

3/23/25 Christ Fellowship

Sovereign God – Job

How many of you know what Hebrews 11 is called? It's called the faith chapter. The author of Hebrews spends a long time talking about all the great men and women of faith through the Old Testament. He talks about Noah and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He talks about the faith that Moses showed leading the people out of Egypt and through the wilderness. He mentions Rahab the prostitute who showed great faith because she welcomed the Hebrew spies.

But then, like most preachers, he runs out of time and has to just summarize a few of them. In **verse 32** he says, *“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith – listen to this - conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. ³⁵ Women received back their dead, raised to life again.”*

Woo! That's what I want! I want to be part of that! Don't you? I want to have faith so that can be said of me. The only problem is he doesn't stop right there. He continues by saying, *“There were others who were tortured, Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. That's pretty bad but listen to this. ³⁷ They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.”*

Now, whoa, whoa, whoa wait just a minute. No, that's not what I want. I don't want to be part of that stuff. But they are all mentioned as people of faith. We would call them Christians today. But I only want what the first group had, not the second. So, who decides who is in the first group and who is in the second group? **And** what did the second group do wrong? Because I don't want to be in that second group.

The answers to those two questions are answers for the ages. Who is in charge? And what do I have to do to not go through difficulties? Those questions have been asked as long as we have written history as we can see from the book of Job. Job is one of the oldest books

in the Bible. We don't know who wrote it or when it was officially written but the events that take place in the book happened about 4,000 years ago. And the answer to the first question is pretty easy to answer. Who is in charge? God. God is in charge of every little thing. And every big thing. God is in control of nature. He is in control of people. He is in control of what happens in the heavens and what happens on earth. He is in control of kings and kingdoms and what happens at Walmart on Tuesdays. God and God alone is in control.

Now...the second question, what do I have to do to not go through difficulties? That's a little harder to answer. In fact, it's impossible to answer and is not answered even in this book of Job that is dedicated to that question. And that can be frustrating to all those control freaks out there that want to know all the answers. But when you can settle in your mind that Jehovah God is sovereign – He has no advisors and takes no advice – AND that He is good and that, as it says in **Romans 8**, that He makes all things work to the good of those that love Him – when you can settle your mind on all that you can have the greatest peace and joy in this life that can be imagined, plus treasures in Heaven that will last for eternity.

So, let's see what we can learn from the book of Job regarding God's sovereignty. The problem with preaching on Job, especially just one message, is where to go and what to read. I tell the guys at the jail to just read the first three chapters and the last three chapters of Job and you will get the gist of it but we don't have that kind of time today. So, we will just start in chapter one.

Job is found in the Old Testament between the books of **Esther** and **Psalms**. Job is written in a poetic form but we know that it is a true story and not just an illustration or allegory as **Ezekiel** in the Old Testament and **James** in the New Testament both refer to Job as a historical character. The setting for most of chapter one is in Heaven but the first few verses tell us that Job was probably the wealthiest man in the world AND that he was blameless and upright and He feared God. He wasn't perfect but he was a godly man.

So, let's start with **Job 1:6** and read through the end of the chapter. It's important that you see all of this. **Job 1:6-22** says, *“One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. ⁷The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and*

forth on it.”⁸ Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”⁹ “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. ¹⁰ “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹ But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”¹² The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. ¹³ One day when Job’s sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” ¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” ¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” ¹⁸ While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, ¹⁹ when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”²⁰ At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹ and said: **“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”** ²² In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.”

The story of Job and his response is all the more amazing when you understand that Job had no Bible. He had no prophet to speak to him. He had no church to go to to teach him. He had no vision of God or dreams by God to explain things. All Job had was faith.

Romans 1:20 says, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.” Job could see with his eyes that there were things created and so he knew that he knew that he knew that there must be a

Creator and that Creator was Jehovah God who created all and was in control of all and loved all. And that was enough.

I know I've told some of you this before but I want to tell it again for a reason. I was doing a Bible study in Wise County Jail one time and there were half a dozen guys sitting in a circle with me and one of them was having a particularly hard time that day. He had gotten lots of bad news and felt like the world was against him. So, one of the other inmates suggested that the man read the book of Job. The thing was, the man who suggested it couldn't say one sentence without cussing and using the worst language you can imagine. So, he went on to explain the book of Job to the other inmate and I just let him talk. I didn't interrupt even though his language was atrocious.

He said, "Yeah, &^%\$#, you need to read the &^%\$# book of Job. It'll really &^%\$# help you, &^%\$#." And he went on to tell the story of Job in great detail and he told it in a way that I couldn't (and wouldn't) but in a way that the other guy could completely understand and appreciate and he was really helped by the story because the guy explained that God is sovereign but that He could be trusted. And it brought peace to the man just knowing that this life is not a random series of trials that are happening for no reason. And that's what I want for us today as well.

The book of Job is a good illustration of the famous verse in **Romans 8** that says, "*that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*" Now, if I were to ask for a show of hands this morning of all the people that believe that verse to be true, I suspect everybody would raise their hands even if it was just to be polite.

But if you believe it, somebody please explain it. Especially explain it in light of what we have seen happen to Job. And I don't care if you cheat and go all the way to the end of the book and see that Job had everything restored and even had all his wealth restored to double what it was. Because I guarantee you that at the end of Job's life, if one of his buddies had asked him if he wanted to go through all that again since, you know, it was for his good, that Job would have looked at him like he was crazy.

