

# Job, God, & Satan

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[ 0 : 00 ] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

When the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them. He would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all.

For Job said, It may be that my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus Job did continually. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

The Lord said to Satan, From where have you come? Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro on the earth and from walking up and down on it. And the Lord said to Satan, Have you considered my servant Job?

That there's none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil. Then Satan answered the Lord and said, Does Job fear God for no reason?

[ 1 : 20 ] Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has and he will curse you to your face.

And the Lord said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.

So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. In one of his books, David Gibson makes a striking point about reading the Bible. He says, You can measure whether you find the Bible delightful, not by how often you read it, or how much of it you read, or whether you find it hard or easy to read, but by whether you approach the Bible expecting to be surprised.

I expect many of us read the Bible and even read much of the Bible, but do we read it expecting to be surprised? Do we read it expecting to learn something?

[ 2 : 35 ] Do we read it anticipating to be taken off guard, challenged, instructed, and changed? Well, there's few books of the Bible more surprising to read than the book of Job.

It's surprising because of how we read it, what we read there. You know, the book of Job does not fit neatly into any category, any genre category.

It's filled with poetry, but it begins and ends with a story. And in and through the poetry that continues throughout, there's proverbs, hymns, laments, poems about nature, legal-type language, and other literary forms.

Perhaps it's most like a play, like a dramatic play like Macbeth or something like that. With all of its diversity, it is a work of literary excellence.

There's no book like it in the Bible. So it's surprising of how we read it. It's surprising of what we read. The book of Job is not an easy book.

[ 3 : 37 ] One of the books I'm reading about Job, it just began that Job is considered, by all accounts, one of the most difficult books in the Bible, if not the most difficult.

It begins with a horrific tragedy in which Job loses everything. Then it continues for chapter after chapter after chapter for 40 chapters, Weeping with a book, it begins with a book, it begins with a book, it begins with a book, because it's so difficult to read.

It's not usually a book we read until we're in the mood. Like most of the wisdom books and the scriptures, it's a road less traveled.

Zach Eswine says, Wisdom books are roads less traveled. The Song of Solomon is like a back road brothel to us. Bet you never thought of that. Job is like a long stretch of desert road with no

nightlight and no gas stations and no rest stops for a mile.

So people can get stuck out there with no help. Ecclesiastes is like a crazed man downtown. He smells like he hasn't bathed. He looks like it too. And as we pass by, he won't stop glaring at us and beckoning that all of our lives are built on illusions and that we're all going to die.

[ 5 : 11 ] Meanwhile, we usually like our visits to the Psalms, except the ones that make us feel that we need to rewrite or edit because of how uncomfortably raw the emotions are.

That's what the wisdom books are. And the book of Job is no doubt less travel, like that desert road that you don't want to get stuck on.

Most people don't study it until they have to. But it's also surprising because of who is to read it. The book of Job is a masterpiece, but it wasn't written for Job or for God or for Satan.

It wasn't written for skeptics or atheists or know-it-all teenagers. It was written for ordinary believers. The book of Job was written for you.

Now, all the scriptures were written for our instruction. Romans 15, 4 says, but it has a particular message for believers when they suffer. The book of Job is staggeringly honest about the suffering believers will face.

[ 6 : 19 ] Life is pain, princess, is what the princess bride says. And the book of Job kind of says it as well. Sometimes this life will devastate you.

It will make you scream. It will leave you stumbling like a drunk man in grief. Sometimes it will make you question everything you believe. And you will not be spared because you're a believer.

In fact, it might be worse. It's a blunt book. It's also surprisingly hopeful. It addresses the problem of evil more extensively than any other book in the Bible.

Probably more extensively than any other book ever written. It's the most important book on the problem of evil. But it's not theoretical. It's not an armchair book where people sit in an armchair and pontificate like college students often do.

No, this is about somebody whose life has gone sideways and he has something to say. The believer is always in view. The believer's questions, doubts, fears, snares are always in view.

[ 7 : 25 ] And so the book of Job is like a strong tonic for the devastated sufferer. It burns a bit on the way down. But if you drink it all the way, it'll heal you.

And the book of Job begins with a story. This morning, I'm going to introduce you to the characters in the book of Job. The main characters, Job, God, and Satan.

Book of Job does not dally though. It gets right to the heart of the matter. In a word where we're going is it's impossible to know whether our faith in God is real until we walk through suffering. It's impossible to know whether our faith in God is real until we walk through suffering. So first character, Job. I have no main points. I'm introducing you to three characters, Job.

