

Subject: *When Trouble Comes Your Way*

Scripture: *Job 1:1-5*

A message on the back of a car said, “Life is good.” That’s not always true. Life is not always good. But God is good. The Book of Job is one of the oldest books of the Bible dealing with one of the oldest problems: why do bad things happen to good people? or to put it another way: why do good people and innocent people have to suffer? We can understand when good things happen to good people and when bad things happen to bad people, but we struggle when bad things happen to good people and we say, “He/she didn’t deserve this.”

Job said (14:1) “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.” Sometimes we are surprised when trouble comes, but we should be surprised even more if trouble doesn’t come.

1. Job’s Unblemished Character (vs. 1-5)

As the curtain rises for the first chapter of this drama we are introduced to the main character, a man named Job. Notice first of all he was a man, just a man and nothing more. He was not a superman. He was a normal man, no different than you and me. When did he live? He probably lived at the time of Abraham. Where did he live? He lived in Uz, a city in the northern part of Arabia. How did he live? That’s the big question about Job (and about you and me).

- He was a strong believer – He was perfect (blameless, not sinless), upright (morally straight), feared God, and turned away from evil.
- He was a satisfied father – He was blessed with seven sons and three daughters. He had his quiver full.
- He was a successful businessman – In Job’s day wealth was measured by flocks and herds. Job was rich and he was known far and wide, “the greatest man of the east.”
- He was a spiritual leader – He was concerned that his children may have cursed God (renounced, turned their back on God). As the priest to his family, he offered sacrifices and interceded for them. How blessed were his children to have such a godly father. He was a “promise keeper” before the days of Promise Keepers.

Everything we read about Job sets the stage for the story that is about to unfold. He was a remarkable man in his day, or any day. Just from a human standpoint no one would have said that Job deserved to suffer. Job probably suffered more than just about anyone else, and He probably deserved to suffer less than anyone else. J. C. Ryle said, “The grace of God exempts no one from trouble.” Trouble is no respecter of persons.

2. Job’s Unseen Enemy (vs. 6-12)

Now the scene shifts from earth to heaven, but Job didn’t know a thing about what happened. Notice four questions that tell us four things about Satan:

- Question 1 (“Whence comest thou?”) – Satan’s location

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

- Question 2 (“Hast thou considered my servant Job?”) – Satan’s consideration
God uses Job as an illustration, an object lesson. What an honor. God wanted to show that someone like Job served him out of a pure heart and real commitment.
- Question 3 (“Doth Job fear God for nought?”) – Satan’s accusation
He accused Job of being a fair-weather believer. Satan claimed that Job only served God because of He was so good to him. He accused Job of serving God for selfish reasons.
- Question 4 (“Hast not thou made an hedge about him?”) – Satan’s frustration

We know that we are called to be soldiers on the battlefield, but there are times when we are the battlefield. Satan is the enemy of God and he is the enemy of God’s people. It is no wonder that we suffer from Satan’s attacks. It is a wonder that we don’t suffer more than we do.

3. Job’s Unexpected Troubles (vs. 13-19)

- The suddenness of his troubles – Trouble and suffering may take us by surprise, but it never takes God by surprise. There is no panic in heaven, only plans. John Chancellor was just settling into retirement at age 67 after being the anchor of NBC Nightly News when he discovered he had stomach cancer. Shortly before he died he said, “If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans.”
- The sequence of his troubles – Sometimes life seems like a nightmare. When will this ever end? Suffering has a beginning, but for a believer it always has an end.
- The severity of his troubles – It was one thing to lose his possessions, but it was another to lose his children. It would be bad enough to lose one child. I remember attending a funeral in Arkansas several years ago in which a whole family was killed in a car accident (father, mother, and three children). Five caskets were lined up end to end across the sanctuary. My heart sank and I remember praying, “I hope I never have to see anything like this again.” We never know what kind of trouble we may face in this life.

4. Job’s Unshakable Faith (vs. 20-22)

Job had it all and then he lost it all, but the great thing is he didn’t lose his faith in God.

- Job showed his humanity and expressed his grief
- Job showed his humility and expressed his faith – He confessed that he came into the world with nothing and he would leave the world with nothing. He praised God for giving and taking away. It’s one thing to say, “The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away,” but it’s another to say, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.” It takes the grace of God to say that. By the way, that’s not what the devil predicted.

The issue is not whether we can avoid suffering. The issue is how we respond when it comes. Job's faith was not destroyed. Satan was wrong. Job proved that he loved God and worshiped Him not because of what He gave him, but just because of who He is.

Life is not always good, but God is good. When trouble comes and bad things happen, God hasn't changed. When the storm clouds come and the storm rages, the sun is still shining above the clouds.

When trouble comes, will your faith survive? It will if it's true faith. The question is not do you have enough faith to be healed? The question is do you have enough faith not to be healed if that is God's will for your life?