

Praying, Part 6 - Complaining

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[0 : 0 0] And as we search your word, encourage us, we pray, with wisdom and truth and support.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.

You know what we say about people whom we describe as always complaining. It isn't a compliment.

My father ran the general office in his division of the Great Western Railway back in England long ago.

And the general office was a kind of garbage bag for complaints. And he didn't enjoy spending day after day responding to letters, the messages of complaint, which were all funneled his way.

[1 : 3 6] He got tired of it, and I don't blame him. Well, probably none of you are old enough to remember the pioneer British, what would you call it, cartoon sitcom, I suppose, on the radio.

So, It's That Man Again, or Itma for short. Is there anybody here who knew Itma? Oh, very good. Very good. Well, then, you will know, friends.

It was a cartoon affair. The characters had cartoon names, like Mrs. Mop, who cleaned the rooms, and so on.

And there was a cartoon character on that program named Mona Lott. And the very name tells the story.

She used to come in and produce her wearisome complaints, all packaged in a way that produced giggles rather than groans.

[2 : 4 2] And then, at the end of her monologue, she would say, it's being so cheerful that keeps me going. And she always got a good laugh for that.

Well, that, I think, tells us how we, too, in Western Canada, feel about people who make a kind of professional identity out of complaining.

Sometimes, of course, complaints are necessary in this world. If you complain of something that's gone wrong for the sake of other people who come after you, you don't want them to have the same trouble that you've had.

But if it's just for yourself that you would be complaining, well, you know how it is. We admire Disraeli, that 19th century English Prime Minister, whose maxim was, never complain.

And whose second maxim was, never explain. But never complain, it came first. And we are inclined to tell ourselves, well, I'm not going to complain.

[4 : 0 6] And when we say that to ourselves, it's like giving ourselves a little pat on the back. Well, that's the way that we are.

But I hope you're beginning to see that there's a good deal of pride, as well as a certain amount of self-pity, involved in our attitude towards complaints, shall I say, on the horizontal level.

Complaints about things that happen in this world. And when you get into the Bible, where constantly you read of bad things happening to good people, so that they find themselves feeling over and over at the end of their tether, well, you discover that they complain with great freedom to their God, and it isn't regarded as anything other than wisdom for them to do so.

So you've got it in the Psalms over and over again. Things are out of hand. I'm helpless. Makes me feel hopeless.

I'm hurting. Lord, do something. And there's that phrase, which turns up nearly 20 times.

[5 : 40] How long? Question mark. It's almost a technical phrase for a complaint, like etc.

It's a technical phrase for everything else that comes under the heading of what you've just been talking about. How long? Lord, I am complaining, and I'm looking to you to do something about a situation which is beyond my control.

Lord, how long? Perhaps I ought, at this stage, before we go any further, to give you one or two examples of where the word complain actually appears in the Psalter.

Psalms 55. First words. Gave ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy.

Attend to me and answer me. I am restless in my complaint, and I moan because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked.

[6 : 49] Comes again in verse 17 of the same Psalm. Evening and morning and at noon, I utter my complaint and moan. And God hears my voice.

See, this isn't the wrong thing to be doing. It's the right thing to be doing. There's encouragement there. He hears my voice. Think of Job.

Job. Job, we are told, was handed over to Satan for Satan to do what he liked with Job up to the point of taking his life, which he mustn't do.

But he was given permission to take everything else, and he did. So Job loses his wealth, and he was a rich man. He loses his children, and he was a family man.

He loses his health, and like all of us, he's a man concerned about his health, so that he's left feeling that he's lost everything that seemed to matter.

[8 : 06] And he complains. And so, you find in the opening of Job chapter 10, this is what he says.

He's being goaded, actually, into a passionate sort of complaint to God by the platitudes that his three friends are offering him.

And if they hadn't goaded him in this way, he would never have said all the things he did, I think. He was sitting silent, in ashes. Morning, and his friends came and sat with him in silence for some time.

Then Job made an initial speech, how bad things are. He was simply reflecting on his circumstances, and his friends started talking platitudes, and that that embittered Job and got him going, and he's going now.

I loathe my life. I will give free utterance to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I'll say to God, don't condemn me.

[9 : 27] Let me know why you contend against me. Does it seem good to you to oppress, to despise the work of your hands, and favor the designs of the wicked?

That's Job's complaint in chapter 10, and it comes back in chapter 23, verses 3 through 5. says Job.