The first character we meet is Job. Now verse one begins like a fable almost. There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. Almost like in a galaxy far, far, far, far away.

[ 8 : 27 ] There was a problem. It begins like a parable. There was a father with two sons. That's kind of how it reads. And so some of the smart guys wrestle with whether Job was really a historical man or just a literary figure, just a parable, a parabolic type figure put in our Bibles to learn a lesson.

Now there's three places in the Bible where Job is referenced. Twice in Ezekiel and once in James. And none of those give any impression that Job was not a historical godly man.

And so that is my view. He's a real person. But the story holds up and the moral holds up and it's the Word of God either way. I think this story begins with talking about a man who's in Uz, whose name was Job.

A man who is outside the people of Israel for an important reason. Now much of the Bible, much of the Old Testament tells the story of God's faithfulness to a people. His chosen people to be His chosen possession out of all the peoples of the earth.

So beginning with Father Abraham and then Isaac and Jacob and Jacob's 12 sons. God's purposes are advanced in the Old Testament in the midst of a people. But sprinkled throughout are stories of people who are outside the family.

[ 9 : 45 ] Who weren't born into the right family tree. Which is all of us. Stories like Hagar and Ishmael.

Stories like Rahab and Ruth. Lot. Job is one of those outsiders. That's what we're meant to see immediately in the land of Uz.

People argue about where that is. Probably close to Edom. There's two things we learn about Job immediately. Is that Job is a godly man.

Look at the way it continues. It says, There was a man in the land of Uz named Job. That man was blameless and upright. Who feared God and turned away from evil.

Blameless and upright. Feared God. Turned away from evil. Blameless does not mean Job was sinless. Job offered sacrifices as we just read for his family.

[10:42] No doubt aware that he too was a sinner. Rather, blameless is a way of referring to this idea. That Job was whole or complete. He was a man of integrity. All the parts of him were held together.

He was the same man on the inside and the outside. Now sometimes we say, What you see is what we get. And sometimes we mean it sincerely. Sometimes we mean it as an excuse. I'm not changing, baby.

This is what you got. But that's not the way it was with Job. Job was a true man of integrity. No spin. No charade.

No veneer. He was the same man in public and in private. They say the true test of character is not what you do on a stage. But what you do when no one is watching.

And that's what we're meant to glimpse in these verses. Job was a man who was blameless when no one was watching. Serving God. He was upright.

[11:39] Upright is a way of accenting what's not present in his life. He's upright. He's not crooked. Not twisted. No deceit. No shadows. No hiddenness. No secret sins.

Job is blameless and upright because he fears God. It continues now. He knows his place in the world. The fear of God is not what we think in the Old Testament. It's not cowering fear or cringing dread.

It's reverential awe. It's just knowing that you are not the center of the universe. But that God is. God is the unchanging, eternal, almighty creator.

And you're accountable to him. And so Job fears the Lord. And he turns away from evil. He knows that the fear of God, the worship of God in his heart, demands things from his life.

The second thing we learn about Job is that he is greatly blessed. Look at the way verse 2 continues. They were born to him. Seven sons and three daughters.

[12:47] A combination of numbers there that's very important. Seven references the number of completeness or perfection. And so seven and three, this full ten number.

The number, he has a complete, perfectly blessed family. He has a full quiver. He's a blessed man. It continues. He has 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, another 10,000.

500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants. The idea is the numbers don't lie. Job is rich.

Job is living his best life right now. No wonder it continues and says, This man was the greatest of all the people in the East. One of the greatest men that ever lived.

We might say Job was too blessed to be stressed. But verse 4 and 5 reveal anxiety.

[13:51] While he's rich, his focus remains on his godliness, on his humble pursuit. Verse 2 and 3 does unpack all that he owns, but 1, 4, and 5 unpack his diligent pursuit of God.

Far too often, rich people need to be exhorted to be rich in good works. That's what Jesus talks about constantly. Because it's so easy for riches, which we're all rich in this country.

So easy for riches to lead to self-importance, love of fine things, you know. The old things don't work anymore, you know. We've got to keep pushing it up. Neglect of God.

So Jesus says, It's only with great difficulty that a rich person can enter the kingdom of heaven. But Job is rich. He's never condemned for being rich in these verses.

And yet, he's a man of God. Easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than for a man to live like this.

[14:55] Job, verses 4 and 5 give us a window into the way he lives. So his kids are throwing these feasts. Presumably, he's not invited. So that, I mean, I guess that's just what you do when you're rich.

