

How Does the Story End?

Job #9 | Job 42:10-17

August 9, 2020

PRAYER

Introduction

Job 42 ¹⁰ After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his fortunes and doubled his previous possessions.

- *Sorry about your kids, here's some new ones.* – Charlie from Salish

The Push and Pull of American Optimism and Cynicism

- Optimism after WW2: American dream, Disney “happily ever after,” Beatle-mania
- Pessimism of the 70’s: Civil rights, Kennedy assassination, Nixon resignation, Vietnam
- Optimism of the 80’s: End of the Cold War, fall of Iron Curtain, landslide Reagan, hair metal
- Pessimism of the 90’s: cynical grunge rock, hip-hop culture and the pain of the AA experience, another presidential scandal and impeachment, David Foster Wallace

We live in this push-and-pull between optimism and pessimism/cynicism, so we experience the ending of Job differently.

- Some of you are excited by the happy ending.
- Others of you identify with the eye roll of my friend Charlie
- My premise: The ending of the book of Job actually holds both together in tension. It does **not** gloss over the genuine tragedy in Job’s life, yet it does not allow us to wallow.

Big idea: Sometimes, our life story ends in joy, sometimes in sorrow. Either way, the follower of Jesus can experience hope for the future and grace in the present.

- Four keys: 1) No sugar-coating, 2) Enjoy what is good, 3) Share what is good, 4) get ready for a resurrection.

I. No Sugar-Coating

Job 42 ¹¹ All his brothers, sisters, and former acquaintances came to him and dined with him in his house. They sympathized with him and comforted him concerning all the adversity the Lord had brought on him.

Not So Neat and Tidy

- More hardship just learning at the end: where were these people while he was suffering?
 - Likely they shrank away due to retribution theology.
- Even here at the end of the story, yes it’s happy, but there are still some sad notes
- The ending book of Job does not guarantee that when we go through suffering, it will all turn out good in this life. *Paul in Philippians expecting and hoping but not all the way certain*

Along with Job 42, no verse gets used to sugar-coat more than Romans 8:28...

Romans 8:28

(ESV) ²⁸ We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

- Key verb *work together* | Greek $\sigma \upsilon \nu \epsilon \rho \gamma \acute{\epsilon} \omega$ (synergeo)
 - Who or what is doing the working together? The things, or...God and the people?
- Four other appearances in the NT:
 - **Mark 16** ²⁰ And [the disciples] went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.]]
 - **1 Corinthians 16** ¹⁶ also to submit to such people [i.e. good leaders], and to everyone who works and labors with them.
 - **2 Corinthians 6:1** [preceding section in 5:20 ²⁰ *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."*] Working together with him, we also appeal to you, "Don't receive the grace of God in vain.
 - **James 5** ²² You see that faith was active together with his works...
 - **Two different people or entities working together for a common purpose**
- Haley Goranson Jacob suggests that this English translation is due to a reaction from the Reformation tradition where there is an emphasis on monergism: God alone does the work of salvation. Which is true! But is that what this verse is actually about?
 - Jesus has saved us, but we're waiting for the final restoration
 - While we wait, God is working for good in the here and now.
- Case to be made that the translation should be (RSV) *We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.*
 - Without this, we can be tempted to attribute bad things to God, or to try to make bad things be good things.
 - The Bible is crystal clear that God is not evil, there is no darkness in him, he is not the author of evil, he is not tempted by evil.
 - BUT, the Bible is very clear that God, in his sovereignty, allows pain, evil, difficulty.
 - AND, the Bible is very clear that one day, those things will be done away with.
 - NOW, God is partnering with us, working with those who love him and are called according to his purposes to bring about good even
- **Francis Schaeffer** [I]t is not that in some magical way everything really is fine, even when our observation and experience sees and feels the sorrows of the present world. No, it is because God is the infinite God He is that in spite of the abnormality of all things now, He can in the midst of the battle bring good for His people out of abnormality.
- **David Bartlett** Christians do not need to say that every tragedy or loss is part of God's plan. We can say that in every tragedy or loss God is still God and still moves our lives and all of history toward what is good...Even when contemplating the enormous tragedies of human history, natural disaster, or human viciousness, faith reminds us that God is still at work in the midst of evil, working toward the good. The question, *Why did God let this happen?* is unanswerable. The questions we may begin to answer are, *What can God do with this evil to help bring about the good?* and *How can we be God's partners, God's servants in the work?*

II. Enjoy What is Good

Job 42 Each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold earring. ¹² So the Lord blessed the last part of Job's life more than the first. He owned fourteen thousand sheep and goats, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys.

