

Job 42:7-17 - Unmerited Favor from Beginning to End

This morning we come to the conclusion of what I hope has been a helpful study through the book of Job. I think Job's opening words in the aftermath of tragedy is really what we are to learn in all of this: The Lord gives, the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

All that we have is God's and all that is taken away is God's. God does not need to give us an account for why he does what he does - whether good or bad. And he is worthy of our praise no matter what he does.

And we are very much like Job in that we often know that and follow that and say that. But sometimes we stray and forget that, we step out of line, and the Lord in his grace and love brings us back to that realization.

I don't know what comes to your mind when you think of the aftermath of Job's situation, but what often comes to my mind is that Job gets everything back. Somehow he wins the life lottery twice and retires jet set. But I don't think that's actually the point of the end of the book.

I think the point of the end of the book is that God is shown to be amazingly gracious to rebellious sinners. In fact, what shines most in this whole section is that God is gracious to everyone here.

He's gracious to Job's three friends. He's gracious to Job. He's even gracious to Job's wife. He's gracious to Job's children - and especially gracious to Job's daughters. God is gracious to Job's grandchildren.

So after 42 chapters of craziness I think we should walk away from this book saying: "That was crazy - boy, is God ever good!" I'm not sure there's any other response than to praise God for his grace. And that's what I want to dwell on this morning - just how good and gracious God is in light of all that's happened.

1) God shows unmerited grace to foolish counselors. **Read 7-8**

I think it goes without saying that God is more gracious to these guys than we probably would be. We've endured a dozen chapters of their accusations and false claims and their bad theology. We've really learned how not to counsel people. I mean why not take these guys out as well? Why give them any more opportunity to be cruel to those who are hurting?

But God's grace is greater than we can understand. Notice what God does here: God's anger is kindled against the friends and yet God himself provides the remedy for his own anger through sacrifice.

I think a lot of times we think of God in simplistic terms. Either he's happy with us or mad at us - there's very little in between. It's hard for us to understand sometimes that God is a person - 3 persons, really - that can express multiple emotions at any given time just like you and I can.

Here, God is angry at the friends. He says to Eliphaz - who apparently is the leader of the group - "my anger burns against you and your friends." And he calls them out for specific things. They have not spoken what is right - they've spoken lies and error to Job. And they have been foolishly sinful in what they've said. God is angry that they have been poor counselors to Job in the midst of his crisis.

So this whole time, Job's friends have been pounding Job with biting criticism God has been up in heaven shaking his head going "that's not right." And it's really come to a point where God **can't not** rebuke them anymore.

But it's not just that God is mad at the friends. God is gracious to them. He provides a way for their sins to be atoned for and he does it in a way that's pretty amazing. Job who was the target of their abuse suddenly becomes their priest. They are to take 7 bulls and 7 rams - sort of the perfect offering - and bring it to Job who will intercede on their behalf.

This is really amazing. What God is doing is reconciling everyone to everyone. He's reconciling Job to his 3 friends. It seems as though Elihu escaped judgment here. But God is also reconciling the 3 friends to himself. He is providing a way to pardon them. See we often magnify the fact that God is angry with the friends but we miss the fact that God himself appeases his own anger toward them.

Really, what we see here is the same love that God has toward us in the gospel, isn't it? God taking the initiative to save wretched sinners simply because that's what he enjoys doing. It brings God joy to forgive our sins because we in turn praise him for his grace.

Romans 5:8: But God shows his love for us that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

So is God mad at the friends. Of course. But what's he do? He provides the means of reconciliation to himself. God is offended and yet God makes it right.

When I was a little kid my dad gave me a baseball bat and a ball and let me play in the backyard. The only rule I had was to not hit the ball against the garage because there was a window. What do you imagine I decided to do? I practiced hitting the ball against the side of the garage, of course. And of course the window shattered. I was 5 or 6 at the time. Was my dad angry with me? Sure. Could I pay to have the window fixed? No. So in his love he remedied the situation by paying for something that I couldn't possibly pay for.

That's the kind of grace and mercy God is showing toward this 3 guys right here. They've insulted Job, they've misrepresented God, God is rightly angry and God makes it right. **Read 9**

Forgiven. Just like that. No more hostility, no more anger. And reconciled to Job as well.

