Job 22

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[0:00] Take your Bibles, if you would, and turn with me to the book of Job, chapter 22. I'm pretty proud of our young people, amen? I hope you are. I love it that they're the age of my grandkids.

Amen. That's sweet. I don't know who you are or what you're going through right now. Some of us may be sitting here living in the past.

We got hurt, and we're not over it yet. Everything's happened, and we're beat up and hurt. Others are sitting here, and you're worried about the future. You're like, I don't know what's going to happen, and I'm scared about the future.

In this passage of Scripture, Job is really hurting, but he will have victory in spite of it all. He will have victory in spite of it all.

You've got to remember who Job is. We'll look at the passage of Scripture when we get the discussion going in just a minute. But just remember that in just a few hours, he went from the richest man in his community, the richest man in his entire region, to a very poor man.

[1:09] All of his goods were taken away from him. His children all died in one day. And his wife has told him to curse God and die. And then on top of all of that, on top of all of that, God allows Satan to hurt him physically, and he is now covered in sores, sitting in an ash heap.

And he sat there for seven days in total silence. And now there's a conversation. His friends, his wife had already told him to curse God and die. And now his friends have come to just tell him, you stink.

And everything about you stinks. And just to be honest, you're a really bad guy. You are wicked, and you are getting what you deserve. I didn't come here to comfort you. I came here to confront you.

You are getting what you deserve. And I think about you, because I know some of you are really going through some things. There's health issues in your family, and you're like, God, where are you? I want you to know there's a passage of Scripture written about that.

Some of you are going through marriage issues, and some of you are going through financial issues, and you're going through other problems, and you're wondering, where is God in all of this? I think if you'll just go with me through a story.

[2:20] God wrote us a story, and it's a true story, and it's an inspired story. And it's a story God's given us, so we know how God deals with people. This is beautiful, because I can see my life played out here on the pages of Scripture, and I can say, I relate.

That's like me. That's what God wants to do in my life, so I hope you'll do that with me if you would. Sometimes it seems that our problems are about to drown us. Look, if you would, in Job chapter 22 and verse 2.

First problem is that Eliphaz is falsely accusing Job. In chapter 22 and verse 2, he claims that Job is an arrogant man.

He looks at Job, and he says, can a man be profitable unto God? Do you really think you're that big of something? God's paying attention to you? Verse 3, is it any pleasure to the Almighty that you're righteous?

You're bragging about how good you are. Do you really think God is in all of that? And in verse 5, he said, your wickedness is great. Is not thy wickedness great, and thine iniquities infinite?

You are a lousy man. You may be bragging about how you're right. You may be bragging about how you don't deserve what's happening to you. But the facts are, you are a lousy guy.

Let me explain to you what you've done, he says. You abuse people. Look at chapter 22 and verse 6. He said, you took money from poor people. You didn't give water to weary people.

You held food back from hungry people. Chapter 22, verse 9. Widows came to you as rich as you were. You sent them away empty, and you broke the arms of the orphans. And now you are attacking God, Eliphaz says.

Why are you attacking God? Look at 22, verse 13. And thou says, how does God know? And Job says, I feel abandoned. I feel like God has abandoned me.

Look at 23, verse 2. Even today is my complaint bitter. I am really hurting. I'm in worse shape than I could ever explain to you. My stroke is heavier than my groaning.

[4:26] Whatever you hear me complain, and however you hear me hurt, it's far worse than what you think. Oh, that I might find. Oh, that I knew where I might find him.

That I might come to his seat. I just wish I knew where God was. You know, I didn't really do anything wrong. And I know y'all say I'm a bad guy, but I really didn't do anything wrong.

I don't deserve what's happening to me. I don't deserve this. Chapter 23, verse 8. I go forward, but he's not there.

And I go backwards, and I can't feel him. I can't perceive him. I can't sense him. I go to the left hand where he does work, but I can't behold him. Okay, he might be doing something, but I can't see it.

He hides himself on the right hand, and I cannot see him. And to be honest, I'm feeling afraid of God. Look, if you would, in Job 23, verse 15.

[5:28] Therefore, am I troubled at his presence when I consider I'm afraid of him. Verse 16.

