

When People Look at You What Do They See?

Job 1:1-5

Once, while preaching in Ecuador, pastor Roberto my translator, kept pronouncing Job "Hoeb." I had forgotten that in the Spanish language the "j" sound is pronounced like an "h" sound. It took me awhile but I finally 'got it.'

Job was a remarkable person. Then, as now, people have a tendency to concentrate on qualities such as wisdom, education, reputation, affluence, athleticism, and appearance. From the book of his name we discover he was blessed with some, if not all, of these characteristics.

In our culture, when we acquire the correct material possessions, we believe that we will create a favorable impression with others. As we encounter Job, we find that he has ten children and more animals in his fields than can be imagined. As you may remember, wealth was determined in those days by the number of livestock you own. Also, his home is huge, and his employee payroll is larger than anyone's. Best of all, he owns the most honored reputation in all the land.

In the Gospels, Jesus is presented as holding nothing, unmarried with no children, and no home to return to. He was educated at the Temple by the ones who would eventually turn against him. He journeyed throughout the land teaching and preaching with friends and people whom the religious leaders thought to be untouchable, hideous.

We know that Jesus' relationship with God is intimate and primary. His priority is to love people unconditionally regardless of their gender, ethnicity, age, or any other qualifier.

In the New Testament, the story of the Last Supper comes just four days before what we call Palm Sunday, or the triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Because

he had no servants, Jesus sends a disciple to borrow a donkey for what we would call a ticker-tape parade. Both Job and Jesus are acknowledged for who they are, and for their positive relationships with people. Afterward, both are met by their adversaries, enemies no one believed were a possibility.

The story of Job begins by presenting virtues that are difficult to see: "**Blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.**" (v. 1) Sometimes, when we attempt to evaluate a person's integrity we can be biased by our personal development and experience. But in Job's case, we can know exactly what God said. (See 1:8 and 2:3)

We can know that Jesus Christ is blameless, a man of integrity, and pure as well, because of the Biblical record. As with Job Jesus was honorable, righteous, and lived according to God's commands. Biblical evidence indicates his care for the poor, the sick and the marginalized, and it also gives confirmation of his moral and ethical standards.

Both Biblical stories beg the question: *"Am I living up to the standards of these two righteous men?"*

Not many people can imitate the wealth of Job, but we can endeavor to be like him in heart. The poor and the rich have equal access to Godly character. The ground is level here. Living in the worlds of Job and Jesus was just as terrible as it is for you and me.

It was not his wealth that made Job unique. It was who he was inside that distinguished him. With all he had at his disposal, he certainly could have chosen to do anything. Had he made the choice to go against the God's law, he could have gotten away with it. Job decided to set boundaries because of his love of God.

Job is an excellent model for us as he fractures the shoddy, materialistic worldview, and risks to live in God's presence. He understands that who he is shapes his decisions. Job makes every effort, not to be wealthy, but to be

acceptable before God, and to live correctly before people. May we discover the strength to make an impact for God in the world in which we live. Alleluia. Amen.