

Week 2: Questions for Thoughtful Reflection and Application

The testing of Jesus carries themes of the testing of righteous men throughout the Bible. The story of Job describes the main character this way:

Job 1:1 There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil. (NLT)

⁶ One day the members of the heavenly court came to present themselves before the LORD, and the Accuser, Satan, came with them.

⁷ "Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan.

Satan answered the LORD, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on."

⁸ Then the LORD asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job?

He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless-- a man of complete integrity.

He fears God and stays away from evil."

⁹ Satan replied to the LORD, "Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God.

¹⁰ You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property.

You have made him prosper in everything he does.

Look how rich he is!

¹¹ But reach out and take away everything he has,

and he will surely curse you to your face!"

¹² "All right, you may test him," the LORD said to Satan.

"Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don't harm him physically."

So Satan left the LORD's presence. (Job 1:6-12 NLT)

Satan proceeds to take everything Job possesses, his children, his wealth, all that he has except his wife. She also has lost everything.

Job 1:21 He said, "I was born naked. And I'll leave here naked. You have given, and you have taken away. May your name be praised." (NIRV)

A second test broke Job's health. Job finally curses the day he was born. For the remainder of the book Job and 3 different friends with different views of why he was suffering engage in a lively conversation. Their question? Why has God allowed this suffering? In chapters 38-42 God responds to Job directly with a series of questions that reveals God's incomparable knowledge, creation activity, and power. Like the Psalms of creation, we are left in awe of God's majesty, yet Job is never given the answer he wanted regarding suffering. But, stripped of everything, Job was in a unique position of access to God. His response is astounding.

Job 42:1-6 Then Job replied to the LORD:

² "I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you.

³ You asked, 'Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?'

It is I-- and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.

⁴ You said, 'Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.'

⁵ I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

⁶ I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance." (NLT)

Consider Isaiah's description of the Suffering Servant:

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our message?

To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?

² My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground.

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.

³ He was despised and rejected-- a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.

We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.

He was despised, and we did not care.

⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;
it was our sorrows that weighed him down.

And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!

⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins.

He was beaten so we could be whole.

He was whipped so we could be healed.

⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.

We have left God's paths to follow our own.

Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.

⁸ Unjustly condemned, he was led away.

No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream.

But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people.

⁹ He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone.

But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.

¹⁰ But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and cause him grief.

Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants.

He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands.

¹¹ When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied.

And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.

¹² I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death.

He was counted among the rebels.

He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels. (Isa. 53:1-12 NLT)

Hebrews 2:18 Since he himself (= Jesus) has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested. (NLT)

For this week's journaling, consider the following. You can choose to do one or all the tasks below. It is up to you and the time you have available to put into this assignment this week:

1. Write out a prayer about the ways the Church is particularly tested these days. As you reflect on this task, consider Heb. 2:18 and ask yourself how God could use you to help the Church.
Lord you are so awesome, you are so worthy to be praised. Lord we ask to protect the church, protect it from the Pharisees of today, the stiff necked person that judges people who do not walk or talk the same way as they do. Let that thinking be deleted from the church. Let love and patience be a new way of walking with you. Let us know people the way Jesus knew people, let the church walk in love and greet everyone that walks through the doors with the love of Christ. I know once that happens, the heavens will explode with praise. Thank you for loving all of us unconditionally, in your Holy precious Name, Jesus. Amen

2. Create in prayer a history of your own personal history of God's actions in your life. Lord, you have been so good to me. Never have you left me, never have you said I won't be right beside you. In my deepest sin, you were there trying to bring me back out of the pit of hell. You were patient as I walked it out and then you opened up your arms to welcome me back home like the prodigal son. I am so in awe of how much you love me and my family. Because of that I have the peace during this time of turmoil that you will pull me through, you are carrying me through things and I cannot wait to see what is on the other side. I thank you for the provisions you give me daily and love you so much. In this time, where things are uncertain for my family and I you are walking with us every step of the way and I am blessed. Thank you Lord for your love and mercy everyday.
3. Set aside a time of reflection. Choose this week to focus NOT on doing God's will but seeking God's will. Write out a short paragraph of what you learned from this time.
I learned this week that God wants me to spend time with him in the morning, reading the word, worshipping and reflecting his goodness. Since I have been doing that, it gives me wisdom when I need it, peace when there is chaos, love when I am sad. I look forward to this every day now, spending quality time with the Lord.