Can I tell you something? This should give us hope and peace. As someone who counsels people a fair amount I'm sure I've blown it big time over the years. I think it's safe to say we all have. We've all given advice that's contrary to the Bible - contrary to what God himself says. But I think what we rest in is that if there is hope for these guys, there is hope for us who are covered - not by the blood of bulls and goats - but by the precious blood of Jesus.

Is God ever angry at what we do? Sure. But is he angry forever. Not a chance.

Psalms 30:5: For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime.

2) God also shows unmerited grace to Job. Read 10-12

So God restores Job. He restores his wealth - in fact, it's precisely twice as much as what he had before. I don't think we get the idea that this happened magically or instantly - it may have taken decades to rebuild what was lost. But it is double what he had before and but we are to understand that this didn't come by Job's own git-r-done mentality or ingenuity. What he was given was all from God.

Job's holdings began to grow as soon as he prayed for his friends. I think this is important because it shows both sides of the equation had to be reconciled. The friends were in the wrong, but so was Job. They had all said things that were mean and harsh and needed reconciliation. The friends had to come to Job, but Job had to pray for the friends. There was healing that needed to be done all around.

God also restored Job's respect among Job's own family. **Read 11**

This is the first time we are introduced to the fact that Job had brothers and sisters. They are adult brothers and sisters. We know nothing about them, except the language seems to indicate he had a fair amount of them and not only do they comfort Job but they contribute financially to his needs as well. Remember Job is utterly destitute - it's his brothers and sisters who help him.

It should go without saying that as followers of the Lord Jesus we should be willing to help out our own family financially if they are in desperate need.

They brought all of this, **Vs. 11** says, because God had brought evil - or calamity - upon Job. Wait, wasn't it Satan who brought these things? Well, yes in a direct sense. But in an ultimate sense God orchestrated it all. The Bible doesn't try to reconcile those concepts, neither does it shy away from those concepts. God is good,

but also evil comes just as sure as he sits on the throne. He's not evil, but he is sovereign over evil. It's more than simply allowing evil, but less that being evil. I don't know how else to thread that needle, but there it is.

The bigger question I think we need to ask here is "Why does God bless Job again?" Does he bless Job because Job repented? Does he bless Job because he felt sorry for him? Why does he bless Job?

The honest to goodness answer is we don't know. We have no idea why God decided to bless Job with double what he had before.

When Job was rebuking his wife earlier in the book he said "Shall we not take the bad along with the good?" I think it's also safe to say, "Shall we not take the good, along with the bad?" God's not trying to set Job up just to crush him again. That was never the point of the first trial.

I think the thing Job learns here is that the worst chapter of your life is not always the last chapter of your life. I mean in some ways the ending of Job reads basically like a fairy tale, doesn't it? And they all lived happily ever after.

You know what? For some people, that's what God has designed. And that's okay - that's good. For others the happier chapters are earlier in life and the more difficult ones come later. For still others all of life is a hard book, and for others all of life is pretty easy.

The point is that no matter what comes God is good and worthy to be praised for his grace and good wisdom.

God gives unmerited grace to Job's friends, to Job.

3) God shows unmerited favor to Job's wife. If you remember, the last time we saw Job's wife was back in chapter 2 where in the aftermath of 2 waves of calamity she told Job that he should curse God and die. To which Job rebuked her for her foolish words, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God and not evil?" And in all of that, the Bible says, Job did not sin.

That was the last time we saw her. And here, we don't see her directly, but she is part of the story. **Read 12-15**

So where is his wife? God is blessing her and Job with another 10 children. She's not in the forefront or even mentioned, but God is blessing her nonetheless.

I mean, again, if I'm in God's shoes and there's a woman telling her husband that he should just curse me and die I think the last thing on my mind is "you know, I think I'll bless her with 10 more kids and twice the wealth that she had before." That's not my first inclination. God could have simply made her barren or even taken her out of the game, given Job a new wife and he could have kids with her.

But he doesn't do that. We actually don't even see from her what we saw from the 3 friends - we see no repentance from her at all. She may have repented at some point but we don't know. It's not obvious one way or another.

So why does God bless her? Because God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He blesses her because God is more gracious and kind than you and I can ever imagine. I mean, some 4,000 years later we still make fun of Job's wife, don't we? "Curse God and die, huh? Maybe God could have taken her too. Haha."

You know what? God's been over that for 4,000 years. Why did he leave her alive? Because he wasn't done blessing her yet. She had done absolutely nothing to deserve grace in the first place and she had done absolutely nothing to deserve even more grace at the end of her life. God was under no restraint or obligation to treat her with any sort of kindness at all.

