March 22, 2026 – Fifth Sunday of Lent

Lent Sermon Series: Faith Through Trials

Job: The Lord Gave and the Lord Has Taken Away

Job

The book of Job is the story of perseverance through personal hardship and challenge. No matter our age, we have all probably faced some type of trial in our lives and some are still enduring rough times. Some of us find joy easily in the darkness, and others depend on the presence of God and our friends to get through it.

I've looked at this book a lot of times and it doesn't matter how much I pray before reading it, I have to admit that I just don't get how Job was supposed to feel after losing everything. At the end of the book, we read that God gave Job ten more children, which was certainly a blessing … but how does that replace the ones he lost?

First chapter, and we have the "*heavenly beings"* presenting themselves to God, and who happens to be amongst them? – Our enemy, the accuser – none other than Satan himself. And God asks him where he's been. Satam tells God, "Just walking around earth, checking things out."

And God asks if Satan had seen God's servant Job. God tells Satan that there's no one like him on all the earth … he's upright and blameless; he fears God and turns away from evil!

Satan practically laughs at this … "Well, why wouldn't he be a good man, why wouldn't Job think highly of You? You've protected and blessed him and everything he's done. You've allowed everything he has to increase. Give me a break – of course he honors You!"

Satan dares God to let Job suffer and then see him curse God.

So, God says, "*Very well, all that he has is in your power; only do not stretch out your hand against him!"*

One day messengers come to Job, telling him that their enemies have killed his oxen and donkeys; his sheep have been burned; his camels have been stolen; they've killed his servants; and a great wind took down the house where his children were eating and the house "*fell on the young people, and they are dead."*

Our children are not supposed to die before us. Mary knelt at the base of the cross and wept in great sorrow as her son died. Sally is sitting by John's bedside. Job has now lost all of his children and he "*tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped."*

In verse 21 we read: *Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."*

Wait, what? He loses everything and worshipped God?

It says that in all of these devastating things that have happened, Job didn't sin and he didn't blame God for any of it.

No matter how much he suffered, he still had faith. He certainly didn't understand why any of this had happened – I think we can relate, but Job trusted God. The death of his children is a reminder of the fragility of life and the importance of keeping our faith in the face of adversity, trusting that God is present through our trials – and He will work all things for good.

Job recognized that everything he had in his life came from the hand of the Lord. If God chose to take that away from him, then who was Job to complain?

But the thing is, Job's trials don't stop there.

The heavenly beings came before God again, and Satan was there once more. And once again God asks Satan where he's been. "Oh, you know, taking a stroll on earth, checking things out."

God asks him if he's noticed Job, and how "*he still persists in his integrity, although you incited me against him, to destroy him for no reason."*

Satan says, “hurt the man himself – and he’ll curse you.” So, God gives Satan permission to touch his flesh … but he must spare his life.

Satan goes back to earth “*inflicted loathsome sores on Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.”*

As soon as I was old enough for my insurance to cover the shingles vaccines, I immediately went for both shots. They gave me flu-like symptoms, but there was no way I was going to endure the burning, stabbing, painful itching, shock-like symptoms, possible blindness that shingles could cause. This is how I imagine Job suffered.

As if this pain wasn’t enough, Job’s wife comes to him and says, “*Curse God and die!”* But Job said to her, “*Shall we receive good from God and not receive evil?”* And still Job did not sin with his lips.

The rest of the book, 42 chapters, are conversations. Each taking a turn, his friends heap all kinds of accusations on him … Job certainly must have sinned for God to allow such suffering! But Job insists he’s done no wrong.

In fact, he speaks of how he has tried his best to do good. He’s helped the poor and the orphan, the blind and the lame, he’s championed the cause of strangers, and how blessed he was to have his children around him and all his needs met.

Job tells them that he followed all of God’s commands because he knew what would happen to the unrighteous. He didn’t lie, he didn’t look at other women besides his wife, he didn’t ignore the needs nor the complaints of his slaves, he didn’t value money or his possessions over God, he didn’t celebrate the misfortunes of others.

We can do everything we can to live a good life, but, like Job – we can still feel attacked, whether physically, mentally or spiritually.

All of Job’s words might have sounded a little prideful, but even God told Satan that this was the kind of man Job was.

As the book continues, Job has a conversation with God, asking Him what he had done for God to punish him in this way, praying for relief.

As if the book was written like a play on stage, there’s even an interlude where it’s asked where wisdom comes from, where can it be found.

Then a young man, Elihu (El – lee – hue), came forward, and he was angry because for all of their accusations, Job’s friends couldn’t identify a single wrong that Job had done … even though they insisted he must have done something to allow God to treat him so.

But Elihu (El – lee – hue) was also angry at Job, because Job was justifying himself rather than God. In 33:8-16 Elihu says: *“Surely, you have spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the sound of your words.*
You say, ‘I am clean, without transgression; I am pure, and there is no iniquity in me.
Look, he finds occasions against me; he counts me as his enemy;
he puts my feet in the stocks and watches all my paths.’
“But in this you are not right. I will answer you: God is greater than any mortal.
Why do you contend against Him, saying, ‘He will answer none of my words’?
For God speaks in one way and in two, though people do not perceive it.
In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on mortals,
while they slumber on their beds, then he opens their ears.

This younger man brought wisdom to the table. In 34:12, Elihu (El–lee–hue) says: *“Of a truth, God will not do wickedly, and the Almighty will not pervert justice.”*

After all of these conversations, back and forth, God answers Job … well, he actually questions Job as to who created and provided for the world. Job couldn’t say much to that and, in chapter 40:7-8, God said,
“Gird up your loins like a man; I will answer you, and you declare to me.
Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be justified?”

And Job was humbled!! In chapter 42:2, Job says, “*I know that You can do all things and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”* In verse 6 he says, *“therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”*

And next God talks to Job's friends and tells them that they have not spoken truth about God … while Job has actually spoken well of Him. So, God tells Jobs friends, who should have been encouraging their friend Job, helping him through his suffering, that they needed to do some penance. They were to bring burnt offerings to God and then Job would pray for them. His friends are humiliated! But God accepts Job's prayers for his "friends."

And then in verses 10 through 17, God divinely restores Job's fortunes twofold; He blesses him with sheep, camels, oxen and donkeys. God gives Job seven sons and three daughters who were more beautiful than any in all the land. Job lived a long life and saw his children and his grandchildren, four generations.

We may face what seems to be insurmountable challenges. We may not receive twofold what we have lost. In fact, God may not even restore what we lose during our lifetime. We may not be vindicated for the lies told about our character. We may not experience easy days. We may not live a long life.

But we are to trust in God's plan even through our sufferings. Believe that God can and will use all things for good. Believe that there <u>are</u> better things to come. God's blessings will exceed our every expectation, blessings beyond our imagination.

In John 16:22, Jesus said, "*So you have pain now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."*

And then in verse 33, "*I have said this to you so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution, but take courage: I have conquered the world!"*

We must learn to find joy in our sorrow, faith in our trials, humility, perseverance and patience in the face of all we endure … and have the ability to worship God through every moment of our lives.

God's faithfulness, His love and His mercy will ultimately lead us to a place of abundance and joy. There will be light after the darkest of storms.

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."