

Third Presbyterian Church
Tuesday Bible Study
Job Sermon 2 – Lesson 2
 Being Considered AGAIN!

Job 2:1-13 (NIV)

¹ On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. ² And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." ³ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason." ⁴ "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life.

⁵ But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."

⁶ The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life." ⁷ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. ⁸ Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. ⁹ His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" ¹⁰ He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said. ¹¹ When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. ¹² When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. ¹³

Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

Questions

1. In Satan's reaccusing Job, he states that it is because he has his health that he still is loyal but if you take his health, he will curse you.
 - a. Discuss how loss of health different from loss of possessions?
 - b. Our faith is most vulnerable when our body fails us. Agree or disagree and why?
 - c. How does "being considered" resulting in a loss of health tend to affect those around us? (discuss how so-called friends leave us in time of health crisis and how we keep ourselves from being discouraged when that happens)
2. Many want to follow God but don't want it to cost them anything. They desire a pain free prosperity.
 - a. Discuss how this mindset does not grow faith in God and will cause is to become bitter against God.
 - b. Discuss using the lens of the following scriptures:
 - i. **Luke 14:26-27 (NIV)** ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.
 - ii. **Matthew 10:22 (NIV)**- You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.
3. Being considered is a spiritual battle even if the attack is our body.
 - a. What gift has God given us to overcome spiritual battles supernaturally?

4. Trials prepare us for greater use by God and also prepares us for Glory!!
5. Review the following purposes for Being Considered and discuss each
 - to refine and purify us
 - to cause us to repent of our sin and turn to God
 - to stir us to continually cry out to God for help, which forces us to trust God and to fellowship with Him more and more
 - to strengthen us through the endurance of suffering
 - to cause us to obey God more than ever before and to live far more righteous lives
 - to make us stronger witnesses for God to the world
6. Why is it important to know the 5 stages of Grief and be honest with ourselves with where we are?
 - a. Five Stages of Grief, Briefly discuss each and how we would minister to someone in each stage:
 - i. **Denial**- No, this can't be **happening to me!** (go to sleep wake up and this nightmare will be over)
 - ii. **Anger**- Who's **responsible for this happening!** my relief will come from finding and punishing the cause of this pain.
 - iii. **Bargaining**- I would do **anything to change** it back. God what do I have to do for all of this to just go away. I will tithe like I'm supposed to, I will come to church, study, serve, I do it all just make it stop....
 - iv. **Depression**- I can't **go on**, I just want to die..i can't take this anymore....
 - v. **Acceptance**- There was nothing I **could have done different** or nothing I **can do to change** it now. Lord, I am going to trust you.
7. The normative understanding is Job's wife is villainized for her statement "Curse God and Die." The sermon presented an alternative perspective that allows us to consider what she also has and is going through that possibly produced this statement as an act of loving her husband and wanting his pain and suffering to end.
 - a. Discuss this alternative perspective
 - b. Discuss how Job's response to his wife was covering her in the midst of his own suffering by acknowledging her grief.
8. What is the ministry of Presence and why is it so effective?
9. Discuss your major takeaways from the sermon and this study.

(1:1-2:13) Introduction: Have you ever been coasting along comfortably in life with everything going fairly well, then, without warning, things began to crumble? For months, perhaps years, you had been relatively peaceful, stable, and happy. You were experiencing no major trouble or hardship. When the normal difficulties of everyday life arose, they were easily worked out. Whatever life threw at you was manageable and under control. But then, suddenly, something happened. Some tragedy struck so quickly and unexpectedly that things seemed to come crashing down around you. For years you had been working hard to build a good life for yourself and family, but then, without warning, your good life was threatened, interrupted, and perhaps damaged beyond repair. Think for a minute about these scenarios:

⇒ A good relationship suddenly deteriorates and falls apart.

- ⇒ A child starts acting up or gets into serious trouble.
- ⇒ Unexpected bills arise or an investment goes bad.
- ⇒ You lose your job, home, or a beloved family member.
- ⇒ You are diagnosed with a life-threatening illness.

In other words, tragedy strikes and you feel attacked by fate, bad fortune, Satan, or even the Lord. You believe you are doing everything right but, in return, your life begins to unravel around you. On top of that, nothing you do seems to change or improve the situation. Hopelessness sets in and there appears to be no way out of your desperate situation.

This was the position Job found himself in. Job had a good life, in fact, a very successful, satisfying, and happy life. He was a moral and righteous man who loved the Lord with all his heart. Then suddenly, out of nowhere, one tragedy after another bombarded him. Before Job could comprehend what was happening, it was all over. He had lost everything. His ideal life was interrupted by Satanic attacks and horrible suffering.

This is the captivating drama of the book of *Job*, the real-life story of a godly man under assault by the evil one, Satan himself. In the opening two chapters, we witness a riveting account of the warfare waged in the spiritual world for the lives of men and women. This is, *Job's Rich Life and Happiness Interrupted by Satanic Attacks and Horrible Suffering*, 1:1-2:13.

1. Job's remarkable life, character, and faith in God (1:1-5).
2. Job's accuser and adversary—Satan (1:6-12).
3. Job's faithfulness despite catastrophic loss (1:13-22).
4. Job's relentless enemy and attacker—Satan (2:1-6).
5. Job's perseverance despite physical suffering and rejection (2:7-10).
6. Job's encouragement from a visit by three friends (2:11-13).

1. (1:1-5) Job's remarkable life, character, and faith in God.

