

# The Lord Gives, and The Lord Takes Away

sermonaudio.com

*Job*

By Dalton Teal

**Bible Text:** Job 1:20-22

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 22, 2023

## **Providence Church**

2146 Buford Hwy

Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

**Website:** [www.providenceduluth.org](http://www.providenceduluth.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch](http://www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch)

of Job, and then we will go before the Lord in prayer.

1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. 2 There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. 3 He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. 4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually. 6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. 7 The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." 8 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" 9 Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? 10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." 12 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. 13 Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 14 and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 16 While he was yet speaking, there came

another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 17 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 18 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." 22 In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

Let's go before the Lord in prayer.

*Our most gracious and heavenly Father, we thank you for the joy that it is to come before you and look into this text. Lord, there are many hard and difficult things that present themselves here. It reminds us of the pain of loss that many of us have experienced, some of us more recently than others. It reminds us of the afflictions that we face in this life as we long for eternity. But Lord, in all of this, it reminds us of your faithfulness, that you are the God who is sovereign over all things, in control of all things. And so Lord, this morning we ask for your favor to be upon us, that you might grant us clarity and wisdom as we seek to understand this text, that you might allow us to have eyes to see and ears to hear the marvelous words of Job as he recounts your glory and your power and your sovereignty. Lord, be with us. Be with me that I might not preach in vain or in pride but I might humbly present what you have declared. Be with us now and may you be glorified in everything that is about to unfold. And I ask this in the precious name of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Yesterday was a particularly long day for me and a few others. I'll tell you a little bit more about the first half of the day. But we did have the joy of having our first youth fellowship of the year where our students were able to gather together ages 6 to 12th grade. We had a whole lot of pizza and Samuel Anderson really helped me put some pizza down. He definitely beat me in the pizza eating competition. But we were able to play games together, which by the way, I won't mention the name of this person, but I will give his title. If you want to see the chairman of the deacons aggressively playing very entertaining games with all of our youth and then even more aggressively celebrating when he beat them down, his wife may or may not have the video, that would be all I will say. But we were blessed even more to hear of his testimony and the faithfulness of what God had done in his life and was doing in his life. So it was a tremendous joy to be a part of that last night and I'm so thankful for all the leaders that were a part of that.

But before that, myself and Mr. Kim Pitts drove up to Greenville, South Carolina. We drove up and several others from our church went up to be at the funeral for Glenda Guthrie, the mom of both Todd and Ted, to be there for the celebration of her life and her faithfulness. I have had the unique privilege or difficulty, however you want to word it, of going to dozens and dozens of funerals in my life and Lord willing, if he keeps me on this earth for long, I know that I will probably go over a hundred, if not hundreds more. That is the nature of ministry and the nature of this life. But there are several funerals or memorial services, you might call them, that stick out to me, and yesterday's was one of them. Yesterday we heard from four sons about the faithfulness of their mom, how all she cared about was her Lord and Savior and raising a family in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

A week ago we had a memorial service here for Cynthia Pierce and I heard the same thing. All she cared about was the faithfulness of her Lord and Savior and serving him. In fact, Cynthia meant a lot to me. Many of you don't know that both Cynthia and then Miss Linda, who's sitting back there right next to her empty seat, basically ran my welcome wagon. They had been welcoming to me the entire time that I had been here, to the point in which they now call me Sunshine because I was a little bit bothered that no one else wanted to say that I was sunshine-y. But they ran my welcome wagon and they have cared for me and all I ever heard from Cynthia was, first of all, "Go Dogs," and then second of all, "You should hear about this sermon that I've been listening to from Paul Washer or John MacArthur." That's all she wanted to talk about.

And you see, the consistent theme of all of these funerals or memorial services that I have been to is the joy that these people took in their Lord and Savior, the hope that they had in God. For both Mrs. Guthrie and for Cynthia, they went through hard trials their last few years. Cynthia's health was constantly declining. Even a year ago, we didn't know she was going to make it or not. She had a difficult time standing up because of her blood pressure. She had to go sit out there and listen oftentimes. She had to park right there in order to be able to safely walk to and from her car. A lot of times, she couldn't be here because of her health but yet, in all of that, as Pastor Ty mentioned last week during her service, she never complained. She just praised her God. And for me, that stands out because it's very easy for us to complain in the midst of adversity. It's very easy for us to complain when trials are in our faces, when we are suffering the greatest calamity, and yet these faithful servants of God, all they cared about was glorifying their Lord and Savior.

