

The Closest Of Bonds

Job 42:5
John 14:1-14

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Job has lost his way - troubled he was, from the outside in;
all the way down - deep down, into his heart he was troubled.

And I don't think any of us would be any different if we were in his sandals.
He'd been hit by one tragedy after another.

You know how they say that things come in three's?

That's how it was with Job.

First all his livestock is destroyed. Some by raiders. Some by lightning.
And servants were all killed.

Then his children were killed when a strong wind collapsed their house.

And finally Job's own body is attacked - he becomes terribly ill with
painful sores over his whole body.

HUGE trouble.

So, his wife comes along and tries to convince him that this is God's fault.
"Curse God and die!" she says, like Eve tempting Adam.

And three friends come along - Eliphaz, Bildad (the shortest fellow we
read about in Scripture - the Shuhite), and Zophar. With all kinds of long
speeches and rationalizations they address the question of Job's suffering.
It's because of this or that... and here's how you must respond, Job.
Obviously!

Job gets caught up in their talk. It gets into his head and under his sore-
infested skin, that talk does. He begins to doubt himself. He begins to wonder
about God.

At the end of it all, 34 chapters of it all,
at the end, Job is still left with the questions.

Including the dominating elephant called "**WHY?**"

Why this suffering?

Why me?

Why like this?

He can't make sense of his situation.
He can't make sense of his world.
He can't make sense of any of it, he can't.

Job remains lost, at a loss,
troubled
all the way down, deep down, to way inside to the core of his heart.

Till God steps in directly.

Everyone else has spoken.

Now it is God's turn - Job 38.

And he begins - he starts to circle around Job, tossing question after question towards him:

"Where were you when....

Who makes this work?

Surely, Job, you know...."

Question after question comes to Job about the world around him.

Who designed the blueprint for creation?

Who put the sea into its place?

Who keeps the earth spinning?

Where does light come from?

Can you make a single star - much less keep it in place?

What about the miracle of birth, Job - do you control it, or even understand it?

The amazing eyesight of a hawk in flight - do you make it happen?

God begins in a grand celestial sweep, and ends up with questions about small animals that lived in Job's neighbourhood.

What about it, Job?

Surely, Job, you know... don't you?

Then two more chapters of questions, focussing on large sea creatures.

It's all big.

It's all mysterious.

It's all overwhelmingly awesome.

It's all WAY beyond his control.

It's all WAY outside of Job's scope of understanding.

"And Job," says God, "It's all way smaller than me."

Job finds these mysteries of the universe unfathomable.

That is, they are too deep to measure, so many fathoms down that no sonar of human understanding could reach to the bottom.

No matter how deep these mysteries of life are to you, Job, I am deeper than them all. No matter how far removed they seem to you, Job, I stand above them all.

What God is doing is shaking Job free of his cobwebs, getting him unstuck from his futile searching. Job was getting all wrapped around the axle of his own predicament. Couldn't see beyond it. Couldn't figure it out. Couldn't fit it into his spirituality.

God had to shake Job free from his philosophising **about** religion and morality and rules and the like. Clear all of that out of him, and get him to reach up towards heaven as a little child;
small in body,
limited in mind.

Job's friends had been trying to fit God into their world, into their way of thinking, into their mould. Job, too, was busy with that project.

And it wasn't working.

God can't be boxed in to our little world and experiences.

God can't be contained in our small ways of understanding.

He is above and beyond them.

And **yet,**

yet,

yet

That great God chooses,
of His own amazingly gracious free will,
he chooses to reach into our world,
to reach down to us,
to take hold of our lives in the middle of their sometimes upside
down and often incomprehensible circumstances,
and claim us as his own.

The one who
designed creation
put the sea in its place
keeps the earth spinning
moves the light
sends the stars along their course
guides the miracle of birth
gives the hawk its sight
That one - even more than he cares for all these -
cares for us.

Ours is not to rationalize Him into neat categories.
Ours is not to know all **about** God.
to hear, and line up, all sorts of facts **about** God.
Ours is not to understand.