The basic facts about Job's remarkable life are given first. We immediately learn of his homeland, his character, his family, his wealth, and the spiritual leadership he gave to his family (see Eze.14:14; James 5:11). Note the Scripture and outline:

While the precise location of Uz is unknown, the area known as Uz is also mentioned in *Jeremiah* and *Lamentations* (Jer.25:20; La.4:21). Uz is also the name of an Edomite man, one of the three sons of Dishan mentioned in the books of *Genesis* and *First Chronicles* (Ge.36:28; 1 Chr.1:42). This son might have given his name to the land of Uz. Regardless of the origin of the name, scholars have speculated on its location. Among the possibilities are the following:

- ⇒ In or near Bashan, south of Damascus
- ⇒ In or near Edom, southeast of the Dead Sea
- ⇒ In northern Arabia, east of Edom

Scholars who point to northern Saudi Arabia note an area called the *Wadi Sirhan*. This is roughly a two-hundred-mile valley that is fertile enough to have supported the large herds Job possessed. It is also near a desert (1:19) and close enough to Edom to be associated with it. In addition, it was within raiding distance of the Chaldeans who attacked Job's camel herds (1:17).

Job's character is far more important than where he lived. Thus, immediately after identifying the man from Uz as Job, the writer lists two vital facts about his character:

1) First, Job was blameless or perfect and upright (v.1b). It is essential to understand how these two words are used here. The word blameless (perfect) does not mean sinless. Job was human; therefore, he could not have been sinless. Nor was he perfect in the sense the word is used today. The Hebrew word *blameless* (*tām*) refers to being blameless of outward or willful sin, not to sinless perfection. It suggests that Job was innocent of deliberate and conscious sin, that he was a man of integrity who walked closely with the Lord. As described later in chapter 31, Job was...

- moral
- honest
- just
- loyal to his wife and family
- generous to the poor
- faithful to the Lord

Job did not worship false gods or idols but rather the only true and living God. For this reason, he sought to please and honor the Lord in all that he did. His heart was pure; consequently, he was in right standing before the Lord.

Neither Job nor God ever claimed that Job was sinless, only that he was *blameless*, innocent of known sin. If Job were perfect or sinless, he would not have needed to repent as he did in the closing chapter of the book (42:6).

The word *upright* (*yāšār*) also pointed to Job's integrity (see Pr.13:6). He was morally straight and lived according to his beliefs and convictions. In other words, a person who observed Job's behavior in his day-to-day life would find no fault in him—and neither did God (see 1:8).

2) Second, Job feared God and shunned (eschewed) evil (v.1c). Scripture declares that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps.111:10; Pr.9:10). The phrase "fear of the Lord" means much more than mere fright or the feeling of fear. It includes reverence and awe—an acknowledgment of God's perfection, strength, and majesty in contrast to human weakness, sinfulness, and need. An appropriate fear of the Lord leads to a godly lifestyle and righteous behavior. Job shunned evil because he feared and revered the Lord. And because he feared and revered the Lord, he sought to live a blameless and upright life.

God blessed Job with a large family: seven sons and three daughters. Not too much should be made of these numbers, though scholars point out that they have symbolic meaning, including their sum of ten. The main emphasis here is on the size of Job's family. In that day, a large family was considered a sign of God's blessing and favor. Therefore, when Job's fortunes and family were restored in chapter 42, the Lord blessed him again with seven sons and three daughters. Hence, the closing chapter of *Job* will present a picture of complete restoration. God

had initially blessed Job with an ideal family. Even after Job lost everything he had, God would bless him with another.

The Lord blessed Job with great wealth. He had a huge ranch and farm and owned an enormous number of animals and servants, which was a common way to measure wealth in the ancient world. Obviously, he needed quite a bit of land in order to support such large herds as well as to provide food for the extensive number of workers (servants) and to sell produce at the markets throughout the region.

1) Job had 7,000 sheep. Sheep were useful for both food and clothing, and in the ancient east, they were heavily relied on for both. Because Job owned so many sheep, he likely engaged in trade and commerce, thereby increasing his wealth. This was all the more likely in view of the fact that he owned so many camels, a major source of transportation in desert regions of his day (see next point). Caravans of camels served the same purpose as the trucking industry today.

2) Job had 3,000 camels. These were used to transport crops and other goods throughout the region, but camels were also prized for their milk and meat.

3) Job had 1,000 oxen (500 yoke or pairs). This indicates that he was engaged in farming on a very large scale. Oxen were used especially for plowing and moving heavy loads, even for operating machinery like grain or stone grist mills. Oxen could also serve as a food source. Furthermore, it is likely Job used them in his burnt offerings to the Lord (v.5).

4) Job had 500 donkeys. The Hebrew word for donkey refers to female donkeys only. The females may have been prized more than the males for their milk, a delicacy during the days of Job. Donkeys, like camels, may also have been used for transportation.

5) Job had a large number of employees or servants. The mass of land and sheer number of animals he owned would have required a huge number of employees, a number probably reaching into the hundreds including their families.

6) Job was the richest person in the East. He was also said to have been the greatest of the great men in the East. In context, this word *great* could refer to both his wealth and his wisdom. *Men of the East* were known for their wisdom, and Job was so wise that other men came to him for counsel (29:21-24).

Unquestionably, Job was recognized widely as a wealthy and great man—a noble or aristocrat, a man highly respected in his day. Even more impressive than his wealth was his faith in the Lord. Job gave credit to the Lord for all he owned. He acknowledged that the hand of God had provided everything. This is clearly seen in the statement he made after losing everything, including his property and his children: "the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away" (1:21).

Scripture paints a very appealing portrait of Job, that of a fine, upstanding, and trustworthy man!

⇒ Job was blameless (perfect) and upright (1:1).

⇒ Job feared the Lord (1:1).

⇒ Job shared with the poor (31:16-21).

⇒ Job cared for strangers (31:32).

⇒ Job was an honest and just judge (29:7, 12-17).

⇒ Job was an honest and fair employer (31:13-15, 38-39).

⇒ Job was highly esteemed and sought out for his wise counsel (29:7-11; 29:21-24).

Job did not allow his wealth to lead him astray, to lead him away from the Lord. Rather, Job put his wealth to good use. He was faithful, generous, and just. He was grateful to the Lord for all he had been given. He was both a good steward and a faithful manager of all that God had entrusted into his care.

Two small bits of information given here show how deeply Job was committed to his family and to the Lord. He was a faithful father.

