

As a quick recap we've seen how the book of Job is set up with God taking one of His servants and using him to demonstrate the frailty of men and the power of God together with His will to accomplish all that He desires for His glory.

In Job's case it was God's will to showcase Job for Satan in such a way as to demonstrate that no matter what is allowed in the life of one of God's people He will never let them go, but in the process it also shows that He will use whatever means to test His people, but in the final analysis He will bring them through because He will never let them go.

1 Peter 4:12-13 ¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

Romans 8:35-39 ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Unless we understand this and believe this we will view trials and tribulations as something that is strange and useless as it simply hinders our ability to live a life of our own choosing according to our plans.

Job's plan was to manage his many animals and till the land as he made a very good living at it. He only desired to love God and his family and his neighbors. There was nothing in the plan of Job to invite the trials he was about to encounter.

Without consulting Job God had other plans. And the plan was to take Job and use him in a way that showed how the seed of the

woman continues to combat the seed of the serpent. And that until the very end of time this war will continue.

And as in most wars there is collateral damage, and as in most wars people do not normally volunteer to get into harm's way. But for those who have been called to war and have been trained and equipped for war we anticipate the battles and are ready when we are engaged.

But the only way this can happen is if we are tested in what we have learned. Those special forces in our armed services spend more time training than they ever spend in battle. They are taught tactics, they are taught to use every type of weapon, they are taught about their enemy and they are taught to trust in the people who send them into harm's way as those people are there to have their backs with the latest technology that assures success in their battle.

It's no coincidence that our special forces are some of the best in the world. And yet, many Christians are taken by surprise when the battle begins to rage around them as if some strange thing were happening to them and that no one has their back.

This is the way Job perceived it. Something strange was happening to him that he could not understand or explain. But instead of relying on his training and his status as a warrior for God, which in his case was the result of trusting in the promise that God was His Lord, Creator and Savior, he placed his eyes on the situation and his friends and concluded that God had forgotten him.

God had not forgotten him, in fact it was because God was always mindful of His servant Job that Job was in the situation he was in, precisely to find himself engaged in a battle that was designed to show God's goodness and power in Job's life.

Most of us don't have the mindset that we are soldiers for Christ. We are familiar with the expression and we believe that we are set apart by God to represent Him in this world, but the idea that this aspect of being set apart actually includes being a soldier, is a little foreign to us.

But unless we embrace what God has deemed of us, that is a soldier of Christ, we will not be inclined to go forward when the battle rages, thinking instead that the trial is only the result of sin, or bad luck, or being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or even something we may have done to deserve it.

None of those things were part of the equation with Job, and more times than not, they are not part of the equation in our lives as believes in Christ Jesus. Paul understood this. And in case we've forgotten, the apostle Paul wrote most of the New Testament under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If anyone deserved to be blessed by God it was this man. But what do we read?

2 Corinthians 11:23-33 ²³ Are they servants of Christ?-- I speak as if insane-- I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶ *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷ *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? ³⁰ If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, ³³ and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and *so* escaped his hands.

Paul was always in danger and suffered tremendously in this world as a result of his ministry for Christ. And so, it is obvious that not even he was exempt from these types of trials that either God allowed or personally orchestrated for Paul's good and God's glory. And this is something he passed along to his protégé Timothy.

2 Timothy 2:3-4 ³ Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

Only as we see ourselves as soldiers for Christ in a hostile world will we be able to accept and endure in the power of the Spirit when trials and temptations want to overtake us. Instead of seeing the trial as an opportunity to grow so that we might please the One

who has given us eternal life, we will see it as only heartache and hurt.

Trials are heartaches and hurt, but that is only true if there is no apparent reason for them. That would be true heartache. But the God who creates the universe with a mere word tells us that He has a reason for everything in our lives.

What He is telling Job, as He lays out in great detail how He created all things and that He didn't need to consult with Job during that process, is that He doesn't need to consult with Job as to how to work in Job's life for his ultimate good.

From chapters 38 through 41 God reminds Job of His almighty power and creative acts as He formed all things animate and inanimate. The Lord reminds Job that every animal of the field belongs to Him and that all of the traits that each animal possesses has actually been programmed into that animal by God Himself.

Ostrich's are one of the dumbest animals when it comes to rearing its young. That's not because evolution left something out of this animal's ability to propagate itself effectually.

