

From Darkness to Light

Job 42:10-17

Of all the Biblical teaching, the book of Job offers the most distinctive perspective on trusting in times of danger. Steadfastness aids in assisting our determination to keep on keeping on, even when friends and even family may have given up on us. Learning to trust God, to believe that God is always present is necessary for spiritual growth.

If we have not discovered this truth, we may try to alleviate the pain in one of three ways. First, test the ‘head in the sand’ approach. We believe that by avoiding the issue it will simply go away, or at least the pain will lessen. But we know how well this works, don’t we? Generally, waiting leads to greater difficulties. Jesus travelled to Jerusalem for face-to-face encounters regarding eternal concerns, knowing there was danger while his disciples often tried to lead him in other directions.

The second approach is acceptance, giving in to the inevitable. A kind of resignation that says, *“That’s just how she always is.”* We have been down this road so many times, expended so much effort, that we are doubtful that anything can change. I have heard it said that if you do anything for 8 weeks it becomes a habit difficult to break.

I am attracted to the fact that not once did Jesus accept anyone’s behavior as inescapable. He just lived life with integrity, always giving others choices for living abundantly, above the life that they were now living.

The final method of dealing with life’s problems in trust is to engage in some form of positive action. I have discovered that the majority of our problems are relational in nature. Someone has to take the first step if resolution is to be accomplished. Our problem is that we want the other person to go first. Some of the most difficult words to utter are, “I’m sorry.” I can already hear you say, “But pastor, I already tried that!” Try it again. Trusting in God involves more than just waiting.

Today, we remember that Jesus was a person of action. He was not comfortable waiting for others to initiate action. He rode into Jerusalem. He confronted those who were conflicted by his belief, teaching, kindness, and sense of honor.

On what we call Good Friday he squarely faced the consequences of his actions. But he was still not finished. He died that you and I might have life eternal, and God raised him from death that we might know God's love is present now and forever.

How Job reacted to his ginormous suffering and loss that was both physical and spiritual is sometimes unbelievable, and yet he trusted God. He hung on to his hope and his God during that agonizing pain, and gives us an icon of the significance of trusting in God. Although severely tested Job never lost sight of God.

God forever meets us in the fringes. Because God lives with the dispossessed we too must follow God to those places where anguish lives. The Holy Spirit who anointed the prophets and Jesus to speak and minister to the marginalized, calls us to be Spirit-powered prophets now.

The same Spirit who gave Job the strength to acknowledge God's power and love is calling us to do justice in Resurrection power. The justice of God is not theory by practice. It is to be acted upon, to be lived out. Justice, like grace, is not something we simply receive, it demands to be put into action. The prophet Amos said, "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." (Amos 5:24)

Today, by the grace of God, we may no longer have to live caged in suffer and pain. By the love of God, we can release the anger, believe again in goodness of God. The blessings that God had in reserve for Job, were given to him only after he had prayed for and forgave his 'so called' friends.

The restoration and healing that the world longs for can happen through the transformative Spirit of God's love in Christ Jesus. We, like the world, long to connect with our loving God, and live and serve in this spectacular family of faith.

On this Resurrection Sunday we can make up our minds to live by faith and hope. Today, through our commitment to the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior,

we may fortify our faith, and live confidently out of darkness into the light. Alleluia.
Amen.