowing this well they must have something they need to deal with now I want you to understand that may be the case but you know what there's a 50-50 shot or greater it's not we find here that Job's friend took a doctrinally correct truth that God will deal with those that sin he'll chastise those that need to be corrected and sometimes suffering is a result of sin and turned it into a universal maxim that suffering is always the result of sin you know what

Job didn't do anything he experienced great suffering the Bible didn't say he was perfect but his heart was perfect before God because he says God I'm going to trust you and you're going to be the priority you know they Job's friends did something you know the Bible tells us in Romans 12-15 it says rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep you know what some weeks are like that this last week we had two funerals you weep with those who weep but you know what this week we had a new life got a new baby Pierce you know what Romans 12 explains last week weep with those who weep rejoice with those who rejoice you know those are things that are just part of life sometimes in the same week sometimes in the same time frame those things are going to happen but I want you to understand someone's suffering isn't just a generic formula we need to understand what's taking place in this you know because reducing that to a formula can be one of the most painful responses to a friend who's hurting because even though something may be true it can be used unwisely you know we can apply another part of our message this morning study to be quiet we see the devastation of his life but also see the declaration of truth because how did Job respond to the devastation that turned his life upside down you know

I don't know about you but I think we can all agree Job's life went from one direction to the other pretty quickly I mean you talk about getting kicked out of the pan into the fire I mean it's like life totally upside down look at verse back in chapter one look at verse 20 then Job arose and rent his mantle and shaved his head and fell down upon the ground now I want you to see it wasn't that Job didn't go to the Lord just bouncing and giddy but Job was grieving his heart was broken life was devastated that's the description but you know what he did in the midst of his grieving he came and worshipped the Lord he fell on the ground and worshipped and said notice here in the next verse he says naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither the Lord gave and the Lord taketh away blessed be the name of the

Lord now notice verse 22 in all this Job sinned not nor charged God foolishly you know Job understood even though he had grief often times in our mind grief and worship are incongruent with one another when I'm grieving how can I worship you know no matter what's going on in your life God hasn't changed God's still the same he's still the one that is over all things in all the things when everything of Job's life was stripped away he chose response was commendable but you know what I want you to understand you can have faith in God and still have questions roll around in your head what we're talking about here is not some blind cheering speech because chapter three you'll find that Job was suffering inside even though he trusted

God he didn't understand you know Job chapter three he asked the question why did I not from the womb in other words Job says if this was going to happen to me why didn't God just take my life he says naked I came in naked I came out I could have stopped right there I could have ended with nothing right there later on in chapter 23 in Job we find that his complaint was bitter!

[31 : 21] Oh that I knew that I might find him that I might come even to his seat to understand that declaration of truth we need to understand what God knows for Job many of his questions were prompted by his sense of God's absence he's asking God I trust you but where are you you know that's a legitimate question we often have God I trust you but why aren't you showing yourself mighty in this look over to chapter 23 we look down here at verse a it says behold I go forward and he is not there and backward I cannot perceive him on the left hand where he doth work but I cannot hide behold him he hideth himself on the right hand and I cannot see him in other words Job says I know God is there but I don't feel like he's there you know what that's our feelings sometimes come to the surface on that you know Habakkuk the prophet in chapter 1 verse 2 says oh Lord how long shall I cry and wilt thou not hear even cry out to thee of violence and thou wilt not save

Psalm 13 verse 1 says how long wilt thou forget me oh Lord forever how long wilt hide! they face from me you know when we experience such these times in life it's important to remember that just because God is not apparent to us doesn't mean he's not aware of us Job couldn't perceive God's presence but you know what as we read through the book of Job you know what God was there all along God was there God knew what was happening you know think about when the children of Israel were suffering in Egypt look over to Exodus chapter 3 Exodus chapter 3 That's God's perspective of what was happening what was the perspective of the children of Israel at that point God where are you do you know that we're suffering do you know that we're going through this where are you you know we understand

Job had questions and he wanted to know why these calamities had befallen him and throughout the heart breaks of the chapters of the book of Job Job questions himself he questions God and he questions why at the end of the book though God reveals himself to Job but rather than answering Job's questions he asked Job some questions look over to chapter 38 Job chapter 38 and it says and the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said who is this that darkeneth counsels by words without knowledge gird up now thy loins like a man for I will demand of thee and answer thou me now think about that God looks at Job in his misery and says hey get up quit wathing in your misery there's some more good advice for you grieving is okay but there comes a point when you got to get up you got to get up and get moving Job God looks at Job and he tells him gird up thy loins like a man for I will demand of thee and answer thou me notice this question he says where was thou when I laid the foundation of the earth declare if thou hast understanding who hath laid the measure thereof as thou knowest for whom hast stretched thy line upon it whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened or who laid the cornerstone thereof when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy he continues on for 64 more verses simply this

God revealed to Job you don't know as much as you think you know he's questioning God who is omniscient because you know what all the questions God asked Job you know who knows the answer to him God he understood then in chapter 40 God turns his question toward answers of application and notice here Job 40 in verse 1 moreover the Lord answered Job and said shall he that contended with the Almighty instruct him he that reproveth God let him answer it then Job answered the Lord and said behold I am vile what shall I answer thee I will lay my hand upon my mouth you know oftentimes we want the easy answer you know oftentimes the generic easy answer would satisfy us you know throughout history people have wanted an answer to the question of why God allows suffering but instead of revealing the answer something greater because you know even if God would have told Job all the details you know what let's just put it this way it would have did this to

Job have you ever talked to somebody and explained something and they look at you like I don't have a clue what you just said you know basically that's what God is describing to Job he says Job if I took time to explain this to you you wouldn't grab it it go right over the top of your head revealed himself you know we want our answers tied up in neat packages but there's nothing neat about pain and suffering of the world and there's no way we can comprehend what God knows if we demand answers to the why question we assume that we and God possess equal understanding that we can understand or comprehend why something happens you know often in the case as in the case of Job you know what we never receive the exact reason why we're suffering most of the appropriate response is to simply trust God a truth that we can hold on to during these times in the statement

[37 : 03] I can trust the God I know with the details I don't understand God says you can know me and he says I'll need to trust you you know let's put this in a practical application how many times when you're raising your children do your kids just have to trust you!

why can't I do that you know what when kids are two or three years old you can't you can give them a full explanation of why the ramifications of their choices of doing this you know what the kid look at you like you know what the same application goes to Job we stand before God as a two or three year old God give me why why why why and God going I know the details in the application here but you know what if I spent time to try to tell you it's just going to go over your head will you trust me what do we expect as parents as our kids these are the rules this is the direction trust me now there comes a time when kids need more answers but I want you to understand that's maturity because they reach!

a point where they're more know the unknown scares us but dwelling on the things we don't know or don't understand doesn't change the outcome instead we should dwell on who we do know and what we know to be true about him you know to trust God let's look here turn to Job 13 we're out of time this morning notice what Job says he says though he slay me yet will I!

trust what we don't understand we must declare the truth that we know about God about what God has declared what God has provided and he says that he's there he'll never leave us or forsake us let's pray