In fact, we were on a call a couple of weeks ago with Ted, where he was calling into an elders' meeting, and we asked for a report. "How is your mom doing? What's been going on?" At that point, they had taken her to the hospital. She was on a ventilator. Things weren't looking good. And he said, "You know, the first words that mom said as we were driving to the hospital was, I just want God's will to be done." And then there was a moment in which they took her off the ventilator and all she wanted to say was, "I want God to be glorified in my life." And for me, it begs the question of how? How in the face of such pain and such struggle and such calamity is that their faith? How can they with boldness, talk about how all they want is God to be glorified? All they want is God's will

to be done? I don't think it's because of their character, these people were heroes in faith. I don't think it was because of the greatness of who they were and the strength at which they had. I think it was because of the greatness of their God that they were able to look in the face of such pain and such anguish and such calamity and say, "Come what may, I will glorify God."

So this morning, I want us to consider the response of Job, to look into and think through how in the world Job can respond in such faith because if I was in his position, I don't know if I would be able to say the same thing. In my flesh, my favorite question would probably be why. Why have you, O God, allowed this to happen to me? Why have you allowed me to go through this trial or this season? And all Job has to do is worship his Creator. And so I want us to look into his response.

Before we do that, let's just quickly summarize. I will not preach all of Job 1. I have a note on my board in my office that says you cannot preach all of Job 1, so don't even try it. So we're not going to do it, but let's just briefly summarize. Who is Job? Verse 1, he is a man who is blameless and upright, who feared God and turned away from evil. He is a man of character and of faith. He is a man of character and of faith. He is blameless and upright. Now it's important to note that Job is not sinless. That is not what the argument of this text is, that Job was sinless because we know that the scriptures say that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. From the time of Adam all the way through until Christ returns, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. So Job was not a sinless man, but based upon the faith that he had, the way that he lived, and the offerings, the sacrifices that he made, he was considered blameless and upright.

But the question is, how was he considered this way? It's in the next few words, he feared God and turned from evil. Now his fear of God is not necessarily the way that we would connotate fear today. We would think, shaking in our boots, afraid of a situation where we are just terrified. Now there is a sense in which your fear of God is because God is holy and you are not. So there is a pretty high fear but the fear at which is being described here is that Job held God in such a high and reverent place that he wanted to do nothing against him. He turned, or he ran from evil.

Job was a man of great faith and character. Not only was he that, but he was also a well-to-do man in his time. He was a well-known man. He was the greatest man of the East. This is what he had. He had seven sons and three daughters, so I can even do that math. Seven plus three is ten. Ten children. And then he has 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, which a yoke is two, so double that, there's 1,000, and 500 female donkeys, and it's only noting the female donkeys, so there were more. So basically, he had a whole lot of livestock, and then it says very many servants. In this time, wealth was not described by how much financial capital you had, how much money you had in your wallet. It was described by how much land you had, how many livestock you had, how many servants you had.

He was an incredibly wealthy man but what I find most interesting about all of this, again, mentioning his faith and character, is the very last verse of the opening section,

verse 5. Job would send, he's talking about his sons and daughters who would go out and have feasts and celebrate together during the week, he "would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them." So he's offering sacrifices to pay the price for their sin. Here's the interesting part of all of this, "For Job said, 'It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.'" The NASB renders that and says, "perhaps they have sinned." Job's reverence for God, his view of God was so high that he was offering sacrifices on them just in case for them, perhaps they might have sinned against God, and so I'm going to offer a sacrifice for them. This is a man of great faith and it's going to be put to the test in just a moment.

Now we scan out a little bit. We've seen into an introduction into who Job is, and now we're scanning out. We're getting a different view, a different perspective. The scene has changed. Satan has come before the Lord, and the Lord speaks and he asked him a question, "Where have you come?" And Satan says, "From going to and fro on the earth and from walking up and down it." This is an arrogant statement from our adversary. Let's think about this for a minute. He's not just saying, "Oh, I've just been wandering around." He is saying, "I have gone all over the earth and everywhere where I have gone, there has been great evil." He is bragging about the evil that he has caused throughout the entire earth, showing off and saying, "Look what I have done. I have been all over the earth and where I have gone, sin and evil have followed me," which is what makes verse 8 so important. God is saying, "Not so fast. Have you considered my servant Job?" So the Lord brings before Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?" It is God that brings him up and this will be important as we consider later on the implications of that.