For God makes my heart soft, and the Almighty troubles me. I'm afraid. And I'm anxious. I'm worried.

Chapter 24, verse 24. They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low. They are taken out of the way as all other and cut off. Verse 25.

Who will make me a liar and make my speech nothing worth? Job says, I'm being punished and abused, and others are getting away with it.

I didn't do anything, but I'm being punished and abused. I did right, and I'm suffering. Others do wrong, and they're prospering.

[6:26] I'm confused. Why is this happening? I think if you stop here just a minute and just read this story, that may very well describe how you're feeling. Why are your children going through those issues?

Why, when you've tried to serve God and be a tither, be an attender, be a server, would it all mess up in your life? Why would it seem that when you're hurting so bad that your friends would attack you and accuse you instead of comforting you?

Why would you have to feel abandoned? You ever prayed and been like, I don't think he's hearing me. I don't think my prayers are getting to the ceiling.

I don't think this is working. I'm upset. I don't understand it. I'm confused. Now, the beautiful thing is, you're in the middle of the story of Job, and you well know, number one, that Job didn't do anything wrong.

At the very beginning of this book, Job's a perfect man, a righteous man, a good man, and what's going on is this big war between God and the devil, and the devil is saying to God, nobody really loves you.

[7:46] Nobody really loves you. They just love how good you are to them. And God said, no, that's not true. Job loves me. And Satan said, oh, he just loves you because of the toys you give him.

He loves you because of the good stuff you do for him. But if you took that away from him, he wouldn't love you. And God said, oh, that's not true. He loves me. He does love me. And the devil said, oh, yeah, well, put him to the test.

Take his stuff. And let's see what happens. Take his stuff. And Jesus, or God says to the accuser of Satan, well, take it. He'll still love me. And they take it.

And he still loves him. And the devil and God get back together, and they're having a discussion. And God looks at him and says, I told you he loved me. I told you he loved me. Did you see that? He has not turned on me one time.

And the devil said, well, of course not, because skin for skin. If you hurt his body, if you let him get sick, if you'd threaten him with dying, he'd turn on you.

[8:46] And God said, no, he won't. He loves me. And the devil said, well, God said, well, go do it. And now here's Job in the middle of the story. I mean, everything that can go wrong has gone wrong.

Can you have victory? You feel like a pawn in the middle of a big chess battle. It's like the devil and God are going at it. And you're like, I don't even, and he doesn't even know that.

He has no concept that that's what's happening. He's just down here on earth going through all the mess, and he doesn't know why. And everything's going wrong. But he's going to have victory.

And you can have victory. And the scriptures tell you how you can have victory. So I want to show you some principles or steps that Job followed while he thought he was drowning.

Number one, what's really interesting is in this passage of scripture, you know what he does? After old Eliphaz gets through just accusing him and accusing him and accusing him have it and telling him how wicked he is, he ignores him.

[9:51] When he gets ready to talk, he doesn't even answer him. He doesn't say, now that's not true. You shouldn't have said that. Job's like, I just heard the wind blowing. Here I am. Not going to pay attention to it.

You can try to accuse me and make me feel bad, but I refuse to pay attention. And so Job doesn't listen to him. He ignored the false accusations. He ignored Eliphaz's attack.

And here's what he had to do. He had to focus on truth and not lies of the accusers. He had to focus on truth. Because in the story, and I'll show you in a minute in the verses, Job knows he hasn't done anything wrong.

And all through the book of Job, all he's doing is maintaining his integrity. He constantly says, I have not done wrong. This is not happening to me because of something I did.

I don't know why it's happening. And I sure wish I could talk to God about it, but I didn't do anything wrong. He had to focus on truth. Some of you are going through mess. And your life's falling apart and you want to say, why?

[10:53] And Job's obviously asking why. But he's not accusing God. He's not walking away from God. Every believer needs to know that sin, Satan, and self will attack us.

Everybody in the stream, you need to understand something. The devil is out to prove in his whole book that he can make Job walk away from God. All he wants to do is make Job deny God.

And so if you're a prosperity gospel person, you're kind of like, well, if I give my money and if I serve God, he'll always be good to me. And Job's like the very opposite of that. Job's like, I did all of that and nothing good came out of it.

