

Job 40:1-41:34 - Dinosaurs, Dragons, and Repentance - Part 2

As we look at this section of Job this morning, I'll be honest: I've always viewed this portion of Job with a little bit of glee. It's like being a fly on the wall when a superior officer rightly berates one of his subordinates. I think this is the longest sustained personal rebuke in all the Bible. God rebukes Israel as a whole throughout the prophets, but this is personal - it's one on one.

But I think that rather than grabbing some popcorn and sitting back and watching Job get rebuked, we should really all put this into a larger perspective. God doesn't chew people out just to chew them out. He's not like some social media deva who goes viral for telling someone off. If that were the case our God would be a petty God.

No, we need to remember that this is our all powerful, loving and gracious God. And even his rebuke to Job - and to us - us is not just to put us in our place. It's designed so that our hearts would be soft and our lives would be holy.

God has designed everything in our lives - even discipline - in love to bring us closer to him.

Prov. 3:11-12: My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproved him who he loves, as a father a son in whom he delights.

That's powerful. And it's just as much true now as it was true then. If God brings discipline into your life, it's not because he hates you. It's not because he's irritated with you. It's because he loves you deeply.

And Proverbs makes the analogy clear: dads who delight in their kids - who are proud of them and love them and want the absolute best for them - will reprove their children.

And every person who has trusted in Jesus has God as our perfect Father.

What we often see with Job is just the spanking. But what's on God's heart is loving correction. Every child of God needs to be corrected, and God uses different ways to do this.

God's goal in our life is not that our family is perfect.

God's goal in our life is not that we are well-off financially. Or even middle class.

God's goal in our life is not that we have good health or a bunch of encouraging friends.

Those are all good things. But God's goal in our life is that we joyfully and humbly follow the Lord who saved us no matter where he takes us.

Isa 66:2: This is the one to whom I will look, he who is humble and contrite in spirit - repentant, sorry for their sin - and trembles at my word.

And God will often use the rod of discipline to get us there. And all of that is the loving, amazing grace of God.

The reason there is a literal come to Jesus moment here at the end of Job is because God loves Job with an unconditional love. The same love that God had for Job at the beginning of the book when he was bragging about Job, is the same kind of love he has at the end of the book when he's rebuking him in the middle of a hurricane. And it's the same love God has for Job when he doubles his wealth and gives him another family.

God's love has never changed for Job, even though Job's circumstances have changed dramatically.

And this is the one takeaway I want you to have this morning: whatever God is bringing into your life - changes or discipline or whatever - it's because he loves you and he wants you to be humble, contrite in spirit, and tremble at his word. And him getting you to that point in life is his grace.

So we're going to do that by tackling this passage in 2 basic parts. First, we're going to tie up the loose ends in chapter 40 and 41 of God's questioning of Job. And then, secondly, we will look more closely at Job's final response of repentance because I think it will be very instructive for us as we seek to understand what repentance looks like because, remember, that this 4 chapter rebuke of Job is really to get us to chapter 42 where Job actually repents and completely surrenders to God.

God has talked about how he is in complete control over the cosmos, not Job. He is in complete control over the animal kingdom, not Job.

We're going to see this morning that God is sovereign over all judgment and he is sovereign over the biggest creatures on the planet, not Job. He brings all of this up to graciously lead Job to repentance.

So let's dive in: God's still peppering Job with questions and he brings up 3 issues: his own perspective on the situation, Job's ability to judge, and his two biggest creatures. **Read 3-9**

So this is sort of the interlude between God's first set of questions and his second set of questions. It's almost as though he pauses to see how Job will respond, and then continues on. He continues because, as we've looked before, Job isn't quite repentant. Job basically says "I won't talk anymore."

Well, that's a nice first step, but it doesn't deal with the fact that what Job has said in the past is actually sinful. It's wrong.

It'd be like driving down the freeway and someone swerving into your lane and hitting you, you get out and talk and they say "Okay, well, I'll be sure to stay in my lane from now on. Take care." Well, that's nice, but what about all the damage to my car?"