1) First, Job's family was close, a fact seen in his children's celebrating special occasions together. Each brother took a turn hosting his brothers and sisters (v.4). This one fact shows that Job and his wife had reared a loving and tight-knit family, one that cared for one another and enjoyed being together. Job's sons were careful to take care of their sisters' well-being, an act that was necessary in the male-dominated society of that day. This is clearly indicated by the presence of all three sisters at each of these special family celebrations.

2) Second, Job watched over and cared deeply for his children. He consistently sought the Lord for their cleansing and purification (v.5). After the children's celebrations, he would offer a burnt sacrifice for each child, ten sacrifices in all. Job did this in case they had cursed God or sinned in some other way during their festivities.

Because of Job's sacrifices, some individuals may be quick to suppose that the children's festivities were immoral or even wicked. But the Scripture does not say that the social events were morally wrong or sinful. Most likely, Job simply understood that people can be careless with their thoughts, words, and behavior when having a good time. His children may not have sinned overtly or purposefully, but Job was like any godly father would be: he was concerned that his children had sinned in their hearts, that they had failed to conduct themselves like they should—righteously. Thus, he took extra precautions and offered burnt sacrifices on their behalf. This was the very sacrifice that God required to receive forgiveness of sin—a sacrifice that pointed to the atoning sacrifice of the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thought 1. Job presents a powerful example of godliness—a clear picture of a man who sought to honor the Lord in all he did. Although he was blameless and upright, he was human. Therefore, Job was not perfect, not sinless. Nevertheless, it is clear that Job lived a righteous and holy life, for the Lord Himself declared that Job was blameless (1:8). Job feared, revered, and loved the Lord, and proved this in his day-to-day behavior. He could have spoiled his children with his excessive wealth, but there is no indication he did so. Rather, he set a godly example for them. What better example of concern could he show for God's Holy Name than to offer atoning sacrifices in the event that his children had sinned? By this one act, Job showed how highly he esteemed and feared the Lord. Job set a dynamic example for us. We, too, must fear and revere the Lord; we must honor and respect the Lord and His Holy Name. God's Word charges us to fear and honor the Lord time and again. If we fear the Lord, then we follow Him, obey His commandments, and faithfully worship Him.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt.10:28).

"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (De.5:29).

"That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged" (De.6:2).

"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (De.10:12).

"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Ps.29:2).

2. (1:6-12) Job's accuser and adversary—Satan.

Job was blameless, but he still had an accuser. This accuser was the same scheming adversary of every believer—Satan. The New Testament teaches that Satan prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Pe.5:8). Surprisingly, Scripture also says that Satan stands before God accusing believers (saints) day and night (Re.12:10). In this case, Satan's target was Job.

The conversation that now takes place is between Satan and God, and this conversation sets the stage for the rest of the book. Without it, we would not understand why Job suffered as he did, that is, why the Lord allowed him to suffer. Behind Job's suffering lay a spiritual battle, a cosmic conflict between God and Satan. A war was being waged in the heavens, and it would partly play itself out on earth in the life of Job—an innocent and righteous man (see Resource Section, *A Study on Satan*, p.295 for more discussion). The Scripture and outline paint a graphic picture of Satan's encounter with God:

Up to this point, the book of *Job* has offered only a few biographical details about its main character. Beginning with verse 6, however, the scene sets the stage and gives insight into the drama about to unfold. Note what the Scripture says:

"Now there was a day when the sons of God [angels] came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them (Jb.1:6).

Evidently, the angels and Satan were required to report to God concerning their activities. Whether or not this was or is a regular custom cannot be known for sure. These verses certainly suggest that what happens regularly on earth—namely, a time of accountability for those who serve or work under others—takes place in the spiritual world as well. Given that God is the *Master* of the universe, there are probably scheduled times for the angels to report to God. This would include Satan and other fallen angels—those who followed Satan in his rebellion against

God (see outline and notes—[Re.12:3-4](#), [9](#)). No doubt, the idea of Satan's having access to heaven and to God's presence is surprising to some people. Nonetheless, Scripture is clear: Satan will not be cast into the Lake of Fire until the end of the world ([Re.20:10](#)). Until that day, Satan obviously still has the right to enter God's presence, though it may be limited and only when summoned by God.

God asked Satan where he had been. Satan replied that he had been roaming the earth apparently looking for people to destroy in order to cut God's heart and hinder His purpose. This is exactly what the Apostle Peter warns readers about in the New Testament:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" ([1 Pe.5:8](#)).

Satan was roaming the earth looking for people to destroy. That is his nature (see outline and notes—[Jn.8:44](#); [2 Co.4:4](#); [1 Pe.5:8](#) for more discussion). Satan attempts to hinder God's purposes and corrupt His creation in every way he can. He seeks to cut the heart of God because God executed judgment upon him for his arrogant rebellion. And because human beings are the pinnacle of God's creation, they are bound to be Satan's prime targets. Here in the book of *Job*, Satan's primary focus is clearly God's servant Job.

It is important to remember that God initiated the conversation with Satan. God spoke first and drew attention to Job by asking if Satan had noticed His servant Job. The title *my servant* was a term of special endearment, showing that Job was close to God's heart. God said that Job had an unblemished character, declaring...

- he was blameless and upright.
- he feared God and shunned evil.

The Lord even declared that there was no one like Job on earth. His character was superior to that of everyone else in God's eyes. God also had a very special purpose for calling attention to Job. Obviously, he knew Satan already had his eye on Job and that Satan's intentions were evil. Therefore, God took control of the situation. Throughout the book of *Job* (and in all of life), it is essential to remember that the Lord is...

- the Prime Mover
- the Supreme Power
- the Final Authority

God is sovereign: He possesses perfect power and controls all things. Satan can do nothing apart from God's knowledge and permission, nothing without God's consent.

Satan's response to God was insolent and mocking: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Since Satan could not find fault with Job's outward behavior or character, he questioned Job's motives. He suggested that Job did not serve God out of love but rather because of God's protection (v.10a), blessing (v.10b), and prosperity (v.10c). In effect, Satan argued that Job only loved and honored God because of what God had done for him.

