

ENTER SATAN, LAUGHING

Job 42:1-6

INTRODUCTION

- A. The problem of suffering.
 - 1. Young family man, young wife, children – diagnosed with cancer, weeks to live. Why do things like that happen?
 - 2. Woman, devoted to her marriage, discovers husband unfaithful, wants a divorce. Why do things like this happen?
 - 3. The father who loves his children, trains them to be moral and good, knowing God and His grace – turn from God living rebellious lives. Why do good fathers have disobedient children?
 - 4. Mother spending life raising and loving her children, receiving phone call one evening all three of her children killed in accident. Why do such tragedies ever happen?
- B. Can our faith in God help us come to grip with such issues?
 - 1. We need a faith that makes sense of what seems senseless.
 - 2. We need God to answer the “whys” of our lives.
 - a. Is He the cause of suffering?
 - b. Are all bad things the consequences of our being bad people?
 - c. Does God punish us whether we are righteous or wicked?

I. JOB: A RIGHTEOUS MAN WHO SUFFERED.

- A. Job, the Righteous.
 - 1. Job 1:1
 - 2. Entire book founded on premise that Job is righteous before God.
- B. The Good Ol’ Days.
 - 1. God has blessed Job with every blessing because of his pure and upright life.
 - 2. Job 1:2-5
 - 3. Job enjoyed every blessing from God:
 - a. Children.
 - b. Flocks and herds.
 - c. Servants and great wealth.
- C. The Days of Evil.
 - 1. The first round of suffering.
 - a. Job 1:13-22 – tragedies befall Job.
 - i. Raiding parties steal livestock and kill servants.
 - ii. Fire from the sky burns up flocks.
 - iii. Mighty wind topples house – kills all children.
 - b. Job’s response: Job 1:20-22.
 - 2. The second round of suffering.
 - a. Job 2:7-10 – more suffering on one man.
 - i. Festered sores over body, 2:7; 7:5.
 - ii. Scabs form leaving scars, 30:28-30.
 - iii. So disfigured, friends can’t look at him, 2:12; 19:17-20.
 - iv. Fever and loss of appetite, 30:30; 16:8; 19:20.
 - v. Constant pain, 30:17.
 - vi. Cannot sleep, and bad breath, 7:4, 14; 19:17!
 - b. So miserable he curses day he was born, 3:3, 11.
 - c. Still, does not sin: Job 2:9-10.
 - 3. And yet, he does not understand – Why?

II. WHY DO PEOPLE SUFFER?

- A. Job's Friends and the Problem of Theodicy.
 - 1. Why bad things happen to good people?
 - a. Three friends come to "comfort" Job.
 - b. Job 3:11-13 – "why"?
 - 2. Attempt to "sympathize" leads to shouting match.
 - a. Bad things do not happen to good people.
 - b. When people suffer, it means they deserve what they get.
- B. The God of Pleasure and Pain.
 - 1. Job's friends take position: "You reap what you sow."
 - a. When you are righteous, God blesses (Dt. 28:3-14).
 - b. When you are wicked, God punishes (Dt. 28:15-68).
 - c. Job is suffering – proof Job was sinful.
 - 2. The words of one of Job's friends make this clear: Job 34:4-7a, 9-12.
- C. The Complicated God.
 - 1. Job takes another position: Things are more complicated than that! Suffering is not so neatly packaged.
 - a. There are times, when those who should be punished prosper, while the ones who ought to prosper bear God's punishment.
 - b. Job 21:7-8, 13.
 - c. Job is an example of a righteous man who suffers, Job 23:11-15.
 - 2. If God is the one who blesses and punishes, why doesn't He take more care choosing which people get what? God is complicated and you can't understand the way He works and no point in asking God to justify Himself.
 - 3. Job 9:14-15, 21-24.

III. ENTER SATAN, LAUGHING.

- A. Life Is Not a Duet; it is a Trio.
 - 1. Job was indeed suffering in spite of his righteousness.
 - 2. And all that Job's friends had told him was true. God does punish the wicked and reward the righteous.
 - 3. There is a third party, that neither Job nor his friends took into account – Satan.
 - a. Job 1:6-12.
 - i. Job does not deal only with a God who loves righteousness but with an adversary who hates it.
 - ii. While the goodness of Job is a point of pride for God, it is an affront to Satan.
 - iii. The suffering that results in the life of righteous Job does not come from the hand of God, but from the hand of Satan.
 - b. Job 2:1-7
 - 4. It is Satan, not God, who causes the suffering of Job.
- B. Why Do Men Suffer?
 - 1. God causes some to suffer out of His hatred of evil, Col. 3:5-10; Heb. 10:28-29.
 - a. God punishes evil and rewards good.
 - b. If all we see, like Job and friends, is God's hand in the issues that face us, we might come to the same conclusions they did: If you suffer, you are evil.
 - 2. Satan causes others to suffer out of his hatred of good.
 - a. Satan is also alive and well. Some of what happens to us is the result of his work.
 - b. Sometimes, when we suffer, it is not because God is punishing wickedness, but because Satan is punishing good.

3. Job suffers, not because of God, but because of Satan. Job suffers because of his righteousness, not in spite of it.

CLOSING

- A. We are the people who hate Satan.
- B. Will we, then, continue to serve him?