In the same way, God isn't satisfied with Job simply saying he'll lay his hand on his mouth and be quiet because his mouth has done a bunch of sinful damage, whether Job realizes it or not. Look carefully at what God charges Job with. **Read 7-9**

Job has done 3 things. He's charged God with wrong. He's condemned God that he might be in the right. And he has thundered at God as though he has his own authority to do so.

See, from God's perspective the stuff that has come out of Job's mouth isn't simply innocent. It's offensive and sinful because he thinks he is on equal footing with God.

Look back at **9:13-24**. We could look at several places where Job crosses the line, but this is probably the clearest. It's one of Job's early responses to Bildad. Job is getting defensive and saying, "Hey, I didn't do anything to deserve this." Is that true? Yes it is true. The problem is that Job goes a step further and says that since he didn't do anything to deserve this then God is wrong for what he has done to Job. **Read 13-24**

Job says it's not only unjust what God has done, but it's unjust that he can't even bring his case to God and argue it.

Vs. 17: he multiplies wounds without cause - that means God is assaulting Job for no reason.

Vs. 20: Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me. If Job says he's in the right, what does that imply? That God is in the wrong.

Vs. 22: It is all one: therefore I say He destroys both the blameless and the wicked. God doesn't actually care whether or not someone is wicked or blameless, which implies God has no moral standards of his own.

See, Job doesn't directly charge God with evil, but the logical implication of these things is that God has done wrong. It's like if you kids came home and smelled what you were cooking and said, "Mom, thanks for finally cooking a good meal." What would that imply? That mom hadn't cooked a good meal in a while. They're not saying that directly, and maybe they don't even intend that, but that's what comes across.

Job might not be saying that God is in the wrong, maybe he doesn't even intend that, but from God's perspective that's what he's getting. That's why back in **40:8-9** God says "Will you even put me in the wrong?"

Sometimes the stuff we do and say has unintended consequences that we don't fully understand. How we talk about God or our trials or our situation or how we pray out loud, like Job, can actually be putting God in the wrong if we're not careful.

Job needs this perspective in order to understand how offensive some of what he has said is.

So God gives Job some perspective on his word. Then, God basically invites Job to sit on God's own judgment seat. Basically God is saying to Job: "You think I'm a bad judge? Why don't you grab your robes, grab your majesty, hop up onto the throne and judge everyone yourself?" If you can do that, God says, then I'll acknowledge your power. **Read 9-14**

That's pretty biting. Can you imagine that happening to you? You're having a bad day sometime you're whining at your friends and complaining about how unfair all of life is and how you just wish God would do something different. And then God knocks on your door and says, "Hey, I've been listening to you complain about my job. So grab your Sunday best and your glory and splendor and your scepter and I'll let you sit on the throne for an afternoon and you can call the shots."

And what's interesting here is that God only invites Job to judge the wicked. **Read 11-13**

I think what he's getting at is, "Job, can you even judge all those who are obviously wicked? Do you have that capacity? Can you overturn all the wicked? Can you bury them all?" If you can do that, God says, then you don't even really need me. You don't need a Savior at all because you'd be able to save yourself.

See, functionally, this is what we're saying when we say or think that God did something wrong. We're saying that he's in the wrong, that we're in the right. We could do a better job on the throne than he's doing right now. Which of course is crazy.

What's interesting is that although we are inclined to judge - that's just sort of human nature - the ability to judge humanity is really something only God can do. Only God can do it because only God can know all things, all people, all intentions of the heart, how every act or non-action affects every other action for good or bad. It's so comprehensive and exhaustive that it would frankly be impossible for any mere human to do it.

Sure, we can Monday morning quarterback and sit in judgment on peoples' actions to some extent. We judge our politicians, our football teams, business, neighbors, family. We judge news casters and other drivers and other parents. We judge our family, other people's families.

And maybe some of those things we get right. But what do we really know? How can we know it?

