

The Life of Job

January 28, 2024

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Job 1:1-22; 2:7-10

Session Outline

1. The Man with It All (Job 1:1-5)
2. Losing It All (Job 1:6-19; 2:7-8)
3. Lessons from Job (Job 1:20-22; 2:9-10)

Theological Theme

God's faithfulness to us is not dependent on our circumstances, and it is possible to maintain a godly witness in the face of great adversity.

Call to Action

How do you see God when you are suffering? Is there anything you are holding back from the Lord because of your suffering and loss? Be willing to “pour out your heart” to the Lord (Psalm 62:8), because He is your refuge.



Leader Guide

The Life of Job

Introduction

We all have people we go to for help and advice. Depending on the situation, we may seek out the opinions of specific people. Often, those closest to us have ideas of how we should handle the things we face, but this is not always what we want or even need to hear.

This is especially true when adversity strikes. There are those who will counsel you to lash out in blame and anger, while others may challenge you to stay faithful and trust the Lord. What happens when the ones who usually encourage you in the faith are the very ones who encourage you to turn your back on God? Who will you listen to? Job was faced with this very issue and responded righteously.

- ❓ When faced with hardship, who do you typically turn to for advice?
- ❓ What is your most common reaction when struggles come your way? Why is that the case?


Session Summary

The book of Job reminds us life can be unfair. Things happen that we don't understand, and difficulties come our way unexpectedly. Job gave an example of how to deal with tough situations we face. Because of the fall of man that brought sin into the world (Genesis 3), there will be times of suffering and sorrow for everyone. It is important to recognize that blessings in life come from our heavenly Father and even when situations change, we can rest assured that God is with us and will strengthen us to stand firm in our faith.


Job was an upright and godly man who maintained his faith in God even when those closest to him advised him differently. He chose to trust in the Lord and remain committed to righteousness in the face of the worst adversity imaginable. His life served as a godly witness to those who observed the calamities he faced. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can follow Job's example and choose righteousness whether life is easy or difficult.

1. The Man with It All (Job 1:1-5)

It is not clear who wrote this book, and many believe Job penned the words about his life himself. Regardless of the author, this book gives perspective on dealing with the inevitable difficulties of life brought about by the brokenness of the world.

 What are some things you know from past study or teaching about Job?


Job was a righteous man who was blessed with family and material possessions. Job was not perfect, but he was devoted to the Lord. In this text, Job is called “a man of complete integrity” (v. 1). This does not mean he was sinless but that he lived in such a way that his reputation spoke consistently of his faithfulness to God. He not only feared God but also turned away from evil. Consider how those two things go together. To live a righteous life, you must be willing to resist evil and turn away from sin.

 How are all of God’s people called to live in the way Job was described in this passage?

In a culture where status or wealth was often measured by the size of one’s family, Job was exceedingly wealthy. With ten children, he had an impressive sized family that apparently was close and enjoyed fellowship with each other. We read that his children took turns hosting their siblings and their respective families. This seemingly ordinary details set the stage for the life Job was living before everything changed.

Job was not only living a great life in his relationships, but he was also materially blessed. We see a description of the vast wealth he accumulated, which helps us develop a clearer understanding of Job. All these details support the declaration that Job was the greatest man of the east (v. 3).

The fact that Job regularly offered sacrifices for his sons and daughters reinforces his faithfulness. Job took his role as a spiritual leader seriously, not just in the community, but in his family. This is a reminder that we are also responsible for the way we lead and influence those in our families. Job shows us the importance of making wise, godly, decisions and pointing those around us to Jesus in what we say and what we do.

 Application: Where is God calling you to take spiritual responsibility for yourself or your family? How do you need to respond?

Seven

The numbers seven (seven sons and seven thousand sheep and goats), three (three daughters and three thousand camels), and one thousand (five hundred yoke of oxen, where a yoke represents a pair; and five hundred female donkeys) symbolized perfection and completeness.

Job’s impressive family, servants, livestock, and material wealth made him the greatest man in the east, where “east” could designate “virtually any place from Damascus to Arabia and as far east as Persia” (Robert Alden, *Job*, New American Commentary).

2. Losing It All (Job 1:6-19; 2:7-8)

After learning the context of Job's life on earth, the text shifts focus to a scene in heaven. The angelic beings were coming before God in heaven and Satan was among them. Here we are reminded that Satan is under God's authority and not on equal footing with Him.