This was, in fact, an age-old argument and one that deserves close scrutiny. Satan's argument is also one of the major themes of the book. At issue was this question:

⇒ *Does a person love God for who God is or for what God promises and gives? Or, put another way, Will a person freely love God regardless of personal reward?* This was essentially the question Satan posed to God. However, note that Satan's challenge went even further.

It was not enough for Satan to question Job's allegiance; he wished to prove his point. He suggested that if God took away all Job owned, including his children, Job would curse God to His face. This charge against Job was actually an attack on God. Satan was questioning God's integrity and suggesting that God bribed people to love Him. According to Satan, Job only loved and worshipped the Lord because the Lord had abundantly blessed him. But what would happen if the Lord allowed everything of Job's to be taken away from him? This challenge was conniving, for at the root of it was Satan's desire to cut to the heart of God. By causing God's dear servant to curse and deny the Lord, Satan felt he could prove his point—that Job's love for God was conditional, based upon what he would receive in return. However, the Lord knew Job's heart, and He had plans of His own—plans far greater and nobler than Satan's.

God *permitted* Satan's test, consenting to his devious challenge. But even so, God placed limits on what Satan could do. Scripture makes this very clear.

1) First, God granted Satan power over Job's possessions, but not over his body (v.12a). Everything Job had was in Satan's hands. However, Satan was not given access to Job's body; he could not attack Job's physical health. This is a clear example of the Lord's permitting Satan to harass and test believers, while at the same time placing limits on what Satan can do.

2) Second, God allowed Satan to carry on his malicious work (v.12b). After accepting Satan's challenge, God dismissed Satan from His presence. Presumably, Satan was allowed to return to roam about earth and to carry out his wicked schemes and destructive work.

With the venture laid out and the guidelines defined, the stage was set for battle—a spiritual battle that would take place both in the unseen and the seen worlds, both in heaven and on earth. Job's suffering puts the spotlight on questions that have puzzled countless people through the ages:

⇒ Why do bad things happen to good people?

⇒ Why do the righteous often suffer while the wicked thrive?

⇒ Can people truly believe the Lord and follow Him if He does not bless or prosper them?

⇒ Can a believer who is suddenly afflicted with catastrophic suffering still remain faithful?

⇒ Can a believer who is utterly destitute still love and bear strong witness for the Lord?

Note five significant lessons gleaned from Satan's *challenging exchange* with God.

⇒ First, Satan's questions cut to the heart of people's motives for believing in the Lord and worshipping Him.

⇒ Second, spiritual conflicts in the unseen world (the spiritual dimension) influence what happens here on earth (the physical dimension).

⇒ Third, God is in full control of all that happens in both the spiritual and the physical world.

⇒ Fourth, suffering does not happen without God's consent.

⇒ Fifth, God has a higher purpose for everything that happens in people's lives, a fact that will be explored more as the story unfolds.

Thought 1. Few if any of us will ever suffer as much as Job did. Yet during our lives, most of us will face some serious trials, and many will undergo severe suffering. A question therefore arises: Will we continue to trust and love the Lord even when times get tough? Will we be faithful to God even when things do not go our way, when we suffer loss or disappointment? God allows hardships and afflictions in our lives to draw us nearer to Him and to strengthen our faith. In fact, the more we suffer or hurt, the more we usually cry out to God for help and the closer we draw to God. He alone can heal our wounds and strengthen us through the trials and sufferings of life. Listen to the encouragement of God's Holy Word:

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Lu.22:31-32).

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*" (1 Co.10:13).

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory" (2 Co.4:17).

"Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Ps.34:19).

"When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa.43:2).

3. (1:13-22) Job's faithfulness despite catastrophic loss.

Job proved faithful despite the loss of his property and the tragic death of his children. After such great devastation, many people would do exactly what Satan was tempting Job to do: question God and curse His Name. Yet, Job did not. He remained faithful to the Lord and even praised His Name.

The opening scene of this passage, where God and Satan met, was the prelude or introduction to the story. It set the stage so we can better understand what is happening to Job and why. Now, Job finally appears, and four unimaginable tragedies strike him. Seemingly without provocation

or purpose. All on the same day. One right after the other. Inconceivable! Job would lose everything: his whole estate, and worse, all ten of his children. Note what happened.

1) On the same day Job's children were celebrating a social occasion and feasting together, a messenger brought Job a shocking report (vv.13-14). While Job's oxen were plowing and his donkeys grazing, the Sabeans launched an attack. In the process, they stole all of the animals and killed all of the farm and ranch laborers, Job's servants. Only one person, the messenger, survived (v.15).

Who were the Sabeans? Scholars believe they could have been from a place called Sheba in southwest Arabia, or from a town called Sheba in upper Arabia ([Ge.10:7](#); [25:3](#)). Regardless, in one heavy assault, Job lost all of his oxen and donkeys and dozens, if not hundreds, of servants as well.

2) While the first messenger was still reporting, a second messenger arrived to report more dreadful news. A fire, that is, *the fire of God*, had fallen from heaven and killed all of Job's sheep and shepherds (v.16). Most likely, the *fire of God* refers to lightning (see [1 Ki.18:38](#)). Whether the lightning resulted from a thunderstorm or was purely a display of God's mighty power is immaterial. The bolts of fire struck the earth with deadly accuracy, one flash after the other.

3) Incredibly, while the second messenger was still speaking, a third arrived. He reported that the Chaldeans had raided Job's camel herds. Not only had they stolen Job's camels, but also they had murdered the herdsman (v.17). The Chaldeans were Mesopotamians, so they likely attacked from the north. The Sabeans, mentioned above, would likely have attacked from the south.

4) Lastly, and most tragic of all, Job lost all his sons and daughters (vv.18-19). Again, while the latest messenger was still reporting, another arrived. The fourth messenger reported that a strong wind had collapsed the house where Job's children were feasting. All ten of his children had been killed. The strong wind could have been a tornado since tornados can easily destroy houses from all four sides (note the reference to *four corners* of the house, v.19). However, because this strong wind blew from the eastern desert, it was most likely what is called the *sirocco*, a hot and sandy windstorm that blows fiercely at the beginning and then at the end of summer. Regardless of the type of storm, its effect was devastating. Job lost all his children in a single day—seven sons and three daughters.