Turn to John 5:19-29 for a minute. This is just a little side note for us to understand how comprehensive judgement is. This is one of the classic verses used to show that Jesus is fully God, he is fully divine. How does Jesus show his disciples he is fully divine? Because he says all judgment has been given to him from the Father. **Read 5:19-29**

So you know all those people who say Jesus was a good man, but he wasn't God? Maybe they say he was a good teacher? This passage shows that that is nonsense.

Job was a good man, in the sense that he was blameless, upright, feared God and turned from evil. Job was considered wise. But the wisest, godliest man on the planet is not fit to judge anyone.

Here, Jesus says plainly, the Father gave all judgment over to me.

Jesus does all the works the Father does, he raises all the dead people he wants, he raises all those he wants, judges all people, gives eternal life to whoever he wants, and sends to hell anyone he wants. The work of sovereign judgment is a work only God can do - and since Jesus can do it, we know that he is God.

This is wild contrast between Job and Jesus. God's whole point **back** in **Job 41** is that Job can't do these things. He couldn't do them even if he wanted to.

And then God turns to the dinosaurs. If you weren't here last week, I'd encourage you to listen to that sermon. I spent most of the time explaining why I believe Behemoth and Leviathan are what we would call dinosaurs.

Behemoth is a sauropod, like a brachiosaurus. Leviathan - the Hebrew word means dragon - was some sort of seagoing dragon. I spent a lot of time on their identity last week because most modern Christian scholars doubt their identity. So we spent a lot of time on that. But the reason we did that was so we could come back this week and put what God says about them in context.

God didn't mention these 2 animals here so that we'd argue about them 4,000 years later. God mentions these 2 animals to bring Job to repentance. And the gist is that these massive creatures that no man can contain are easily contained by God. Job can't capture them, he can't kill them. No one can kill them. And if Job can't even capture or kill a couple of animals in God's creation, what power does he really have? **Read 40:15-24**

Again, I won't belabor the point. I think behemoth is a sauropod dinosaur. But God's whole point here is the question in **Vs. 24**: Can you take him by his eyes or pierce his nose with a snare? Job do you think you're strong? Can you even capture this animal?

The answer is no. He's too powerful for you. And I think he's also too tall for Job. I think he mentions the eyes and nose because behemoth's eyes and nose would have been 3 stories above the ground.

So Job, here's the largest animal in creation: the Behemoth. Can you subdue him? No. You can't

And if Behemoth is the largest animal, leviathan is the fiercest. Can you capture leviathan? **Read 41**

Again, I think the description here is a dragon. He has fire coming out of his mouth, massive razor sharp jaws, his skin is like a network of plate mail. There is enough evidence all around the world that dragons existed in different areas throughout recorded history that I don't think it's crazy to take the Bible at a plain meaning here.

But the point here, just like Behemoth, is "You're no match against Leviathan, how do you think you'll stand against me??" Behemoth was massive, leviathan is deadly dangerous - Job can't subdue either of them.

If Job can't even capture a couple of animals that God created, why in the world does he think he can tell God what God should be doing? Who does Job think he is?

And then just as quickly as God shows up to confront Job, he is gone. After the description of Leviathan, the Lord will speak to Job' friends again but he says nothing more to Job. He appears and then he vanishes.

And it seems as though the whole purpose of this confrontation - as intimidating and forceful and sobering as it is - is actually a grace of God to bring Job to this point of repentance. Because that's exactly what we see.

So let's look at Job's response and unpack it.

1) So first we see a genuine submission to God. **Read 1-6**

I think what we see here isn't just an acknowledgement of the sovereignty of God - though it is. I think this is more of Job humbled and saying "God, I surrender to you - do whatever you think is best.

As many people have said, Job's problem all along was that his idea of God was too small. He had a small God who could only really be in charge of good things and if bad things came along, then God was getting things messed up.

But the true humility God wanted to bring about in Job's life was a humble acknowledgement that all things come from God and God - because he's God - can do whatever he wants.

Psa. 115:3: Behold, our God is in the heavens, he does all that he pleases.

