Pastor Richard Allen Farmer

Crossroads Church

5587 Redan Rd.

Stone Mountain, GA 30088

770.469.9069

Journeying with Job. Part 17

An Answer...and More Questions

Text: Job 40:3-41:11

God has broken His silence and bombarded Job with questions Job cannot answer. Margaret Brackenbury Crook says that, “Those irrelevant spokesmen for God- the three friends- are set aside”. (Crook, p. 139). Job stopped talking for a while (31:40c). Now, Job answers God.

Again, out of the whirlwind, God speaks (38:1).

From 40:8 through to 41:11, the gist of God’s word to Job, is that Job has deistic tendencies and Job needs to check himself! A translation of verse seven that is more faithful to the Hebrew than the NKJV is, “Gird up your loins like a mighty one!”. Job had once said that he wanted to talk with God as one talks with a neighbor (16:21). God now speaks to Job as God might speak to *God*.

Job has essentially accused God of injustice and now God dares Job to take the helm and see if he can do a better job of ruling the world than God does. God parades His giants of creation before Job (Hippopotamus? 40:15-24[except 17-18]; Crocodile? 41:1-11) and with every passing great beast, Job is made to feel smaller.

I want to suggest two realities that change, or that ought to, when we are suffering.

1. Our self-assessment changes...or should

“I am vile and have no answer for You” (40:4a)

The word *vile* in this text is not a moral word. It means *small, humbled.* Sometimes when one is suffering, the only appropriate posture is silence before the Sovereign!

What we need when we are going through the worst seasons of life, is not the arrogant reminders to others that we are righteous. What we need is more hands over mouths (40:4b) Do you remember Peter in Luke 5:8? After Jesus performed the miracle of the fish catch, Peter said,

*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!*

We change our questions from “Where is *God* in my pain?” to “Where am *I* in my pain?”. If I cannot stand up against beasts, whether actual or metaphorical, what makes me think I should stand up against God? (41:10-11). In the words of 40:9, do I have an arm like God’s arm? Can I thunderously speak as God speaks? Am I adorned in majesty and splendor, as God is? Am I arrayed with glory and beauty, as God is? (40:10). Job answers God and the questions from God continue.

Job has seen crime and accused God of winking at it instead of fixing it (12:6; 24:1-12). Can you, Job, do a better job of tending the earth and managing humanity? Suffering can make a person *bitter*. Suffering can also make a person *better*. We get humbled in our trials.

2. Our understanding of the ways and character of God changes...or ought to.

I want to peek ahead and read 42:2 wherein Job says to God,

*I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.*

The longer one walks with God, the more submissive one becomes...or ought to. If Job could do all that to which God alludes, in 40:10-14, Job would be God. Only God can bring a suffering person through what looks like a terrible injustice and bring the sufferer out on the other side of it, rejoicing. Only God. Only God can take righteous people and accompany them through the fires and floods and lions’ dens and Red Seas and boils and warts and Satanic attacks and cause them to still trust Him when it looks like they are being slayed. Job’s theology is getter clearer by this point in the saga. Job is remembering that God is God. Only God can address injustice and bring justice to it. Only God can see chaos and bring order to it. Only God can see death and bring life to it. Only God can see destruction and devolution abound and bring construction and growth to it.

Perhaps the words of the NT book of 1 Peter would be helpful here. This is a word for every person who feels that God has given him or her an unfair set of circumstances to handle.

1 Peter 5:6

*Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.*

Did you hear it? It is not that there won’t be recovery. That recovery, that victory dance, that shout comes in God’s “due time”.

That’s what Job is learning. May we learn it as well.

Amen.