

Job's suffering – part 2

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JOB'S SUFFERING.

In suffering, you can think: “everything is against me” and then it's important to know whether we belong to God because we own something or because He's God who created us and who wants to have us with Him in His glorious eternity. It's important to know whether we are addicted to a thing because we will be put to the test and those things will be affected. Will we then take offence at God or will we win? This is important whether our bonds with God are based on God or on things.

The devil can slowly work on us that when there is money, we are happy and when there is no money, we are sad. The devil wants to shape human character in such a way: I have, I don't have, happiness, sadness. The devil wants to distract us from being satisfied that I am God's property and I belong to God in order to make a human addicted to something earthly. What Paul later said that those who had thought about earthly things became the enemies of the cross. The devil succeeded in keeping them from the cross to earthly things and making that they are their happiness and not the fact that they died with Christ for the world, for sin and for themselves.

Job wins it. Thus, we can see how great work has been made in this man by God. The terrible news he had received didn't overwhelm him. Job loved his children, sought them to be with him in eternity, cared about his animals and everything was taken from him, it was attacked and killed. However, Job overcomes all adversity, saying: “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” Notice that this is a lesson both for me and you because this test is very similar even now. “I have this and that, I have a good job and good connections, I can live here on earth, I'm safe and calm.” Do you understand? And then, the devil rules over the man. It's enough for the enemy to move it and the man will be hurt, discouraged and offended at God. The devil came up with something that he knows he will take at some point, wanting the man to be addicted to him and so that this man would blaspheme against God and would die. This is also what the devil wanted to tell Job through his wife. And when the devil fails to do it and he returns from the earth, he comes before God again and God says to Satan once again: “Have you paid attention to my servant Job? For there is no one equal to him on the earth.” There is no one like him on the earth. There is no man on the earth like Job. He is unique. As Christ was unique. There was no one like Christ, so He was attacked. Job begins to experience the sufferings of Christ to whom his heart was very attached. Job knew that the Redeemer would stand over his grave one day.

“Yet as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last, He will take His stand on the earth.” (Job 19, 25)

Job's heart was attached to it, he satiated with it, but he didn't expect God to **lead him His Son's way**. We heard Darek said: so many people were healed, freed from possession, fed by Jesus and then as if the devil took them all. “You are left alone.” Maybe he even succeeded in persuading some people to shout: “kill him, kill him”. Jesus isn't addicted. He's free and independent to say: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”. Jesus wins the battle with the devil. Job wins and God says: “Have you seen it?”

“For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds firm to his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.” Satan answered the Lord and said, “Skin for skin!” (Job 2, 3-4)

You know, this is also the suffering of our times. People are scared about their skin. When something appears, then suddenly fear arises and you need to see a doctor quickly to look after your skin. Do you understand it?

The devil says: “strike his skin, we will see if he’s still God-fearing and if he’s still so sure of You.” God says: “Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.” (Job 2, 6) And the devil goes out and strikes Job. Severe boils appear all over Job’s body, from the sole of his foot to the top of his head. Only his lips remain healthy. Job must eat. Then, he uses those lips to talk with his friends. Not only was everything he loved and cared about taken away, but also his own body was attacked. It was a man who, when he entered the city gates, the young people stepped aside and the old people got up because they respected him. Many people knew that he was the man who had an open and beautiful heart. He was loving, smart and suddenly this man was brought to the ashes. He is sitting in the ashes. His own wife is disgusted by him and other people are disgusted by him. All his glory and dignity have been taken away from him. His own tent separated him from healthy people. Job is sitting in the ashes and what is he doing now? He says something very valuable to his wife:

“You are speaking as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we actually accept good from God but not accept adversity? Despite all this, Job did not sin with his lips.” (Job 2, 10)

We accept good from God, but can we also accept the suffering that will hurt us? Good and health are easy to accept, but will I also accept when my body is afflicted? Job wins again. He says: “I’m not with God because I’m healthy. I’m with God because my heart loves Him and belongs to Him. I want to be with Him forever. Although my body separates me from healthy people, from my wife, from all these dignities and although everyone is laughing at me now, I want to love Him.” And again, the suffering of Christ. When we watch Job’s life, we can watch Christ’s suffering. Christ was also laughed at, mocked and jeered at: “Look, He is supposedly so great and He ends up on the cross.” He was even spit at. Job was also spit at and people were showing: “Now, you are nothing to us”. Let’s watch this man’s suffering and notice that God is doing something of His in him. Job didn’t understand it at all back then. Job bases on what he has already experienced with God and what he has lived through with God up to now. He doesn’t understand what’s going on. This is beautiful!