Job 39:13-17 ¹³ "The ostriches' wings flap joyously With the pinion and plumage of love, ¹⁴ For she abandons her eggs to the earth And warms them in the dust, ¹⁵ And she forgets that a foot may crush them, Or that a wild beast may trample them. ¹⁶ "She treats her young cruelly, as if *they* were not hers; Though her labor be in vain, *she* is unconcerned; ¹⁷ Because God has made her forget wisdom, And has not given her a share of understanding.

Time after time God uses different examples of His creation to impress upon Job that the Lord creates for a reason, and He does all things for a reason.

Interestingly enough Job does respond for a brief moment during this monologue that God is carrying out, but it is very brief.

Job 40:1-9 ^{NAU} Then the LORD said to Job, ² "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it." ³ Then Job answered the LORD and said, ⁴ "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. ⁵ "Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more." ⁶ Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm and said, ⁷ "Now gird up your loins like a man; I will ask you, and you instruct Me. ⁸ "Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified? ⁹ "Or

do you have an arm like God, And can you thunder with a voice like His?

By the way, why would God call Job a faultfinder when Job was only trying to figure out why his life was turned upside down?

Because he was tempted to find fault in anything else but himself.

Was Job at fault for the calamity that came upon him?

No. But by not simply submitting to the God who creates all things and plans all things, Job was in essence forgetting that God can and will test His servants as He deems fit. And during those times we still need to turn our attention, trust and worship toward the Creator who has a reason for everything.

God then continues to show Job His power in creation and dedicates the entire 41st chapter to one beast.

Job 41:1-34 ^{NAU} "Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook? Or press down his tongue with a cord? ² "Can you put a rope in his nose Or pierce his jaw with a hook? ³ "Will he make many supplications to you, Or will he speak to you soft words? ⁴ "Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him for a servant forever? ⁵ "Will you play with him as with a bird, Or will you bind him for your maidens? ⁶ "Will the traders bargain over him? Will they divide him among the merchants? ⁷ "Can you fill his skin with harpoons, Or his head with fishing spears? ⁸ "Lay your hand on him; Remember the battle; you will not do it again! ⁹ "Behold, your expectation is false; Will you be laid low even at the sight of him? ¹⁰ "No one is so fierce that he dares to arouse him; Who then is he that can stand before Me? ¹¹ "Who has given to Me that I should repay *him*? *Whatever* is under the whole heaven is Mine. ¹² "I will not keep silence concerning his limbs, Or his mighty strength, or his orderly frame. ¹³ "Who can strip off his outer armor? Who can come within his double mail? ¹⁴ "Who can open the doors of his face? Around his teeth there is terror. ¹⁵ "*His* strong scales are *his* pride, Shut up *as with* a tight seal. ¹⁶ "One is so near to another That no air can come between them. ¹⁷ "They are joined one to another; They clasp each other and cannot be separated. ¹⁸ "His sneezes flash forth light, And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. ¹⁹ "Out of his mouth go burning torches; Sparks of fire leap forth. ²⁰ "Out of his nostrils smoke goes forth As *from* a boiling pot and *burning* rushes. ²¹ "His breath kindles coals, And a flame goes forth from his mouth. ²² "In his

neck lodges strength, And dismay leaps before him. ²³ "The folds of his flesh are joined together, Firm on him and immovable. ²⁴ "His heart is as hard as a stone, Even as hard as a lower millstone. ²⁵ "When he raises himself up, the mighty fear; Because of the crashing they are bewildered. ²⁶ "The sword that reaches him cannot avail, Nor the spear, the dart or the javelin. ²⁷ "He regards iron as straw, Bronze as rotten wood. ²⁸ "The arrow cannot make him flee; Slingstones are turned into stubble for him. ²⁹ "Clubs are regarded as stubble; He laughs at the rattling of the javelin. ³⁰ "His underparts are *like* sharp potsherds; He spreads out *like* a threshing sledge on the mire. ³¹ "He makes the depths boil like a pot; He makes the sea like a jar of ointment. ³² "Behind him he makes a wake to shine; One would think the deep to be gray-haired. ³³ "Nothing on earth is like him, One made without fear. ³⁴ "He looks on everything that is high; He is king over all the sons of pride."

Job 42:1-2 ^{NAU} Then Job answered the LORD and said, ² "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

There is one word in the second verse that clarifies everything for Job at this point that he had not clearly seen up to this point. Anyone want to take a stab at what word that might be?

Purpose. Unless we see God's purpose in everything that takes place in our lives we will be crippled by the trials that overcome us at times.

Again, this doesn't mean that we delight in the pain of the trial it simply means that we rejoice in what that trial might accomplish for God's purposes and glory as we earnestly seek God's grace and strength to go through the trial.

