

Sermon by Bob Brown on Sunday AM 2/8/09
"The Book of Joy" - Job 1:1- 2:10

This is a book about a man named Job, a rich and prosperous man whose family lived in wealth. Then one day he was praying to His God and his whole life fell there, right before his eyes. His wife said, "Job, just curse God and die," but Job said, "No, my dear I won't, because God's got my back today, just like every other day." (*My paraphrase.*)

This cute little introduction to the book of Job is meant to convey a deeper theological message: God can be trusted even when we don't understand what is happening around us. Reading this book and trying to understand it reminds me of the four words in the English language that have always driven me nuts; four words, that when they are spoken to me, get me riled up, and four words that when I voice them, make me wonder how I could possibly even think I can justify using them. Those four words: "Because I said so"!

Keep these four words in mind as we go through this book over the next few weeks. God introduces us to, and wants us to get to know his servant Job. There is quite a bit of hard luck and much questioning going on by Job and His friends through his whole ordeal, which is never quite put into words, explaining why it all happened. Yet in the book's end we get to meet the new and improved Job, reworked by God himself, a man with a new attitude about God and life.

At the very beginning of this book we see what Job is really made of, words penned by God Himself, what an impressive resume: able to leap tall buildings in a single bound, faster than a speeding bullet, stronger than a locomotive, a man of steel...:— no wait, that was a different guy.

God describes His friend Job with four different adjectives in the beginning of this book, Job is blameless, upright, he feared God, and he shunned evil (1:1, 8; 2:3). He had seven sons. We associate 7 with perfection. And he had three daughters. We associate ten with completion. He also had 7,000 sheep; 3,000 camels (10 again), 500 yoke of oxen and 500 donkeys, (10 again).

Job, his wife and all his children could say, "Now we have it good, his friends knew it and even God agreed that this was the good life."

This book literally breaks down into four main sections:

Chapters 1 - 2

3 - 31

32 - 37

38 - 42

Before we get to some of the subtleties of this book, as well as the deep theological aspects, let's look at three things written here that will be important to remember throughout this book.

1. Job sacrificed regularly. (1:5)
2. Job did not sin by blaming God. (1:22)
3. Job did not sin in what he said. (2:10)

As we go through this book, and we see the integrity of Job, his ability to focus himself and his family on God, we need to make some comparisons. Compare your life to Job, his actions, his words, his desires. Compare the material possessions, the blessings and even whether you want God to notice how well you are doing, particularly in the blessings area,

Compare at what point you would give up and fall into the trap the enemy set for you. Compare what you would tell others if your life seemingly fell apart for absolutely no good reason.

When we see that it is God who calls Job to Satan's attention, we probably feel that for no good reason, God set him up. We probably are even afraid that the same thing can happen to us, and we won't know what to do. If that is what we are afraid of, then we probably are believers, but we hold God at a distance, so that He won't notice us. That won't work!

It is God who brings up his servants name, because he knows that he is blameless, upright, he feared God, and he shunned evil. That is a great combination in any person. It should be what you and I strive for, whether it gets us notice or not. It is great that God would notice our love and faithfulness to Him.

According to Jesus, we are to "Let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

Any time our good works for God are seen by men, it will also come to the attention of our enemy the devil.

We are to live for Jesus, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and have no room for fear in our lives. The best strategy to live the normal Christian life is to trust God daily for all of your needs and for His protection over you. When we give our lives to serving our Great Savior, He covers us with his blood, and protects us as His precious sheep.

We also need to be aware of our enemy, the Bible tells us to "Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith..." (1 Peter 5: 8-9)

We have to be on the offensive, we see in the beginning of this book that Satan is the accuser in heaven, but on earth we know that he is the destroyer. But we also see that God is our protector, nothing can happen to His children because He places a hedge around us, just as He did Job.

When He chooses to allow Satan to test us, it is only so that we can learn more about the grace of God. God is not out to destroy us, let me remind you again, of what God told the prophet Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

God had a great future for the new, renewed, Holy Spirit filled Job, and He has a great future for you and me, as we learn of Him and from Him, daily.