

## Sermon – 22/08/2010 pm

### God Restores Job

Study Text: Job 42:10-17

Job repented in dust and ashes (42:6). *And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed, the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before* (42:10). When Job repented God made him prosperous again. Is this not what his friends told him when he was suffering? His three friends as well as Elihu told Job he was being punished because of his sin. They urged him to repent if he wanted to be happy, healthy and wealthy.

Some people draw this conclusion but to do so is to misunderstand the lesson of this book. To draw such a conclusion we would have to ignore what the Lord twice said earlier in this chapter. To Eliphaz he said *you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has* (42:7, 8).

We would also have to ignore what is written in the prologue about the reason for Job's suffering. 'Job's suffering has been due to the struggle between good and evil on a cosmic scale'. It was not simply a matter of God punishing Job for some sin. The restoration of Job therefore does not support the simplistic, mathematically precise, and instant application of the doctrine of retribution.

### Defeat of Satan

What are we to make of the happy ending of the book of Job? Suffering does not always have a happy ending like this. Should the book have ended with Job's repentance? That after all is the climax of the book. Despite intense unexplained suffering Job refused to curse God. He maintained his integrity and in the end humbled himself before Almighty God.

Satan had challenged God to let him afflict Job for a while and see how long this 'blameless and upright' man remained 'blameless and upright'. *He will surely curse you to your face* said Satan (1:11, 2:5). This is the heavenly background to Job's suffering here on earth.

We must remember that we do not live to ourselves but as members of the family of God. We must remember that we live here as citizens of heaven. We must remember we have an unseen adversary contending for our souls. Job passed the test. Satan had to flee with his tail between his legs.

We are not told about the heavenly council here in the epilogue. There is no actual reference to Satan failing to bring Job down. What we are told is that Job's suffering came to an end. The restoration of Job losses means the Lord was no longer allowing Satan to afflict his servant Job. Satan wanted Job as his servant, just as he wanted Adam and Eve. In their case he succeeded. Satan wanted Job as he wanted Peter. In that case Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail under testing (Luke 22:32). Satan wants you. Keep trusting in Jesus and he will not succeed. *Resist the devil and he will flee from you* (James 4:7).

### Double Blessing

The Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends (42:10). At one level this verse makes it impossible to separate Job praying for his friends from the restoration of his riches. Remember what we said about those who hold to a theology of divine retribution or a prosperity gospel, and

how the Lord said Job's friends were wrong? Well, Job praying for his friends is intertwined with his restoration in verse ten, so verses seven and eight cannot be cast aside.

At another level Job's suffering had severely damaged his relationship with his friends. In repenting his relationship with the Lord was restored. God is gracious to forgive and accept us when we repent. In praying for his friends his relationship with them was restored. Jesus said *pray for those who persecute you* (Matthew 5:44). He said when you come to worship God and remember that your brother has something against you, first go and be reconciled to your brother (Matthew 5:24). Praying for his friends Job was reconciled to them.

What about the double blessing? The Lord not only restored Job's property; he restored it twice over. By way of restoration all his brothers and all sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house (42:11). Note that he is no longer on the ash heap but back in his house. These people comforted him in all the adversity the Lord had brought upon him.

Where were these people while he was suffering we might ask – but we have no answer. The point is that Job is now being properly comforted, unlike the friends who came before. And it is not too late. Carson makes the point that 'a survivor of the Holocaust has not suffered less because he ultimately settles into a comfortable life in Los Angeles'. Job still needed comforting after his ordeal was over.

These people came and ate with Job. Each one gave him a piece of silver and a ring of gold (42:11). They expressed sympathy for Job in a tangible way. When his three friends came earlier they brought nothing. They did nothing to relieve his physical pain. They were 'miserable comforters'. But maybe they were now among those who came to comfort him in his house. Each one gave him some money. We are not told the value of the silver and gold but this may have been the means by which the Lord materially blessed the latter days of Job's life.

'The blessing that Job experienced at the end is not cast as rewards that he has earned by his faithfulness under suffering. The epilogue simply describes the blessings as the Lord's free gift. The Lord is not nasty or capricious. He may for various reasons withdraw his favour, but his love endures forever' (D.A. Carson).

The Lord delighted in his servant Job. He boasted of his servant Job. He was like a father to Job. And like a father he wanted to bless Job. A father delights in giving good gifts to his children. He gives out of love, not because his children deserve anything. Parents decorate the room of their baby and give them toys not because the baby is good but because they love their baby and delight in their child. The Lord delighted in Job. He blessed the latter part of his life more than the beginning.

God's love for Job is reflected in Job's love for his children. As part of his restoration he had seven sons and three daughters, the same number as before. It is interesting that we are told about his daughters rather than his sons, and that he gave his daughters an inheritance along with his sons. This was not the normal practice in those days. 'Something of a father's pleasure in his daughters is evident in their names; Jemimah means 'dove', Keziah is the name of a perfume, and the third one is given the name of a rich black eye shadow'.

These women were the most beautiful in the land. Job would surely have agreed with this accolade. He loved his children. He gave them an inheritance. His heavenly Father had given him an inheritance. He had a foretaste of this during the latter days of his life.

God's blessings are not always seen in material things as seen here with Job. The apostle Paul was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan (II Corinthians 12:7). He pleaded with the Lord for

this affliction to be removed but it wasn't. God was not withholding his grace from the apostle but showing him grace in the affliction. God abundantly blessed the ministry of his servant Paul. Paul was not looking for material blessings. He knew he had a glorious inheritance waiting in heaven.

Paul carried his affliction with him into prison where he suffered cold and hunger. He was not suffering because of sin but because of the kingdom of God. He pressed on to the end of his days. He kept the faith saying that *finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give me on that day* (II Timothy 4:8).

## **Died In Peace**

During his suffering Job was so sick he was on the verge of death. He thought he would die. *My days are swifter than a runner* (9:25). *Are not my days few* (10:20)? *There is hope for a tree* he once said *for when it is cut down it will sprout again – but man has no such hope*. Job actually wanted to die but he knew his life was in God's hand. 'The Lord gives and the Lord takes away'.

The Lord wonderfully restored Job's health, along with his property and his family. Far from dying young he went on to live for many years – twice as many years as normal. The Psalmist spoke of seventy or sometimes eighty years being the normal life span (Psalm 90:10). Job lived 140 years (42:16). He saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. He had a large family to pray for in his old age!

*Job died old and full of days* (42:17), an epitaph reserved for godly men like Abraham, Isaac and David (Genesis 25:8, 35:29, I Chronicles 29:28). He died at peace with God and with men. He died full of days.

The end of this book takes us back to the beginning, to a man who feared God and turned away from evil, a man who rose early to pray for his children. We have seen the faith of this man severely tested. We have seen him endure this testing by clinging to God. Job trusted in God despite his suffering. This is the lesson of Job. We cannot control everything that happens to us. We will not understand everything that happens to us in life. But we can trust in God who does know everything and is in absolute control.

We have seen the grace of God in not allowing Job to be tested beyond what he was able, and in providing him a way out so he could endure (I Corinthians 10:13). Are you as a child of God prepared for the time of testing that will come? Are you trusting in God with the assurance that in his strength, and not your own, you will endure and you will see the inheritance that has reserved for you in heaven?

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