So he says, "Have you considered my servant Job? He is blameless and upright. He fears me. He turns away from evil. He is not what you say is happening in the rest of the earth." So Satan turns to him and almost says, "Well, duh, of course, he's going to serve you. You have blessed him tremendously. You have given him a big family. You have give him a lot of possessions. Everything that he has done, you have blessed. So, of course, he is going to praise you. But stretch out your hand against him," basically saying, "cause evil against him, take away everything that he has and he will not worship you. I guarantee it." So the Lord says, "Go, go ahead. All that he has is in your hand. Only do not stretch out your hand against him." He said, "These are the terms. Go and do what you will. Don't stretch out your hand against him." So Satan goes and he does and what we see unfold in the next few verses is exactly how the enemy is going to attack the faith of Job.

First of all, a messenger comes and says, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword and I alone have escaped to tell you." So right there, there's 1,000 oxen that are gone and countless more donkeys that are gone and the servants with them. But he is not done there. "While he was yet speaking, there came another, the fire of God fell from heaven, burned up the sheep and the servants." So there go his 7,000 sheep. They are now gone and the servants that were with him. And then again, verse 17, "While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, the Chaldeans formed three groups and they made a raid on the camels and took them and struck them

down and the servants as well. I alone have escaped to tell you." So if you're doing the math, that is 7,000 sheep that are now gone, 3,000 camels that are now gone, 1,000 oxen that are now gone and countless more donkey along with all of his servants except for three up into this point. In the blink of an eye, Job has lost almost everything, but the worst is yet to come for him. Verse 18, "While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, your sons and daughters were eating drinking wine in the oldest brother's house and a great wind came across the wilderness, struck the four corners of the house and it fell upon the young people and they are dead. And I alone have escaped to tell you." All of his possessions are now gone. All of his servants are now gone and his children whom he loved more than any other thing besides his God are now gone. All that is left is his wife, as we find out later, some friends and four servants.

This man in a moment has lost everything. Everything that he had possessions in this life are now gone and have been stripped away from him and yet what we will see in just a few moments is that Job did not respond in the way that one would think. Job did not respond in anger and turn to God and say, "Why have you afflicted me so?" Job did not return to God and say, "Why have you done this to me?" He did not turn to God in anger and curse him as his wife will later push him to do. You see, for us, the response of Job is incredibly instructive. In the midst of the greatest calamity, Job clings to his faith in God and praises him through the greatest grief. The source of Job's hope was simple, it was very simple: he trusted in the sovereignty of God and the truth that everything belongs to God. This was his hope. This was his confidence. And this was his response.

We're going to unpack this in a couple different points. First of all, we will see that Job will proclaim truth to himself and his response. After that, we will see that Job had a hope that was greater than all of his sorrows. And finally, we will see that Job worshiped and blessed the name of God.

First, Job proclaimed truth. His response, he proclaimed truth. The first thing that he did was recognize that God was sovereign. He recognized the sovereignty. Most importantly, he recognized that God was sovereign and he is not. The idea of sovereignty can best be explained it is the truth that God, in being both Lord and ruler of all things, has the power and right to do with it whatever he wills. Basically, I explain this to our kids in Adventure Club this way. If you were to go out and take an axe and chainsaw and some tools and cut down a lot of trees and build yourself a log cabin based upon your plans, whose cabin is that? Well, it would be yours. You did the work. You built the house. It is your house. Now, let's change the scenario a little bit more for a second. Say that I give you all the materials and I give you the blueprint and I say, "I need you to build this." Whose house would it be? It would be mine because I gave you everything you needed. Now, let's heighten this to the exponential because it is God that formed all things, it is God that created all things. We see all this play out in Genesis 1 and 2. It is God that set a plan in motion for all of history. It is God that is upholding all of the expanses of the universe in the palm of his hand. It is God that does all things. So all things belong to him and since he is the Creator and ruler of all things, he has the right to do with it whatever he wills.

