

The Book of Job:  
A Window into a World  
of Suffering and Faith, #9

God Speaks:  
Putting Us in Our Place  
Job 38:1-42:6

--CEFC 3/11/18

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Imagine with me for a moment that you're a part of  
the French underground resistance movement  
during the Nazi occupation of France in WW II.  
Every day you face life and death situations  
as you engage in covert operations against the German Army.  
Secrecy is of the utmost importance,  
for one case of misplaced trust could be fatal.

One night you meet a Stranger, whom you had heard about from a friend.  
This man deeply impresses you,  
and you spend the entire night in conversation.  
He claims that he is on your side.  
In fact, he claims that he is in command of the entire resistance movement,  
and his knowledge of it certainly backs up his words.  
He urges you to trust him, to have faith in him, no matter what happens.

You emerge from that encounter utterly convinced,  
and in sincerity and constancy you undertake to trust him.

As it happens, you and the Stranger  
never meet in conditions of intimacy again.  
Often you see this Stranger helping the resistance fighters,  
and you are encouraged;  
but sometimes he is seen in the uniform of the German S.S.  
apparently doing their work  
and even handing patriots over to the enemy.

Still, in spite of appearances,  
you continue to believe that the Stranger did not deceive you.

Sometimes you ask him for help and receive it, and you're thankful.  
Other times your messages get no response, but, you say,  
"The Stranger, he knows best."

But lately it seems that you've had to say that more and more.  
In fact, you can't remember one time in the last ten months  
when he has done anything for the resistance.  
Besides, the deaths of two friends appear to be related  
to the actions of the Stranger.

You wonder, you doubt.

Then one day, there's a knock at your door.  
It's the German Secret Police with the Stranger leading them.  
"Does the Stranger still know best?  
Has he deceived you?  
Will you let him in?"

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This parable of the Stranger, made famous by an Oxford philosophy professor,<sup>1</sup>  
illustrates very clearly the difficulty that is sometimes involved  
in faith and trust--  
it illustrates the risk that is involved in every close relationship,  
particularly, I would say, in our relationship with God.

Certainly, our faith in God is not a blind faith.  
We do have very good reasons for believing what we do.  
That is important.

But at the same time, it is not always that simple.  
Life can be very complicated and complex.  
As with the Stranger, we sometimes find it difficult to understand  
the mysterious ways God is working in our world and in our lives.

I don't think I need to list all the things that seem to count "against" God  
in our world--

- Innocent bystanders die in terrorist bombings.
- Babies are born with horrible defects.  
Some are born addicted to crack cocaine  
because of the actions of their mothers.
- The wicked prosper, the good die young.  
Not exactly what you expect  
in a world in the control of our loving heavenly Father.

Or in our own lives, we struggle through circumstances beyond our control.

- We seek guidance and direction about our futures  
and get no answer from above  
and only closed doors here below.
- We see loved ones suffer.  
Just this week we received news from a friend  
that their daughter, who recently gave birth to a child,  
was diagnosed with a cancer that could result in blindness or even death.

It's perplexing--"God, are you really there?"  
and even more often we say, "Lord, do you really care?"

God's ways are mysterious in our sight, and we wonder--  
Does the Stranger really know what is best?

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<sup>1</sup> Basil Mitchell.

Can he really be trusted?  
Is he still on my side?

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Faith involves risk--  
and even a healthy faith will not be without questions, doubts, and struggles  
in its relationship with God--  
and I believe our Lord would have it no other way.

As someone has put it--  
"You do not have to sit outside in the dark.  
If, however, you want to look at the stars,  
you will find that darkness is required."<sup>2</sup>

Our hero Job is certainly sitting in darkness—deep darkness.  
He is devastated in every area of his life—  
Physically, his body is racked by painful sores.  
Emotionally, he suffers the grief of the loss of all his children,  
Socially, he is no longer the wealthy landowner  
who sits in the place of honor in the community.  
In fact, he was now mocked in song by the young men  
who "**do not hesitate to spit in [his] face**" (30:9-10).  
Even his own wife appears to have turned against him.