The man born blind in **John chapter 9** gained his sight after he met Jesus. You remember that story. "*I was blind but now I see...and I would do it all over again because it was for my good!*" Right? No way! I'm sure you are the same way. Maybe you have overcome cancer.

You have gone through all the chemo and radiation and surgeries and right now you are so glad that happened to you since it was for your good. Aren't you? Or maybe you have lost a loved one in death or gone through a nasty divorce and you wish you could do that again, right? I mean, it was for your good. That's ridiculous! Of course not.

So, how can we sit here this morning and say that we trust God because in everything – all the pain, all the suffering, all the loss, all the poverty, the cancer, the heart disease, the arthritis, the car wrecks and everything else – that God has been working for our good? Because I don't see it. Do you?

No, you don't see it because most of the time it will be unseen in this life. It is not until we get to Heaven and can have a long conversation with God and allow Him to show us how that cancer you had on earth allowed you to talk to the doctor about Jesus and that man would years later treat your grandchild and lead that child to Jesus. We will only understand it when God explains that your pain was an inspiration to so many other people and made a huge lasting impact on so many. And because of your attitude during your poverty here on earth, you are being rewarded with truckload after truckload after truckload of eternal blessings there in Heaven.

We can't see that now because we can only see in the present and in the past. We can't see the future. But God, who invented time, is standing right now at our future and with Job right next to him is saying to you who continue to run the race in this life, *“Good job, my good and faithful servant!”* And Job is hollering at everyone in Heaven saying, *“Hey y'all come look at this guy. He went through so much in that old life but he was faithful and believed in God's sovereignty and look how God is rewarding him!”*

When bad things happen, God is sovereign and God is good. When good things happen, God is sovereign and God is good. When you make mistakes that lead to consequences, God is sovereign and God is good. When people abuse you, God is sovereign and God is good. When Satan attacks you, God is sovereign and God is good. Even in death, God is sovereign and God is good.

Think about Lazarus for a minute. Lazarus was a friend of Jesus but he died somehow. You remember the story. In **John 11** Jesus waited a couple of days and when he got to the home of Lazarus and Mary and Martha, Lazarus was dead. It says he had been in the tomb for four days. But Jesus went to see him and I love how the King James says in **verse 39**

that Martha tried to warn Jesus not to open the tomb. *“But Lord...by this time...he stinketh.”*

The body of Lazarus was decomposing and it stinketh but Lazarus himself was in Heaven, right? Think about it. Lazarus had been there four days, not even enough time to see all the rooms in his mansion. He is partying with Job and Moses and Abraham, swapping stories with King David, singing a duet with Rahab and sitting at the feet of God the Father. He is laughing with family he hasn't seen in years. He is eating food prepared by angels and seeing sights our minds can't take in.

But then...he hears the voice of his friend Jesus. And He's calling his name. *“Lazarus, come forth!”* Oh no! No, please don't call me back down there. I miss seeing them but this place is amazing and I'll see all of them soon. I don't want to leave this paradise. *“Lazarus, I said come forth!”* Aw man! Okay. Here I come. Back in those scratchy old tomb clothes. Hot, can't walk, can't see. What a bummer.

Why did he have to go back? Because God is sovereign. You'll have to ask Him. And I believe it is fine to ask God “why?” I believe God is big enough to handle you asking Him why some things happen to you or your loved ones. In fact, if you read through the book of Job, most of the rest of it is either Job asking God why all this happened or Job's friends using their finite brains to answer the question of why an infinite God would allow such a thing. I'll just tell you that they were wrong in their answers. Job was wrong in HOW he asked and God never did answer the question at all. Do you know why? Because God is sovereign. That's why.

Have you ever noticed that God doesn't ask your opinion on much of anything? And have you ever noticed that when you ask Him why something happened, He rarely gives you an answer, at least not right away? So, what can we do about that? Well, we have two options. Option number one is to continue to ask God why. Just keep asking. Focus on the why. Obsess about why. Ask God who He thinks He is to do such a thing. Get mad at Him. Dare Him to answer you. Tell Him just how you don't deserve it and how mean He is to do such a thing.

That's option one. And if you choose to try option one, I recommend you buckle up. Because while God is fine with you asking Him why, it needs to be done in the right way. Ask Job how it turned out for Him. It started out with God asking Job a simple enough

question. In **Job 38**, God asks Job, “*Who is this that darkens my council with words without knowledge?*” God is saying that Job doesn’t know what all is going on and he can’t know and it’s not for him to know. He couldn’t understand it if God told him. Then the book ends with Job saying in **chapter 42**, “*I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ³You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. ⁵My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.*”

Music

That’s option two right there. Accept that God is God and that He alone is sovereign even when you can’t see it and you can’t feel it and when it is painful and when it’s not right and not fair and it’s mean and you don’t understand. Just rest in the fact that God’s will is absolute, irresistible, infinite and unconditional. He is sovereign over life, death, Satan, and circumstances in Heaven, Hell and Earth. He is sovereign over the wind, the sun, the moon, tides, gravity, friction and science. He is ALL THAT...and He loves you.

He loves you so much He sent His Son to die for the bad choices you have made. He sent Jesus to die on the cross to pay for the sin you chose to commit. Sin is anything that displeases God. But **Romans 5:8** says that even while we were yet still sinners that Christ died for us. Even in His displeasure at what you were doing, Jesus died for you and everything He does is working for your good. You don’t have to understand it. You just have to accept it. Do it right now. Ask God to forgive you, to change you and to make you more like Him. Do it right now as the music plays.