

12 June 2022

Worship: Despite suffering – Job 1:6-22

1. The Work of The Evil One

He is found amongst God's faithful servants

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

Question 1: How can great evil exist alongside great good?

He is restless

⁷ The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

Question 2: Why does God ask the evil one this question?

He accuses to destroy (but does not know the future)

⁸ And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" ⁹ Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? ¹⁰ Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."

His power is limited by God

¹² And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Question 3: What do you find disturbing about this conversation?

Question 4: What do you find encouraging about this conversation?

2. The Work of God

He asks questions to which he already knows the answers!

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

He takes joy in your faithful discipleship

⁸ And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?"

Question 5: How do you feel about the concept that your discipleship brings God joy?

God tests to reveal truth: is your faith transactional or eternal?

⁹ Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? ¹⁰ Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." ¹² And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Question 6: Why does the debate between transactional and eternal faith matter so much?

3. The Work of Job

His tragedy

¹³ Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were ploughing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁶ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁷ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁸ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

- **Tragedy 1: some animals (v14-15)**
- **Tragedy 2: more animals (v16)**
- **Tragedy 3: bigger animals (v17)**
- **Tragedy 4: his children (v18)**

Question 7: How does tragedy affect faith?

His response: worship

²⁰ Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshipped. ²¹ And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

- **He mourns**
- **He worships**
- **He shows wisdom**
- **He praises God**
- **He stays faithful**

Question 8: How does this behaviour by Job act as such a helpful guide to anyone facing tragedy?

A Prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, thank you for the greater understanding this passage gives me of the work of the evil one. Thank you that he is not all powerful and all knowing, but that, despite appearances sometimes to the contrary, he is a defeated adversary. Thank you for your work in my life, the questions you ask of me, the joy you take in my faithful discipleship and the testing you permit, which reveals my faith to be not transactional but eternal. Whatever the difficulties and tragedies of life, help me mourn, worship, show wisdom, praise you and stay faithful. As different layers are laid on the canvas of my life, hold me fast until that day when the full picture of your work in my life is revealed: the beauty of Christ at work in me.

For the sake of your Son my Saviour Jesus Christ, **Amen.**