And then there was the spiritual suffering—  
Where was his God in all this?  
Job is suffering inexplicably—"for no reason" we're told (2:3).  
Job was innocent, he had done nothing to deserve this.  
"Though I cry, 'I've been wronged', I get no response," he says;  
"though I call for help, there is no justice.  
[God] has blocked my way so I cannot pass;  
he has shrouded my paths in darkness" (19:7).

You see, Job has trusted God,  
but now he feels abandoned by him--  
Back in 29:2 he said--"**How I long for the months gone by,  
for the days when God watched over me,  
3 when his lamp shone upon my head  
and by his light I walked through darkness!**  
4 **Oh, for the days when I was in my prime,  
when God's intimate friendship blessed my house"** (29:2-4).

As a man of faith Job expected God to act on his behalf,  
and so he made his appeal—  
He called upon God to come to him,  
to make himself known,  
either to vindicate his righteous standing  
or to show him where he has gone wrong.

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<sup>2</sup> Annie Dillard.

But what happened?

Nothing--There's the rub.

That can be the hardest thing of all about suffering—  
it's not intellectual, it's personal—

we feel let down by someone we had trusted.

"Why, Lord?

Why are you treating me this way?

Why are allowing this to happen to me?"

The agnostic and even the atheist will, in a moment of pain say,

"God, why me?" (which is in itself interesting).

But their distress is just not the same, because that kind of response  
is not really based on personal faith;  
it's just a cry of desperation.

But the believer sees God's failure to respond as a betrayal of trust.

Only the one who has trusted the Stranger has questions  
when he appears to be helping the enemy.

Your closest friends can hurt you the most--

only someone you've committed yourself to can let you down.

Job had put his trust in a living, personal God,  
and that trust involves risk,

for it caused him to expect that God would act justly toward him,  
and would respond to him when he called upon him.

Now, he feels abandoned in senseless suffering.

I think of the experience of C.S. Lewis.

Earlier in his career Lewis had written a book called *The Problem of Pain*,  
in which he sought to address some of the intellectual issues  
related to believing in a good God in a world of suffering.

Many have found that book very helpful.

But later in his life, Lewis encountered his own pain--

He married late in life,

and after only a couple of years,

his wife died of cancer.

Her death plunged Lewis into the depths of despairing grief,

and during that travail of his soul he kept a brutally honest record

of his thoughts and feelings,

which he later published in a book entitled *A Grief Observed*.

At one point he wrote these words--

"Meanwhile, where is God?

This is one of the most disquieting symptoms [of grief].

When you are happy, so happy that you have no sense of needing Him,

so happy that you are tempted to feel His claims upon you as an interruption,

if you remember yourself and turn to Him with gratitude and praise,

you will--or so it feels--be welcomed with open arms.



and though he said some good things,  
he wasn't what Job needed either.

In the end, it comes down to this—

If God himself is the ultimate source of Job's problem  
then only God can be its solution.  
And now, after 35 chapters of dialogue and debate,  
and of Job's cries of lamentation  
and his calls for litigation,  
God finally makes his appearance.

We first need to appreciate the fact that God appears at all.

Certainly, God is under no obligation to respond to any demand we may put upon him.  
As he says to Job in 41:11--

**"Who has a claim against me that I must pay?  
Everything under heaven belongs to me."**

He is God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth.

He is by no means subject to our beck and call.

And some suggest that the long-winded speeches of Elihu,  
separating Job's demand that God appear  
and God's actual appearance,  
are meant to make that very point.

But God does appear—

he "responds" to Job.

In what must be called an act of humble grace,

God condescends to interact with him.

Elihu thought it impossible that God would do such a thing—

**"God does not listen to the empty plea [of the wicked];" he had said,**

**"the Almighty pays no attention to it.**

**How much less, then, will he listen [to you, Job,]**

**when you say that you do not see him,**

**that your case is before him**

**and you must wait for him, . . ." (35:13-14).**

But God has listened to Job's lament,

and now he responds to it.

And he doesn't send an emissary—

an angel or a prophet--

No, God responds in person.

It is interesting that here we find God's personal name "Yahweh"

(translated as "the LORD" in all capitals).

That name has almost been absent since chapter two.<sup>3</sup>

It's the name he revealed especially to his people Israel as his covenant name—  
expressing his personal commitment to them as their God.