I've done everything I was supposed to do and nothing came out of it. And you need to understand that just like Eliphaz is constantly accusing him right now while you're hurting, you keep hearing these voices in your heart and in your head.

You can even maybe hear it from some of your friends and they say, well, the reason your children are sick is your sin. And the reason you're going through this is you're not a good person. And the reason you're going through this is God doesn't love you.

Or the reason you're going through this is God doesn't even exist. It's all the devil playing with your mind. We must choose what we will listen to. We must choose what we will think about.

We must not hear what we shouldn't hear. Don't listen. Don't listen. Eliphaz goes, Eliphaz goes, you are a wicked guy.

Job goes, next discussion. Not going to talk about that one. Not even going to entertain that question. Not even going to respond to you one time. Instead, he trusted God and God's character.

We must learn to focus on God and who he is. We must know God enough to know we can trust him. We must know who God is and know what God's like so we can know we can trust him.

So how do we apply these truths personally to our hearts? Number one, we must know the truth in our heart. See, here's what Job says. I didn't do wrong.

[12:55] I know the truth. I didn't do anything. One of the darkest days of our life, a horrible thing had happened.

One of my children had rebelled against me. I was a fairly well-known figure in Peru. One of my children had rebelled against me and they put it on national TV about the missionary and his kid doing wrong.

I was humiliated. Pastors I knew were saying stuff. One old friend called me and this is what he helped me with. He said, did you teach her anything about doing that?

Did you ever teach her to rebel? Did you ever show her to do wrong? I said, I don't think so. He said, you know you didn't. She's chosen this.

But in my heart, I wanted to quit. I wanted for it to all be over. I just wanted God to take me out of here because I was listening to things that weren't true. How many of you are guilty of that?

[13:56] We must know the truth in our heart. We must know that God is just and right. And Job knows that. Here's what Job says. I know God's good.

If I could just get up there and sit down with him and talk to him, we could solve this. I wish I could find him. If I could just sit down with him and say, God, what in the world is going on? That's what he keeps saying all through the book.

I just want to talk to God. As a Christian, you should be prepared for the attacks that are coming against you. Some of you will quit on God because you're in trouble and things are going wrong and you're not prepared for the attack.

Did you know the Bible says put on the whole armor of God? Did you know that when, in other words, you know you're in a war. Job, I don't think Job fully understood that.

He's still living in Old Testament days. This is possibly the first Bible, book of the Bible that was ever written. He doesn't have all the truth we have. But in the New Testament, I know I'm in a battle. I'm fighting and the devil's against me.

[14:58] I need to get on my whole armor. I need to pick up my shield of faith. I need to have in my hand the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. I need to do battle with falsehood. We should be prepared for the war that's coming.

We should soak ourselves in Scripture. You see, the only way you know truth, now this is what I'm going to tell you. This is truth. This is truth.

And the only way you can know what's true is to know what the Word of God says. You can't go by your feelings. You can't go by what your sensations are.

You can't go by how you're feeling about something. You need truth. And this is truth. Now, some of you don't spend much time in the book.

You don't learn all the Bible you can. You don't fill your heart up with it. You don't memorize it. You don't meditate on it. And all your life is falling apart and you have nothing to look to. But I need a true north.

[15:57] I need what's right. I need a place to look at and know I can get through this. I need to soak myself in the Scripture. I should memorize and meditate on Scripture before the day of battle.

I should memorize and meditate on Scripture before the day of battle. By the way, if you do right before the accusations come, you can feel confident.

Because you're doing right. Job, the whole book through, is going to be said every time they say, you're wicked. When Job does respond, he just goes, that ain't true. I maintain my integrity.

I am the man. I am the man of God. I have served God. I have done right. And it's not true. It is simply not true. Go back with me, if you would, to Job chapter 23 and verse 11.

Now, listen to what he says. You read it and probably passed over it fairly quickly. But he said, my foot have held his steps. I have walked where I was supposed to walk.

[16:58] Look at that. His way have I kept and not declined. Here's a, can I put that in Tennessee hillbilly for you? I've been doing right. I've been doing right.