This is the recognition that we have in this passage. First of all, we see the sovereignty of God play out in verses 6 to 12, remember in our brief context there, because it is the Lord

and not Satan that says, "Have you considered my servant Job?" It is God that brings Job up in the first place. That's an interesting point that we need to think about. It was God who had control over this scenario. It was God who was working in Job to create such a great faith. It is God that had blessed Job exceedingly and it is now God saying to the enemy, "Have you considered Job?" And he lets him put him to the test.

So God is sovereign in the calamity. He is even also sovereign, it's important to note, over just how far Satan could go. He says, "You can do this and you will go no further." It's almost as if Satan is a dog on a leash and he's saying, "You can go this far and I won't let you go any farther. I have control over what you do in this scenario." It's important to point out, though, that God is not the source of evil in terms of God does no evil. It would be contra his nature and contra his character. God does no evil, but there is a very important word that we use here at Providence to explain this: God ordains. God ordains. He uses this scenario for Job's good and for his glory. God ordains evil, he ordains suffering and sorrow for the glory of his name and for his purposes. This is the sovereignty of God at play here.

Look with me really quickly at Genesis 50:20. We will consider the story of Joseph for a moment. Joseph was a man that was born blessed. His father loved him and gave him a coat of many colors, which by the way, I asked one of our kids to tell me the story a few weeks ago of Joseph and I thought I was going to get just a few bullet points. No, I got exact details and everything that played out. It was incredible. But Joseph was a man that was blessed by God and was favored in his household by his father and his brothers hated him. And so they threw him in a pit. They planned to kill him and then ultimately sold him into slavery. In slavery, he ended up rising up through the ranks and became a high ranking official in Potiphar's house. And then we know what happens after that. Potiphar's wife seeks to tempt him. He runs. She lies. He's thrown in jail. Even in jail, God uses him and builds him up to a place of prominence. And then the king has some dreams. He sends for Joseph to interpret those dreams. And before we know it, Joseph is the second most powerful person in Egypt. But the interesting part is how Joseph responds to everything that has played out in his life. In our flesh, we would have been angry at our family if they had done that. We would have struggled to forgive them. Joseph does not do that. Verse 20 of Genesis 50, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." As for you, you meant evil against me. Joseph's family meant evil against him in this act and many others meant evil against him, and yet what he relied on through it all is that God was at work meaning it for good. God was sovereign through his circumstances. God was carrying him through all of these trials and difficulties for a reason. For Joseph's understanding, it was so that many of his family would be kept alive during the years of family, right, because God placed him in a position where he was able to feed his family when they later came to him in need. But there are other things playing out here. It serves as an encouragement to us thousands of years later. So God is good in all of that but ultimately, it displays that God is in control and he deserves all of the glory.

What they meant for evil, God ordained and used it for good. This is what we see playing out in Job. What the enemy was meaning for evil against Job to cause him to question his faith, God was using it for Job's good and for his glory. He is sovereign over all of that

and since God is sovereign and in control of this calamity and in control of everything that is playing out and using it, ordaining it for our good and for his glory. Job had two responses, he had two different ways he can respond. He can either A, turn from God, as his wife later encouraged him to do, or B, he could bow in humble submission. And as we see in the text, Job chooses humble submission. It says in verse 20, "Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground." This is an incredible act of humility. He didn't stand up and scream. He didn't immediately stand up and just cry out. He tore his robe. He tore his robe. He shaved his head and he fell to the ground. He has lowered himself. He has brought himself low because he has been brought low. And yet the greatest part of that verse is the last two words, after doing all of that, falling to the ground Job worshiped, and we'll come back to that idea in just a moment.

The other thing that Job considers is why does the Lord afflict? I think it's something that's instructive for us this morning as we consider this text. Why does God afflict? Why does God allow suffering and sorrows and pain in this life? One of the first reasons is that God will bring about judgment for our sin. Turn with me over to Lamentations 3. It's good that you mentioned, you know, Lamentations this morning because we were going there. Lamentations 3 and we'll look at verses 37 to 40. "Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come? Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins? Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD!" So in this instance, the Lord afflicts to judge sin. It's important that we note that, that God will use suffering and pain to strip bare all the things that we have in this life to make us realize the very nature of our souls, that we are sinful, that we have sinned against God. And he uses that in an act of judgment, but to call us back to him.

