

# **Faith Under Fire**

## **Lesson #2 (How will you respond to tragedy?)**

### **Job Chapters 2-3**

**Scripture:** 1 John 5:4 *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.”*

#### **Introduction:**

The story is told of a church who was worshipping on Sunday morning and the preacher had just stood up to speak, when the back doors to the auditorium slammed open. Five masked gunman quickly positioned themselves around the room.

Everyone was scared and knew that this was a really bad situation. Mothers held their children close as panic filled their faces while most fathers scanned the room for a path of escape.

One of the Elders tried to reason with the gunman, but was told to sit down and be quiet.

One of the gunman went to the microphone and told everyone that if they wanted to leave that they could get up and quietly exit at the back of the room, but if they stayed and worshipped Jesus they would die.

Most people quietly made their way out of the room as one of the gunman held the door.

When the last of them had left the room the gunman removed their masks, put down their guns and told the preacher that he could go ahead and preach ....now that the hypocrites were gone.

In the first century under Roman rule, Christians had to make such decisions. And even recently as Columbine High school folks are still being called upon to decide just how much faith they will place in God.

#### **Transitional Statement:**

Church the question this morning is how will you respond when your darkest hour gets even darker? Will your faith increase all the more? Or will you began to question the sovereignty of God?

## I. Satan comes before God a second time.

Job 2:1-3

*1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." 3 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause."*

A. Once again, Satan shows up in the presence of God

1. This is interesting that Satan keeps coming to God's presence
2. But why is he there?
  - a. He didn't stop in for a glass of tea
  - b. He is not there for a little chit-chat
  - c. Satan and God are enemies and here I think of Satan like a vulture circling overhead waiting to strike.

B. So God asks Satan where he has come from.

1. Satan answers the same way he did the first time God had asked him.
  - a. From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it... 1 Peter 5:8
  - b. Satan is still engaged in the only thing he does....prowling around trying to corrupt souls.
  - c. Satan doesn't give up....he doesn't take vacations

-He is a ruthless predator

C. Now for a second time God says: "*Have you considered my servant Job?*"

1. Of course Satan had considered him
2. The implication is that Satan had failed !
3. Here God is saying that Job loves me for who I am not for what he gets out of the deal.
  - a. God says that there is no one like him on the earth.
  - b. He remains blameless and upright
  - c. He still gives honor and reverence to My name

d. And his integrity is still intact

- 1) That is, he has actively made a choice to reject evil and remain innocent.
- 2) Even though you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.

## **II. So Satan makes a second accusation against God.**

Job 2:4-7

*4 Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 " However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face." 6 So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life." 7 Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.*

A. Basically Satan says: You don't play fair....

1. You wouldn't let me touch his flesh

B. Satan says "*Skin for Skin*"

1. The greatest motivation in a man's life is his own hide, which he will place above everything else .....including You God.
2. But, if his flesh and bones were attacked...he would curse You to Your face.

C. Interesting note, if you look at the text Satan says if You God will harm his flesh.

1. God doesn't even dignify a response to that
2. But God gives Satan the ability to test his theory for himself.

a. Only Satan must spare his life.

D. So Satan went out and struck Job with sore boils from his head to his toes.

## **III. Then Job finds out that things can get worse.**

Job 2:8-9

*8 And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. 9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" 10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.*

A. You have heard the expression when it rains ...it pours.

B. Some of the toughest times in life is when things just keep going wrong.

C. Job in the middle of such great grief is now stricken with disease

D. Job finds his own life hanging in the balance.

1. He is in great danger of infection
2. And he is trying to clean his wounds, by scrapping them with a broken piece of pottery.
3. Probably scared and alone
4. At this point ostracized by society
  - a. Sitting among the ashes....according to the Septuagint, outside the city gates.
  - b. Not exactly on people invitation list for supper

E. And talking about kicking someone when they are down.

1. Satan attacks him again....in one of the most vilest of ways
2. He employs Jobs wife in his services
  - a. His wife says: why don't you just "*Curse God and die*"
  - b. The one person that should be helping him always move closer to God is now tearing him down.
3. I can tell you that out of all Satan's weapons....pitting family against family is the probably the most cruel of all.
  - a. And boy does he like using it.

F. Job responds to his wife by saying "Shall we accept good from God and not adversity?"

1. This is nothing short of great insight.
2. Job realizes that he is more than a little child at Christmas time holding out his hand to receive only the good things from God.
  - a. Job knows that God also disciplines those whom He loves...Heb 12:6
  - b. He understands that God can put us through trials as well as bless us

G. In all this the text says that Job did not sin with his lips....

1. The statement here is different from Job 1:22 where it says that Job didn't sin or blame God.

2. Here it says only that he didn't sin with his lips.
  - a. This leaves us wondering about how he is doing mentally
    - 1) Is he struggling with sin in his mind?
    - 2) Is taking thoughts captive for God becoming hard for Job?
  - b. Is he beginning to question or even blame God?
3. Now, I don't know about you but initially when a problem comes up I do ok, but when problem after problem after problem strikes....
  - a. It begins to wear me down.
  - a. And then I begin to struggle
    - 1) Frustration sets in
    - 2) And the longer it goes on the more likely I am to sin in some way.
4. As we work our way through the rest of this text we are going to see Job struggle and even slip and fall.

