**JOB 38:1-11**

**POP’S QUIZ**

The historical record of Job can be seen as the most tragic event in the entire Bible. Job had been immensely blessed by the Lord. We’re told that at one time Job had ten children and that “he possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants,” and that he was “the greatest of all the people of the east” (1:3). But in one day he lost it all. His flocks and servants were destroyed by raiding parties from the surrounding nations, and his children were killed in their home by a storm. And if that weren’t enough, not long after this Job himself was struck with a terrible disease and he ended up with painful sores all over his body. To say that Job suffered would be an understatement.

Yet, throughout his suffering Job never lost faith in God, but he was certainly tempted to. Time and again, Job complained to God and questioned God’s motives. “I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say to God, ‘Do not condemn me; let me know why You contend against me’” (10:1–2). If he didn’t outright accuse God of being unfair to him, he certainly got close. Job even insists that he be given the chance to defend himself before God: “I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue my case with God” (13:3).

Likely you haven’t experienced suffering to the same extent that Job did, but you know what it means to suffer. Some of you have had to bury your husbands or wives. Many of you deal with painful, lingering illnesses, or have had to endure treatments for various conditions. The suffering that Job faced, while extreme, wasn’t uncommon. As sinners living in a broken world, we all face suffering.

And when we suffer, we often question God. We want to know why God has allowed these terrible things to happen. Why did God send that hail that destroyed your entire crop? Why would God make me suffer for years with pain? Why am I still languishing here on earth while my spouse and all my friends are in heaven?

Suffering of any kind is a test of our faith. It shakes us and makes us wonder if God really cares about us, or if He even exists. It makes us wish that we could ask God straight to His face why He’s doing what He’s doing it.

In today’s text God gave Job the chance he was looking for. “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind” (v 1a). That God answered Job, or that He would answer any of us, should blow us away, humble us, and leave us marvelling over what kind of God we have. Yet, Job didn’t get the answers he was looking for. In fact, Job got a Fatherly quiz from God. “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? … I will question you, and you make it known to me” (vv 1b–3). The Almighty doesn’t have to answer to us; we answer to Him!

Yet, Job had no answers for God’s questions. Would you be able to answer any of them? Let’s try the first three. “Where were you when God laid the foundation of the earth?” (v 4). You should know the answer to that question. I’ve told you many times. You find the answer in Ephesians 1:3-4. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.” Before the foundation of the earth you were in Christ Jesus.

Next question: “Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?” (v 5). That one too I’ve given you the answer many times. The answer is found five times in the book of Isaiah, and in many other places. In Isaiah the Lord God says, “My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand forth together” (Isaiah 48:13).

Last question: “On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone”? (v. 6). There again we turn to Isaiah (28:16). “Therefore, thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation".” The Bonus question is ‘Who is the cornerstone?’ From many Scripture references we find out that the cornerstone is Jesus. Jesus Himself said, “Have you not read this Scripture: "'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” (Mark 12:10). Have you read the Scriptures?

Even though Job didn’t know all of these Scriptures, he knew that God alone had done all these things. He just had no idea how! On what are the bases of the earth sunk? How did God lay the foundations of the earth? None of us know this! Scientists have made amazing discoveries about God’s universe, but the truth is that we’ll never fully understand how God made the universe, or how He upholds it and rules over it.

And if we can’t understand how God does those things in creation, why would we think we could understand the deeper mysteries of God, like how God can make “all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28)? We can’t, and that will finally be Job’s reply. After several more chapters of questions from God, Job finally gets up the courage to speak up. “I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. . . . I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (42:3, 6).

Job repented, and he turned with renewed faith back to the Lord. And that, in the end, was God’s goal, as it is always His goal for us. God desires that we repent of our sins and foolishness and turn back to Him in faith and trust. That’s the most important thing to keep in mind as we think about all those things that Job had to endure. God wasn’t Job’s enemy. God was treating Job as a believer and a beloved child. Through these questions, God was reminding Job of wonderful things which were meant to strengthen his faith in God. God’s “invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made” – Romans 1:20.

It was arrogant of Job to think that God should have to justify Himself to Job. It’s also arrogant of us if we think that way too. And it’s arrogant of us to think that if God did answer us, we’d be able to understand Him.

We, too, should repent in dust and ashes, and quit questioning things that are too deep for us to understand. We don’t need to know why God allows the things that He allows. The First Commandment simply calls for us to “fear, love, and trust in God above all things”. That is, we are to believe that God who made the heavens and the earth knows what He’s doing, especially as He directs the affairs of our lives.

Yet, now we have one advantage over Job. We can look at the work of  Jesus. We know that the very same God who laid the cornerstone of the earth (v 6) became the Cornerstone of our faith! Unlike Job, we can see both the wisdom of God and the love of God at work in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for our salvation — events that God planned *before* He laid the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20).

Knowing all of this means that we can answer some of God’s questions in ways that Job never could. “Who determined its measurements? Who stretched the line upon it?” (v 5). The Lord God created and upholds the universe by His divine power.

“All things were made through Jesus, and without Him was not any thing made that was made” - John 1:3. Jesus did those things. He determined the measurements of the earth with the knowledge that one day that same earth would entomb His bloodied and beaten body and then quake when He rose victoriously from the grave!

Sometimes it’s hard for us to believe, but God doesn’t allow anything that’s not ultimately for your eternal good. This means not only should we trust that He knows what He’s doing, but we should also trust that what He does, He does because He loves us, and because He wants only what’s good for us. We can confess that God “who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will also with Him graciously give us all things” (Romans 8:32).

In the midst of your sufferings think of the words of Habakkuk (3:17-19): “Though the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.”

We can’t comprehend the inner workings of God. His wisdom and His ways are just too deep for us, and that’s okay. We have to let God be God. In the midst of things we don’t understand, we do know that God knows what He’s doing, and He loves us so deeply that He was willing to come and suffer and die for us. He has reconciled you to Himself through the blood of  Jesus.

So, instead of questioning God when we suffer, we can remember His questions to Job, which remind us of His love for us in Christ, as every answer points to Jesus: In Christ, Jesus, Jesus. To God alone be all glory, forever and ever. Amen.