<sup>3</sup> Only in 12:9 and 28:28.

Yes, the LORD, Yahweh, answers Job,  
 and he does it "**out of the storm**"(38:1).  
 Nothing is more terrifying than a hurricane-force windstorm—  
 we tasted a little of that a week ago.  
 Job's children had been destroyed by one (1:19).  
 And Job himself was afraid that if God actually did appear to him,  
 "**he would crush me with a storm**" (9:17).

The "**storm**" can be a sign of God's anger and wrath,<sup>4</sup>  
 and if Elihu and the friends were right about Job,  
 we might have expected God to destroy him--  
 to condemn him and to crush him  
 for all his rebellious talk about God being unjust toward him.  
 But that doesn't happen.

Yes, the Lord speaks "**out of the storm**"—  
 And it is right that he should do so—  
 He is no tame god;  
 he is great and awesome and beyond our comprehension,  
 and Job needs to know that.

But instead of denouncing Job,  
 the Lord simply asks him questions.  
 He engages him.

There is almost a gentle, some even say, a "playful tone"<sup>5</sup> to God's words to Job.  
 One commentator says that God's response  
 "puts Job in his place  
 more as a father might do it to a dogmatic adolescent  
 than as a judge to an offender."<sup>6</sup>

The LORD God affords Job the dignity of addressing him personally.

The LORD's appearance to Job is surely a demonstration of God's grace.  
 Here we see the great and awesome God of the universe—  
 and he is that, as he makes clear—  
 the great and awesome God of the universe  
in his grace makes himself known personally to Job.

And as Tim Keller observes,  
 the paradox here should not be missed.  
 God comes both as a gracious, personal God  
and as an infinite, overwhelming force—at the very same time.  
 He is both at once.

<sup>4</sup> cf., e.g., Jer. 23:19: "See, the storm of the LORD  
 will burst out in wrath,  
 a whirlwind swirling down  
 on the heads of the wicked."

<sup>5</sup> So Anderson, followed by Wilson and Kidner.

<sup>6</sup> Kidner, *Wisdom*, p. ?.

Shouldn't this point us to Christ—  
Only in Jesus Christ do we see how the untamable and infinite God  
can be born as a baby and give his life as a loving Savior.  
In Christ on the cross, God's wrath and mercy meet as no where else.<sup>7</sup> /

More than anything,  
in his suffering, Job wanted his relationship with God restored.  
It was God's absence that most disturbed him.  
Now, in his appearance to Job,  
God responds in his grace to Job's cry.

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But when he appears,  
it is immediately obvious in what God says to Job  
that he does not respond as Job expected.

Job wanted an explanation for his suffering—  
He expected God either to vindicate him  
or to condemn him.  
But God does neither.

Consider what else God might have done—  
God could have explained to Job that he had nothing to do with his sufferings—  
they were the work of the Satanic accuser—  
"Blame him, not me."

Or God could have denied  
that he had the power to stop such awful things from happening—  
that's just the way things are in a fallen world.  
He says neither of those things either;  
nor could he.

Instead of giving answers,  
God asks questions.  
And in fact, he completely changes the subject.  
The all-consuming talk of Job's suffering is entirely left behind.  
Instead, God intends to change the way Job looks at his own situation  
by changing the way he looks at the world.  
He wants to broaden Job's horizons,  
so that he might see that his perspective is far too narrow  
to understand what God is up to in his life.

The Lord begins by asking in 38:2—  
**"Who is this that darkens my counsel  
with words without knowledge?  
3 Brace yourself like a man;  
I will question you,  
and you shall answer me."**

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<sup>7</sup> Keller, *Walking with God*, p. 282.





