

The End of Job's Story...but not ours

1. (set up for next week's service). There are many books out there about people's journeys through sickness, the sickness or loss of a family member, pain or disappointment. I think those books are wonderful to have around; they help us with our own journey.
2. The problem is...they end before our journey ends. We are completing our look at the Book of Job today (and as repetitive as it was, it was way too rushed. Unless you read along and ahead of us and spent time reflecting on its language and the twists and turns along the way, you will have missed out on a lot of information you might very well need one day. Fahrenheit 451).
3. Let's look at **Job 42:1-6**. I want to float an idea out there to you. I have often asked God to reveal Himself to me in this way or that. Sometimes it is in a result – a person healed, a relationship change – but there have been times I just wanted to see His presence (lecture hall). What if...work with me here...what if seeing His presence would make the situation much, much worse?
4. When Job got to see and feel the full (..ish) presence of God, he claps his hands over his mouth (**Job 40:1-7**). In our hymns, we often speak of a "sweet, sweet Spirit" in this place or we call for God to come in mighty ways or loving ways or... what if God holds back because showing up would break us?
5. That is true even of his angels. (**Judges 13:11-17**) God does not and never did despise Job, but just by showing up, Job now despises himself. Think of a toddler pushing a nerf ball through a Little Tykes hoop and then his dad comes powering in, body blocking him, and dunking. Forget that that would be a jerk move by the dad...what would the effect be on the kid?
6. Do the same with reaching things, writing, driving a race car...the child would quickly learn to despise itself. How could it understand, much less compete, with such a powerful person? Parents who do not understand the fragility of children and the need to nurture them carefully along the way can end up with a child who is unable to

function in larger society (either due to over protecting or not being protected).

7. Job despised himself and, though He doesn't say it, that is probably the reason God hesitated so long in showing up. He took a lot of abuse and challenges from Job before chapter 38. He allowed Elihu, Bildad, Eliphaz and Zophar to say a lot of things – both beautiful and stupid – before showing up because God KNOWS how we view ourselves after viewing Him.
8. We will be asking God's Spirit to fill us and to go before us here at Fourth as we navigate these difficult and troubled times. God issues a promise and a warning when we call for that: **Exodus 33:15-20**. He then places Moses in a safe place where he will be allowed to see just a part of God as He passes him.
9. How much of God Job was allowed to see is unknown. What we DO know is that that revelation shattered his self esteem and his sense of value. So, God goes immediately to work to fix that.
10. In Job chapter 42, God tells Job's friends that they have not spoken the truth about God. They said so many wonderful and true things but they left out grace, forgiveness, and the fact that we live in a war zone and many, many good people will suffer due to no fault of their own. (one out of one, write down what you would die for – and live for that).
11. God promises to hear the prayers of Job...but there is an interesting bit that tends to get lost here. **Job 42:8,10**. Notice that God heard and responded in the heavenlies to Job's prayer, but there was no earthly restoration until Job forgave his friends and prayed for them. Our receiving of blessing on earth is absolutely tied to how we show grace, forgiveness and mercy to others. (**James 2:13**)
12. And do not miss a couple of other things woven into these last few verses (which we tend to rush and just say God blessed Job a whole lot). In the middle of all of the piles of blessings God gives Job, he restores him to a community who are able to constantly comfort him. **Job 42:10,11**. His community supported him, shared with him until he was back on top...but they continually comforted him

because none of these riches would reverse the fact that Job lost children and now also had memories of hard times with friends. That would last until he died and his community understood that and walked with him.

13. And that line "...over all the trouble Yahweh had brought on him." Yahweh is a name for God which is assumed to be one of, if not the highest name for Him. We are unable to source its original meaning but it seems to be connected to ancient words for "covenant" or "agreement." I prefer to think of it as linked to "promise." God is running the universe and He runs it looser than we would and tighter than we would...but He is running it.
14. And those who are faithful no matter what He brings on them, **Revelation 7:11-14.**