Oops, just a moment. Here we are. Oh, that I knew where I might find him. Sorry, it's verses 2 through 5.

Today also my complaint is bitter, says Job. My hand is heavy on account of my groaning. I'm so churned up, and so flattened by the things that have happened to me and the distress that I feel that I can hardly lift my hand up.

That's what he's saying. My hand is heavy on account of my groaning. Oh, that I knew where I might find him. This is God. That I might come even to his seat.

[10 : 39] I would lay my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know what he would answer me and understand what he would say to me. Why is he doing this to me?

He doesn't tell me and I want to know. But it isn't just Job. Jeremiah is known, as you know, of course, as the weeping prophet.

And on more than one occasion in the book of Jeremiah you have got complaints which Jeremiah, the prophet, makes to God let me read just a little bit of that.

Jeremiah chapter 12. And you'll notice he uses the same verb. Righteous through you, O Lord, when I complain to you.

There it is. Yet I plead my case before you. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive? And you, O Lord, know me.

[11 : 48] You see me and test my heart towards you. And yet I don't thrive. O Lord, what's going on?

And then again, chapter 20, you have Job saying this. O Lord, you have deceived me and I was deceived.

That is, you've led me into something which you never enabled me to foresee. You are stronger than I and you have prevailed.

You've put me in a situation where I wouldn't have gone if I'd been able to resist your pressure.

But I couldn't. you press me into it. And this is it. I've become a laughing stock all the day. Everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, this is Jeremiah declaring the message that God has given him, whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout violence and destruction.

[12 : 58] But the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. People laugh at me for saying things like that.

And so it goes on. Well, I'm showing you that in these narratives of godly men practicing piety in the Old Testament story, explicit complaints are being made.

And there's no, there's nothing wrong with that. no, no rebuke to them for complaining. But they're realists and they do feel that as far as they're concerned, things are out of hand.

And unless God moves, they have no hope. Now, earlier in this series of talks, talks about praying, remember, I gave you a picture of the Christian life, an image to suck the sweetness out of in the way that we suck sweetness out of candy.

the image was of Christian life as hiking with the Lord. Remember? And I stick to that image.

[14 : 24] But it needs to be qualified. It sounds very upbeat, very adventurous, very romantic. I say this is something worth doing.

That's the feeling, I think, that the image gives you. Well, all right, from one standpoint, the Christian life is like that. And it is a richer and a more joyful life than any other.

No two ways about that. And if this was the moment for giving an extended testimony to that, I could do it, and indeed I'd enjoy doing it. But that isn't the whole of the story.

When you go hiking with someone, someone who undertakes to lead you through a country where you've never been before, again and again, there are downs as well as ups.

And you find yourself in places where you feel, now, if I'd been planning this, I wouldn't have involved myself in what we've got here, stumping our way through mud, or whatever it is.

- [15 : 39] And in the New Testament, I haven't been in the New Testament until this moment, but I'm moving there now, in the New Testament, what you've got is a sustained insistence, it's a kind of drumbeat effect, a sustained insistence that those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ, those who become his disciples, will be involved in troubles constantly.

The downs, you see, is distinct from the ups, so yes, there'll be joy, there'll be glory, and perhaps in our preaching and our fellowship discussions with each other, we are inclined to stress that aspect of it because we know that we needed it, and the world around us needs it still, and it's a joy to share the thought of joy as a constant provision from the Lord who loves us.

But in the New Testament, that emphasis, which is certainly there, is balanced by a whole series of passages about tribulation, affliction, suffering, chastisement from the Lord, those words are familiar to you.

Well, yes, because they occur in the New Testament so often, and they are promised. Now, when you look at New Testament narratives, you can begin to see what this means.

Here are some quick examples from the New Testament. Mark, chapter 4, towards the end. Jesus says to his disciples, let's go across the Sea of Galilee.

- [17 : 35] And because they are his faithful disciples, they don't argue about it, they get into the boat and push out and start rowing, and away they go. And Jesus, who is exhausted, goes to sleep in the stern of the boat with his head on a cushion.

a storm comes up and they have to wake him up and say, teacher, don't you care that we're perishing? Situations out of hand.

And the thought to bear in mind is that they wouldn't have been in that situation if Jesus himself hadn't said, let's go across the lake right now.

You see the picture? Being Jesus disciple again and again gets us into situations of trouble which otherwise we would have avoided.

Another example, even more striking, how the gospel came to Europe. Remember, the Holy Spirit has prevented Paul and Silas from missioning in Asia minor the way that they planned to do.