**39:1 “Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?  
Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn?”**

He questions Job about the wild donkey,  
the wild ox, the war horse, the hawk and the eagle—  
all of them are beyond the power of humans to domesticate and control;  
each is endowed with its own habitat,  
and it's own ways of living  
that human beings have nothing to do with.<sup>9</sup>

There's the delightful description of the ostrich—  
who has some rather silly wings, and some foolish ways,  
but what it lacks in sagacity,  
it makes up for in speed--

Job 39:13 **“The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully,  
but they cannot compare with the pinions and feathers of the stork.**  
**14 She lays her eggs on the ground  
and lets them warm in the sand,  
15 unmindful that a foot may crush them,  
that some wild animal may trample them.**  
**16 She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers;  
she cares not that her labor was in vain,  
17 for God did not endow her with wisdom  
or give her a share of good sense.**  
**18 Yet when she spreads her feathers to run,  
she laughs at horse and rider.”**

Job, were you the one who designed all this?  
Are you the one who controls the workings of these things?

God is portrayed as an architect, a surveyor, an engineer,  
and perhaps most interestingly, he uses language  
reflecting parents caring for their children—  
swaddling the seas in a garment (38:9),  
acting as a father to the rain (38:28),  
giving birth to the frost (38:29),  
providing food for the ravens (38:41).

Job, if you can't understand how I govern the physical universe  
do you think you can understand how I govern the moral universe?

Or I think of the way Jesus speaks in the Sermon on the Mount,  
as he points to the birds of the air and the lilies of the field—  
If God cares for them, won't he also care for you?  
So here, God points to his care of his creatures in the natural world  
as a sign of his care for Job—

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<sup>9</sup> The hawk and eagle are even described as "unclean" animals—with their contact with blood and dead corpses (39:30).

If I care for a wild donkey in the desert,  
do you not think that I can care for you, Job?

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Job 40:1       **"The LORD said to Job:  
"Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?  
Let him who accuses God answer him!"**

And Job does—in a way.

40:3   **"Then Job answered the LORD:  
"I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?  
I put my hand over my mouth.  
5           I spoke once, but I have no answer—  
twice, but I will say no more."**

Job is humbled in his response to the Lord's first speech.  
He is rendered speechless,  
but there is as yet no resolution.  
But God is not through.

God again speaks and confronts Job's belief  
that he stands in a position to assess God's justice—

40:8 --**"Would you discredit my justice?  
Would you condemn me to justify yourself?  
9       Do you have an arm like God's,  
and can your voice thunder like his?  
10      Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor,  
and clothe yourself in honor and majesty.  
11      Unleash the fury of your wrath,  
look at every proud man and bring him low, . . .  
v. 14   Then I myself will admit to you  
that your own right hand can save you."**

At this point God speaks of two mysterious and frightening creatures—  
portrayed in some ways like the hippopotamus and the crocodile.

And some have been scornful about God's response to Job here.

George Bernard Shaw was quoted as saying:

"If I complain that I am suffering unjustly,  
it is no answer to say, 'Can you make a hippopotamus?'"

But such critics seem to have missed the point—

40:15-24 describe the Behemoth—  
**"Look at the behemoth,  
which I made along with you  
and which feeds on grass like an ox.  
16      What strength he has in his loins,  
what power in the muscles of his belly!"**  
He hides among the reeds in the marsh,

he makes the raging river his home.

Then all of chap. 41 speaks of the Leviathan—  
 described as having a menacing mouth full of fearsome teeth (41:14),  
 and a back laced with rows of shields tightly sealed together (41:15);  
 his underside leaves a trail in the mud (41:30),  
 and "**He makes the depths churn like a boiling caldron  
 and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment**" (41:31).  
**"Can you fill his hide with harpoons  
 or his head with fishing spears?** (41:7).  
**"A club seems to him but a piece of straw;  
 he laughs at the rattling of the lance"** (41:29).

v. 20-- **Smoke pours from his nostrils . . .**  
 21 **His breath sets coals ablaze,  
 and flames dart from his mouth.**  
 33 **Nothing on earth is his equal—  
 a creature without fear.**  
 34 **He looks down on all that are haughty;  
 he is king over all that are proud."**

There are two ways of understanding what is going on here—  
 Either the behemoth and the leviathan are literal animals—  
 animals like the hippopotamus and the crocodile—  
 described in highly mythical language.  
 Or they are mythical creatures<sup>10</sup>—  
 described in language related to literal animals—  
 animals like the hippopotamus and the crocodile.

The fact that both the ESV and the NIV11 capitalize their names  
 suggests that they prefer the latter view.