In the brief span of one day, Job learned that he had lost everything—everything he had worked for, everything he possessed, his businesses, his livelihood, his employees, his potential, and worst of all, his children. The magnitude of Job's loss is almost beyond comprehension. We cannot even imagine how Job must have felt.

At this final piece of news, Job finally arose from his seat. Picture the scene: Job had been sitting and listening in utter shock—listening to one messenger after another, listening to every devastating report. But after hearing about his children's deaths, he could bear no more.

1) Job got up, tore his robe, and shaved his head (v.20a). In other words, Job expressed his deep anguish. In ancient times, tearing one's clothing and shaving one's head were common expressions of intense grief. So Job was expressing his grief in the custom of his day. However,

Job's next response was anything but customary or ordinary; in fact, it was extraordinary—totally unlike what most people would do.

2) Job worshipped the Lord (v.20b). In the midst of receiving such devastating economic news and the loss of his dear children, Job fell to the ground in worship. What a moving picture! Out of intense grief, Job still worshipped and prayed to the Lord. He still trusted the Lord to strengthen him, so He could bear the utter heartbreak and devastating grief of it all.

3) Job acknowledged two indisputable truths (v.21):

⇒ First, he could not take his wealth with him when he died.

⇒ Second, the Lord was in control of his life.

There is profound wisdom in these two truths. God had given Job everything he had, all that he owned (v.21b). Everything was from the hand of the Lord. God therefore had the right to take it away. Think how remarkable Job's attitude was. He did not complain or even question God—not at this time. Instead, he bowed reverently and worshipped. He acknowledged that God was sovereign and in control of his life.

Job also acknowledged that none of his possessions—not a single one—could follow him to the grave (v.21a). Nothing he owned could go with him into the next life. Notice how beautifully and eloquently he stated these truths: the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. What a powerful, heart-rending statement of faith.

4) Job not only worshipped and acknowledged God's sovereign control but also he praised the Lord (v.21b). Rather than cursing God to His face—as Satan had bargained—Job bowed in worship and blessed the Name of the Lord.

5) Job did not become bitter nor sin by blaming God (v.22). He did not charge God with wrongdoing. God had acted within His jurisdiction. As stated above, all that Job owned had been given to him by God, and Job knew this fact. Therefore, he would not dare curse or blame God, nor ask, "Why me?" As stated above (pt.4), as a faithful follower of the Lord, Job blessed and praised His Name. Consequently, Satan's first plan failed miserably.

In concluding this point, note how two of the four tragedies were manmade; that is, they came at the hands of evil men, the marauding Sabians and Chaldeans. On the other hand, two tragedies were the result of natural disasters: the destructive fire and the windstorm. From a human standpoint, each of the tragedies might have seemed like worldly phenomenon—just plain bad luck. But Job did not interpret them this way. He knew that God had *permitted* them. Although these tragic events played out on earth, they had their roots and their driving force in the spiritual world.

Thought 1. As we face trials and suffering throughout life, we need to keep Job's experience in mind. In fact, Scripture teaches that we are in a spiritual war every day of our lives (Eph.6:10-18; 1 Pe.5:8). We may not see the spiritual battles waged in heaven, the spiritual wars behind what happens here on earth. Still, we can be sure that God has all things under control and that He will use everything we experience for our good if we will place our trust in Him (Ro.8:28). This does not discount the pain and grief we feel when we go through suffering. However, such knowledge gives us confidence and patience to endure the suffering. It is the

trials and tribulations that cause our faith to grow. Through hardship and struggle, we are driven to turn to God either for greater strength or to repent of sin. Trials and suffering arouse us to trust God with more assurance. For these reasons, we should not complain or become embittered when we face hardship. Rather, we should praise and honor the Lord, just as Job did. Listen to what God's Holy Word says about enduring and persevering through trials—even *counting suffering as joy*.

"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Mt.24:13).

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4).

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5:10).

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11).

4. (2:1-6) Job's relentless enemy and attacker—Satan.

Job passed the first test; but Satan, the adversary, did not give up. He relentlessly pursued his wicked goal. If he could only make Job suffer more, he felt then Job would certainly curse God. For a second time, Satan plotted his attack against Job.

Finally, the time arrived for the angels to come back before God with their reports. And once again, Satan was to appear to stand accountable for his activities.

As before, God asked Satan where he had been. Satan reported that he had been roaming the earth, obviously seeking to destroy people in order to cause God pain and hinder His purpose. Scripture tells us this time and again (Mt.4:1; 13:19; Jn.8:44; 2 Co.2:11, 11:3; Eph.6:11-12; 1 Pe.5:8; Zech.3:1). Satan's attacks here in the life of Job are among the best illustrations of his deviousness and his evil intent. Satan is seen assaulting Job and seeking to turn his heart against the Lord. For what reason? To cut God's heart by obstructing His plans on earth. Remember, Satan always seeks to hurt God because God's judged him for his self-exaltation and rebellion (see Deeper Study #1—Jb.1:6-12 for more discussion). Even so, God can turn even Satan's evil schemes into blessings. The Lord can use and transform all things according to His eternal purposes. This is what He will do with Job. Whatever evil men or Satan may do, God can use it for good:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose" (Ro.8:28).

"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive" (Ge.50:20).

God addressed Satan directly and pointed again to Job's steadfast faith. Despite the catastrophic loss Job has suffered, he still had faith in God. He was still blameless and upright, and he had maintained his integrity without wavering. Thus, Job had passed the first test and vindicated God's Holy Name. By pointing to Job's faith—a faith firmly intact in spite of everything—the Lord proved that a person could suffer tremendous loss and yet continue to love and honor Him. Job had remained faithful in the face of great tragedy. He actually praised the Lord instead of cursing God's Holy Name. Nevertheless, Satan was not willing to accept defeat. He defiantly hatched another scheme.