1. ANE symbol of blessing is family and possessions | the way that a writer and audience from this time period would express God's favor on a person, God's love.
 - a. The blessings come through community | help him get back on his feet
 - b. The people are partners, servants in the work of restoration for Job
2. Life will have both good and bad
 - a. **1 Corinthians 4** ¹¹ ...I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. ¹² I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. ¹³ I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.
 - b. **Ecclesiastes 8** ¹⁵ So I commended enjoyment because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat, drink, and enjoy himself, for this will accompany him in his labor during the days of his life that God gives him under the sun.
 - c. **Job 2** ¹⁰ Should we accept only good from God and not adversity?
3. **Tim Mackie** But you interpret the reward differently now because the reward you realize isn't owed to Job, but it is simply God's gift to Job. He could have not done it, and He could have done it. We now know how God runs the universe, He could have done it, He could have not done it. And we interpret this not through recompense, "Job earned this." We interpret it now as, in God's wisdom and generosity, He gifts job with abundance and joy once again.

Before, Job feared the loss of possession. Now he can enjoy these things as grace/gift. And we see that in the way that he shares his possessions.

III. Share What is Good

Job 42 ¹³ He also had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴ He named his first daughter Jemimah, his second Keziah, and his third Keren-happuch. ¹⁵ No women as beautiful as Job's daughters could be found in all the land, and their father granted them an inheritance with their brothers.

- His money was not just for him to hoard, but to share
- So generous, in fact, that he gave his daughters a share of the inheritance
 - Only the daughters are named, and they receive inheritance with the brothers
 - Names of things that are beautiful, sweet-smelling | not theological
 - To the ANE mind, this would again signal excessive abundance
 - New covenant foreshadowing | **Galatians 3** ²⁸ There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.
- Even though he has suffered tremendously, we see him...
 - Praying for friends

- Hosting dinners
- Giving money to his kids, exceedingly generous
- One of the best ways to heal from the pains of our lives is to love and serve others

IV. Job's Resurrection

Job 42 ¹⁶ Job lived 140 years after this and saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. ¹⁷ Then Job died, old and full of days.

- Remember the friends sitting for 7 days, like with a corpse?
- If that is so, then this is a type of resurrection

Christopher Ash The purpose of the Lord to show mercy and compassion will be seen finally only when the Lord Jesus returns in glory. Job 42 anticipates the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Like all the Old Testament types of Christ, Job dies at the end of his story (v. 17); and his death proves he is not the one to come, but merely one in whose sufferings are foreshadowed that one whose sandals neither Job nor any Old Testament prophet nor even John the Baptist will be worthy to untie.

Jesus' Resurrection

- Life, death, burial...his friends were sitting around mourning as though he were dead
- The innocent sufferer, dead in the grave
- **Luke 24** ⁵...“Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” asked the men. ⁶“He is not here, but he has risen!

Waiting For the Final Resurrection

Romans 8 ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope ²¹ that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. ²³ Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Christopher Ash The blessings of the new heavens and new earth will be rock-solid real. We look forward to beauty that makes the most beautiful woman in the world seem dull. We look forward to fruitfulness that will make the most abundant family in the world seem barren. We look forward to prosperity that will make the Forbes list of the world's billionaires seem poor. And we look forward to a celebration that will make the best party in the world seem like a quiet glass of apple juice. So...let us remember what we ought to expect of the normal Christian life. Let us see what Job foreshadowed, now fulfilled in the sufferings, faith, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and heavenly reign of Jesus Christ. Let us expect to suffer with him if we will ultimately reign with him, for by grace we will.

Right now, we live by the Spirit. We have the Holy Spirit as a firstfruits, we are waiting.

Eleonore Stump It is possible to suffer in human ways—dreadfully—and nonetheless, in the face of the presence of God, lose all desire to complain, and be moved just by love of God and love of the connection to God. And if it is the case that in the presence of God all the suffering will seem like a small thing by comparison with the love of God...if it seems so to Job in his suffering, then it can seem so to any other human being too.

Benediction

1 Peter 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

Sermon Description

Does the end of the book of Job teach that we should expect things to always turn out happy after we go through a period of suffering? When understood in the context of the entire book (as well as the rest of the Bible), we can confidently say that is not what the end of Job is teaching. As followers of Jesus, we know that the ultimate end of the story is eternal joy, even if we experience hardship and suffering in this life.

Discussion Questions

1. When you or someone you love is suffering, are you prone to sugar-coating? Why or why not? How can we help each other be honest about suffering while still hopeful in the gospel?
2. What hardships are you facing currently? In those hardships, how can you still enjoy what is good? How can you share what is good with others?
3. In what ways is the end of Job a type/picture of the resurrection of Jesus? How is it a type/picture of the resurrection that awaits us as believers?
4. As our world goes through tremendous suffering, how could our hope-filled suffering be a witness to the goodness of Jesus and the truth of the gospel?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would be the kind of disciples who do not sugar-coat our suffering, but face it with the hope and the joy of the gospel.
2. Pray that we would enjoy what is good, and share with those in need, particularly those who have yet to come to saving faith in Jesus.