And then he said, verse 12, neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. I'll just be honest with you. If you try to act like I've done wrong in this, I'm just going to tell you up front, that's not true.

I did right. I want to stop and say before I move on that some of you are going through mess because you brought it on yourself. Some of us are going to have shocking things happen to us and we're going to think to ourselves, I wouldn't do anything wrong.

I was serving God. I was honoring God. I was living right. I don't know why things are falling apart on me. And so this is the answer for you. But others of us, I mean, when you go out and go to Las Vegas and gamble away a bunch of money and come home and you're back here living in America and you're in debt and they're about to take your house away and you say, what in the world is God doing to me?

God didn't do that to you. You're the dingbat that went out there and wasted all your money. Could I get an amen right there? You got drunk. This actually happened one time. A friend of ours got drunk and he ran off the road and the car was aimed towards the people on the side of the road and he jerked it back on the road.

[18:18] He didn't hit those people and he got arrested and attempted murder was part of his charge. And when he was coming out of his drunkenness, all he kept saying was call Pastor Gardner. And I got over there and he's like, what in the world did God let this happen to me for?

And I'm like, well, if you hadn't got drunk, it probably wouldn't be happening. So amen. So that's not for you, but it is for the rest of us. We need to build Bible truth into our heart and into our lives.

We need to renew our minds. We need to think like the word. We can have victory. Go to Job 23.10. Job 23.10 if you would. He knows the way that I take.

Could you just stop there for a second? You know what he said in that verse? He said, I know God knows what I'm doing. God is not up in heaven saying, Job's really messing up and Job doesn't know it.

Job's like, I'm not doing wrong and God knows it. See, that's real confidence in God. Could I get an amen right there? He's like, I'm doing right and God knows it.

[19:20] Now, what Job doesn't know is if we could open heaven just a little bit, we'd see God in heaven talking. And God in heaven would say, Job's a perfect guy. He's right. And everybody's telling him he's not, but he's like, I'm doing right.

And then he said, and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as goal. When he gets through with whatever he's doing, I do not know why what's happening is happening.

I do not know why all this junk is happening in my life, but this much I know. Sooner or later, I'm going to win in this too. Sooner or later, I come out on top. When all this is done, I shall come forth as goal.

Amen? On the day that I spoke to my church in Peru about all the problems I was going through, that Sunday morning I preached a message that said this, I will win in this too.

Because we don't lose. I knew that the God of heaven would take care of me. So let's just check out some things about the trouble you're going through.

[20:22] Look at James chapter 1 and verse 12 with me. James chapter 1 and verse 12. Did you know that enduring trouble and temptation and trials and testing is kind of like an expected part of your life?

We're not just going to live here in a beautiful existence with no problems and no heartaches. And when junk happens in my life, I need to know that when tribulation and when temptation and when trouble and when trials come my way, that God in heaven is pulling for me.

God in heaven is on my side in this deal. Look at the verse. Blessed is the man that endures temptation. For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

I want you to underline in verse 12. You should have your Bible open. Underline endures. That's a tough word. That's a tough word. That's basically what Job's doing.

He gets up every morning, wakes up in that ashes heap and wakes up in the morning and grits his teeth and says, I'll just go on. I'll just do right. I'll just keep serving God.

[21 : 29] I don't know what's happening. I don't know why he's trying me. But this much I know when it's all said and done, I'm getting a crown. I'm going to come forth as goal. When he has tried, you got your Bible open in verse 12?

Tried. Did you know that this faith that you have that's so flippant and easy might not be faith? It might be culture. Maybe you don't really trust God.

You just think I like church. When he is tried, when the man is enduring all this is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.

Go with me if you would to 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 7. Another verse that says very much the same thing. 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 7. The trial of your faith. Underline that.

The trial of your faith. It's easy to believe God when the sun is shining. It's easy to believe God when everything is going right. It's easy to believe God when everybody's on your side

[22:32] But in 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 7, he said the trial of your faith. The testing of your faith. Being much more precious than of gold. You know, for gold to get purified, they put it in boiling temperatures.