In the end, I don't think which view you take really matters,  
 because either way, these two mysterious and frightening creatures  
 are symbols of the forces of chaos in the cosmos,  
 forces that are frightening and uncontrollable by human beings--  
 These menacing creatures represent hostile powers in the world  
 which God alone can subdue.

Of Behemoth, the Lord asks,  
**"Can anyone capture him by the eyes,  
 or trap him and pierce his nose?"** (40:24).

And of Leviathan, he says—  
**"If you lay a hand on him,  
 you will remember the struggle and never do it again!  
 Any hope of subduing him is false;  
 the mere sight of him is overpowering.  
 No one is fierce enough to rouse him"** (41:8-10).  
**"When he rises up, the mighty are terrified;**

<sup>10</sup> In Isa. 27:1 Leviathan ("the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will slay the monster of the sea") symbolizes moral chaos in the world.

**they retreat before his thrashing" (41:25).**

These are ferocious beasts—frightening creatures—  
yet the Lord created them  
and the Lord controls them.

Therefore, he asks, "**Who then is able to stand against me?"**

**"Who has a claim against me that I must pay?**

**Everything under heaven belongs to me" (41:10-11).**

"Don't you understand, Job?" the Lord seems to be say.

"If I can control these terrifying creatures,

can't you trust me to manage the affairs of your life?"

And isn't this the same message we get from Jesus himself—

when he says,

**"In this world you will have trouble.**

**But take heart! I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33).**

Jesus, in his glorious resurrection, has overcome the forces of sin and death—

he has been declared victorious over what Paul calls

"the principalities and powers of this world"—

those spiritual forces of darkness that threaten us

and that we cannot control.

Peter says that Jesus "**has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—**

**with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him" (1Pet. 3:22).<sup>11</sup>**

Can't we then trust him, even when we feel

overwhelmed by the forces of evil in our world?

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These speeches of God are meant to put Job, and us, in our proper place—

and that's not a bad thing—

It's just good and right.

I like the way Derrick Kidner puts it--

God's speeches "cut us down to size,

treating us not as philosophers but as children—

limited in mind, puny in body—

whose first and fundamental grasp of truth must be

to know the difference between our place and God's, and to accept it."<sup>12</sup>

He's the Creator of heaven and earth—

and we are not.

He rules over all;

and we don't.

He is wise beyond our ability to comprehend;

<sup>11</sup> Cf. also Col. 2:15.

<sup>12</sup> Kidner, *Wisdom*, p. 72.

he knows what we could never know.  
His ways transcend our understanding,  
and we have to accept that fact  
and trust him, even when it's hard.

Isn't this what our worship week after week is meant to teach us?  
God is God, and we are not,  
and that's a good thing!

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Well, finally, Job seems to get it—

His first response was insufficient;  
now he seems satisfied  
as his vision of the greatness of God has expanded.

42:1—"Then Job replied to the LORD:

"I know that you can do all things;  
no plan of yours can be thwarted.

3 [You asked,] 'Who is this that obscures my counsel  
without knowledge?'  
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me to know.

Job 42:4 ["You said,] 'Listen now, and I will speak;  
I will question you,  
and you shall answer me.'

5 My ears had heard of you  
but now my eyes have seen you."

Job's faith had always been real—  
remember his initial profession way back in chap. 1—  
"Naked I came from my mother's womb,  
and naked I will depart.  
The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;  
blessed be the name of the Lord."

Now, after this long struggle with God,  
his faith has been deepened,  
it has been refined,  
and it is now as precious as pure gold.

Elisabeth Elliot, the wife of a martyred missionary,  
and widowed twice,  
thinking back over her life,  
with its countless tragedies and troubles—  
she reflects on the end of Job,  
and she puts it well—

"God is God.  
If He is God, he is worthy of my worship and my service.  
I will find rest nowhere but in His will,

and that will is infinitely, immeasurably, unspeakably  
beyond my largest notions of what He is up to."<sup>13</sup>

This is where Job has arrived in his long journey of faith./

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So we come to verse 6 of chap. 42--

**"Therefore I despise myself  
and repent in dust and ashes."**

This, at least, is how the English versions traditionally translate the Hebrew.

