

Job 38:1-11

One of the sad trends in our culture is the growing lack of **respect** that children have for their **parents**, as well as for **anyone** in authority. For whatever the **reason**, a large group of today's young people don't look at adults the same way they **used** to. The way they **talk** to their parents and teachers, and the way they **act** around adults, is indicative of a general culture of **disrespect** that seems to be more and more **prevalent** - and at times it's even **accepted** and **promoted**. But we can't just look at the sins of the **younger** people in our world today, we need to take a step back and look at **ourselves** too, because very often **we also** show a **disrespectful** attitude - not only toward other **people**, but even toward our **God**. It seems like sometimes we **forget** just who He truly **is**, and we **treat** Him very **poorly**. But in our text for this morning God brings us a **wake up call**. As He speaks to **Job**, He also speaks to **us** - **encouraging** us to **Remember Who God Is**.

In order to appreciate this reading from the Book of Job, we need to go back and look at the events of Job's life which **led up** to our text. In the **first** chapter of the Book of Job, we learned that Job was someone who **knew the Lord**. He **believed** in the Lord, and he **showed** his faith by living a **godly life**. The very first verse of the book tells us, *"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was **Job**. This man was **blameless and upright**, a man who **feared God and turned away from evil**."* In fact, Job was such a **fine example** of a believer, that God Himself **touted** Job's virtues in a conversation with Satan. That's when **Satan** proposed the **plan** which serves as the **background** for the whole Book of Job. Satan asked God to allow him to **strike** Job with **disaster**, in order to see if Job would still **follow God**. As odd as it may seem, God **consented** to the plan - and in the course of just **one day**, Job lost his **possessions**, his **servants**, and even his own **children**. Even so, Job remained **faithful**, and he didn't **curse** God. Satan then proposed taking the disasters a step **further**, which God **also** allowed. Satan could do **anything he wanted** to Job **himself**, except he **couldn't** take away Job's **life**. So, Satan struck Job with a **terrible** disease, covering his entire body with **boils** - and while Job **lamented** his circumstances, and wondered **why** these things were happening to him - Job **still** didn't **curse** God.

Then Job's **friends** arrived on the scene. Now we would **assume** that this would have been a **helpful** thing, but it turned out to be just the **opposite**. The **best** thing they did was to sit **silently** with him for seven days and nights, because once they opened their **mouths**, they got themselves into **trouble**. All

three of Job's friends **accused** him of committing some **great sin**, and they proposed that **that** was why these great tragedies had come into his life. But Job refused to **acknowledge** any such sin. Over and over again He **defended** himself against their accusations. Finally out of **frustration** with his **situation** and with his **friends**, Job **foolishly** accused **God** of treating him **unfairly** - and he demanded an **audience** with God so he could **vindicate** himself.

Be **careful** what you **wish** for, because you might just **get** it! Interestingly enough, Job **got** his **wish**, but it didn't turn out **at all** the way he **expected**. The Lord came to **meet** with Job, and the words of our **text** are the first words He spoke. **Job** wanted God - Job **expected** God - to **defend** his actions, but **instead**, God **blasted** Job for his **pride** and **arrogance**. We hear God **thundering** from a violent storm, "*Who is this who spreads darkness over my plans with his ignorant words? Get ready for action like a man! Then I will ask you questions, and you will inform me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you understand anything about it. Who determined its dimensions? I am sure you know. Who stretched out the surveying line over it? What supports its foundation? Who set its cornerstone in place, when the morning stars sang loud songs together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Who locked up the sea behind doors when it burst out of the womb? When I clothed the sea with clouds, when I wrapped it with thick darkness as its swaddling cloths, when I broke its power with my decree, when I locked it up behind barred, double doors, I said, 'You may come this far, but no farther. Here is the barrier for your proud waves.'*"

Basically, God was saying to Job, "Job, just who do you think you **are**? Have you been around for all **eternity**? Do you think you have all the **answers**? Do you think I don't **know** what I'm **doing**? Do you think I owe you an **explanation** for My actions?" God made it **very clear** that He didn't owe Job an **explanation** for **anything** - because **He is God**, and He can do **whatever** He **wants** to do, **whenever** He wants to **do** it - and **whatever** He chooses to **do** will always be **good**.