- [18 : 56] And so they stayed on the high road which led west, more or less, until they got to the coast, Troas. And I suppose that having got to Troas, they looked at each other and said, well, what does the Lord want us to do?

Now we're here. And that night, Paul had a vision, a dream, a man of Macedonia, saying, come over and help us. So they interpreted this as a call from God to Europe and they crossed the Aegean Sea and they came to Philippi and they started preaching the gospel there.

Before very long, Paul had exorcised a woman who told fortunes and had an owner.

She was a slave and of course slaves did have owners in those days who regarded the slave as their property and the slave owner was very fed up because as it says their, what's owners in the plural, they saw that their hope of gain was gone.

So they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace and before Paul and Silas knew where they were, they were in prison. Well, if they hadn't been following the Lord's lead they wouldn't have been in prison.

- [20 : 21] They wouldn't actually have been in Europe. They would have been missioning in Asia Minus. But they had followed the prompting of God the Holy Spirit and now you see where it had got them.

Mind, they coped. They sang hymns and then there was an earthquake which saw them out of their chains and, well, you know how the story went. The jailer was converted.

But I'm thinking of those hours when they were sitting in prison and they must have wondered, even if only momentarily, whether it really was worth it to be the Lord's agents in spreading the word and get themselves into trouble in Europe the way that Peter and the others had already been getting themselves into trouble in Jerusalem.

Trouble, trouble, trouble all the way it seemed. Well, yes. And Jesus in Luke 21 in his deliberately enigmatic discourse about the future is very blunt talking to his disciples about this.

They've just asked him what's the shape of things to come and he tells them, well, this is part of the story, verse 12 of Luke 21.

[22 : 00] They'll lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons and you'll be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake.

This will be your opportunity to bear witness. Settle it, therefore, in your mind, not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I'll give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

but you'll be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends and some of you they'll put to death.

You'll be hated by all for my name's sake. Be realistic that's what's coming for you as my disciples, says the Lord Jesus.

well, you see there is something to complain about here. In the real Christian life of the New Testament disciples, just as in the real godly life of the faithful Israelite in Old Testament times, it was trouble, trouble, trouble, matter for complaint constantly, as well as matter for joy.

[23 : 19] here is a rather sweet little verse which makes it all sound easy and happy, but getting to the point where you can say this calmly and joyfully is not as easy as it might sound.

Trials must and will befall, but with humble faith to see love inscribed upon them all, this is happiness to me.

Trials make the promise sweet, trials give new life to prayer, bring me to my Saviour's feet, lay me low and keep me there.

yes, very good, but don't be shallow and complacent, it's not the easiest thing in the world by any means to get to the point where you can say that from your heart and live it.

And meantime, we New Testament Christians have much to complain about in the way that Job and the son has had much to complain about.

[24 : 36] All right, so facing that fact, let me speak in order of three things. One, the range of the believers complaining, second, the rationale of the believers complaining, and third, the response of God to the believers complaining.

here we go. The range of the believers complaining to start with. I'm not going to talk at all about sin and the failures in our lives due directly to sin, which we only diagnose and discern after it's happened.

All of us know that experience. And an unhappy experience it is. I shall say more about that actually in a future talk. But what I'm going to focus on at this moment is circumstances creating what I'll call now complaint situations.

It's the range of circumstances that believers have reason to complain about. Go back to the sources. There's opposition.

You know, some after some, talks about my enemies, the people who set themselves against me. The kind of thing which was reproduced over and over in Marxist countries before the Iron Curtain crumbled, it's still being reproduced in Muslim countries, as we hear from time to time.

[26 : 17] people go after the disciples because he or she is a Christian believer. The enemies become persecutors and then every now and then you find that you've been betrayed by somebody you trusted.

They have abandoned you because of the pressure that's being put on you. you thought they'd stand by you and thereby sustain you but no, they've quietly melted away, they've let you down and so you are left in much more painful isolation than ever you anticipated and it's bitter.

The opposition is great and grievous. Let me read just a little bit now out of the Psalter to illustrate this.

There are many places I could go but I'm going to Psalm 13. How long O Lord will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

[27 : 43] And so it goes on. Psalm 55 from which I quoted earlier provides further presentation of complaint about enemies.