The sense is that now Job recognizes that in his lament  
he had spoken wrongly against God—  
his complaints were too harsh,  
his questions were too pointed,  
his attitude too full of pride,  
and he needed to confess his sin  
and turn from it.

John Calvin, for example, in his Sermons on Job,  
spoke of Job's "excessive and outrageous talk" for which he needed to repent.<sup>14</sup>  
So there are some pretty strong voices supporting this way of translating this verse.

But this is one of those very rare cases when I will go against the majority  
and disagree with the English translations.

For one thing, it is not clear to me that Job really has anything to repent of—  
The Lord will twice commend Job in what follows  
as the one who spoke rightly about him,  
in contrast to the friends.

And in the New Testament, James also commends Job's persevering faith  
as an example for us.

And if Job had repented here,  
there is no declaration of forgiveness from God,  
which we would have expected.

As for the translation,  
the word translated "**despise**" in this verse basically means "to repudiate or reject"  
and it usually takes an object.

There is no object here—the word "**myself**" is added by the translators,  
but I think the object of the verb could be what comes later in the verse—  
that is, "**dust and ashes.**"  
That's what he rejects.

And the word translated "**repent**" here  
is not the usual Hebrew word for "repentance" (the Hebrew *shub*)  
found so often in the prophets.

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<sup>13</sup> Cited in Keller, *Walking with God*, p. 287.

<sup>14</sup> *Sermons on Job*, p. 1.

A common meaning of this word  
is "to change one's mind" or "to reverse a decision"—  
and is often used in that way with God as the subject,  
so it doesn't necessarily mean that what is turned from was wrong.

Finally, the preposition found here is commonly used  
of what one is changing one's mind about.<sup>15</sup>  
Here that is "**dust and ashes**"—the ritual symbol of Job's state of mourning and grief.

So putting that all together,  
I think what Job is saying here is that in light of God's appearance to him  
and what he now understands about God's care and control of the cosmos,  
his complaints and protests are no longer appropriate.  
He is now "**comforted**" by God in a way his friends never could do.  
His mind is changed.  
So he says, "I reject and turn away from dust and ashes"—  
that is, he turns from his state of mourning.  
He can now re-enter normal relationships in society,  
which is just what we see him do in what follows.<sup>16</sup>

Job's questions have not been answered,  
but he is now satisfied that God,  
who seemed to him to be a Stranger—  
God is still on his side,  
and that he knows what he's doing,  
even if Job doesn't.

And Job never does know what had transpired in the heavenly courts,  
and how God had commended Job  
and how the accuser had challenged God  
by cynically asserting that Job only feared God because God blessed him.

Job never knows any of that--  
and it has to be that way  
if his faith is to be proved genuine—  
for real faith trusts even in the dark.

This is what makes Job's faith so powerful—  
Think about it—  
Job didn't have the testimony of the Scriptures.  
He didn't have the example of Abraham or Moses or David.  
Nor did he have the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ.  
I mean Job didn't even have Job to look to.  
What an example he is of persevering faith!

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<sup>15</sup> נִתְּנָה עָלַי. cf. Exod 32:12, 14; Jer 18:8,10.

<sup>16</sup> On this view, see esp. Wilson; also David A. Lambert, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 134, No. 3 (Fall 2015), pp. 557-575: "God's speech is finally an "effective 'consolation'"—it forces Job out of his ritual stance and, at long last, silencing his protest."



So I ask,  
Is your faith real?  
Is it authentic?  
Or is it just mercenary and conditional--  
that is, that you will trust God only so long as he blesses you,  
and only so long as you can understand what he's doing in your life?

This is not to say you won't struggle to trust God when you encounter hardships.  
You will ask "Why, Lord? How long, Lord?  
What are you doing?  
Why are you allowing this to happen in my life?"

I can be hard to trust the Stranger.