Satan claimed that a person would give all he had to save his own life—that a man loves his own life more than he loves God. Satan reasoned that a person may lose his possessions and family and still maintain his faith. Quite the opposite would be true, however, if the man himself were harmed; he would then surely lose faith and turn away from the Lord.

Satan wanted to use Job as a pawn to prove his point—the point that people love their own lives more than they love God. Therefore, he made a bold prediction to God: if God struck Job's body with a terrible disease, then Job would question why God allowed such a terrible disease to seize him. And Satan's claim did not stop there but went on to allege that Job would eventually curse God. Satan's argument was that human beings are basically selfish, that people are self-serving and self-seeking at their very core. He reasoned that a man or woman could lose personal wealth or even family and still trust the Lord. But if a man's own health and life were at stake, he would surely give up on God and probably curse God.

Note how Satan wanted to do exactly what the Lord had forbidden him to do in the first test: strike Job's health. Satan never gives up easily. People might have expected God to hold His ground on the issue and refuse Satan's request. However, this would not be the case. We know from the rest of the story that the Lord had a far greater plan in store. Although Job had already suffered through the most devastating tragedies conceivable, he must endure even greater pain and grief. Keep in mind, though, that the Lord will work all things out for good. He would use the sufferings of Job to bring about a far greater good, doing so in a way that would glorify the Name of God beyond all imagination. Millions of people in the future would be helped as they endured unbearable suffering and looked to Job as an example.

The Lord accepted Satan's challenge to prove Job's faith and love. He told Satan that he could strike Job's body, but he must spare Job's life. Once again, God placed limits on Satan's power. The Lord knew Job's heart, that he would struggle to stand fast and struggle hard. Think what incredible confidence God had in Job...what an amazing testimony to Job's faith and character! Think of the joy and honor Job's life has brought to the Lord and to millions who have looked up to him during their days of suffering.

Thought 1. Many believers focus too much on human weakness, too much on the temptations and frailties of their flesh or carnal nature. While it is wise to have a healthy respect for our human frailty—our tendency to sin—and essential to remain humble and dependent on God, we

must understand that God strengthens us by *His Spirit*. The Lord makes His very own Spirit available to strengthen us.

We must never forget that God's *strength* is always available to us and that this life is not all there is. Eternal life is waiting for all of us who trust and stand firm in the Lord. We must keep in mind that faith is simply trusting God, trusting Him in every circumstance, no matter what happens. It is this kind of trust, this kind of faith, that gives us the strength to endure just as Job did. And when we can praise the Lord even in the midst of suffering, hardship, or misfortune, we know our faith is real. Consider how often God's Word challenges us not to fear but to be strong, to persevere, to endure, and to stand firm—all because we trust the Lord:

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Co.15:58).

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Co.16:13).

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Ga.5:1).

"That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto" (1 Th.3:3).

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb.3:14).

"Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)" (Heb.10:23).

"But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Jos.22:5).

5. (2:7-10) Job's perseverance despite physical suffering and rejection.

Job had proven faithful during Satan's first attack, a devastating assault that caused the loss of his entire estate, utter bankruptcy, and the death of his ten children. But now a new attack was to begin. Would he continue to prove faithful when his physical health was threatened, when he was afflicted with a severe disease, intense pain, and indescribable suffering? Or, would he feel forsaken by God and end up cursing and turning away from the Lord? Would Job understand that God takes all the evil, the trouble, and the hardships of life and works them all out for good? Could Job conceivably believe and act upon this wonderful truth while in the midst of such agony? Scripture gives us all the answers:

Job was covered with boils or painful sores from his feet to his head (v.7). Precisely what the disease was is not known, though some scholars speculate that it was a severe case of chicken-pox or measles. Others suggest that it was a form of leprosy, perhaps *black leprosy*.

Job's symptoms are not fully spelled out in this passage; however, several other symptoms are mentioned elsewhere in the book. The commentator Warren Wiersbe has summarized the symptoms well:

Whatever (Job's disease) was, the symptoms were terrible: severe itching, insomnia, running sores and scabs, nightmares, bad breath, weight loss, chills and fever, diarrhea, and blackened skin. When his three friends first saw Job, they did not recognize him!

These two verses give three facts about Job's suffering (vv.7-8):

1) First, Job was afflicted all over (v.7). Keep in mind that it was not God who afflicted Job with this dreadful disease; it was Satan. Satan was the direct cause and instigator of Job's suffering. The Lord merely permitted it, and He would use it for His higher purposes. The point is significant, for it means that God can redeem human suffering by using it for good, making it meaningful. Whereas Satan seeks to harm and destroy, God uses Satan's schemes to bring about good.

Another fact needs to be kept in mind: although Scripture teaches that Satan and his demons can cause physical suffering, we should not attribute every disease or health problem to Satan's direct involvement. Many human illnesses are brought on by people's lifestyles, or simply the result of living in a fallen and corrupt world.

2) Second, Job found relief only by scratching his sores with a piece of broken pottery (v.8a). The sores were not only painful but also extremely itchy.

3) Third, Job sat down among the ashes (v.8b). Sitting in ashes was another sign of mourning. But rubbing ashes on his sores may also have given Job relief from his excruciating pain. The ash heap or town garbage dump was outside the city. Job had likely become so disfigured that he fled human company—perhaps in shame over his appearance or out of fear of infecting others. Most likely, however, the community banished and isolated Job for fear that his disease might be contagious. Regardless of the motive, one thing is clear: this once wealthy, noble, and highly respected man had now become utterly destitute. His physical condition and appearance were distasteful—so much so that he sought escape from human contact and sought relief anywhere he could find it.

At this point in the story, we begin to wonder how much more a person can take—how much more Job would suffer. This godly, righteous man had already lost...