You just throw a party, you know. But it seems they're throwing a feast on their birthdays. They're partying on their birthday. A celebration. And when every feast is over, he doesn't know what went on because he wasn't there.

He goes to offer sacrifices. Because they might have cursed God. Now, in literary mastery, he's introducing a vital theme, the theme of cursing right here in verse 5.

But, you know, then it says, look at the end of verse 5. He says, Thus Job did continually. Thus Job did continue.

So we drop into this man's life. And what's he doing? Seeking God continually. Greatest man.

[15:59] One of the greatest men that's ever lived. I want to pause and just consider Job as a father, as a man of his house. Look at what he did continually. What is it that Job most wants for his children?

Children, what is his greatest desire? It's zeal and affection for the Lord. That's what he wants most of all.

His whole life orients around this. And I just think, fathers, we must ask the question, what do we want most for our kids? Would we be content if our child had a good job, a good marriage, a good life, wasn't a pain?

If they didn't fear the Lord. Would that be enough? If not, is it clear, you know? Is it evident in the way we pray?

Is it evident in the commitments we make? Is it evident in the career opportunities we take? Is it evident in the things we insist on? You know? Sometimes I think the pursuit of God among us religious people can just be something we shove in on top of everything else rather than the first thing we put in.

[17:09] Because this is the most vital thing. This is the thing we want our kids to not leave our home and not miss. And miss. We want them to get this, a zeal and affection for God.

And I respect you men so much. But this might be an opportunity to rethink. How is it going? What are they taking away? As John Piper has said, the greatest stumbling block for a child in worship is a parent who does it.

Not the youth program. It's mom and dad who are playing the game. You guys are great, but I just have to say that.

So these verses tell us that Job is a man who genuinely worships God and is greatly blessed. He's a man who genuinely worships God and is greatly blessed.

There's an apparent connection that we're meant to see between Job's godliness and his prosperity. Now, Scripture repeatedly teaches almost like a cause and effect between what we do and what we receive.

[18:11] God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The wicked draw the sword, but the sword pierces their own heart. Psalm says, the hand of the diligent will rule, the wise inherit honor, the fool disgrace.

And so it seemed there's this apparent connection we're meant to see between the greatness of Job as a godly man and the greatness of his possessions. Proverbs 13, 21 says it. Disaster pursues sinners, but the righteous are rewarded with good.

And so Job is a man of integrity and he's blessed greatly financially. He's blessed greatly with possessions. And so it seems everything is in its right place. Everything's perfect.

Life is going according to plan. The good are getting good things. The godly man is blessed, healthy, wealthy, happy. These good godly acts are rewarded with good godly consequences. We're meant to hang on that connection because it's generally true, but not always. There's exceptions to the rule.

[19:15] And that's where Job is about to take us. Point two, God. The second character is the most magnificent being in the universe, the almighty God.

He begins. We meet the Lord immediately as the scene shifts. Verse 6. So we shift from the land of us to heaven.

We shift from Job's day in, day out, continual worship of God to a decisive day. We shift from the focus on Job to the focus on the Lord.

And there it will remain. And on this day, unbeknownst to Job, massive decisions will be made about his life. This will not be an ordinary day for Job, even though he's completely oblivious to what's going down.

But it began like any other day in heaven. The divine council gathers to discuss matters going on throughout the world that God has made. Look at verse 6. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan also came among them.

[ 20 : 19 ] And so the Lord in his throne room, the sons of God, are there. I think that's a reference to these superhuman beings like angels that report to him. We know from the scriptures that angels appear before the Lord.

Daniel tells us they deliver messages from the Lord. The opening of the Gospels tell us that as well as other places. They guard and guide the people of the Lord. They care for his people just like they cared for Jesus.

You know, these angels present themselves before the Lord because they're summoned by him. They submit to him. And so Satan also is there. The accuser and the adversary, he reports to the Lord as well.

All who are gathered in this throne room report to the Lord, to the Almighty God. But what are we to make of this scene?

I've been thinking about this all week. Is the Lord really surrounded by a divine council? Is that what we're meant to picture in our mind? Now obviously Isaiah 6 says, the Lord, there are seraphim and cheraphim flying around when Isaiah saw the Lord high and seated on the throne saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty.

[ 21 : 30 ] The whole earth is full of his glory. So no doubt he receives endless praise for his greatness. But is it a council? Is it a cabinet meeting? The Lord whose eyes roam to and fro throughout the earth, does he really need anyone to tell him what's going on?