Give ear to my prayer O God hide not yourself from my plea for mercy attend to me and answer me I'm restless in my complaint and I moan because of the noise of the enemy verse 3 because of the oppression of the wicked for they drop trouble upon me me and in anger they bear a grudge against me so it goes on and there's so many more more of the psalms expounding this theme oh yes stay in psalm 55 for a moment verses 12 through 14 of course illustrate what I said about being let down by people you trusted it's not an enemy who taunts me then I could bear it it's not an adversary who deals insolently with me then I could hide from him but it's you a man my equal my companion my familiar friend we used to take sweet counsel together within God's house we walked in the throng and now you've gone over to the enemy and joined the company of those who were resolved to make my life a misery it's you a man my equal my companion once my familiar friend well there's a lot more in the psalms along the same line but this is sufficient to illustrate complaint about the opposition that's raised against the faithful believer deprivation is also matter for complaint

Job had lost his health and his wealth and his family several of the psalmists have found themselves sick they're in a bad state physically and they cry to God about that take Psalm 6 for instance O Lord rebuke me not in your wrath nor your anger nor discipline me in your wrath be gracious to me O Lord for I am languishing heal me O Lord for my bones are troubled my soul also is greatly troubled but my body is in trouble as well you O Lord how long turn O Lord deliver my life and so on I'm weary with my moaning every night

I flood my bed with tears I am a sick and sad man my eye wastes away because of grief and so on there's that there's this in Psalm 38 let me read it to you O Lord rebuke me not in your anger nor discipline me in your wrath for your arrows have sunk into me and your hand has come down on me there's no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation there's no health in my bones because of my sin sin comes into the story but the hand of God also is in the story and that's what the psalmist is acknowledging here my wounds stink and fester because of my foolishness I'm utterly bowed down and prostrate my sides are filled with burning and there's no soundness in my flesh and so it goes on

I am feeble and crushed he says well many of us know what it feels like to be sick in that way in the next psalm psalm 39 the writer says again he's praying out of a low state physically remove your stroke from me I am spent by the hostility of your hand see the picture God I feel is beating me stroke bang bang bang and there are other psalms too which wail express a wailing message about the loss of health and good things in psalms 74 and 79 bewailing the ruin of Jerusalem which of course has impoverished the psalmist as much as anyone else would be impoverished when a city has been sacked and ruined by the enemy

[33 : 34] I must move on but that's opposition that's deprivation isolation is something that I've spoken of already depression that state of the self which comes on us so easily when we feel that the pressure is intolerable and we can't see any way out depression is the natural response to feeling that that's how it is is the world and in psalm 88 you've got a very vivid and poignant presentation of depression where the psalmist begins by saying oh lord god of my salvation I cry out day and night before you but then he goes on to say you have put me in the depths of the pit in the regions dark and deep your wrath lies heavy upon me and you overwhelm me with all your waves you've caused my companions to shun me you've made me a horror to them every day

I call upon you oh lord I spread out my hands to you I oh lord cry to you in the morning my prayer comes before you but it doesn't seem to do any good for the psalm ends with the words you have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me my companions have become darkness darkness or that could be translated darkness has become my only companion and there the psalm ends it starts dark and it ends dark it's the utterance of a man in depression well some of us have been there and know what that's like so much then for the range of the believers complaining this is reality friends and we would be very foolish to turn back on it and suppose that we shall never find ourselves in this particular situation where circumstances all seem to be against us and

Satan we are made to feel is behind the circumstances yes and God doesn't seem to be doing anything and depression closes in on our hearts but I must move on heading subheading to the rationale of the believers complaining that is to say the warrant for complaining for expecting and hoping for deliverance looking to God to do something change the situation get me out of trouble whatever the warrant or the rationale for such a hope and such action is simply that we will say it now in New Testament terms we are children of God and God is the perfect heavenly father and you know what children do when there's trouble at least one hopes they do because this is the way of the healthy child he or she will run to dad or mum perhaps but let's say dad because that's the image we're dealing with here we are as I said children of

God adopted children special that makes it you know adoption does that because you can always say to the adopted child so indeed you should you are special we chose you and that's what God in scripture says to each one of us so that relationship becomes a warrant for rushing off to talk to dad when there's trouble it was a long time ago back in England but I remember a day when my boy what's the seven eight nine perhaps something like that he was playing with a group of his friends and I was within sight of him and he came rushing over to me very upset and he said daddy