- all his wealth
- all his income
- all means of earning a living
- all ten of his children
- all his health—he had contracted a dreadful disease
- all the support of his relatives, local friends, and community

Still, there was one more blow Job would suffer—a final, very painful blow: criticism and rejection from his wife. Think about it: Job's wife was the only thing he had left on earth. She was probably the last person upon whom Job could depend, the very person from whom he

would hope to gain comfort and support. But note what happened. These verses reveal some startling facts about both Job and his wife.

1) Job's wife criticized his faith and wanted him to die (v.9). She essentially asked Job, "Are you willing to suffer like this for the rest of your life? Why not just give up on God and die?" No doubt, she was utterly exhausted from taking care of her husband and not wanting to see him suffer any more. It is unlikely that she really wanted Job to die, but she certainly wanted to see his suffering end. Death would be better than the agony he was in. Had Job's wife expressed only this sentiment, it would have been more than understandable. Instead she went further and criticized—even rejected—Job's faith: How could he continue to trust the Lord under such cruel and unjust treatment? Perhaps she blamed the Lord because Job had been unwilling to do so.

Nevertheless, before being too harsh on Job's wife, consider several points:

⇒ First, remember how much she had endured along with Job. Take into account that for most people it is easier to do the suffering than to watch their loved ones suffer—especially a beloved spouse or child.

⇒ Second, Job's wife had lost all of her wealth right along with Job. She had lost all her financial security in the world, all her financial protection and safety. Like Job, she had no means of support.

⇒ Third, with the loss of her wealth and possessions also went her social standing. This was probably the least of her worries, but it most certainly had an effect. As the wife of a nobleman or aristocrat like Job, she had held a very high position in society. She would have been highly respected right along with Job. When she lost her wealth and social standing, she likely lost a large part of her identity and self-esteem.

⇒ Fourth, and most devastatingly, she had lost all of her children: seven precious sons and three beloved daughters. Imagine the excruciating loss! This would be more than many people could tolerate. It would drive some into a state of complete despair, perhaps insanity, and push others to commit suicide.

⇒ Fifth, she was now watching the only person she had left in the world suffer debilitating and humiliating pain. Her noble husband had been debased and brought low—so low he now sat in the city's garbage dump.

In light of all these devastating losses, Job's wife should not be judged too harshly. But she did make a grave mistake in giving Job poor advice. She should never have criticized Job's faith. Perhaps she had been extremely supportive up until this point. But at this moment she weakened and gave in to her despair. Like far too many of us, when Job's wife faced dire circumstances, she desired relief more than the strength to endure.

2) Job responded to his wife by correcting her (v.10a). Even so, his rebuke was quite gentle. He did not say, "You are a foolish woman." He simply said that she was talking like *one of those foolish women*. We cannot know which group of women Job had in mind, but his point is clear: his wife had spoken foolishly even if she did not believe wholeheartedly in what she said.

What Job said next is another example of profound wisdom (v.10b). Moreover, it was eloquently stated: "Shall we accept good from the Lord and not trouble (evil)?" In other words, if people are going to accept the good things in life and enjoy them, they must also accept the hardships in life. This truth may be hard to digest; then again, it simply acknowledges the reality of life—life in a fallen, corrupt world. In this depraved and lawless environment, hardships come to everyone. Life brings both good and bad.

3) Job did not sin by blaming or cursing God (v.10c). In other words, he did not renounce his faith. He did not reject God nor accuse Him of wrongdoing. In Job's view, he was God's property and God could do with him what He wanted. Job trusted the Lord to work all things out.

Thought 1. Job's attitude seems to go against human nature. Far too often when people face trouble, their first response is to ask, *Why me? Or, how could this happen to me now when I am so young? Or, why now, when there is still so much to do?* Many people become bitter and blame God. They wonder, *How could God let this happen to me? Or, What did I do to deserve this?* These questions stem from not understanding how God uses suffering in our lives. Basically, God uses suffering...

- to refine and purify us
- to arouse us to repent of our sin and turn to God
- to stir us to continually cry out to God for help, which forces us to trust God and to fellowship with Him more and more
- to strengthen us through the endurance of suffering
- to arouse us to obey God more than ever before and to live far more righteous lives
- to make us stronger witnesses for God

"Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Co.1:3-4).

This is a hard lesson for some believers to learn, especially if they feel they have been promised health and wealth or have (mis)understood that God's wonderful plan for their lives involves only pleasantness and not trouble. Believers on this side of the cross have many more examples from both the Bible and church history of God's people who have suffered. Job was much more in the dark. Yet out of that darkness his strong belief in the sovereignty of God shone forth all the more brilliantly. Somehow he already knew that the clay does not ask the potter, "What are you making?" (Isa 45:9). Job acted as though he had read 2 Cor 4:17, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

Note what else God's Word says about the value of enduring hardship:

"Now no chastening [suffering, discipline] for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb.12:11).

"But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they [the Egyptians] were grieved because of the children of Israel" (Ex.1:12).

"Behold, happy *is* the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty" (Jb.5:17).

"But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Jb.23:10).

"Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne *chastisement*, I will not offend *any more*" (Jb.34:31).

"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (Ps.119:67).

6. (2:11-13) Job's encouragement from a visit by three friends.

Fairly soon after all the calamities had happened to Job, he received a visit from three friends. These three men must have known Job fairly well, for they traveled a great distance to visit him, coming as soon as they heard and spending a huge sum of money in the process. Very little background information is given for them—only their names and where they were from. But who they were is not as important as what they had to say. In their attempts to comfort Job, they expressed beliefs about God and why people suffer. Although these beliefs were misguided and erroneous, they are beliefs that a great majority of people hold. It is the friends' judgments about Job and why he suffered that provide the platform for all that the great book of *Job* teaches. Note the Scripture and outline:

Job's friends were evidently wealthy nobles, for they all wore the outer garments (*me'il*) customarily worn by the nobles or aristocrats of Job's day. In addition, they had ample freedom and wealth to travel long distances and to spend what was probably weeks and perhaps months at Job's side. Verse 11 gives the names and origins of Job's friends.

