



## SoulShare

October 12, 2019, 9:00—10:30 am Breakfast & Discussion

### Job

My name is Job and I need to tell you about the worst year of my life – which also turned out to be the best year of my life. But I had better summarize. A complete account of the conversations I had with a group of friends (yes, they really are my friends) has been written down but I suspect you do not have the patience for it. I have noted in my brief observations of your society that people no longer have discussions of substance but communicate in brief written messages, mostly about inconsequential matters, often without even looking into each other's faces. I grew up in a talking and thinking culture but in deference to yours, I will be brief.

I was a model citizen of my day. The few of us whom God had entrusted with wealth understood that it was a stewardship and therefore used it to help the helpless and feed the hungry. I honored my Maker and taught my children the same. He blessed me with health and prosperity although I did not actually ask for either. Everything was going fine and I expected to finish a long life in that same situation.

What I did not know until much later is that there was a deeper story being written with a plot I could not have even suspected and a plotter whose evil intent was turned by God into something magnificent. In a series of rapidly successive crises, everything was taken from me, my wealth, my children, my health, the love and encouragement of my wife and finally the respect of my friends.

Reasoning from the general principle that God is just, my friends, after a suitable period of respectful silence (something I also find lacking in your society), proceeded to encourage me to confess the secret sin that obviously brought this just punishment upon me and my house. Naturally I focused on the injustice of it all since there was no secret sin and in fact, if graded on a curve, I should get an A++. The argument got nowhere.

Finally the youngster of the group spoke up with a similar story but a slightly different twist – starting from the justice of God, he pointed out that no one deserves anything from Him and, as one of the later writers said (yes, they let me read ahead) “our righteous acts are like filthy rags.”

Then God spoke. How can I explain it to you? I will not even try. Of course he is sovereign! Nothing happens without his permission and He used these tragedies to bring me to a higher level of devotion. I love and serve Him not because of the benefits but because it is right. And it is right because this is the reason I was created and the only way I can be complete. And there ARE rewards, deeper and richer than I had imagined.

Then God gave me back double what I lost. Oh, you remember that I had 10 children and only got 10 more? Well, as you ought to know, I still had the first 10; they had preceded me into the presence of the Creator. And God told me to pray for my friends – who you might say had become my enemies – after they had properly repented. I have to admit to a brief thought of calling down all my plagues upon them (for their own spiritual edification, of course) did flit across my mind. But do you know that forgiving those who despitely use you is incredibly liberating!

My story has been recorded for the benefit of the generations that followed me. Do you see any lessons for yourself?

***Read the first two chapters of Job and the last two and as much in between as you can.***

*Why might it be that the Holy Spirit included the book of Job in the Scriptures?*

*What issues are discussed? Are they resolved? How should we react to injustice?*

*In critiquing our society, my fictional Job mentions our short attention span, our triviality and impersonal communication style. Is it just? What can we do about it?*

*Is there any reason to believe that Job really was above reproach?*

*Job did not get to hear the conversations God had with Satan. Job 1:1 –2:7 Why?*

*Why was Satan allowed an audience with God?*

*How does Satan accuse us? Revelation 12:10 “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”*

*Why might God have allowed all this to happen to Job? Why did God let it happen to such a good man?*

*What lesson does this have for us who don't measure up to Job's character and discipline?*

*Is there a difference between “God is good” and “God is good to me”?*

*Should we pray that our children and grandchildren be happy? What should we pray?*

*What was the effect of God telling Job to pray for his friends? Job 42:8b, “My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.”*

*Is the following an argument for “Health-Wealth?” Job 42:10, “After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before.”*

*What does forgiveness do to the one who forgives?*

*God demonstrates his power in Job 40:15-18 “Look at the behemoth, which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength he has in his loins, what power in the muscles of his belly! His tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are close-knit. His bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like rods of iron.”*

*The result is Job's declaration in Job 42:1 Then Job replied to the LORD: “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.*

*But what does that creature sound like?*

*Does it seem to be talking about a creature that Job had actually seen?*

*What does your Bible's footnote say?*

*What is the implication when God says to Job, “Look at the behemoth, which I made along with you”?*

*Does that sound like something that was extinct millions of years before man appeared on the scene?*