Jonathan's got a knife do something well Jonathan was one of his friends and Jonathan had a knife all right I can remember that as a moment of crisis what am I going to do human dads are not always fully adequate to handle the situations that confront them I did what I thought best okay but the point is that he came running to me there was trouble he was scared rushed off to talk to dad there's dad let me go to him and that's the warrant spiritually for our complaining to God and Jesus encourages us as a matter of fact to do that make such complaints in times of trouble he encourages us in this parable that he tells it's a comparison really that he's making parable of the unjust judge and the persistent widow which you find in the opening verses of Luke chapter 18 the parable is told to the effect that they this is the disciples ought always to pray and not lose heart chapter 18 verse 1 he said in a certain city there was a judge you neither feared God nor respected man but you know how the story goes the widow said give me justice against my adversary and she kept coming back eventually this man said though I neither fear

[40 : 35] God nor respect man yet because this widow keeps bothering me I'll give her justice so that she won't beat me down by her continued coming and the Lord said hear what the unrighteous judge says and will not God give justice to his elect who cry to him day and night will he delay long over them no I tell you he'll give justice to them speedily nevertheless when the son of man comes will he find faith on earth this is Jesus being enigmatic in the way that Jesus often is yes God will most certainly in his own good time uphold you deliver you and bring you into what scripture would call a large good place but are you going to hang on until that happens

I wonder that's the point of Jesus saying nevertheless when the son of man comes will he find faith on earth well there's the point we are children of God and so we ought to have every confidence that at the end of the day our testimony will be God has seen me through at the moment we are crying to him saying Lord this is beyond me and I'm hurting please do something and we are to sustain ourselves with the thought that he is our heavenly father and as the perfect father he is most certainly committed to do something and the parable of the unrighteous judge is making that point it's an A40 or I argument as the logician would say if the unrighteous judge can be prevailed on to act this way simply by persistence call it faithfulness in the way that the widow keeps going to him and won't take no for an answer well how much more will your heavenly father look after you but says Jesus

I'm not telling you how to foresee when the end of the day will be the moment that is when you'll be able to say yes I look to the Lord and he delivered me of course it may in fact for the as it is it's always been for the martyrs be a day beyond this world but now the third thing that I want to talk about a little more fully is the response of God to the believers complaining our God our heavenly father shapes everything that happens to us for our nurture that's a basic new testament truth which we must never lose sight of you know how the writer to the Hebrews hammers away at it in chapter 12 of his letter as he writes to

Jews who become Christians and their friends in the synagogue resent this and they're persecuting them in one way and another I suppose breaking their windows and shunning them and not being willing to employ them in their business and all that sort of thing they are making it as hard as they can for these converted Jews in the hope of breaking their spirit and bringing them back to the synagogue and in chapter 12 the writer has come to practical realities and he says verse 5 have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as son my son this is of course men and women sons and daughters together the inclusive masculine as the grammarians would call it my son and he's quoting now from Proverbs chapter 3 don't regard lightly the discipline of the Lord nor be weary when reproved by him for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and he chastises every son whom he receives this is what's happening he says it's for discipline that you have to endure

God is treating you as sons what son is there whom his father doesn't discipline and so on and so on well this is the frame so to speak within which to fit everything that I'm going to say now it's all part of God's nurturing discipline whereby he furthers the work of remaking us in character and attitudinal terms so that we bear the moral and spiritual image of Jesus our Saviour but now within that frame of reference I have three specific things to talk about A B and C A see how God sustains us in our weakness he keeps us going yes that's the first encouraging thing for us to note with regard to the way that he responds to our complaining classic

[46 : 38] New Testament passage on this I think is Paul's account in 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 of how God actually how the Lord Jesus reacted responded to Paul's complaint about his thorn in the flesh do you remember how Paul puts it to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations the revelations that is that he personally been given a thorn was given me in the flesh now Paul wouldn't have said in the flesh if it hadn't been physical and he wouldn't have said a thorn if it hadn't been painful would he so he is talking about something physical that is painful and he describes it as a messenger of

Satan to harass me what does that mean it means that God has allowed Satan to do it just as he allowed Satan to do things to Job and what Satan does is to encourage brooding on the thorn in the flesh to engender in Paul's heart negative notions about the goodness heavenly father and I think in this instance it's morally certain that Satan was engendering negative thoughts also about the future of Paul's ministry as you know as indeed Paul has said very very fully in the first part of chapter sorry in the second part of chapter 11 just before this his ministry is his life and he boasts a little bit he says