And yet what God does in his grace is bless her with 20 kids and twice the estate she had before. Remember in chapter 1 when the estate was half this size Job was said to be the greatest man in all of the east. Now God has blessed her with twice that.

This is all unmerited favor. This is all God's grace. God's not setting some sort of trap. Why does he bless her? Because he wants to. It's his nature to do this.

Has God blessed you in life? You know why? It wasn't primarily your ingenuity, it wasn't primarily your skill or upbringing - those are some factors of course. It's because God chose to. Because he can and he wants to.

This is something I think we need to really wrap our mind around. God likes being gracious. Maybe you like jogging, maybe you like movies, maybe you like sports. God likes pouring out grace on people who absolutely do not deserve it and will eventually praise him for it.

More than that, God can give whatever he wants and he can take whatever he wants. And he's good and gracious and worthy of praise both ways.

4) God also shows unmerited favor to Job's children. Read 13-16

Many scholars think it is so unusual that Job had 7 sons and 3 daughters initially, and then God blessed him with that exact same number again that there is no way that this book could be historical. The numbers are all too perfect. Seven in the OT was a number for perfection so 7 sons would have been the perfect number of sons. The exact doubling of his livestock seems too perfect - there's just no way this could be real.

That's true if you have a very small God who has no ability to control life and the cosmos, but as we've seen for the past 4 chapters that's exactly who God is. This is well within his capacity to do. And actually serves as a very fitting conclusion.

More than that, I think the details we have specifically about the daughters are what helps confirm that this is an historical book. Aside from Job and the 4 friends, they are the only people named in the book. We don't know the name of Job's wife, but we know the name of 3 of his 6 daughters.

The first daughter is Jemimah and that probably means dove - like a bird. Keziah is the name of a spice that's taken from tree bark that is kind of like cinnamon, so her name is something like Cinnamon. And Keren-Happuch - which doesn't roll off the tongue as easily - means something like "bottle of eye shadow." For real. So he has Dove, Cinnamon, and Bottle of Eye Shadow. It doesn't really make any sense to name fictitious daughters of a fictitious man at the end of the book where there is no more information. But adding random bits of information that are unnecessary is usually the dead giveaway of a real story. written by someone familiar with the people in the story.

And apparently they are beautiful, God goes out of his way to tell us that. There are actually only a few women in the Bible who God goes out of his way to let all of redeemed history know just how beautiful they are. There's Sarah, Abraham's wife, who is beautiful even into her old age. Esther is said to have a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at. Solomon praises the Shulamite woman for her beauty in the Song of Solomon. And here we see these 3 ladies were the most beautiful in the land. God blessed them with beauty - that's okay. Not everyone is blessed with beauty.

When God was designing the universe, I know for sure when he was thinking about me he was thinking "Well, we do need some bald guys who are 5'8" - they can't all be beautiful."

More intriguing than what Job's daughters looked like is that Job gave them an inheritance among their brothers. This was really unheard of in ancient times. In ancient times the sons received the inheritance. So any inheritance your daughter received was through her husband. But here the blessing of God flows through Job to even his daughters.

And just like God blessed Job and his wife with children, God blesses Job's children with children and grandchildren. **Read 16**

Four generations from Job to the youngest.

Prov. 17:6 Grandchildren are the crown of the aged.

A common way to bless one another in Israel was summed up in **Psa. 128:6**: May you see you children's children!

This is blessing on blessing for people who don't deserve it. And they all live - quite literally - happily ever after.
Read 16-17

We're not sure if Job lived to be 140 years old or if he was 70 and God added 140 years to that for a total of 210 - the grammar could go either way. Back then people lived a long time. Abraham lived until he was 175 years old. Job likely lived around the same time so it's not out of the question to think he lived to 210.

And what I want us to remember as we leave Job is that the same God of grace that gave and took away, is the same God of grace we serve today. It's the triune God whom we know through Jesus Christ.

And where ever you might be on the spectrum of getting or having something taken away know that God is good. He is worthy of our praise. He doesn't give or take away because he hates us. He gives and takes away because he loves us. And whether it's to show off our unwavering commitment despite losing everything or whether it's to entrust us with more wealth than we can imagine it's motivated by our gracious God who loves to hear us sing of his grace.

Pray