Being able to say those words is easy. Especially when things are good. And they're also easy when we're bantering about theology with each other.

But God isn't interested in banter. He's interested in our worship. And worship isn't just acknowledging theoretically that God can do whatever he wants, it's praising God when he does whatever he wants. Especially when it's difficult. Because that's the true test of whether we believe God is sovereign and love that God is sovereign: when that sovereignty overrides our will.

Song:

*O Father use my ransomed life in any way you choose,
And let me song forever be, my only boast is you.*

Those are scary words to sing, but that's what God is after.

2) Another way we know Job is repentant is that he agrees with God's charge against him. **Read 3-4**

Job is basically quoting back to God things that God had said to him earlier in **38:2-3**. And God's charge was basically that Job didn't know what he was talking about. And to show that, God blasts him with over 100 questions.

What Job is saying is that that was the right thing to do! God thank you for that rebuke. Thank you for this 4 chapter long correction.

See, we often despise correction. From other people and from God. We grit our teeth and say we're sorry. We reluctantly acknowledge that God is right. But deep down inside we still want our own way. We don't think what they're doing is right.

But I think if we had a face to face with God and saw him in all his splendor and majesty and he could unfold just a portion of his wise plan for us we would agree with Job: we utter what we do not know. God's plan is too wonderful for us to understand.

What a weird thing to say. God's plan is too wonderful. Job lost all of his kids, all of his wealth, he's covered in oozing boils with a nagging wife and 4 rude friends. And he goes: God, your plan is too wonderful for me to comprehend.

You guys, all the tragedy and sorrow and heartbreak of this life - when you look at it compared to the grand scheme of God and the glory that he has planned for us in Christ in ages to come - it's nothing.

Cancer and loss and financial ruin and layoffs and breaking up and losing - in grand scheme our part in those is too wonderful to comprehend.

Job isn't saying those sad things are good things - they're not. He's saying in the grand scheme of things that these bad things are part of a plan so much greater that we can't possibly understand it.

3) We also see Job publicly and obviously repenting. **Read 5-6**

How do we know when someone is repentant? I think we all know people who say they are repentant but aren't really repentant. I've seen people cry profusely about a sin, but they repentant. Tears are no indication. Promising to do better is no indication.

How do we know? It's hard, and to some extent only the Lord knows for sure. But one of the key indicators of true repentance is what the person is actually sorry **for**. Are they sorry they got caught? Are they sorry they have to endure some kind of punishment? Are they still trying to justify themselves or take only a little bit of the blame?

Those are indicators that they're not truly repentant. Job says three things that give us an idea that he is truly repentant.

A) Realizes their sin was primarily against God. **Read 5**

All of what Job has done has been done in the sight of God. God has seen all of this and that's what grieves Job.

If we're only worried about our public appearance or what other people think, and not primarily grieved that we have offended God, we might not really be repentant.

B) Despises the sin itself. **Read 6a**

You know what the source of Job's sin is? It's Job. It's not Satan even though Satan acted against Job. It's not Job's wife, even though she was a massive force of discouragement in his life. It wasn't Job's bad health. Health can make us grumpy and irritable - most of us don't go through anything like Job. And it wasn't his friends - who will go down as the world's worst friends.

What caused Job to sin was Job. And he says he despises himself for that. He hates himself because he is the cause. I think this is a testimony to true repentance. When there are no excuses. When there is no blame shifting. When all we can do is to simply plead guilty for our sin and trust in God's mercy.

C) True repentance repents as publicly as they sinned. **Read 6**

He covers himself with sackcloth and ashes. Why? Because that's a sign to everyone that he was wrong. The godliest man on the planet - the one everyone came to for godly council, the one everyone probably heard complaining about God - was wrong. Big time wrong.

And he was publicly declaring to everyone he was wrong. This is a grace of God. No one is above repentance. No one is above

I want to encourage you that no matter what comes into your life, what he is looking for is humble praise for his good sovereignty, which is too wonderful for us to comprehend.

Pray