I'm a fool to boast but I'm going to tell you all the same there don't seem to be any limits to the adverse circumstances I've had to cope with in my ministry and yet I'll tell you also this thorn in the flesh came to me and I wondered this I think must have been part of his thought I wondered how my ministry could continue if this disability wasn't healed of course Paul knew that Jesus was the healer and he had been used himself to heal in the name of Jesus there are occasions reported in the acts that have been part of his ministry experience and now he complains of the thorn in the flesh and asks the Lord to heal him and this is a perfectly appropriate thing for him to do three times he says

I pleaded with the Lord about this that it should leave me but he said to me my grace is sufficient for you my power is made perfect in weakness therefore says Paul I'll boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me for the sake of Christ then I'm content with weaknesses insults hardships persecutions and calamities for when I'm weak then I'm strong what Paul means is that the Lord said to him no Paul I am not going to heal your thorn in the flesh but you are afraid that it's going to mean the cutting back if not the actual ending of your ministry and I'm telling you that my grace is going to keep you going even though the thorn in the flesh remains my power is made perfect in weakness when I'm weak says Paul then I'm strong this is a testimony the Lord is keeping him going despite his weakness despite his disability and so it was in fact to the end of Paul's ministry and you never hear about the thorn in the flesh again

Paul lived with it lived with the pain of it lived with the sense of physical strength gone which from time to time it induced but he didn't complain about it anymore and it seems the Lord did keep him going and his ministry wasn't restricted as a result of whatever it was nobody quite knows what it was and we're not going to speculate about that now but this is a wonderful testimony to the fact that the Lord does sustain us and keep us going in our weakness when we feel we're under pressure which is going to make us crumple but that's only one of the things I'm going to ask you to notice here second thing I ask you to notice what the Lord shows us in his wisdom how he keeps us trusting and for this

[52 : 48] I go to the last chapters of the book of Job I guess you know the storyline of the book of Job Job goaded by his friends has said all kinds of passionate things in his distress coming back again and again to the fact the thought that he wishes he could talk face to face with God and make sure that God understood his complaint and hear from God perhaps what is the rationale of what's happening to him he's never told that it was God demonstrating to Satan that Job is going to honor him by faithfulness never mind what Satan does we know that

Job doesn't but now after Job has said much along these lines comes chapter 38 of the book where we read then the Lord answered Job yes answered in the sense of spoke to him about what Job had been speaking to him about the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge dress for action gird up your loins like a man I will question you and you make it known to me where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth and so God you could say batters Job with a series of questions which are making the point that God knows what he's doing all through his world in relation to everything that happens in his world all circumstances they're under

God's control and have been so since the moment of creation answers God to Job over and over what do you know about that are you able to measure my wisdom in managing creation and question after question is asked do you know when the mountain goats give birth do you know about the wild donkey who loose the bombs of the swift donkey do you give the horse his might do you give the ostrich its life standard and then in chapter 40 it's as if he takes takes Job to the zoo behold behemoth the commentators think that behemoth in chapter 40 verse 15 is the hippopotamus and then chapter 41 verse 1 can you draw out

Leviathan with a fish hook Leviathan is probably the crocodile and so it goes on what God is saying to Job in all this is look you see how much wisdom I have at my command when it comes to creating and managing my world you see some of the wonderful animals that I have made you couldn't handle them but I do every action of theirs is under my control now if I am in the natural order in my providence in this way can't you believe that the same wisdom that guides me in matters of the circumstances around you and the life forms around you is operating in your personal case in the circumstances that surround you can't you believe that

I know what I'm doing when I run this whole cosmos that's Job's that's God's question to Job really and Job has an answer to it which is a great answer verse 4 of Job chapter 40 behold I am of small account what shall I answer you I lay my hand on my mouth I won't say any more I feel small says Job I am of small account friends it's a very healthy thing to feel small physically there are occasions when we feel small confronted with the sheer bigness of things that God has made have you ever stood on the edge of the Grand Canyon I have or coming nearer home have you ever stood in that little park on the one going north through the

[58 : 43] Thompson Canyon about five miles from Lytton there is a little park there and you can stand at the edge of the park and look down on the Thompson and look up and you see the literally enormous side the northwest side of the canyon and the Canadian National Line going along at the bottom of the bottom of this enormous expanse of rock and sometimes you see a train on it one of those hundred car freight trains you know two thousand tons of stuff looks like a little centipede crawling along and you feel small at least I do and I think anyone would well it's the spiritual equivalent of that that God is teaching

Job as he takes him to the zoo and talks to him about the wonders of the natural order all of which he invented and controls small is healthy in spiritual things and always to learn how can tell you know about ■ how can help you combine with your arma and