So in fact, this is an act of grace that God will use the pains of this life to call us to himself, but in the instance of Job, this is not necessarily what we see playing out because Job was a blameless man. Yes, he sinned, but we see conversations happening later in the book of Job between Job and his not so great friends, they're charging him and saying, "You sinned against God," and he's saying, "I don't think so." And the Lord later testifies to that. So this is not necessarily the nature, but it is important for us to understand that God uses that in grace to call us to repentance.

The second thing that God does in affliction is bring about sanctification. Turn with me to 1 Peter. By the way, we're going to be doing a lot of turning with me, so just get ready. 1 Peter 1, as we continue to ask the question, why does God afflict? This is a text that we heard from Pastor Ty several weeks ago. 1 Peter 1, starting in verse 6. "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls." As God allows us to suffer, he is sanctifying us. Like gold that passes through fire, when you think about gold passing through fire, at first it's filled with all sorts of impurities, all sorts of dirt that make it not as beautiful as it should be, and so when you put it through



the fire, you are seeing the dross and all of the dirt being burned out and what's left is a more pure bar of gold. The same is true for our faith. When the Lord allows us to suffer and to go through difficult seasons of life, he is sanctifying us. He is making us more like him. He is burning off all of the impurities that distract us from right worship of him and obedience to him and producing a more pure and beautiful salvation, a more pure and beautiful faith.

So the Lord afflicts to bring about judgment for sin. He afflicts to sanctify. The third reason is to create a greater dependence upon him. Look at 2 Corinthians 1, 2 Corinthians 1:8 to 9. "For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again." The confidence here in the midst of affliction, in the midst of suffering, is that it is God who will deliver them, not themselves. It is creating in them a deeper and greater dependence upon their God, that they would look to him and realize, "I don't have the strength to get through this affliction on my own. I need God's grace and God's strength." And the other promise that they're relying on is he will surely provide it.

So God allows us often to suffer so that we might depend on him. He strips away all of the things that we might hope in, takes them so that we will only hope in him and trust in him. But the last thing we need to think on when we consider affliction and why the Lord sovereignly ordains it is that we might never know. We might never know the reason why God allows us to suffer in this life. Another turn with me, turn with me to Isaiah 55. Isaiah 55, we'll look at verses 8 to 11. As we consider that we might never know, here is an important promise for us to cling to. Isaiah 55:8, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." We might never know why we go through what we go through in this life. We have some promises to cling to that God is sanctifying us, that God is working within us to create a greater dependence upon him, but in terms of the details, we might not understand it. For me, that is incredibly difficult. I am overly analytical about everything. I analyze why something has happened and try and understand the implications of that. So in going through a hard season, I'm looking at it and going, "Okay, maybe God's preparing me for this and maybe God's doing this in me," instead of just responding in faith and saying, "Thank you, Lord."

We may never know and we may never understand and, you know, this is where Job was. Job didn't really know why. He didn't have the answer to the question of why, because I think we get a little bit of reader syndrome when we're in Job, because we see what's happening behind the scenes. We see the conversations that God is having and we see everything that's unfolding and we think Job knows. Job did not know. He did not have

the privilege that we have today of looking into what God was saying in that moment, how God was ordaining it. All Job knows is, "I have all of this and now it is gone." He has no knowledge of this conversation and yet he responds in incredible faith. This is why I believe it's instructive for us this morning because Job recognizes that all he needs is the Lord and depends upon the Lord without knowing the details.

Now God will later on in the book of Job answer that question. He answers it a little bit differently than you would think. If Job asked the question why, you would think God would say so that this would happen in your life, so you'd be sanctified in this area. He doesn't do that. What God says is, "Were you there when I created everything? Where were you when I formed the expanses of the universe? Are you the one that looks to the waves and says you will go this far and you will go no farther?" He answers him with his power, his authority and his sovereignty and for Job, that's all he needed. He did not need the details. He just trusted in the grace and sovereignty of God. This is the kind of confidence and faith that we need to have this morning as we consider, many of you are going through or have gone through or about to go through some of the most difficult seasons you could ever imagine, and all you will want to ask is why? Why is the Lord allowing me to go through this? But that is not the right response. The right response is thanking the Lord and trusting in his goodness, trusting in his providence and resting in the truth that he is in control of all things.

