

Job's suffering – part 3

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JOB'S SUFFERING

Sometimes there are great sufferings that one has to endure, but then one is even closer to God.

Let's notice that Job's suffering increases very quickly. When his friends come, they are already biased against him. The devil biases them against Job and will use them to destroy Job. When Eliphaz speaks (God says to Eliphaz: "go with your friends to Job), we read in chapter 4, 5-17:

"But now it comes to you, and you are impatient; it touches you, and you are horrified. Is your fear of God not your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope? Remember now, who *ever* perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed? According to what I have seen, those who plow wrongdoing and those who sow trouble harvest it. By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of His anger they come to an end. The roaring of the lion and the voice of the *fierce* lion, and the teeth of the young lions are broken out. The lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered. Now a word was brought to me secretly, and my ear received a whisper of it. Amid disquieting thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on people, dread came upon me, and trembling, and made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed by my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. *Something* was standing still, but I could not recognize its appearance; a form *was* before my eyes; *there was* silence, then I heard a voice: *Can mankind be righteous before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?*"

Someone stands in front of this man. Job is righteous, fearing God, pure and he still stays true to God. God also has such an opinion of him. And now Eliphaz is to call into question the truth that is present in Job's life – "Would God call down his righteous man? Would God take everything away from his righteous man? Would God make you sick now? You must have done evil. Recall if someone ever died while being innocent or if the righteous people were exterminated. After all, your children died."

Do you understand it? A friend comes to you and he says: "Recall, has it ever been like this? You didn't see to your children. They had sinned and so they died. They died because of their sins. You are also going through it all because of your own sins. Confess only to your sins. We'll try to figure it out, Job." (We'll try to figure it out, but no longer with the righteous man of God, but with the sinner who has turned away from God).

See how tricky the enemy is. He's trying all the time to get Job to start thinking in a different way. Job thinks in God's way all the time and he turns to God with everything; God is in the first place in his heart. The devil's intention is to change his way of thinking: "Job, doubt in your honesty and doubt in what you have experienced with God." Later, we will see the pressure increasing. It can be said that Job's friends are getting annoyed that Job doesn't want to agree to what they offer him. They offer him an honorable way out: "Job, admit that you are the sinner and we, your friends, will somehow solve this problem." However, Job refuses to accept such a way out. He wants to stay where he was before. Job wants to be with God. He wants to ask God and find out the reason of this suffering. His statements are those of a man who is in pain. His children died and he doesn't understand what's going on.

Job begins to say words that he addresses to those people, expecting that his friends will want to say something that will help him understand what's going on now. They bowed very easily to pressure of the

devil and have already figured out what was happening to Job: “Job, you have sinned and now, we only have to get the place of your sin out of you.” If Job had really sinned and wanted to cover it, he would have been an unrighteous, false and hypocritical man. But Job was the righteous man, so he didn’t hide anything.

In the Book of Job 8, 4-6, we can read:

“If your sons sinned against Him, then He turned them over to the power of their wrongdoing. If you will search for God and implore the compassion of the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, surely now He will stir Himself for you and restore your righteous estate.”

Do you understand? “Your sons sinned against God and then He turned them over to the power. Job, start to think like this; it really is a punishment. If you confess to it, God will get you out of your disease. Just confess, this is the punishment for their sins. You don’t have to endure this pain. Confess and then God will heal you. He will get you out of this disease.” Someone might say: “Whatever, I’m sick of it. I don’t care.” But Job said: “Even if I was killed, I will stand my ground. I know how I walked with God. I know how I watched it. I know and God knows it as well.”

Although God still doesn’t speak with Job and the devil tries in various ways to speak to him, drag him into his trap (as he once dragged Eve, Adam and other people) and play with him, Job has a sincere heart and his statements are also sincere. He doesn’t understand, but he is genuine. Even when he’s outraged, he’s sincere, he isn’t a hypocrite and the devil can’t cause a false way of thinking in him to sow a thought that he could later use against Job to keep him from God. “Take it, accept it, we’ll figure it out.”

In 8, 13, we can read:

“So are the paths of all who forget God; and the hope of the godless will perish.”

Job could have said: “You are bad comforters. What did you make up? Who is speaking through you?” In Job, the Spirit of God who is in him begins to act and Job begins to notice that these are his friends who need his help! Job already understands that they are deluded and when they want to go away, he says to them: “Don’t go away, stay. I have news for you.” Job is really important to them, even if he’s sick and attacked. Do you understand? What a great power of God’s action in man!