Through the conversation, we learn Satan has been allowed freedom to roam the earth and is very interested in what goes on around the earth. God is omniscient, meaning He knows everything. Satan is not. Although he does move about in the spiritual realm, he does not know everything like the Lord does. It was God who brought Job to Satan's attention. The Lord set forth Job for being such a faithful servant of His.

Satan responded with a challenge that Job was only faithful to God because he was enjoying a very nice, comfortable life with his family and possessions. Satan accused Job of only having good character because God made it easy for him to do the right things. Satan accused Job of only being faithful out of a desire to get things from God.




What does this interaction teach you about God's authority over everything and everyone, including Satan? How are you encouraged or challenged by this?

Despite Satan's accusations, God had confidence in his servant Job and gave Satan permission to attack Job within certain parameters. Think about what God might say about you when He looks at your life. Are you living in such a way that could withstand any attack of Satan? With God's permission, Satan jumped at the opportunity to wreak havoc on the life of this godly man.




God had confidence in Job because Job placed his trust in God. What does that teach us about where our ultimate hope and stability is found?

After being given permission to come against Job, Satan brought as much catastrophe as he could onto the man. Satan began by destroying Job's family during a celebration and went on from there. In the space of a short time, Job's life was turned upside down and his losses were devastating. Tragedy came to Job through different sources, including the acts of sinful men. Satan often accomplishes his evil plans by offering evil people the opportunity to commit vile acts. Job lost his loved ones and his possessions. Finally, God gave Satan permission to attack Job's health. Satan was restricted from taking Job's life, but it seems that was almost all Job had left.

-  Application: Be honest, how would you respond if you were faced with the same tragedies as Job? Many people have faced deep tragedy in the world. How does this text point us to care and compassion for those around us who are suffering?

3. Lessons from Job (Job 1:20-22; 2:9-10)


In what may be a surprise to many readers, Job responded to his initial losses with faith and godliness. We are told of his mourning, but he did not sin. Trusting the Lord doesn't mean you will not be sad, broken-hearted, and devastated over loss. But as we see from Job, those who have faith in the Lord do not mourn the same as those without hope.

-  How have you experienced the difference between mourning in faith and mourning without hope?

Job mourned but he also chose to worship God in his suffering. Instead of focusing on his circumstances and becoming stuck there, Job assessed his situation in a godly and wise way. He declared that everything he had was a gift from God in the first place. By recognizing that his previous wealth and prosperity was a blessing from God, he could still trust the Lord in the absence of these things.

In all that happened to Job, he refused to curse or blame the Lord. To Job, God was worthy of praise no matter the circumstances. Instead of giving in to the temptation of blaming God and turning his back on the Lord, Job stood fast in his faith and refused to give in to the situation, affirming the confidence the Lord had bestowed on him.

After the first round of calamity, Job remained faithful. Then Satan came again and brought physical suffering to add more devastation. In chapter two, we see how this next set of circumstances caused Job's wife to turn against the Lord and challenge Job's faith. She gave him foolish advice to curse God and put the blame on the Lord. Remember that Job's wife was also suffering. She faced the same losses and was struggling herself, but Job is the one who responded rightly.

-  Have you ever faced a time when others mocked you for keeping faith in God? How did you respond? What makes this so difficult?

It's one thing to stand for the Lord when others are helping and encouraging you, but when those closest to you start pushing you the other direction, it is increasingly difficult to remain faithful. Job's response to his wife's challenge of his integrity and faith showed even more wisdom. He recognized that God is the Giver of good, undeserved gifts we receive with gratitude. When adversity comes our way, we should also look for the gift God may be giving through it. When those closest to him challenged his faith, Job did not sin against the Lord. That is a remarkable testimony and example for all of us.



Application: How are you encouraged to respond to difficulty in your life through studying the account of Job?

Conclusion

Suffering is a given for all people. Difficult things occur in all our lives, and those who know the Lord can be a strong witness during those times, just as we see in the life of Job. Job was a man who had everything and was highly respected by his peers but cared most of all about the opinion of the Lord.

Job's faith came under severe and devastating attack that resulted in him losing his wealth, status, and eventually his health. Through everything that happened, Job had multiple opportunities to blame God and curse Him. Regardless of who tempted him to lash out at the Lord, Job remained faithful and sinless before God. His life was a witness of the difference between mourning as one with faith compared to those without hope.

