

Scripture Passage

13 “Hold your peace with me, and let me speak,
 Then let come on me what *may!*

****** *At this point in the conversation it seems that Job is tired of his friends interrupting and wants his turn to speak his mind.*

14 Why do I take my flesh in my teeth,
 And put my life in my hands?

15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.
 Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.

*******{Here Job has a challenging time trying to understand what he is experiencing and why God is allowing him to suffer so greatly despite being innocent. Despite all of this Job still proclaims that he trusts God. Now, even though Job proclaims that he will continue you trust God, this is where he kinda messes up. By saying “I will defend my own ways before Him”, he is saying that he will present his argument before God and essentially ask him WHY he is allowing Job, such a great man, such a righteous man, to suffer so much. He wants to justify himself before God- big mistake. You see, when we question God, we undermine the trust that we have in him by asking WHY. The truth is, God never answers the WHY and it is not something that we need to understand. There is no need for him to justify himself. He is the creator of the Universe, the being that knew us before we were ever formed in the womb. Who was Job, who are we to feel that we have the right to question why God allows things to happen to us?}*

Job 9:28 I am afraid of all my sufferings; I know that You will not hold me innocent (Some translations use the term *acquit*) ****** *Job’s desire is to stand before God as an innocent man; a man that is innocent of any sin that may have caused his suffering.*

16 He also *shall* be my salvation,
 For a hypocrite could not come before Him.

17 Listen carefully to my speech,
 And to my declaration with your ears.

18 See now, I have prepared my case,
 I know that I shall be vindicated.

*******{Before Job experiences all of his pain and suffering, he believed himself to be a blameless and upright man, as Job 1:1 states” blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil} and even God agreed! (See Job 1:8) Then the Lord said*

to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”

19 Who is he who will contend with me?

If now I hold my tongue, I perish.

******{Job stood firm in his innocence and he felt that if he gave in and agreed with what his friends were trying to convince him, that his suffering is a result of this sin, then he would surely perish}.

Job’s Despondent Prayer

20 “Only two things do not do to me,
Then I will not hide myself from You:

21 Withdraw Your hand far from me, And let not the dread of You make me afraid.

******{Here, Job in his own way is acknowledging that despite what he was enduring, the hand of God never left him. Note here how there’s been a shift in Job’s thinking. Back in verse 7:16 Job states, “ I loathe my life; I would not live forever. **Let me alone,** for my days are but a breath”. Before, Job was just going through the motions in the same way that we all do; maybe saying things out of anger, only to regret it later! It happens to me more times than you can imagine.

22 Then call, and I will answer;

Or let me speak, then You respond to me.

******{It is clear here that Job values the intimate and personal connection that he has with God and is concerned that everything that he is enduring will make him lose that connection. He desires more than anything to have that intimate relationship and communication restored to what it once was. (**Then call, and I will answer**).

Job 12: 13-22 (NKJV)

Introduction: (Surfaces a need, Commands attention, Introduces body of Sermon)

Title: “How do good people suffer wisely?”

Pose Introductory Questions:

Have any of you ever experienced the death of a loved one? Been evicted from your home? Lost your job? Experienced the pain of the end of a relationship? Maybe you have a child that has gone astray despite being raised in the church. Maybe you’ve been in a season of financial difficulty? Maybe you’ve struggled with severe depression or anxiety. These are just a few of the challenges that we all face everyday. Either it has happened to us in the past, is happening to us during this time in our life OR we will experience it at some point in our life. It is just the reality that we all have to face.

Tell brief personal story-

*** I want to take you back to the height of the Covid Quarantine. I know that we don't want to even think about it. The world seemed to come to a standstill; everything stopped. Times Square was Ghosttown, the streets were empty, curfews were set in place, and families were separated by distance maybe they got stuck in another country or state because of Covid or could not be with family members in the hospital because of covid. It was a dark time in our lives. I have to admit that I struggled through the darkest days of my life, and thoughts entered my mind that I have never thought of. Watching Governor Cuomo's daily news briefing and watching as the death tolls rose by the hundreds and the thousands. Thinking of all of these good people, from all walks of life, dying because of Covid and I and the rest of the world, the world that believes in God at some point or another asked "WHY?" Why is this happening to these people? Why God are you allowing this to happen? I remember one weekend when I found out that five, five people I knew passed away. Four directly as a result of covid and one from a freak car accident. It was too much for me to bare all at once and I wanted to know WHY God was allowing so much suffering.*

Some of you may be familiar with the age-old question "Why do good things happen to bad people?" The Book of Job tells the story of one man who faced an immense amount of pain and suffering in his life DESPITE being a righteous person. Before I lead you through a few verses of Scripture that I want us to try to unpack together, I want to give you some context to provide you with a better understanding of the Book of Job. Now there are a lot of things in Job that I can't address right now because of the limited amount of time, so I'm encouraging you to read it on your own to better understand his story.

Brief Summary of Context:

*** One day Satan tried to prove a point to God. During a conversation , God pretty much brags about this man, Job, to Satan. He says that there isn't anyone on the earth like Job; a man that is blameless, upright, fears God and turns away from evil. Satan acknowledges that God has blessed Job with everything BUT if God were to take everything away, he was certain that Job would curse God. God has so much faith in Job and is so confident with who he is, that he tells Satan that he can do whatever he wants to Job, just don't kill him. As a result of this, Job begins to experience tremendous pain and suffering in his life: His servants were killed, Livestock were set on fire and killed with swords, A house fell on all of his children that were gathered there, Job had painful boils from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. There's a point when even his wife told him to curse God and die already. Despite all of this 'Job did not sin with his lips' (Job 2:10). After hearing of his afflictions, three of Job's friends come and sit with him and try to comfort him. Each has a dialogue with Job and each is essentially trying to convince Job that all of his pain and suffering is punishment for something that he did, some sin. But Job isn't trying to hear that.....*

**** HIGH SCHOOL STORY***

I want to leave you with two things to remember:

1. God does not have to answer the WHY in your life?
2. You undermine God when you ask WHY.

Other Scripture to refer to and make connections:

17 "Even though the fig trees have no blossoms,
and there are no grapes on the vines;
even though the olive crop fails,
and the fields lie empty and barren;
even though the flocks die in the fields,
and the cattle barns are empty,

18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord!
I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!"

Habakkuk 13:17-18