But you have to keep reminding yourself—  
Why did I ever trust him in the first place?  
And for us,  
living in this "new covenant age,"  
there is no clearer, no stronger ground for trusting God,  
for believing that despite all appearances,  
he really is on our side,  
than what is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In sending his own Son into the world  
God himself enters into our suffering;  
on the cross of Christ, he shares our pain.  
You could even say, with Dorothy Sayers, that  
on the cross, "God had the honesty and courage to take His own medicine."<sup>17</sup>

But he not only shares our pain on the cross,  
he also bears on sin, and he takes it away.  
And in Christ's glorious resurrection from the dead  
we have assurance that nothing can separate us from his love—  
nothing at all!--  
for he now reigns forever.

I appreciate the words of Cornelius Plantinga—  
"We do not refer each other to the cross of Christ to explain evil.  
It is not as if in pondering Calvary we will at last understand throat cancer.  
We rather lift our eyes to the cross, whence comes our help,  
in order to see that God shares our lot and can therefore be trusted."<sup>18</sup>

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**"My ears had heard of you  
but now my eyes have seen you."**

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<sup>17</sup> Cited in Yancey, *Where is God?* pp. 225.

<sup>18</sup> Cited in Yancey, *Where is God?* pp. 230.

Have your eyes seen something of what Job saw—  
the Lord God in all his majesty,  
the One who rules his cosmos with his own unfathomable wisdom?

And I ask you, Have your eyes seen what Job never could see—  
that same God in love hanging on a cross for you?

Listen to Jesus—

**"In this world you will have trouble.  
But take heart! I have overcome the world"** (Jn. 16:33).

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**Prayer**—

**The challenging prayer of Blaise Pascal—**

"I ask you, Lord, neither for health nor for sickness, for life nor for death;  
but that you may dispose of my health and my sickness, my life and my death,  
for your glory. . . .

You alone know what is expedient for me;  
you are the sovereign master;  
do with me according to your will.

Give to me, or take away from me,  
only conform my will to yours.

I know but one thing, Lord, that it is good to follow you, and bad to offend you.  
Apart from that, I know not what is good or bad in anything.

I know not which is most profitable to me—  
health or sickness, wealth or poverty,  
nor anything else in the world.

That discernment is beyond the power of men or angels,  
and is hidden among the secrets of your Providence,  
which I adore, but do not seek to fathom."<sup>19</sup>

**The encouraging Prayer of the Apostle Paul—**

I pray that the eyes of your hearts may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, <sup>20</sup> which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Closing Song: *Behold Our God*

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<sup>19</sup> Cited in Philip Yancey, *Where is God*, p. 112.

Benediction:

Rom. 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"

"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"

For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.

**The Book of Job:  
A Window into a World  
of Suffering and Faith, #9  
March 11, 2018**

**God Speaks  
Job 38:1-42:6**

What Job has called for now takes place: God himself appears to Job. God's response is not exactly what Job expected, but it broadens his horizons and puts him in his place. And with that he is finally "comforted."

**I. God Appears to Job "out of the storm" (38:1)**

**II. God Speaks to Job:**

**A. God's Wisdom and Care (chaps. 38-39)**

1. Cosmogony (38:4-21)
2. Meteorology (38:22-38)
3. Zoology (38:39-39:30).

**B. God's Power and Control (chap. 40-41)**

1. Behemoth (40:15-24)
2. Leviathan (41:1-34)

**III. Job's Response (42:1-6):**

**A. Job Gains a Deepened  
Knowledge of God (vv. 1-5)**

**B. Job Is "Comforted" (v. 6)**

**Sermon Discussion:**

**God Speaks:  
Putting Us in Our Place  
Job 38:1-42:6**

- Have you ever had someone you trusted let you down? How did it feel? Have you ever felt that God has let you down?
- When are you most tempted to doubt that God is on your side? How do you deal with that temptation?
- How does the first divine speech depicting the physical and animal worlds speak to you of God's majesty and his wise governing of this world? How should it affect the way you view the world around you? How should you respond to that revelation?
- What forces do the Leviathan and Behemoth represent to you? Do you believe that they are merely God's creatures which he can subdue and control? How does that relate to the hostile forces of this world that seem so threatening?
- How do you understand Job's reaction to God's speeches in Job. 41:1-6. How do you respond to them?
- Do you expect to know why God allows hard things to come into your life? Can you trust him even when it is hard to see what good could possibly come of them?
- Why did you put your trust God in the first place? What is the grounds of your faith?