

When God Hides Job 1 – 2

When God Hides Introduction

- The Book of Job confronts problems that we may not want to think about:
 - The Problem of Evil
 - The Problem of Suffering
 - The Problem of the Silence of God
- Evil, suffering and the silence of God.
- These are difficult issues to address.
- These are difficult realities to confront.
- But we need to address them and we need to confront them head on.
- That is exactly what the Book of Job is going to help us to do.
- Any Christian who masters the Book of Job goes a long way toward ensuring success in the Christian life.
- Here is what we can hope to learn.
 - In the biggest things in life, we need to trust.
 - We have no choice but to trust.
 - Happily, God is a God worth trusting.

*Man is not God but hath God's end to serve,
A master to obey, a course to take,
Somewhat to cast off, somewhat to become.
Grant this, then man must pass from old to new,
From vain to real, from mistake to fact,
From what once seemed good, to what now proves best.*

- Robert Browning

Job's Righteousness Job 1:1-5

- 1:1 blameless and upright, feared God and turned away from evil.
- Job was an innocent man.
- If there was a standard to live up to, Job lived up to it.
- We couldn't expect to find a better man than Job.
- 1:5 Thus Job did continually.
- Job prayed and offered sacrifices for his children.
- His goodness was good for himself and it was good for his family.

God and Satan Job 1:6-12

- 1:6 Satan Hebrew *Ha Shat-an'*, "The Satan," meaning "the accuser" or "the adversary."
- God and Satan Job 1:6-12

- 1:8 "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?"
- God is bragging to Satan about Job.
- He describes him as "My servant," "none like him," etc.

- 1:9-11 Satan slanders Job. That's what he likes to do.
- He did it to Job and he will do it to you and me.
- Revelation 12:10 calls him "the accuser of the brethren."
- He is also telling God that he is wrong about Job – that Job is not as blameless as God says he is.

- We can paraphrase his accusation,
- "God, you imagine that people will love you simply for who you are, but that never happens. Job loves you only because You bless him and prosper him. Remove the blessings and he will curse You to Your face. You'll see. No one on earth will ever love you for who you are."

The Problem of Evil

- If God is all-powerful and God is all-loving then why does he allow evil (or Satan) to exist?
 - We don't get the full explanation.
 - God will eventually remove Satan from the picture.
 - Christ has already defeated him at the cross.
 - Beyond that, we must be content with 2 Peter 3:9-10.

God and Satan Job 1:6-12 (continued)

- 1:12 Satan is no doubt thrilled to get his hands on Job.
- God, however, has the final say.
- God places limits on what Satan can finally do.
- Now stuff happens that Job did not see coming.

Satan's First Attack Job 1:13-22

- 1:13-19 A moment ago Job was "the greatest of all the people of the east." (1:3)
- Now he has lost everything.
 - His livestock – the basis for his wealth.
 - His servants – another measure of his greatness.
 - His children – his hope for the future.

1:20-22 Think deeply about Job's response.

- Satan was wrong about Job.
- God was right.
- But Satan does not easily admit error.

Satan's Second Attack Job 2:1-10

- 1:9 We can probably guess why Satan spared Job's wife.
- Her sole purpose seems to be to intensify his sufferings.
- 1:10 Job is a spiritual superman.

The Problem of Suffering

- If we always knew why we or others suffered, there would be far less of a problem.
- We could say, "Look, see, that's why this is happening!"
- Two things from Oswald Chambers (1874 – 1917) YMCA Chaplain, Zeitoun, Egypt
 - *The problem in connection with suffering arises from the fact that there is seemingly no explanation of it.*
 - *God and Satan had made a battleground of Job's soul without Job's permission. Without any warning, Job's life is suddenly turned into desperate havoc and God keeps out of sight and never gives any sign whatever to Job that He is.*

The Problem of the Silence of God

- In reality, God is not altogether silent.
- He just doesn't answer all the questions that we might ask.
- And we want answers.
 - In the biggest things in life, we need to trust.
 - We have no choice but to trust.
 - Happily, God is a God worth trusting.

Job's Friends Arrive Job 2:11-13

- For "seven days and seven nights" they sat there silently.
- Job's friends start out well.
- It gets worse from here on.

- *Words are not of much help in situations like this. Silent empathy is the best a wise friend can offer. ... Silence can sometimes be more eloquent than words.*
 - Professor T. Habtu, Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya

When God Hides Conclusions

- The Book of Job has forced us to look at some problems that we all face.
 - The Problem of Evil
 - The Problem of Suffering
 - The Problem of the Silence of God

- We might, however, reframe these issues.
 - The Problem of Fallen-ness – in us and in the whole world.
 - The Problem of Our Faith – or, rather, our lack of it.
 - The Problem of Our Wanting Answers to All of Our Questions – which doesn't always happen.

- In the biggest things in life, we need to trust.
 - We can't control our heartbeats.
 - We can't control most major organs in our bodies.
 - Our breathing is only partially under our control.
 - We can't control the behavior of other people.
 - We can't control Satan and we certainly can't control God.

- Consider Peter's words in 1 Peter 4:19.
 - "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good."

 - *Will I trust the revelation given of God by Jesus Christ when everything in my personal experience flatly contradicts it?*
 - Oswald Chambers (1874 – 1917) YMCA Chaplain, Zeitoun, Egypt

- When God hid himself from Job, he exposed Job's heart.
- Satan was convinced Job would curse God as a result.
- Satan was wrong in Job's case.
- We should aspire to be like Job.
 - In the biggest things in life, we need to trust.
 - We have no choice but to trust.
 - Happily, God is a God worth trusting.