The Lord who knows the end from the beginning, does he need someone to report on what's going on in the far reaches of the empire? No, absolutely not. And what's Satan doing there?

This is a divine council. Surely, the demons should not be allowed. God is revealing to us the way the world is governed in a way that we can understand.

God's ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. He's infinite. We are finite. He has no limits. We have very real limitation. Not just physically, like needing to sleep and needing to eat. We have limitations cognitively. And so God is accommodating, I believe, in this passage. The picture of the divine council is borrowed from our world. It's the idea of a king or a commander-in-chief, something like that.

[ 22 : 51 ] The ruler who has this royal cabinet in which secretaries of all different kinds come and report to him. It's meant to be a picture of something that points to a reality. And the reality is the sovereign Lord of all is Lord over everyone and everything.

That's what this picture is meant to point to. And so the angels who guard and guide the people of God report to him willingly. They submit to him. All that they do is unto him because he is the sovereign Lord.

And yet the devil who accuses and afflicts the people of the Lord report and submit to him. He reports and submits to him as well, albeit unwillingly because he's the Lord.

And so this picture is telling us how the world is actually governed. Ancient cultures would say the world is governed by gods of all sorts, gods and goddesses.

We've talked about that along the way in different series, you know, in the Roman world. There'd be a pantheon because you had to cover all your bases so gods of sea or harvest or wisdom or whatever and so there was this pantheon that covered the whole world, you know, the whole world.

[ 24 : 01 ] If they all got together they would watch over it all but that's not the way the world is governed by divine revelation. Modern culture tends to view the world as governed by a struggle between good and evil, between God and the devil like the empire and the federation in Star Wars.

So there's this idea these equal and autonomous independent powers at war fighting it out and that's not the way the Bible presents it.

Jesus said when he's leaving in the garden of Gethsemane he said this is your hour. I'm not beholden to you or worried about you. All that you do is under the sovereign hand of the Lord and so he says this is your hour and the hour of the power of darkness.

You know, maybe modern culture says we're governed by fate or karma or morality or something like that. Still other Christians believe that we're governed absolutely and only by the living God.

The only superhuman being in the universe is the Lord some people say and so what he says goes what he does happens but that's not the full picture either. These verses present a different picture.

[ 25 : 17 ] God is the sovereign Lord and governs all that is done throughout the earth but his governing includes many superhuman beings many good and some evil.

We learned about this in Ephesians that Jesus Christ is exalted far above all rule and authority and power and dominion above every name that is named not only in this age and the age to come he's in dominion over everything in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6 taught us something we could easily miss that there are rulers and authorities cosmic powers spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Life's not as it seems and so the angels report to the Lord and submit to him in these verses but the devil does as well as Martin Luther famously said he is after all God's devil.

I'm probably raising more questions than I'm answering but hopefully we'll get to some answers. In fact these verses make clear that the devil can only do what the Lord knows and permits him to do. Knowing that the devil accuses and afflicts the people the Lord asks the devil have you considered my servant Job? The devil essentially says yeah I've considered him but I can't do anything about him because you protect him.

[ 26 : 51 ] one of your pet ponies. Then look in verse 12 the Lord gives him permission he says behold all that he has is in your hand only against him do not stretch out your hand.

Job doesn't know anything about this conversation because this book wasn't written for Job it was written for you. Why? why do you have insight into that and he doesn't?

Because the devil can only do what he does to Job with the Lord's knowledge and permission the devil cannot touch a single hair on the back of one of Job's camels without the Lord.

Saying so and so all that the devil does is under the sovereign hand of God and D.A. Carson says the book of Job frankly insists that suffering falls within the sweep of God's sovereignty.

The reader understands as Job does not that Job's afflictions owe! everything to an exchange between God and Satan. Satan himself recognizes his limitations. He has to secure permission to afflict Job because there's a hedge around him.

[ 28 : 06 ] He charges God with putting a hedge around Job to protect him. Only when God grants permission can Satan lash out at Job's family and livelihood. Of course it was the work of Satan.

Doesn't eliminate Satan's will in the matter but in God's universe even Satan's work cannot step outside the outermost boundaries of God's sovereignty.

And so you see it all falls under the sweep of the sovereign hand of God such that even Satan must ask this permission of the Lord.

Now these verses are the deep end. You're in over your head so am I. These verses teach us we learn about Job we learn here that the Lord is a sovereign Lord who's infinitely worthy of worship because of who he is regardless of what he gives or takes away.