These words of our text were only the **beginning**. In the verses which **follow** our text the Lord goes on to ask Job **77 questions** before He even gives Job the opportunity to **respond**. And what **was** his response? It was pretty much what we would **expect** from a person who had been so thoroughly **rebuked** by the Lord. Job was completely **humbled**, and he responded. "*I am insignificant. How could I reply to you? I will put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I cannot defend it. Twice, but I will not go any further.*"

No one sitting in this church (or anywhere else) has experienced the trials which **Job** experienced - and that doesn't mean that none of us have ever seen **tragedy**, or that we've never known **heartache**. We **have** - and the fact of the matter is that we will probably experience **more** of it before our lifetimes are over. How would **we** respond if God allowed the same things to happen to **us**, which He allowed to happen to **Job**? Would we **complain**? Would we **question** God's **goodness**? Would we **demand** that God **listen** to us because He seems to be treating us **unfairly**? I'm pretty sure that we wouldn't come away looking any better than **Job** did. Just like **Job**, we need to **Remember Who God Is**. God is the **Creator** - we are the **creation**. God is **all powerful** - we are **weak**. God **knows everything** - we don't even know what we **think** we know. We have **no right** to question **any** of God's actions. That may be offensive to our sinful **pride**, but an attitude of **humility** is what we would **need**, if we would ever even **think** about trying to **compare** ourselves with God. God can do **whatever** He wants to do, and that would be our **only** message today if these 11 verses from the Book of Job were the **only** words we had to go on. But we know that there's **more** to Job's story, and we also know that there's more to the story of how God deals with **all** of His people.

After Job **repented** of his sinful pride, the Lord turned His rebuke to the **friends** of Job. He scolded **them** for accusing Job of some **great sin**, and He **vindicated** Job for saying **correctly** that God **wasn't** punishing Job for a **specific sin** in his life. He told the friends to bring a **sacrifice** to Him, so that **Job** could plead on **their behalf**, and God would **hear** Job's prayer. Then, as the story **ends**, we see God's amazing **grace**. Instead of dealing with Job in **anger**, He **blessed** Job - even **beyond** the blessings which he had previously **lost**. God restored Job's **wealth** to **twice** what it had been before, and he blessed Job with more **sons** and **daughters**. And then after blessing Job with another 140 years of **life**, God gave him the **greatest** blessing of all. He took him to **Himself** in **heaven**. Job had certainly learned **Who God Is**. He had learned that God is **almighty** and **all-knowing**, and that He could deal with him however He **wanted**, but he had **also** learned that what God **wanted** was to always deal with him in **love**, and **compassion**, and **grace**. That's **Who God Is**.

When we are in the middle of **tragedy** and **suffering**, we **all** need to fall down on our knees, and humbly **submit ourselves** to the mighty hand of God. We **don't** need to **question** whether or not God is treating us **fairly**. We know that He is **not** treating us **fairly** - and we should be **grateful** for that, because

God is being **merciful** to us. When we **Remember Who God Is** - that He is a **holy** God who **hates sin** - we realize that if He treated us **fairly**, He would have to **condemn** us. If God treated us **fairly** we wouldn't only face **troubles** and **hardship** in **this** life, but because of our **sin**, we would have to face **eternal** punishment in **hell**.

But, instead of condemning **us**, God decided to condemn His Son **Jesus**, in our **place**. As we heard in our second lesson today, "*God made him who did not know sin, to **become sin for us**, so that **we might become the righteousness of God in him**.*" Through the **sacrifice** of Jesus - the **sinless** one - we are provided with **forgiveness** for our sins, and God sees us as **righteous**. There's nothing **fair** about that - it's completely due to God's **love** for us - love which is totally **unearned** and **undeserved** by us. Nevertheless, it's a love which we can **count** on, because we know **Who God Is**. Our God is a God of **love**, and He doesn't want to see us **suffer** now and forever. Instead He wants us to be **with Him** in heaven. And since He knows that we can't **earn** heaven on our **own**, He **gives** us heaven as a free **gift** - a gift which was **earned** by His **perfect Son**. When we realize how **wonderful** that gift is, and how **unworthy** we are to receive it, all of our **questions** and **complaints** will turn into **praise** and **thanksgiving**.

This is the eternal **truth** of the Gospel, but that **truth** doesn't make our earthly sufferings **go away**. Nevertheless, it **does** give us the motivation to **bear up** under all kinds of trials. It's **comforting** to know that the God who is our **Creator**, and who could treat us **any** way He wants, has chosen to deal with us in His **mercy**, and has promised to make **all things** work out for our eternal **good**. We may not be blessed as clearly as **Job** was, to **see** the hand of God turn all of our sufferings into **blessings** in our lives. And we may not ever find all the **answers** to our **questions** while we are still on this side of heaven. But in the middle of our **suffering**, we can be **content** by simply **Remembering Who God Is**. He is the **almighty** God who **created** the universe, but He is also the God of free and faithful **grace**, who sent His **Son** to **save** us, and who has promised to always be **with** us, to **forgive** us, and to **strengthen** us in all our trials. **Remember Who God Is**, and humbly submit to **His will**, as we look forward to the joys of **heaven**. Amen.