Another implication of the sovereignty of God in the response of Job is that all things belong to him. We talked about that God created everything. He formed everything. He upholds everything and therefore all things belong to him. And this is a key theme in the response of Job. Verse 21, he says, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return." We'll come back to that in just a second. "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away." It's interesting that even Satan recognizes that. Earlier in the passage, he says, "Well, of course, Job is going to fear you. You have blessed him." He's recognizing that everything that Job had was from the hand of God and now Job is recognizing the exact same thing, "God has given. The Lord gave to me. He gave me," in the words of Job, "he gave me all of my possessions. He gave me my family. He gave me my hope." The Lord is the giver of all good things.

I'll quickly reference James 1:17. James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." God is the source of all things. He is the one that gives. Church family, if you have breath in your lungs, God has given that to you. Do you have clothing that you are wearing to keep you warm? God has given that to you. If you have a home, God has given that to you. Everything that you have is a gift from God undeserved and it's important we use the undeserved word because none of us deserves what God has given us. And we in our sinful flesh can say, "But I've worked really hard for this. I have toiled year after year at my job. I have gone through conference rooms and meetings that were very boring and could have been an email. I have worked where I have not slept for days at a time. I earned this." And God says, "Everything is a gift from me. You deserve nothing." It is an act of grace that God has given us what he has given us. Our God is the source of everything and this is the confidence that Job was holding on to in this moment. He is recognizing, "Nothing that I have," from that list that we see in chapter 1, the very

beginning, "is by my strength. My God has given it to me and he deserves all of the praise."

The second thing that he says should punch us in the gut and really should convict us because often we do not respond this way. "The Lord has taken away." You see, to recognize the sovereignty of God, that he is in control of all things, he holds on to all things, it is his to do with it what he wills, to recognize that God gives everything is also to recognize it is his right and not mine to do with it, whatever he wills. If it belongs to him, it is his. He can do with it whatever he pleases and he is worthy of all of our praise because of that. And yet many of us, when we lose something act like a three year old when they lose their favorite toy. Mom and Dad give you a toy. You love it. You're very thankful. You're very joyful. In the moment that they say, "Okay, it's time to put it up," what happens? Whining and complaining, or when you tell them to share it gets even worse because their favorite word is "mine." "That's mine." So often we respond like that, don't we? When things are going well, we praise God. God is good. "He is the giver of all good things. He has blessed me tremendously." But in the season where everything is taken away, we don't respond like this, do we? We get angry and say, "That was mine. I have every right to that and you took it from me." Brothers and sisters, that is nothing more than sin. We have sinned against God in that way. It is his.

Everything belongs to God and he has the right to do with it what he wills. Job recognizes that in this moment, even in the loss of his 10 children that he loved so dearly Job says, "The LORD has given and the LORD has taken away. He deserves all of my worship." He recognizes that God had every right to do with it what he willed and he so chose to take it away from him for Job's good and for his glory.

Listen to the words of Charles Spurgeon as he considers what Job is saying in this moment, "Some of the rarest pearls have been found in the deepest waters and some of the choicest utterances of believers have come when God's waves and billows have been made to roll over them. The fire consumes nothing but the dross and leaves the gold all the purer. In Job's case with regard to his position before God, he had lost nothing by all of his losses for what could be pure and brighter gold than this that gleams before us from this text revealing his triumphant patience, his complete resignation and his cheerful acquiescence in the divine will. Job looked at everything he possessed as a gift from God." As a gift from God. "He did not complain and say I spent many weary days and many anxious nights and accumulating all these flocks and herds that have been stolen from me. We must learn the wisdom of never ascribing any earthly comfort to any earthly source. We must worship the giver and not the gift. And when we know that the Lord takes away our possessions, the knowledge that they are effectually his prevents us from complaining." When we come face to face with the reality that everything is a gift from God and that it belongs to him and it is his to do with it what he wills, we will realize that it all, no matter what he does, it all is his for his glory, for our good, to worship and praise his name.