This man of God was attacked from all sides. You and I can be attacked more and more, even in dreams, by various things that would like to weaken us: “See, God left you and abandoned you. Why are you still in this? Why do you still obey the Word of God? Use the rest of your life, enjoy, have fun, take advantage at least of it.” But you know how you live with God. If you abide in Him, abide in Him to the very end. You gain your soul through perseverance. Don’t retreat! Don’t give up! This is a fight against the enemy who has similarly attacked our brothers and sisters in Christ in previous generations.

Let’s open Job 22, 3-9:

“Is it any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous, or gain if you make your ways blameless? Is it because of your reverence that He punishes you, that He enters into judgment against you? Is your wickedness not abundant, and is there no end to your guilty deeds? For you have seized pledges from your brothers without cause, and stripped people naked. You have given the weary no water to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry. But the earth belongs to the powerful man, and the one who is honorable dwells on it. You have sent widows away empty, and the strength of orphans has been crushed.”

Do you understand what they are saying now?! Job cared about people, did good and they are saying now that he only did evil! “Does your piety matter to God?” The enemy becomes more and more distinguishable because of the fact that Job abides in the truth. The enemy is hidden. He has to launch more and more things to attack Job. He even runs out of arguments and attacks Job: “You did evil. God wouldn’t punish such a man. What is the gain of your piety? You lie in the ashes . God shows that it means nothing to Him.” But it did, right?

Are you ready to watch your righteousness? Who is your Righteousness? Do you understand what we are leading up to? Jesus Christ is our righteousness. Are you ready to hold onto your Righteousness and not let go of at all? **The Lord is our righteousness.** The righteous person will live by faith, but the Lord is the benefit that generates an effective life here on earth. The fruit of this Righteous One is our action towards ourselves and other people. Are you ready to watch yourself?

Job watched the Righteousness in which he lived before God’s face and although many things fell to him, he didn’t let go of it. Are you ready to stick with Christ so as to go through all adversities and not abandon it in order to sin and to live here in the world? You decide to walk with Him, you belong to Him all the time because He is your righteousness. You won’t let go of the Lord because He is your righteousness and you keep to it completely. You belong to Jesus. He is the most important to you. I think we will end here for today, we will end with our righteousness.

You, me and each of us must hold onto the Lord with all our heart. We walk on this earth, we have different experiences, episodes, various information reaches us, but Jesus is perfect righteousness both for me and you. We have already climbed Golgotha, we have been crucified with Him to lead a new life today, belonging to Him. Thanks to the Righteousness, we can walk with God on the earth, belong to Him and be sure of our Christ. See that the devil also attacks Christ today. The devil says: “He wasn’t so righteous. He had a woman on the earth, Magdalene. He followed someone else.” They try to attack our Righteousness and if you want to be saved, hold onto the Lord as your righteousness. Belong to Him with all your heart and with all your life so that He could bestow His life on you and so that other people would experience help, love, grace, forgiveness, mercifulness, abstinence and doing good, just like the people who were with Job.

Don’t stop doing good, you have Righteousness. Do good, especially to those who live in faith. When Christ is your righteousness, then your life is vivacious, real, you are filled with the Lord, you live, abound and Christ emanates from you. This is not a plagiarism. This righteousness emanated from Job and was showed up on other people. In the same way: “The Lord is my righteousness” – it must be showed up and it must emanate. It revives us for God, therefore the devil will try to distort the righteousness, take away its perfection and take away its power over our sins. Christ died so that we would stop sinning and could lead a new life. Hold on tight, don’t let go of it, not to allow yourself to sin because it isn’t holding onto the Lord. Is it possible to hold onto someone so pure with impure hands? Is it possible to hold onto the Lord with impure thoughts, plans and still have your plans? A woman touched the Lord with faith and her disease disappeared. Whoever touched Him with faith was freed from this evil.

Remember that if this Righteousness ceases to have its value, then you will begin to live like the world. It’s always like this. If the Lord is no longer this perfect righteousness that on the cross of Golgotha perfectly fulfilled everything that the Father wanted so that He could forgive you and me that we could live a new life; and if Christ isn’t a gain for you and me to live a new life, then we gave back our Righteousness. If the devil succeeds in leaving Christ and living his own life, then we will die.

Job says some things that are also very important and we can listen to his statements, know his reactions, learning how he reacted. We are expected to fervently care about these Lord's issues, to crave for them, to talk with God about them and to come to Him. People also expect us to knock to be opened so that we receive what's necessary, that the Lord may be honored and that He may have us here on the earth for Himself. Although the enemy will discourage us, stop us, try to fascinate us with something else, it will be at the center of our lives. We already know that Job won, he passed the test and it's important for God that we also pass the test so that He might have us in His eternity. Amen.