He's infinitely worthy of worship because of who he is and regardless of what he gives or takes away. These verses offend. What in the world are you talking about?

[ 29 : 12 ] Have you considered my servant Job? What are you talking about Lord? But there's something more important in the universe than your comfort or my comfort. There's something more important than your earthly happiness your earthly joy there's something more important what's more important is the glory of God.

There's something more important. You are not the center of the universe you're not the universe's reference point. Your comfort your earthly happiness your contentment is not primary. Now God is good he gives gracious gifts and we'll unpack that as we go but you were made for the glory of God even if it means nothing else.

So these are the tonic. This is the tonic that burns. But it's comforting it's so comforting there is hope here that's nowhere else because true comfort is not a good vibe it's being anchored in the purposes and the promises of God the character and the sovereignty of God so many people try to explain away what's going on in this passage it's a hard one you know you need a stiff cup of coffee to get through it but they explain it away because they think the suffering destroys people but what destroys people is suffering without a purpose and these verses unveil a purpose to us so that when life hits us sideways we can know as evil as the devil seems and as serious as the afflictions are it is under the hand of almighty God and he's the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So Christopher Ash says it's not suffering that destroys a person but suffering without a purpose. about to preach the whole series man sorry third character Satan Satan the scene in heaven introduces God and it introduces an unseemly character the adversary the enemy the accuser now is this Satan it just literally means the adversary the accuser here I believe he's revealed and not fully because we need more of divine revelation and know who this character is but we know him as the devil as the enemy Satan's the prince of the power of this air he's a heavenly creature that was

thrown down out of God's presence and now rages against believers he accuses seeking to destroy our faith with his flaming darts he tempts seeking to undermine our faith and our good conscience he divides seeking to dismantle our faith through anger and bitterness sexual immorality slander condemnation and more he afflicts seeking to devour our commitment to Christ and cause us to desert him he is the enemy now C.S. Lewis famously said there's two equal and wrong errors we make about the devil we think he's behind everything or we think he's behind nothing and in America in our modern scientific culture we no doubt lean towards the latter we think he's behind nothing but things aren't as they seem maybe we're in the upside down not all that you see is all that there is

Satan's very real though under God's sovereignty his power is nevertheless real he works great evil and suffering in the world and so the conversations continues look at verse 7 the Lord said to Satan from where have you come Satan answered from going to and fro walking about through the earth now that's a little bit you can't catch it all but the Lord it's a little bit like a teenager when you ask him how was your day at school fine you know there's a little bit of like none of your business going on in that response the Lord knows what he's up to and so the Lord says have you considered my servant Job because I know you've been walking to and fro throughout the earth to see who you might accuse and afflict so have you considered my servant Job now you must take this in the narrator has told us in verse 2 that Job is blameless and upright fears God and turns away from evil but now God says it and God will say it again later in chapter 2 I think but he says it twice here it's very important because of where this book's going to go it is the Lord who commends Job also underlines that Job is blameless and upright so whatever is going to happen to Job will not be happened as a payment for his sins and so the Lord puts him forward and Satan says does Job fear God for no evil have you put a hedge around him and that's where we got one of the top three most annoying phrases that Christians say the hedge of protection so if you prayed for a hedge of protection you didn't know what you were praying for you that's where it's from maybe you could retire that from your prayer life as well though it's pretty sweet you know if you look at this passage but the Lord says does he fear God for nothing you put a hedge around and you blessed him [ 34 : 44 ] Satan what Satan's saying here is does Job really worship you for you or what you give does Job really worship you because you're the living there's the little taunt here because you're the living and true God worthy of worship and obedience or Job does Job just worship you because of the blessings you give does Job serve you because of conscience or convenience is Job's faith sincere or show is it genuine or fake is Job a fraud Satan says stretch out your hand he'll curse you so the Lord says all that he has is in your hands essentially the Lord says let the gains begin and these verses teach us that the Satan is the accuser who tests believers to see if they worship God because of who he is or because of what he gives now I want to zero in on a few things he's the accuser who seeks to see and to test whether people worship God for who he is or because of what he gives