This is the joy of what we are seeing play out in this text and Job realizes that he has no claim on any of it. He recognizes it is God that gives, it is God that takes away, and he has no claim. For the first time and maybe I'm way behind other people, verse 21, the

very first part actually stood out and I understand what's going on here. He says, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return." For me, most of my life, I have just looked at that and said Job is talking in humility. Right? He's talking in humility. He has been brought low. He's recognizing, he has torn his robe, he is naked in this moment, low before God. That is not necessarily the depth in which what Job is saying. When we come into this life, we bring nothing. You bring no possessions. You bring no clothing. You have nothing when you are born. And when you will leave this life, you will have nothing. You will take nothing with you. The material possessions that you gained in this life, the financial capital that you have, the nice car that you might drive or the not as nice car that you drive, the home that you live in, all of the family that you have, you will take none of it with you. Naked you come and naked you will go, and to recognize this is to recognize that God is the giver and the taker and his name is worthy of all of our praise. One author says a man may stand before God stripped of everything that life has given him and still lack nothing. That's a reality we're about to look in.

2. We have a hope greater than all of our sorrows. A hope greater than all of our sorrows. Job did not live for the created, rather, he lived for the Creator. He did not live for his possessions and his standing in the world. He lived for God, his Creator. He lived for God, his Creator and now, now that everything has been taken away, we really do see his heart because he still makes the same statement, "I live for God and God alone. I do not live for what God has given me. I live for him. I live for the giver of all things." He had a great hope. He had a great hope. As one author said, "When thou art deprived of any comfort, suppose a child has been taken away by death or a part of your estate has been lost, say not I have lost it, but say it has been restored to its rightful owner."

It is God's to do with it what he will and for Job, he had great hope and confidence in that. He lived for God. His hope was in God. You see it when he is talking about, when we're talking about he is a man blameless and upright. He fears God. This is what we learn about him. It doesn't start out with saying, "There is a man named Job in the land of Uz and he had all of these material possessions," and then it talks about his character. It starts with his character, with his faith in God, the greatness of his God, and then flows into that because for Job, the primary thing, the most important thing was his Creator, his faith in his sovereign God.

Job had a very high view of God and I think we should have a much higher view of God than we really do because everything we're seeing playing out in this text is that God is far bigger than we can comprehend. He is far greater than we can comprehend. He has far more power than we can comprehend. We make him too small. We try and create a God that we can fit in our pockets and pull out when we need him when things are going well, and then cast him aside when things are not. God is far bigger than you can comprehend or imagine and for Job, that was the case. He feared God. He turned from evil. He loved him in great faith. But for us, our response should still be the same. In fact, it is even more lovely because we as New Testament people have a hope in Christ. Our hope is in Christ. The Heidelberg Catechism asks the question, "What is your only comfort in life and in death?" The answer is simple, "That I am not my own, but belong both body and soul in life and in death to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ."

Brothers and sisters, we can respond as Job because of that truth, that we are not, our hope is not found in our possessions and what we have, it is not found in the material gains that we have gained in this world, it is found in Christ Jesus and Christ Jesus alone. And there is reason to hope because Christ did not just come to say, "I love you. I'm here for you," as many churches create him to be. Christ came to redeem a people for himself. Christ came because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, that none of us can fix the problem of our sin and so he went willingly to the cross, laid down his life for us, again, a gift undeserved if ever there was one, laid down his life on the cross, paid the prices for our sins, so that by grace through faith, we might be saved from our sins if we will repent and turn and trust in Christ. We have a great hope because John 3:16 says that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. We have confidence and a hope that is unshakable because our hope is not in the things of this world. Our hope is not in what we have. Our hope is in Christ. Our only hope in life and in death is that we are not our own, but we belong not to our possessions, not to our loved ones, but we belong both body and soul in life and in death to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

Look with me at Hebrews 6 really quickly. Hebrews 6 really drives home this point that we have reason for great hope even in the midst of the greatest sorrows because we have a Savior that has overcome sin and death. Hebrews 6:19 to 20. "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." This is our hope, that Christ has overcome sin and death, that he is seated at the right hand of the Father ruling and reigning right now and interceding on our behalf. If you belong to Christ, your hope again is not in this world, but in him. That he has claimed the victory. "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" Christ has accomplished all. So even in the midst of the worst suffering and the worst sorrow that you could ever imagine, if everything was taken from you, you could echo the words of the commentator that says you can lose everything and still have everything because Christ is our all.

