

..... Daily Devotions

March 17-23, 2019

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A Quick Walk through Job

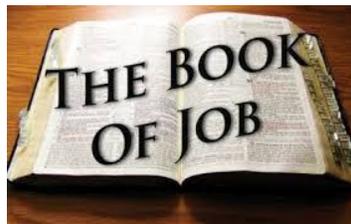
Sunday, March 17, 2019

Text: Job 1:1

In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job.

I have heard it said by many friends that Job is not one of their favorite books of the Bible. It has always been one of mine. One of the reasons I love reading the Bible so much is that the living word can reveal truths to us as we are ready to receive them, and I am sure that the Lord revealed Job to me at the perfect time in my life. A time when I was struggling with my faith and saw someone else, a Biblical Giant, if you will, who also struggled with the age-old question of "WHY?"

Let us pray: *Awesome Father, I pray that I am able to share what you have shared with me this week and do it all justice. While there is much we will not have time to comb through, I pray that we will see what You wish to reveal. Amen*



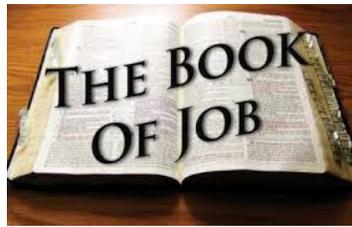
Monday, March 18, 2019

Text: Job 1:1-3

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.

I have thought about these words over and over again: *blameless and upright*. I cannot claim that same title with the Lord. It is truly intimidating if I think about it all too hard. *Blameless and upright* are not the descriptions I think anyone would use while speaking of me. Maybe chatty, possibly kind, but never blameless and upright. But what gives me such hope is that knowing that while Job was blameless and upright, he still struggled. Even though he did his best, things still happened to him that he couldn't explain and were the worst events imaginable. For me, it's a comfort to know that when bad things happen to me, it's not just a punishment for something.

Let us pray: Forgiven God, thank you for grace. Thank you for forgiveness. We praise you that when bad things happen (and we know they will) that we can rest in your peace and your goodness while we walk through it all. Thank you, Lord, for never leaving us alone. Amen



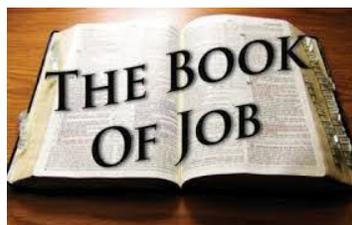
Tuesday, March 19, 2019

Text: Job 1:13-19

One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

When I read this, I have such a hard time. I tend to focus on the phrase "While he was still speaking." So Job is plugging along, blameless and upright, and all of a sudden a servant runs bringing him bad news, and before he can even finish, another servant runs bringing him bad news. This happens four times! The last one being the loss of his children. As much as I have tried to empathize, I know in my heart that I have NEVER had it as bad as Job had it in these moments. Having read this book a few times, I know how much worse it gets from here and yet, he still never turns from his faith. He still knows that God exists and is good. Sometimes when I feel like there is not another thing I can handle, the Lord reminds me of this particular phrase and I realize that while I might not feel close to our Lord, He has never left me.

Let us pray: Ever present Lord, I praise you for saving me from how bad things can really get. Thank you for the Holy Spirit that gives us what we need to take the step forward into faith, even when we feel like we can't take another step. Thank you for showing us over and over again, that we are not alone. Amen



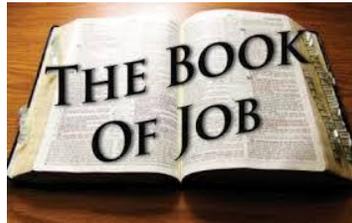
Wednesday, March 20, 2019

Text: Job 15:1-6

Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: Would a wise man answer with empty notions or fill his belly with the hot east wind? Would he argue with useless words, with speeches that have no value? But you even undermine piety and hinder devotion to God. Your sin prompts your mouth; you adopt the tongue of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, not mine; your own lips testify against you.

Ever been a friend to Job? I sure have. I have made false judgments over and over again. I have made friends and family feel terrible thinking I made better decisions or was somehow doing everything right while others around me were doing everything wrong. Then, I get what I like to call a Jesus Whooping. I end up making a stupid mistake, or I end up hurting people and I realize that I am just as flawed and messy as the people I thought I was better than.

Let us pray: *King of Kings, we pray your forgiveness for trying to do your job. For thinking that we can somehow do it better than you. We praise you for your grace and goodness, even when we won't offer it ourselves. Amen.*



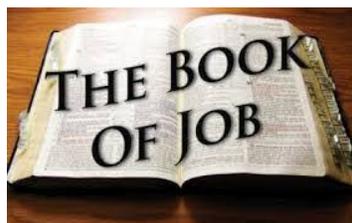
Thursday, March 21, 2019

Text: Job 9:32-35

He is not a man like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court. If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand on us both, someone to remove God's rod from me, so that this terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot.

Ever been Job? I sure have. The Lord could fill the Grand Canyon with all the times I have cried, "WHY ME?" I thank him, for his grace is new every morning because I have tested Him over and over. This is one of the reasons I love Job so much. It gives us permission to go to God in praise, in anger, in sorrow and in thanksgiving. To go to God with all the broken pieces of our hearts, wherever we are at. He will be there.

Let us pray: *God of grace, we praise you for your unending love, especially when we don't deserve it. We ask you to stay close to us, especially when we are pushing you away. We thank you for your peace, especially when we refuse to feel it. Amen*



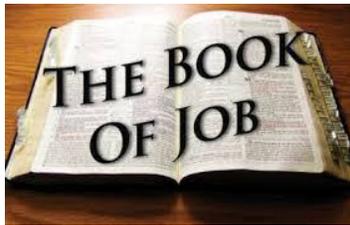
Friday, March 22, 2019

Text: Job 38:1-7

Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm. He said: "Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footing set, or who laid its cornerstone- while the morning starts sang together and all the angles shouted for joy.

I grew up in a house where mom was the boss. I can't help but hear my mother's voice in this scripture. *The Lord answered Job out of the storm.* Whenever I read this passage I am reminded of when I would have to "face the music" as my father used to say. The storm for me was always that feeling of dread when I had broken the rules or been busted doing something I shouldn't have been doing. That emotion of fear and anxiety and guilt all rolled together in my stomach. The thing is, my mom loves me so much. I know that no matter what I do, she loves me. Even when I don't really deserve it.

Let us pray: *Holy Father, we thank you for loving us no matter what. Even when we are angry with you. Even when we can't understand your ways or think we know better than you. Thank you for revealing your love to us over and over again. Amen*



Saturday, March 23, 2019

Text: Job 42:12-15

The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters. The first he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-happuch. Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.

Not all stories of hardship have a happy ending. This story ends with more blessings than Job could have dreamed of before his struggles. In my own struggles I sometimes cry out to God, "When are you gonna bless me like you blessed Job?" Selfish I know, but I have faith that when I am welcomed into Heaven, the latter part of my life will be blessed more than the first.

Let us pray: *Holy and Gracious Lord, we thank you for your blessings, your goodness and strength. We ask for forgiveness for questioning you, but we praise you, Lord, for meeting us right where we are. Sometimes in despair we forget who you are and what you want for us. Thank you for never giving up on us and blessing us far more than we deserve. Amen*

