



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – August 10, 2024

The Lord be with you.

Why do bad things happen? The good people pay. That's a question that I and a lot of people struggle with. Why, our Lord Jesus Christ struggled with it on the cross. Why, God, why have you forsaken me? As a pastor and chaplain, I've been with people in all kinds of suffering: physically, emotionally, spiritually and together we ask why.

But you know, it seems to me that the “why” question really doesn't get us very far. At least for now, rather than the why question we need to be asking the “what” question. What is it, Lord, that you asked me to do in the midst of the bad stuff that's happening to me? And I don't know of a better book of the Bible than the Book of Job to look at about suffering.

Job. His, his name is synonymous with suffering and why bad things happen to really good people. The Book of Job is a long book. It's actually 42 chapters long and there is one verse in this long book, one verse that, well, it acts as a pivot one verse on which the whole book turns and we wait until the last chapter of Job, Job 42 as God sometimes hides the key to his book at the back door. Job chapter 42 verse 10. I read and the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends. And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

The long book of Job, the suffering of Job. It pivots, it turns right here with chapter 42 verse 10. I've got it underlined in my Bible. Now, the Book of Job, it begins with the Lord speaking of Job as saying that he is blameless, he is upright, he fears God and turns away from evil. And God says there is no one like job on the earth. Job is God's favorite. But then suddenly in, in spite of all of job's goodness as life can sometimes do to us. Job's life drops off a cliff.

Job's life takes a sudden dramatic turn into intense suffering. Job loses his wealth, he loses his 10 children in a catastrophe. And then Job is afflicted with painful sores from head to foot. And then on top of all of that, then Job's three friends Faz, Bildad and Zoar, they come to comfort without using the word loosely.

Actually, they come to Job with harsh words, accusing Job of sin as I find people sometimes do when things go wrong. They said, “Job, you know why you're suffering. You're suffering because you have sinned.”

And Job wrestled, he struggles with God. Why do the righteous suffer? Why do bad things happen to good people? Job argues with God, questioning the fairness of God. And through all of this, it seems that God is silent as God does not immediately respond to job's cry. And this struggle goes on for goes on for almost 40 chapters. And what is some of the most beautiful poetry in, in all the Bible that takes us to Job. Chapter 42 verse 10. And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends. And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.



water from rock

Ok. That's Job's friends. Afaz, Bildad, Zoar who had come to him accusing him of sin and urging him to repent. But Job does not respond with bitterness or self pity. But Job praises he prays for his friends. That's what Job does. Look at what God does. The Lord restores the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, Job's praying for his friends. Job's act of intercession. It is profound and it is the healing for Job. It is the restoring for Job as yours and my healing.

Our restoration is often intertwined with our willingness to forgive and to pray for others and notice here that God's restoration of Job. It, it is more than just restoring to Job what he lost it says the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. This restoration is more than a return to Job's previous state. But it is raising Job. It is elevating Job to new levels of blessing. Yes, God's ways, God's plans are often beyond our understanding.

As high as the heavens are above the earth, as God brings beauty from ashes. He brings joy from mourning, the suffering that we're going through. The pain that we are enduring can become the place for our praying for others and for forgiving those who have hurt us. God will bring good out of that when bad things happen to good people, the why the why question about our suffering? Well, it's too big for us to answer. But here is the what, what God wants us to do, what God can bless.

So, loving Father, as you restored Job's fortunes and blessed Him beyond what he had before we ask for your healing, you're restoring in our lives, help us to trust you to trust your timing and your ways. Even when we ask why and face trials and trouble, give us comfort in knowing that you are always working for our good. Even when we cannot see or understand it in the name of Jesus, we pray amen.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.