And as it boils, the filth rises to the top and they scrape off the filth to get purer and purer gold. And Peter said, I know y'all are going through a bunch of mess. But this is precious to God.

And it's purifying you. Look if you would at the verse. The gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found under praise and honor and glory.

At the appearing of Jesus Christ. I have a great friend who I love very much. Brother Randy Sterwald. He's in the hospital. He's got cancer. He's a missionary to Kenya. He's supposed to fly out, I think, tomorrow to go back to Kenya or yesterday to go back to Kenya.

He's not going until he gets this cancer under control. And they've not given a great prognosis. And he's laying in that bed and he's hurting and he's suffering. And he's going through all kinds of mess. And the infectious disease doctor will come into his office and sit with him for 40 minutes and let him tell him stories and talk Bible with him.

[23:47] So in the middle of all the mess that's going on, while it might seem like God's not blessing Randy, he might be saving a doctor. Look at what the verse says here. Found under the praise and honor and glory at the appearing of our Jesus Christ.

You know what our trials do for us? Number one, they prove the genuineness of our faith. They prove the genuineness of our faith. I had a friend in high school who got married.

They came home from their honeymoon. And when they got home from their honeymoon, they went to bed in their house. The next morning when he woke up, she was already gone. I don't think that was too much love. Betty, I didn't let her out.

So I've kept her for 46 years. Kept her locked in the house just so she couldn't pull that off. That's a joke for those that don't know. But real love stands the test of time.

Say amen. Real faith stands the test of time. Real faith says I believe in God no matter what's going on. Secondly, these trials help me get ready to serve others.

[24:49] Did you know life was never about you to begin with? That when God saved you, he saved you to be in the ministry. And he wants to give you a voice. And when you talk to somebody that's going through stuff, if they don't think you've been through that, they don't hear the genuineness of your heartbeat.

But so God lets his people go through stuff so they can help other people. I'm going to show you a verse in a minute from the Bible. You already know the verse. But let me just tell you this. All those prophets in the Old Testament, he let them live their message.

They lived their message. So they might even, one guy had to eat his food cooked over poop. And he's like, now wait a minute, God. And he said, I got a message for Israel. They're going to be eating their food cooked over poop.

I'm pretty sure he was like, could I get a new message? Could I get a new message? Another guy had to bury his girdle in the dirt and leave it there, let it rot it. And then he had to put it on and wear it. I can imagine him going, I wish I could get a new message.

Amen. Another guy had to marry a woman who wouldn't be faithful to him. And he knew she wasn't going to be faithful because she wasn't faithful before he married her. And God said, I got a message. You know, God has a message.

[25:51] And you're his servant. He wants to use you. 2 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 3 says, Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation.

In the middle of your mess, he'll be there to give you help. In the middle of whatever it is you're going through, God will be there through the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God. And God will give you something to give you strength to get through that.

But look why. Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble. And how are we going to do it?

With the same comfort we got from God. So here's a born-again believer and he's going through a lot of stuff and his life is falling apart. And he's like, God, what in the world? And God's like, I know what I'm doing.

And after you come out of that like gold, you're over here talking to somebody and they're saying, I'm going through mess and nobody understands the trouble I've seen. And you go, yes, I do.

[26:55] And I know what God did. And I'd like to tell you how God worked in my life and how God can work in your life. You see, God's working in your life. You may think he's abandoned you. You may not think he's working in you, but he is.

In 1 Peter 5, in verse 10, the Bible says, The God of all grace, who hath called us unto eternal glory by Christ Jesus. I want you to look at what he says.

After you have suffered a while. Look at that. The Bible people knew you were going to go through mess. They didn't preach a message like, y'all put \$10,000 in an offer plate today and God will make me rich.

I mean, you rich. They didn't do that. They got up and said, you're going to suffer for a while. You're going to have trouble for a while. Your marriage may get strained and your health may get in problems and your finances may get in trouble.

But after you've suffered for a while, he will mature you, perfect you. He will establish you. He will strengthen you. And he will settle you. We know we love God.

[27:57] And we're going to continue to do right. And I just need, I know you know these verses. I just think maybe we need reminded. 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13. There is no temptation.