#### **IV. Then Job's three friends show up**

Job 2:11-13

*11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky. 13 Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great.*

- A. Job's situation was on the grape vine, so to speak.
  1. He was the talk of the town
  2. When his friends heard about him they came to sympathize and comfort him
- B. Job was so diseased that his friend's didn't even recognize him
- C. When they saw his condition:
  1. They grieve at the sight of Job
    - a. Tearing their robes and throwing dust in the air.

D. When they came to him, he was in great pain and agony

1. Such agony that no one spoke a word to him for 7 days.

## V. Here, for the first time, Job opens the flood gates of his heart

\* In Jobs first response he simply fell to the ground and worshipped God.

A. But, now he curses his birthday

Job 3:1-10

*1 Afterward Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. 2 And Job said,*

*3 " Let the day perish on which I was to be born,  
And the night which said, 'A boy is conceived.'*

*4 "May that day be darkness;  
Let not God above care for it,  
Nor light shine on it.*

*5 "Let darkness and black gloom claim it;  
Let a cloud settle on it;*

*Let the blackness of the day terrify it.  
6 "As for that night, let darkness seize it;  
Let it not rejoice among the days of the year;  
Let it not come into the number of the months.*

*7 "Behold, let that night be barren;  
Let no joyful shout enter it.*

*8 "Let those curse it who curse the day,  
Who are prepared to rouse Leviathan.*

*9 "Let the stars of its twilight be darkened;  
Let it wait for light but have none,  
And let it not see the breaking dawn;*

*10 Because it did not shut the opening of my mother's womb,  
Or hide trouble from my eyes.*

1. His kid's had celebrated their birthdays, and maybe thinking back to that, Job proclaims that there is no cause for celebration in his life.

- a. Job had lost so much...and now his body is diseased.

- 1) And each passing moment is agony for him.

- b. Now, Job much like Peter walking on the water to Christ, finds himself distracted by the storms of life.

2. Previously Job had turned away from circumstances and clung closely to his faith.

- a. But now from an anguished soul, Job seems to lash out.

b. He curses the day of his birth and calls on others to do the same.

1) You know curses are God's department...not ours.

2) What right does any man have to curse what God has made?

3. But in verse 10 Job goes on to justify the curse by saying:

a. It didn't shut the opening of my mother's womb

b. And it didn't hide trouble from my eyes.

b. Here he is laying blame for his agony on his Birth-Day

1) Or is this simply the beginning of blaming God?

4. Folks, celebration is always in order, for the faithful !

a. That's why Paul & Silas sang hymns of praise to God while in prison, waiting on an uncertain doom....Acts chapter 16.

b. That's why Stephen, while being stoned to death, kept his eyes focused on heaven.

b. And that is why in our darkest hour we can keep from loose heart.

B. Then Job stops to ask why he didn't die at birth.

Job 3:11-19

11 " Why did I not die at birth,

Come forth from the womb and expire?

12 "Why did the knees receive me,

And why the breasts, that I should suck?

13 "For now I would have lain down and been quiet;

I would have slept then, I would have been at rest,

14 With kings and with counselors of the earth,

Who rebuilt ruins for themselves;

15 Or with princes who had gold,

Who were filling their houses with silver.

16 "Or like a miscarriage which is discarded, I would not be,

As infants that never saw light.

17 "There the wicked cease from raging,

And there the weary are at rest.

18 "The prisoners are at ease together;

They do not hear the voice of the taskmaster.

19 "The small and the great are there,

And the slave is free from his master.

1. Job question about his birth can only be directed at God.

a. This is not a generic or even a philosophical question.

2. God is the only one that gives life.
  - a. And the question can only be directed to Him.
3. Because of a lack of peace and rest in Job's life.
  - a. Job regrets being born
  - b. It seems here that his attitude could be going as far as saying my birth was a mistake.
4. Job doesn't outright say that God is wrong, but when you began to questions God's sovereignty it is the first step toward dangerous territory.

C. Then Job asks a second question.....why is life given to him who suffers?

Job 3:20-26

*20 "Why is light given to him who suffers,*

*And life to the bitter of soul,*

*21 Who long for death, but there is none,*

*And dig for it more than for hidden treasures,*

*22 Who rejoice greatly,*

*And exult when they find the grave?*

*23 "Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,*

*And whom God has hedged in?*

*24 "For my groaning comes at the sight of my food,*

*And my cries pour out like water.*

*25 "For what I fear comes upon me,*

*And what I dread befalls me.*

*26 "I am not at ease, nor am I quiet,*

*And I am not at rest, but turmoil comes."*

1. i.e. why does God allow me to keep suffering
  - a. Job knows that God's holds his life in His hands.
  - b. Why doesn't He just zap my life to and end
    - 1) And put me out of my misery
3. Some folks throughout time have let this thinking drive their faith aground.
  - a. They reason, through it all, that God doesn't really care for them
4. While others cling to their faith
  - a. They realize that God works his eternal purposes through suffering.
  - b. They stop and remember that God even allowed His own son to suffer for our salvation.

5. Here, I think, we see Job struggling at this point in his mind.
  - a. Make no mistake Satan is working on him.
  - b. And that is when Satan comes at us the hardest....while we are down.

**Conclusion:**

**Like Job, our struggles can really be strong at times.**

**I would like to leave you with some questions:**

- 1. Is your physical wants and needs more important than God in any way?**
- 2. Are you allowing people around you to pull you away from God?**
- 3. Are you keeping a close watch over your thoughts?**
- 4. Will you worship God at all cost?**

**Job says it like this:**

“Shall we accept good from God and not adversity?”