

June 14,2020

Second Sunday of Job

Job 3:1-10, 4:1-9, 7:11-21

The Book of Job poses the difficult question of why does bad things happen to good people? If you stop and think about it you might ask why shouldn't bad things happen to good people? Who better to deal with bad situations than good people? They would have the personality, attitude, and resources to handle bad situations the best. They would certainly be better equipped to handle a bad situation than a bad person. Another thing to think about is that if good people had to deal with bad situations wouldn't it make them an even better person? Bad situations are an opportunity to grow and learn. Mostly about yourself and those around you. Just as Job did this morning about Elipaz.

There are deeper historical roots being exposed in the Book of Job. The Jewish understanding of a benevolent creator God is being challenged and questioned. The older Jewish cosmic view of karma was that only good things happened to good people. If bad situations came their way, then they have fallen out of favour with God. How do you explain this when it actually happens? Surely it could not be random circumstances and natural occurrences? The Jews thought that God must be at the center of the situation. This raises even more questions. Why would a good and benevolent God do bad things to good people? Now the morality of God comes into question. Keep in mind that a limited human mind cannot probe or understand the infinite mind of God. If we could then we would be God.

Well now the Jews thought that there must be an evil angel that causes bad things to happen to good people. Enter the fallen angel Satan as God's nemesis. Now the Jews have a cosmic duality of good and evil to explain everything that

happens. The Jews developed this idea during the Babylonian Captivity. The Zoroastrian Babylonians had an eternal cosmic struggle between good and evil. Before the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews did not have this duality concept in their religion. In the Book of Job, we are watching their faith and understanding of the cosmos shift and grow as we read.

You would hope that this cosmic duality would be well thought out and complete over the centuries. Not so. More questions would arise. Such as why does our good God who is all powerful, allow the lesser evil fallen angel exist? Why doesn't God just crush him and wipe him out? The Book of Job is a philosophical can of worms. This book gives you lots to think about and ponder. You think Job has struggles; his book has been raising them for centuries.

The other burning question Job raises is the idea of free will and do we have it? Or are we pawns to entertain God? That question comes out of Greek mythology. I have always thought free will to be an illusion of free will. God just lets us think we have it. God knows what we are going to do before we even do it. That is not so much control as it is knowledge. Sometimes we know what our children are going to do in a situation before they do. God is no different with us. God knew what Job would do when he was tested. That was the reason for the wager between God and Satan. God knew He was going to win the wager because He knew Job's attitude and faith.

In the end it was Job's attitude and faith in God that carried him through his trials. God will not remove your trials but will see you through them. God will not get you over them but through them. Knowing that is comforting during your trials. God does not abandon us. We are His children made in His image.

Random circumstances and natural occurrences cause most of our trials. I like to think that God has more important issues to contend with than me. Job teaches that there will be trials in life. For the good and bad people. Random

circumstances and natural occurrences do not discriminate. Our attitude will determine how we come out of our trials. A positive attitude rooted in faith will carry you much further. There will be days that are harder and more trying than others during your trials. This is where faith in God comes in to help you through those days. Hopefully in the end we will have grown and learned something. Trials are an opportunity to grow and be a stronger person. If we don't learn from them, they generally repeat years later.

This is an interesting adventure down a deep rabbit hole called the Book of Job. Keep in mind that we cannot understand or fathom how God thinks. This is a philosophical and theological exercise of the mind. There is no concrete answer. As Flip Wilson said so beautifully, "The Devil made me do it ". God bless and take care, Pastor D