



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Finding God Through Suffering

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: Job 1: 1-12

In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it." 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."

"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "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. But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." 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.

Job 1: 1-12 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

The book of Job is a part of Holy Scripture and God wants to speak to us through this character. Job loses everything in one day – his job, his property, and his children. After experiencing these catastrophic losses, Job loses his health. Job was a holy man who feared God, he loved to be around people, feasting and spending time with others. In the story of Job, we are taken from earth to heaven and then back to earth. While in heaven, Satan speaks with God. Satan (Ha-satan) in this book is not Satan as we know but actually an angel who has challenging questions for God. Satan is telling God that the reason Job is so good and holy is because God is blessing him. Satan claims that Job only fears God because God is good to him.

When the story returns to Uz, we see Job begin to experience his catastrophic losses. Job experienced the deepest, darkest day of his life and yet he was able to hold grief and God together. Job gives himself permission to feel and grieve.

To some degree the story of Job is the story of us all. We all experience losses, although most of us experience these losses throughout our lifetime and not all at once. We experience all different types of losses: catastrophic losses (death, divorce, cancer) the loss of our youthfulness, loss of the dreams that we had for our lives, and the losses we experience during different transitions in our life.

So many of us are experiencing immense loss and there is so much suffering in the world. In our modern culture we do everything we can to move away from pain and suffering, often trying to distance ourselves from it and then are surprised when it knocks on our door.

Whenever pain and loss visit our lives, we ask two questions: **Why did this happen? Where is God?**

It is possible - and necessary - to hold grief and God together.

Jesus reminds us that there is going to be pain and we will have trouble. He tells us to take heart, as He has overcome the world.

Do you give yourself permission to grieve, to feel sad and be sorrowful? Our inability to lament compromises our ability to have true joy inside of us. We create another reality and compromise our humanity and our spirituality. Our spiritual aliveness is in our ability to carry our pain and suffering to God.

When we do what Job does our lives get spiritually formed and strengthened. Are you lifting your heart and mind to God? The invitation is to reach out to God, asking him to intervene on your behalf, being filled with his comfort and strength.

The Gospel message is a message that reminds us that the God we worship is not immune to the pain we experience. He has taken on our pain, our sorrow and our sin and has conquered it with love. We are invited to reach out to God knowing that He is closer to us than we are to ourselves.

God weeps with you, grieves with you, is sorrowful with you and longs to comfort and heal you.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday Lead Pastor Richard Villodas begins a new series to kick off the Lenten season called Job: Meeting God Through Suffering. Today Pastor Rich gives us an overview of the book of Job and offers us a way to respond to the pain and suffering that often comes our way.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. How did you experience grief and sadness in your family of origin when there was a tragedy or great loss? Did you see people openly grieving and expressing their sadness? Or was grieving and sadness not allowed? How does your experience growing up affect the way you are able to process grief and sadness today?
3. Learning and hearing that Satan in this story is actually an angel, and not the Satan that we are used to hearing about, how does that change your perspective of the story?
4. What is the loss you are experiencing today, what is the grief you are carrying? Are you able to reach out to God about your pain or do you have a family member or friend to talk to about our grief and sadness? Or are you finding yourself reaching out for something else to soothe your pain? Can you find time this week to lift this up to God offering him your sadness and grief?
5. When we are dealing with pain and suffering, we can either stuff it, sooth it, transmit it to other people or lift it to God. Which one of these methods do you use to help you deal with your pain? Can you find time this week to bring this to the community of believers you are surrounded by to pray about?