As we saw earlier the apostle Paul suffered greatly, but even Paul understood that people can only take so much and there is a breaking point for all of us, and we want the trial and the pain just to go away.

2 Corinthians 12:7 ⁷ Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me-- to keep me from exalting myself!

Notice here that Paul was given a messenger of Satan. Job was given Satan himself. But the point is that Paul either realized

during the trial or maybe after, as he is simply reflecting on what he learned about this messenger, that this messenger was sent.

What is the implication as to who sent it?

So, the beatings and the shipwrecks, and the stonings and the hatred at the hands of the Jews and others was not enough? Paul now needed a messenger of Satan sent by God? But notice that Paul realizes that this messenger was sent for a reason.

And what is that reason according to Paul in verse 7 of 2Cor 12?

But then Paul seems to move back in time, prior to realizing the reason, much the same as Job who didn't initially understand the reason.

2 Corinthians 12:8 ⁸ Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

Why would Paul pray this way?

For the same reason that you and I would pray this way. Enough is enough.

But notice the change in heart after Paul realizes that there is a true reason for this messenger sent by God.

2 Corinthians 12:9 ⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore,

Let's stop right there for a moment. What are those three words, "most gladly, therefore", connected with in Paul's thought process according to the beginning of verse 9?

"He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."

The most important part of this phrase, by the way, is, He has said.

Why is that the most important phrase, especially in light of Job's situation?

When God speaks, all that follows is true and good and according to His will that will not be thwarted.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 ⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that

the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

But back to Job.

Job 42:1-6 ^{NAU} Then Job answered the LORD and said, ² "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. ³ 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." ⁴ 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.' ⁵ "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; ⁶ Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes."

Job has confessed that he did not understand the trial. He does not confess, nor does he need to confess that the trial is painful and hurtful and beyond his strength to deal with. God does not rebuke Job for experiencing and then acknowledging the pain; only that Job did not acknowledge that God's plans can and do include such trials for Job's good and God's glory.

And what is interesting is that God blesses Job for admitting one very simple and yet profound thing.

Job 42:3-4 ³ 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." ⁴ 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.'

Up to this point Job has instructed his three friends and his friends returned the favor. And often in life, especially when we are going through trials, we spend of good deal of time instructing ourselves or others, as we try and figure it all out when in fact we really don't know.

But, when we don't know it is so important to go to the One who does know and allow Him to instruct us.

How is that done?

As in the case we saw with Paul, we must go back to our foundation, "And He has said."

There really is no shortcut. But we must accept all that God has said. And so, when He says, I will never leave you or forsake you.

We must accept that. When He says, nothing can separate you from My love, we must accept that.

2 Corinthians 3:1-5 ^{NAU} Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? ² You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ³ being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. ⁴ Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

2 Thessalonians 3:3-4 ³ But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil *one*. ⁴ We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will *continue to* do what we command., we need to believe it and walk in that truth.

The point is that when Job finally got to the place of saying to God, 'instruct me', he had reached the end of his own wisdom and was now relying on God's infinite wisdom. If we are unwilling to go to the one place where we can be instructed by God then the only thing we are left with is our own understanding which will always want to revel in its own pity.

It's at this point when we can turn from our own ways and turn back to God's ways, and that can only be understood because of the Spirit who resides in us to give us eyes to see and ears to hear. And Job admits this as well.

Job 42:5-6 ⁵ "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; ⁶ Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes."

Nothing more is recorded as to God speaking anything more to Job. But He does speak to Jobs' friends.

Job 42:7-9 ⁷ It came about after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has. ⁸ "Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you *according to your* folly, because

you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has." ⁹
So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job.

It is at this point that God blesses Job and restores to him twofold of everything.

Job 42:10-11 ¹⁰ The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold. ¹¹ Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him. And each one gave him one ¹piece of money, and each a ring of gold.

The pain was still there and he still needed consolation from friends and family, but Job could move on with his life knowing that God had a reason and a purpose for all that He did and Job, like Paul, could rejoice in his weaknesses because God's strength and grace was sufficient.

But there is a happy ending to this man's life.

Job 42:12-17 ¹² The LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys. ¹³ He had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴ He named the first Jemimah, and the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. ¹⁵ In all the land no women were found so fair as Job's daughters; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers. ¹⁶ After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. ¹⁷ And Job died, an old man and full of days.

You and I may never see this kind of blessing in this life, but the point is that God will bless us even more abundantly than Job could have ever imagined.

Ephesians 3:20 -21 ²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹ to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.