1) Eliphaz the Temanite was apparently from Teman or Tema. The book of *Genesis* records that a son named Eliphaz was born to Esau and Adah (Ge.36:4). Eliphaz in turn had a son named Teman, who would have been the grandson of Esau (Ge.36:11). Later, Teman would become a prominent city located near Edom, southeast of the Dead Sea. There was also a place called Tema in Arabia, so Eliphaz might have come from either one of these regions.

2) Bildad the Shuhite was from Shuah. The name Bildad appears nowhere else in Scripture, but Shuah is the name of one of Abraham's sons (Ge.25:2). If these two friends, Eliphaz and Bildad, were close descendants of the men mentioned in *Genesis*, this would place Job in the age of the patriarchs (or fathers) of Israel (see Introduction, Author).

3) Zophar the Naamathite was from Naamath or Namah. Some scholars point to a place called Namah in northern Arabia, but this is uncertain. The name Zophar, like Bildad, is found only in the book of Job.

The Scripture states simply that Job's three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—made an appointment to meet together to go to their dear friend Job. Their purpose was to sympathize with him, to comfort him. How important this was! Job needed true friends at this time, probably more than at any other time in his life. Job had suffered such great loss and was afflicted with a severe, perhaps fatal, disease; thus, the presence of friends would be a tremendous comfort. In seeking to console Job, these men were acting as true friends. This is important to remember, as some unflattering things will be said about them later. But their friendship should never be discounted. As far as is known, these men may have been the only friends courageous enough to visit Job, and almost certainly the only ones who spent so much time at his side in an attempt to encourage him.

When Job's friends first saw him, they were shocked and utterly horrified. Their friend's altered appearance and the excruciating pain he was experiencing were almost unbearable for them to look upon. Job was nothing like the man they knew.

1) They barely recognized him: Job's disease had so disfigured him that his own friends could hardly tell who he was. Other parts of the book say that Job had become swollen and disfigured, covered in painful sores from head to toe. These three friends had no idea what to expect. Now, they were looking directly at the face and body of a friend covered with festering sores and swollen beyond recognition.

2) They wept in sorrow: the horror of seeing their friend in such a pitiful state was just too much to bear. Job's friends wept at the very sight of him. Imagine traveling a great distance to be with a sick friend and finding the friend in so much pain, so much agony, that you cannot hold back the tears. Such was the case with Job, and his friends wept aloud in great sorrow.

3) They tore their robes: Job's friends not only wept but tore their outer clothing. As stated before, this was a common expression of grief. Yet, we should not assume it was just a formality, an act with no feeling. These friends' hearts were broken as soon as they saw Job. They obviously ripped their clothing with great emotion, out of deep grief and sadness.

4) They threw dust on their heads: covering one's head with dust was another sign of grief and mourning. These friends were expressing a sense of unity with Job, identifying with their friend and his condition. A similar act in modern times would be when the friends of a cancer victim identify with him or her by shaving their heads when chemotherapy has caused temporary hair loss.

5) They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights: Job's friends had wept, torn their clothing, thrown dust on their heads, and were now sitting silently with him. And not just for a day or two, but for seven long days and nights. Keep in mind that these friends were not visiting Job in the comfort of his living room, nor in the sterile safety of a modern-day hospital. Job was languishing among the ash heaps at the city's garbage dump. Not only was the city's refuse burned there but also its sewage. Imagine the stench. Moreover, Job would not have been alone. The sick and poor of the whole region would have been scavenging for food and wasting away in the garbage dump, just as Job was. Job's friends were placing themselves in danger and assuming real risk. They were probably surrounded by lepers, the lame, maimed, and people with all sorts of contagious diseases. In short, Job's friends endured the discomfort, stench, heat, and nagging insects right along with Job. And remember, Job's friends did not retreat to a more

comfortable place at night. They sat with Job at the garbage dump for seven days and nights. Seven days and nights is a long time. It is not only a long time to endure such physical discomfort and risk, but also to watch a friend suffer in agony and despair. Not too many friends would be willing to do this. But these three friends did. They demonstrated true friendship and courage, doing all they could to help and encourage their friend.

6) They also sat in total silence. Job's suffering was too severe for words. What could his friends say? They were so horror-struck at his condition that they probably could not find words to express their feelings. At least, not for these first seven days. This speaks both to the severity of Job's condition and to the initial wisdom of these friends. When a person does not know what to say, it is better not to speak. Silence may be uncomfortable, but it is often the wisest response—especially when someone is suffering so greatly. Simply being with a person and sharing his or her grief is better comfort than offering empty words—words without wisdom.

Every one of these responses is significant. They teach us much about friendship and how to comfort those who suffer. Later in the book, Job's friends will make serious mistakes in what they say to their suffering friend. But for now, they did exactly what they needed to do: they came to Job and sat at his side, identifying with his suffering and showing concern for him. They were with him in his darkest hour.

Thought 1. Most likely, many of Job's friends and acquaintances neglected to visit him. Many would have been too uncomfortable with his tragedy, too busy, too fearful of a contagious disease, or simply did not care enough to visit. Yet, these three friends took the time and cared enough to travel a great distance to see him, and they stayed with Job for quite a long time. Furthermore, they assumed some risk and a great deal of discomfort by sitting with Job for so long at the garbage dump. One of the lessons gleaned from their visit is this: true friendship takes courage and often requires risk. Henri Nouwen expressed this thought beautifully in *The Wounded Healer*:

No one can help anyone without becoming involved, without entering with his or her whole person into the painful situation, without taking the risk of becoming hurt, wounded, or even destroyed in the process....Who can save a child from a burning house without taking the risk of being hurt by the flames?...In short, "Who can take away suffering without entering it?"

God's Word is clear: we are to help others in their hour of need. We are to reach out, serve, and minister to them.

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward"
(Mt.10:42).

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and

ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me" (Mt.25:31-40).

"And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" (Lu.10:30-36).

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Ac.10:38).

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Ga.6:1-2).

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Ga.6:9-10).

Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Job.

