

When Life Beats You Up

Job 38:1-11

Introduction

I'm going to be preaching from the Old Testament lesson; but I first want to call your attention to a verse in the Gospel lesson. *But [Jesus] was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. And they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38)*. That is the crux of the issue. When things go wrong, our first impulse is to focus on ourselves and our problems, forgetting, if just for a moment, that God is still there, and He still cares.

The Story of Job

Let's get the background on Job

Job, the Man

The Bible says that Job was *blameless and upright (Job 1:1)*. This doesn't mean he was perfect; no one is. The key to understanding "blameless and upright" is the next part of the sentence – Job *feared God and turned away from evil*. Later, we read that he *continually (v. 5)* offered sacrifices for his ten children "just in case" they had sinned. From this we can deduce he did the same for himself. This is like the one who regularly comes to church and receives Absolution and the Lord's Supper. Satan wanted to prove Job was only faithful because God blessed him. So, God took down His hedge of protection, allowing Satan to attack Job's family, wealth, and health. For 37 chapters, Job has been suffering while his "friends" attacked him, saying it was all his fault. He must have done something to deserve this.

Job's Questions

Let's look at the questions Job asks in his suffering. We'll see they are like the ones we ask.

Why was I born? (3:1-4, 11-12)

(Read *Job 3:1-4, 11-12*). Job's wife had told him to *curse God and die (Job 2:9)*. Instead, he cursed the day he was born. Martin Luther is reported to have said that he didn't understand why God didn't just take us as soon as we were baptized. In *It's a Wonderful Life*, George Baily wishes he were never born. Sometimes, it gets so dark, we throw up our hands and say, "What's the use?"

Why can't I just die? (6:8-9)

(Read *Job 6:8-9*). Since Job was born and didn't die at birth, he longs for the next best thing. Why doesn't God just end his suffering and take him now? While we realize euthanasia is a sin, breaking the Fifth Commandment, "You shall not murder", as we get older and our health begins to fail, we wonder why God is keeping us around. "Why doesn't He just take me home?" That's not a bad question, if we're asking it in the sense of wanting to know what our mission in life is to be now. However, it is not good if we are asking it as a suggestion to God to end our life.

Where is my hope? (17:15)

(Read **Job 17:15**). What is life without hope? When the storms of life take away or hide our hope from us, it takes away our will to carry on. There is no goal, nothing to aim for.

Where is God? (23:3-6)

(Read **Job 23:3-6**). We are reminded of Jesus' cry from the cross, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?*" (**Mark 15:34**). Jesus was going through hell for us on the cross. Carrying our sins, He was separated from the Father for the first and only time. When life is beating us up, it can seem like God has forsaken us. The problem is, as I stated at the outset, we tend to focus within. And when that is our focus, we can't see that God is right there.

God's Answer (Ch. 38-41)

God's answer, of which our lesson is a small part, seems like a non-answer. For four chapters, God asks questions of Job to illustrate what it means that He is God and Job is a mere man. The only thing Job can do is repent. He recognizes it has been presumptuous to question God. Sometimes, we must be reminded of that fact. We don't know why God sometimes allows life to beat us up. His ways are higher than our ways. But we have proof that He is still there, and He still cares. The proof is in Christ on the cross. The Father sent His own Son to die in our place. The God who gave His own Son for us will never stop caring for us. His Son, our Redeemer, is always advocating for us. Even before God appears and gives His answer, there is a bright spot in the book of **Job**.

Job's Faith – "I Know My Redeemer Lives (19:25-26)

(Read **Job 19:25-26**). Here is why Job is called a man of great faith. During all the suffering, he held fast to the truth that God still lives, and God still cares for him. He believes in the bodily resurrection of the dead. He says, "*And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God*" (**Job 19:26**). We have that same promise, the promise of resurrection, based on the resurrection of Christ. He died for our sins, but He didn't stay dead. He is God Almighty, living today to redeem us from the pit. Where do you turn **WHEN LIFE BEATS YOU UP**? Turn to Jesus through His Word and Sacrament.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