Every believer has similar opportunities to choose godliness when unexpected or difficult suffering comes. Job chose to worship and praise the Lord even in his mourning. He stressed that every good thing he had received had been from God and was undeserved, so he chose to continue trusting God even when those good things were taken away. Job trusted that the Lord was with him and found strength from God to stand firm in his faith.

- ❓ How have you seen and experienced the presence of the Lord in your suffering?
- ❓ How can we support one another and encourage one another toward godliness amid suffering?
- ❓ How might you have a gospel conversation with someone by sharing about the life of Job?

Prayer of Response

Thank the Lord for the good gifts He gives. Confess where you struggle with faithfulness when things get difficult. Commit to trusting Him in every circumstance whether good or bad.

Memory Verse

*Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I will leave this life.
The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away.
Blessed be the name of the Lord.
-Job 1:21*

Additional Resources

- *Job* by Steven Lawson
- *Be Patient* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Exalting Jesus in Job* by David Allen

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



Historical Context of Job

Purpose

The book of Job demonstrates that a sovereign, righteous God is sufficient and trustworthy for every situation in life, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Author

The author of Job is unknown, but he was a learned man whose knowledge embraced the heavens (22:12; 38:32–33) and earth (26:7–8; 28:9–11; 37:11, 16). His knowledge touched on foreign lands (28:16, 19), various products (6:19), and human professions (7:6; 9:26; 18:8–10; 28:1–11). He was familiar with plants (14:7–9) and animals (4:10–11; 38:39–39:30; 40:15–41:34). He was a wise man, familiar with traditional wisdom (6:5–6; 17:5; 28:12, 28), but was above all a man of spiritual sensitivity (1:1, 5, 8; 2:3; 14:14–15; 16:11–21; 19:23–27; 23:10; 34:26–28; 40:1–5; 42:1–6). He was doubtless an Israelite as confirmed by his frequent use of God's covenant name (Yahweh, usually rendered as the Lord).

Although Job is set in the patriarchal period, its date of writing is unknown. Jewish tradition places the authorship of Job in the time of Moses.

Setting

The story of Job is set in the patriarchal period. In that era wealth consisted of the possession of cattle and servants. Like other Old Testament patriarchal family heads, Job performed priestly duties, including offering sacrifices for his family. Like the patriarchs, Job lived to be more than a hundred years old. Geographically, the action took place in the northern Arabian Peninsula, in the land of Uz (1:1), often associated with Edom. Job's three friends also had Edomite or southern associations, as did the young Elihu (see notes at 2:11; 32:2–3).

Special Features

The book of Job is named after the central character and speaker. The narrative deals with a man who lost everything and the subsequent discussions he had about the reason for his suffering. God alone had the final word and eventually restored all that Job had lost.

Extended Commentary

Job 1-2

The prologue is a tightly woven narrative that blends both chiasm (a pattern repeating ideas in inverted order) and parallelism (a pattern repeating ideas in sequence), as follows:

- A Background of the Story (1:1–5)
- B Dialogue in Heaven (1:6–12)
- C Affliction of Job (1:13–19)
- D Job’s Response (1:20–22)
- B’ Dialogue in Heaven (2:1–6)
- C’ Affliction of Job (2:7–8)
- D’ Job’s Response (2:9–10)
- A’ Background of the Dialogue (2:11–13)

In 1:1 Job is declared to have been altogether upright and blameless. At the very outset, therefore, the possibility that his sufferings might be punishment or discipline is thrown out of court. The text does not even allow the possibility that they were preventative disciplines given in order that he would not be tempted to stray. Job was careful about that danger even for his children. This declaration of Job’s innocence prevents the reader from escaping the dilemma of the book by the assumption that Job must have been guilty of something. He was not.

Satan (meaning adversary or accuser) appeared before God in 1:6 and challenged the validity of Job’s piety. Some claim that Satan here was merely a loyal angel whose task was that of chief prosecutor, but this misreads the text. His hostility to God was transparent, as was his malice. He was evil. Nevertheless, he posed the central question of the book: “Does Job fear God for nothing?”

Job lost all his wealth and children in the first affliction and his health in the second. Satan’s proverb “skin for skin” means that Job valued nothing so much as his own skin, since only skin can equal it. Still, Job did not lose his faith or integrity, even after his wife lost hers. His friends visited him to comfort him, but they sat in horror for a week before anyone could speak.¹

References

1. Duane A. Garrett, “The Poetic and Wisdom Books,” in *Holman Concise Bible Commentary*, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 204.