Not one of you in this room is going through something other people aren't going through. Whenever you're going through a mess, our daughter got raped in Peru.

And we felt like a lone ranger. And in the middle of that, we found out about dozens and dozens and dozens of people had been through the same thing. Look what the Bible says.

Such as is common to man. Whatever you're going through is common. But God is faithful. Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you're able.

God is working in your life. And you say, well, I'm past what I'm able to handle. No, you're not. No, you're not. And when the temptation, the testing, and the trials come, he will make a way of escape.

[28:59] I've got to hurry. So let me give you the last thing. Go with me to Job 23.12. Last thing I want to tell you this morning. If you want victory, fill your heart and mind with the Bible.

Job says in Job 23.12, Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. And look at what he says. I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. Now, these are the words of his mouth.

These are the words of his mouth. They are written down for us. Job wouldn't have had that privilege. When Jesus deals with the devil in the New Testament in Luke chapter 4, you know what he says?

He answers and says, as it is written. As it's written. You know what he did? Job said, I like the word of God more than I like food.

Now, you're going to be like, now, wait a minute. I like to eat at least three times a day plus a snack or two. And Job would have said, yeah, and I like the Bible more than I like that. And you and I are like, well, asking somebody to read their Bible once a day for five minutes is like overkill.

[30:06] Why do you push the Bible on people? And Job would have said, you know, I wouldn't be making it through this trial right now if I wasn't full of this thing. I have loved the word of God. I have loved the word of God.

I've esteemed it. I've held it high. I've revered it. I've believed it. I've heard it. I've accepted it. I fill myself up with it. Can I remind you, man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Might I remind you, the word of God is your weapon. It is the sword of the spirit. Might I remind you that when Jesus stood against the devil, he could have called any power he wants. Any power he wanted.

But instead of that, he said, it's written. He said, I know the book. Now, you want to deal with junk? Can I just warn all of you? You're all going to go through stuff. People are going to turn on you and accuse you.

You're going to feel abandoned and alone. You're going to feel like life has no meaning. You're going to feel like, where's God? I can't find him and I can't talk to him. And you're going to feel all of that. But there are two things you should know.

[31:05] Number one, number one thing you should know is this. If you're a believer, you will come forth as gold before it's over. If you're a believer, you'll come forth as gold when it's over. We win.

Can I get an amen there? We win. You say, well, what if I die? That's winning, buddy. When I die, I'll go to heaven. When I die, I'll be in the presence of God. When I die, I will immediately see my Lord.

So we win. Do you know how you win? By getting in the book and getting the book in you. And I think it's a Bible-loving church, especially those of you who come more than one service a week.

I mean, all we do here is just Bible, Bible, Bible, Bible. Job, how are you feeling? I'm feeling accused. I'm feeling abandoned. I'm feeling afraid.

I'm feeling alone. I don't know where to turn. Okay, Job, what are you going to do? Well, when this thing is over, I will come forth as gold.

[32:07] I will. I'll win in this too. I'll win in this too. And let me tell you why. The very next verse, he says, because I hadn't departed from what he said.

And I have loved this book more than I love my own food. I want to just say to you, you can have victory. Nobody in this room, I know you're going, I hurt.

I pray for you. I hear about the stuff you're going through. I hear about family members that are sick. I hear about children that are sick. I hear about financial problems. I hear about marriage problems. And I pray for you and I think about you. But I can't be your answer, but God can.

And he will work in your life. You're not saved. You need to be saved today. You need to trust him. You need to put your faith in Christ so that he can be your savior. If you're saved, you need to trust him.

You need to get up here and get on your face and say, God, I've been listening to the world too much. I've been listening to my own mind too much. I haven't been in the book enough. And starting today, I'm going to get in the book. I'm going to fill my heart up with the word of God.

[33:05] Why in the world are you wavering? Why in the world are you almost to walk away from God? Stand the test.

Win the victory through Jesus Christ. Father in heaven, I love you. And I pray your blessings on your people this morning. I pray you'd save those that don't know you.

And I pray you'd help Christians that are dealing with a lot of stuff. And give them victory. Son of Savior. Like others.

Everybody. Say, as a long, oh no. Amen. A verse that is a scam.