Lastly, in the midst of affliction, we can hope because we have a hope of eternity. We have a hope of eternity. It was mentioned in 1 Peter, it's also mentioned in Hebrews and let's look at 2 Corinthians 4, a hope of eternity. 2 Corinthians 4:16 to 18. "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." Our hope and our confidence, even as we suffer and struggle in this life, is in the truth that God is working in all things, that God is doing all things for his glory, that God has overcome sin and death by sending Christ on the cross for us, and that one day we will spend eternity with him free from the pains of this life. We have a hope in eternity and we have a hope right now because God is at work within us. God is still sanctifying us. He is still working within us to create a greater longing and a greater anticipation for the day when we will no longer struggle with sin and death, we will no longer struggle with pain, but we get to see our Savior face to face.

So beloved, if you are struggling this morning, if you are mourning the loss of a loved one, if you are broken and beaten down by this life, you have hope. Not in yourself, not in the things that you have in this life, but in Christ Jesus that he has overcome and that he is working in you even now an eternal weight of glory. We have so much hope. We do not look to the things that we are seeing playing out in this life. Like I said, I'm an analytical person and for me, I can actually start to despair when I consider what's going on in this world. Do not lose hope. Our God has conquered all through Christ Jesus and his Spirit is working in us even now. We have a sure and steadfast anchor and it is immovable. It will not shake.

The third and final thing that Job does is he worships. He worships. It is really difficult to worship in the face of such pain and sorrow, and yet from that comes the most beautiful worship because you recognize who your God is, and who your Savior is, and what he is doing in your life. You recognize that all you need is his. Yesterday at the memorial service, Ted and Todd's mom had passed away a week ago today, very, very early on a Sunday morning. The question that all of them asked was what do we do now? And the answer for all of them was we need to go and worship. And so they worshiped together. In the midst of such great pain, this side of eternity, losing someone that they loved so dearly, they worshiped. Brothers and sisters, we are here, not necessarily because life is perfect, because it's going well, because we have everything we had ever wanted, we are here because all we need is Christ, and even in the midst of the greatest pain and the greatest sorrow, we are able to worship.

Job fell to the ground and worshiped and he blessed God. Can you imagine in that moment losing your family and blessing God? He blessed him because all he needed was his God. In a moment, he had lost everything and yet had lost nothing because of how great his God is.

I want to close with this illustration. Many of you, you know that I do love hymns. I am not the best singer in the world, but I love to worship, and don't look at me that way. I love to worship. I love to gather every Sunday morning and worship with you here at Providence Church, to hear your voices cry out to the Lord in worship, and one of my favorite songs is the song, "It Is Well." Most of you probably know the history and the story behind this, but to give you a little bit, "It Is Well" was written by Horatio Spafford, who knew something of suffering. In 1871, he was an investor that had a pretty good amount of money and lost everything in an instance in the Chicago fire of 1871. Around the same time, his four-year-old son died of scarlet fever. But that was not the end of the story for him. Thinking that a vacation would be good for his family, they decided to ship off to England. So he sent his wife and four daughters on a ship to England, planning to join them after he had finished some business. However, while crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the ship that his wife and four daughters were on was involved in a terrible collision and it sunk. More than 200 people lost their lives, including all four of Horatio Spafford's daughters. His wife, Anna, had survived the tragedy. She arrived to England and upon arriving, sent to him and said, "Saved alone, what shall I do?" He immediately set sail for England. At one point during the voyage, the captain of the ship came to him and said it was in this spot that the ship carrying your daughters went down. In the

greatest pain and yet trusting in his God, he wrote down what would later become my favorite hymn.

"When peace like a river attendeth my way  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say  
It is well, it is well with my soul."

Brothers and sisters, whatever we're going through, it is well with our soul because Christ has overcome. God is in control of all things and at work in all things for our good and for his glory and so we can fall on our knees and worship him to the glory of his name.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

*Heavenly Father, we echo the words of Job that we have spoken of things that we do not understand, things that are far too wonderful for us and yet, God, you are so kind in revealing yourself to us in your word. You allow us to see behind the scenes of what you are doing. You allow us to see your power and your glory on full display and in that we have hope that even in the midst of the worst pain, you are in control, you are at work, you are using it for our good and for your glory. And we have hope because all we need is Christ, that he has overcome sin and death and is interceding for us right now. Lord, do not allow us to lose hope. May we, as a body, join together to worship our great God because all we need is you. So may you be glorified in our suffering so that one day we can draw near to you free from sin and death in eternity and worship you forever. We thank you now for our time and we pray that it will be used to glorify your name. In Jesus' name. Amen.*