Ours is to surrender.
To open our lives to him
in joy and in pain
in new adventures and tiresome routine
in the little minutes and the long months.

Job's friends, and Job with them, had been talking about pain and reward and punishment and behaviour - tying God's actions down to codes of conduct, reward and retribution.

"You must have done something, Job!"

And God stops it all short - ignoring all their theology, he enlarges Job's horizons.

You have a Maker, Job, who is infinitely wise and almighty.
Let that be enough, Job.

And Job "gets it."
"My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you."

It's not about Job.
It's about God.
And keeping the faith in that God.
Job gets it.

He looks around the immense world, and suddenly sees everywhere signs of the even greater immensity of God.

The heavens declare the glory of God to Job.
And Job grows still before God, His Almighty Maker.

It's not about saying the right thing, or giving the right answer.
My ears have heard of you...

It's about personal encounter and surrender.
but now my eyes have seen you...

He is powerless.
God is powerful.
He is so limited.
God is infinite - pure, perfect, great.
Bow before Him.

I see it.
I get it, God.

Job loses everything.
And then, in his weakness and emptiness, comes face to face with the one
who holds everything, including Him.
Confidence now rests no longer in himself.
It can be only in a trusting faith in His Creator.

Through the lens of the great big creation, and questions placed before Him by
God Himself in a mystery of immediate divine revelation,
through that lens Job sees God.
And sees his personal place before God.
And surrenders to that God.

As can we.
Many of you will spend time outdoors this summer.
Take a moment and look around.
Stand on the Champlain lookout and let your eyes sweep over the Ottawa
Valley.
Stand below a tree and count all the leaves above you that flutter in the
breeze.
Look up to see the intricate movements of a bird in flight.
Bend down to see the detailed beauty of a blooming flower.
And see the wonder and power of God.

The God who, says Jesus in Matthew 6, considers you as of much more
value. Who clothes the grass of the field and follows the sparrows in their
flight, and much more cares for your needs and life.

Do you get it?
Do you see it?

And, even more, see that care of God in Jesus.
See Jesus as revealed in His Word - the Bible.

See Jesus, and you see God.

A God who establishes the closest of all possible bonds with us.

Even more than Job could ever see Him in nature, or than we can see Him in nature, we can meet this close and powerful God in Jesus.

Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God, believe also in me...

whoever has seen me has seen the Father. - John 14.

Into the middle of our sometimes overwhelming world comes God.

Not with just a word out of a storm, as he spoke to Job.

But entering right into our storm -

- becoming one of us, one with us in the storms, and the calms, of life.

You know, we can do all the speculating and thinking and categorizing we ever want about God.

But sometimes that has to stop.

And we need to end up silent - watching - before God.

See Him.

Job had the first glimmers of that in the power of creation.

A far fuller picture comes in the person of Jesus.

When someone shows spiritual openness and is looking for something to read or explore, I always like to encourage them to begin with reading the gospel accounts of Jesus' life.

They could, I suppose begin with Genesis.

They could begin with a study of doctrine.

They could begin with a course in ancient history.

But best to begin in an encounter with Jesus.

To see Him.

And there to see God as he is to be seen.

No sidetracks.

No misunderstandings.

And in that seeing to be able to find peace and hope and security through faith in Him.

See, when it comes to life there will always be one more question.

We can always be searching for one more answer.

That kind of searching is never done.

And all that questioning and answering is, quite frankly, not what the Christian faith is all about.

When you get right to the centre of it all, it's about a person.

The person of Jesus.

Through whom we meet our heavenly Father and find a bond of trust and faith and child-like devotion - the closest of bonds - with Him.

And in whom is peace.

It's as simple as that.

Unfortunately - we sometimes gets things all muddled up and confused.

So summertime, and our reading of Job, then our wandering in Nature, is a chance to hit the <reset> button.

And so, friend, let me ask -

Do you get it?

Do you see God?