In the Book of Job 23, we will read the statement of Job who exclaims:

“Then Job responded, Even today my complaint is rebellion; His hand is heavy despite my groaning. Oh that I knew how to find Him, that I might come to His home! I would present my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would learn the words which He would answer, and perceive what He would tell me. Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, surely He would pay attention to me. There the upright would argue with Him; and I would be free of my Judge forever. Behold, I go forward but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; when He acts on the left, I cannot see Him; He turns to the right, but I cannot see Him. But He knows the way I take; when He has put me to the test, I will come out as gold. My foot has held on to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not failed the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. But He is unique, and who can make Him turn? Whatever His soul desires, He does it. For He carries out what is destined for me, and many such destinies are with Him. Therefore, I would be terrified at His presence; when

I consider this, I am frightened of Him. It is God who has made my heart faint, and the Almighty who has terrified me, but I am not destroyed by darkness, nor by deep gloom which covers me.” (Job 23, 1-17)

Job says: “I’m looking for God. I would like to check with Him. I would like to know...” “God, what’s going on now? I know I lived with You, walked with You and did what You want, and now, my God, I’d like to know and there is no answer.” All the suffering continues and Job still has no answer, but he knows that God has the answer. Job is sure that God knows, but he doesn’t know yet. And again, here is the patience through which we come into our promises. Again, there is this act of waiting. See how important it is for you to wait. You may not understand something at a given time, but it’s important to wait in **the place of purity** where God wants to see me. When God fulfils His will, then I will see what He wanted to do and I will see His glory.

In the Epistle to the Romans, we can read that God works for good in all things with those who cherish God. Job cherished God and God worked for good, but then Job didn’t see the goal God was leading him to. However, Job persists with it all the time and says: “I won’t get out of this way. Even if he kills me, I won’t get out of it. I know and I hold on tight (even with his teeth because only his teeth were healthy). I won’t let it go. Here I am and here I will stay.” Many people turn away during their suffering, but Job didn’t turn away from God. Do you also want to wait for God in the place of purity for Him to carry out His plan, belonging to Him with all your heart, not being pushed away from who He is and from His Divine plan for each of His children? Job isn’t aware of the fact that he’s just getting to know the suffering of His Redeemer, of Jesus Christ. He’s unaware of it. If we took the prophets, we would see similar suffering in their lives. Jeremiah also talks about it. Everyone experienced this suffering, but Job lived in ancient times. And this man of God had already experienced in his life that God worked on him on some secret issue that Job didn’t understand. But is it still secret to us? We are very happy observers. We have the Bible, we can read it and look at the experiences of earlier generations. We can have already revealed the mystery from ancient times, previously hidden, but revealed in Christ – that God wants us for Himself now and forever.

Recently, when I have read the Book of Job, I was so impressed with seeing the things that are written down here that I felt as if I was reading it for the first time. There are so many wonderful things here and they are so valuable and important for us that we might think that this Book is a great book.

We talked this morning and David said he was reading the Book of Ruth, and we noticed that when the Holy Spirit begins to introduce, you experience what the depth of God’s desires, God’s actions, God’s love and God’s influence is there. Wherever you immerse yourself with the Holy Spirit, there you experience God opening up your senses. You begin to perceive it and you say: “Really, it’s beautiful, it’s wonderful!” If we could read the Bible constantly with the Holy Spirit, we would walk in delight and we would crow over more than all the birds outside. We would be content with all the pleasures that are written down here because here God describes His influence, His action and His aspirations. That’s why, it’s so important that somebody introduces us into it (this is the Holy Spirit) that we could taste of this glory of God’s blessing.

Let’s see what Job knew and what today’s people don’t. Let’s read chapter 3, 17-20:

“There the wicked cease from raging, and there the weary are at rest. The prisoners are at ease together; they do not hear the voice of the taskmaster.” (Job 3, 17-18)

Do you understand it? Job knew that there were no taskmasters, no whips, no demons and no suffering in Hades, in hell. He knew what many people today don’t know. This is where the master and his servant lie

next to each other and they are treated equally. Job knew about it.

“The small and the great are there, and the slave is free from his master. Why is light given to one burdened with grief, and life to the bitter of soul...” (Job 3, 19-20)

Job knew that it was already quiet there and one can no longer hear the voice. But Job knew that one day we would have to get up from there. It was said by Jesus in John 5:

“...the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.” (John 5, 25)

“For a time is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come out: those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the bad deeds to a resurrection of judgment.” (John 5, 28-29)

We can see that Job knew about it, as he claims, from hearsay because then, people orally conveyed the news about God. One generation annunciated the greatness of God to the next generation. Job was before God. He belonged to God with all his heart. In this suffering of Job, the next step is a visit of his friends. We know how difficult was the suffering of Job. We know how difficult it is when your loved ones turn against you: “Do you still want to stick with this God? Leave Him. Note that He doesn’t make you happy and you have problems.” Job’s friends come to him, they see him and don’t recognize him because he changed a lot. Before, they saw him as a dignified and upright man, and now they see him as the man sitting in the ashes and having severe boils. They fell silent seeing it because it must have been a terrible view. We often think about ourselves not to look bad, but here is the depth of the humiliation. But whomsoever God humiliates, He exalts this person even more. (...)