I want to see to see for a moment the nature of the test the stakes could not be higher this is the sovereign king of the universe and Satan says he's just he's a mercenary he's a hired gun he's a fake you pad his pockets and he says what you want to say he's just like a politician in Washington he's got backers and so he supports you the glory of God is at stake do you see because if believers only worship God because he gives good gifts then believers do not worship God for God but for what he gives God becomes a means to some earthly end and enjoyable life a happy marriage a successful career which we all want God though becomes not the living and true God infinitely worthy of worship he becomes a vending machine a means to an end a means to a different satisfaction separated from him and so the test is vital for God for the whole universe because Rache helpfully says it is necessary for it to be publicly seen by the whole universe that God is worthy of the worship of a man and that God's worth is in no way dependent upon his gifts so if you get that you'll get the nature of this test right here it's necessary for God to be publicly seen by the whole universe that God is worthy of the worship of a man and that God's worth is in no way dependent on his gifts and so that's the test that means

Satan has a ministry the ministry of affliction the ministry of testing C.S. Lewis said in his book A Grief Observed which if you read that book read the whole thing because the first chapter is rather pessimistic he says you never know how much you really believe anything until it's truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you it's easy to say you believe a rope to be strong and sound as long as you're merely using it to cord a box I guess to wrap around a box but suppose

you had to hang by that rope over a precipice wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it only real risk reveals the reality of belief that's what's going on here with Job now I don't play poker

I have played some but I know one thing people play a lot differently when money's on the line I don't really like I don't like playing with a lot of money but people play a lot differently when money's on the line and so life is like that suffering is like that money's on the line everybody can play tag out in the yard when you go home at night but suffering is when the money's on the line are you going to believe this when it costs you or are you going to believe this only when it blesses you and so Satan has a ministry to tease that out you know I've heard people say things like I used to love God I used to go to church you know in this area no one never went to church they stopped going at some point you know and so I used to go to church

I had a son something like that I had this thing I longed for my son to know the Lord I took him to church I read the Bible to him I taught him everything I know he played along while he was young but when he left the house he never looked back he turned away from it all rejected he hates God now and he hates me too and I hate God because of it what's that reveal?

[ 40 : 34 ] you weren't in it for God if God is only worshipped by those whom God gives what they want then either God is not worthy of worship or our faith is a show and so you might be being sifted you know Jesus said Satan demanded to have you to sift you like wheat but I prayed for you that your faith would remain strong you might be in the sifter right now and that's the test that's the test but it's critical also to see the Lord's confidence so you see the nature of this test but I think the Lord's confidence is just staggering the Lord says behold all that he has is in your hand he essentially says let the games begin he essentially says my money's on joke why?

because there is such a thing as sincere faith there is such a thing as faith not attached to things there is such a thing as people who love God for love's sake they love God for his worthiness sake so he says damn the devil to hell there is such a thing as faith in God that's what the Lord's saying let the games begin and watch my servant stand up and bless you bless me praise me and so that God is only allows the devil to accomplish the opposite of what he wants he only allows the devil to test the genuineness of his faith so that when tested it might become pure like gold and that's only what he's going to allow the devil to do in your life as well it's impossible to know whether our faith in God is real until we walk through suffering now let's think about this one this week one pastor said

Satan comes to God in this book and says Job doesn't really love you but in the garden Satan came to us and said God doesn't really love you the truth is this side of heaven you will never completely love God just for who he is the sifting will not stop because you always find yourself holding on to these things you know all these things they're just broken crutches they get you nowhere and yet it's so hard to let him go but there is one who obeyed God for nothing our Lord Jesus Christ what did he get for obeying God let this cup pass from me let this pass from me what was he seeing in that cup he was seeing the fury and the wrath of God a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief what did he see there he saw condemnation what did he see there the wrath of God what did he see all these things that he didn't deserve

Job is an innocent man who suffered but there was a more innocent man who suffers on the behalf of me and you suffers for our sins and it's there that he proves that Satan's a liar God gave us everything he has Jesus Christ and his spirit now Trump was saying this week that if he does some good over in Ukraine he might get to heaven there's only one way to heaven it's through our Lord Jesus Christ there'd be no end to the sifting no end to the cleaning up it'll never be enough but Jesus says I am the way the truth and life whoever comes to me I merged a few verses there but only one way to the Father through our Lord

Jesus Christ and it's this Christ who we are united to by faith Job perseveres but we have a friend more mightier than Job and the knowledge that our Lord never leave us or forsake us to the end of the age so that when the devil rages we tremble not for him because of the one who's on our side Father in heaven we cast ourselves onto you we live before your face we live in the confidence and the surety that you know our name and we pray that you would uphold us with a willing spirit keep us in your steadfast love we pray in Jesus' name Amen Amen You've been listening to a message given by

[ 46 : 08 ] Walt Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee For more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com in Tammy in