

Devotion 21:

## **Our Father Does No Wrong**

Job 1—42

“If there is a God and He is so loving, then why is there so much pain and suffering in the world?” It is the biggest criticism, the biggest argument, the biggest attack on our Father by an unbelieving world. And it is the focus of chapters 3 through 37 in the book of Job.

Three friends come to Job’s side as he mourns the devastating loss of his wealth, health, and family. His anguish becomes so great that he yearns for death. And the only comfort he gets is his friends’ meager attempts to explain the mystery of suffering in his life. They are convinced that he has sinned greatly and that he is now experiencing the just consequences. Job steadfastly maintains otherwise. Thanks to chapters 1-2 and 38-42, we readers know otherwise as well.

It is called dramatic irony, when a character on stage does not know something that the audience knows. What we see in chapter one is hidden from Job, his wife, and his friends. They do not realize that God has allowed satan to crush him for a high purpose. Job mistakenly assumes that God is angry with him. Job 1:8 says quite the opposite:

*“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.’”*

Job’s righteousness is tested severely in a span of about five minutes as four servants come and report almost simultaneously that Job has lost his livestock, servants, and ten children. Here is his stunning and God-glorifying response from Job 1:20-21:

*“Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.’”*

No one likes to suffer and the flesh strives to make this world as comfortable for us as possible. At the beginning of the story, satan accuses God of essentially bribing believers by giving them blessings. He basically makes a wager with our Father: remove Job’s blessings and he will curse you to your face. But in the most revealing verse in the book—revealing about Job and revealing about our Father—satan loses the bet:

*“In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.” 1:22*

After satan afflicts Job’s body “with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head” (2:7) his wife (says) to him, ‘Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die,’”(2:9) he replies:

*“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.” 2:10*

As the story unfolds, Job becomes a chronic sufferer and loses all sense of purpose in life. He does not expect to be healed and he sees death as his only escape. He ends up desperately desiring only two things: 1) healing from his suffering, and 2) a face-to-face hearing with God. After repeatedly asking “Why, me?” he finally gets his day in court. But God doesn’t answer his question until Job proves that he can answer over 50 questions from God. Of course, he cannot answer even one of the questions. Paul puts it best in Romans 11:33-35:

*“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!  
Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?  
Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?”*

In a most pointed and disturbing manner, God asks Job, “*Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?*” (40:8) Job replies, “*Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.*” (42:3b) At story’s end, our Father is angry with Job’s three friends: “*You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.*” (42:8b) You might recall that these three friends believed God was punishing Job for some big sin Job had committed.

Have you gone through a season of mysterious suffering? Perhaps you and others have tried to explain it by cause and effect. Is it from satan? Is it due to some past sin? Is it the Lord’s discipline? Is it a test from Him? The bottom line is this: our Father does not allow us to suffer for no reason. Beware of being shortsighted in your perspective. Beware of trying to figure out that which only our Father knows. Widen your camera shutter to see the situation from eternity’s perspective.

At the end of Job’s story, “*The Lord blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the first.*” (42:12a) This is a true statement for every believer. Our Father will more than tip the scales in our favor by His grace, if not in this world, then most certainly in our heavenly home. “*Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*” (Rom. 8:18) We can trust our Father—even in the midst of excruciating pain—because He does only what is right.